



THE

# Michigan Geographic Alliance newsletter

[www.cst.cmich.edu/mga](http://www.cst.cmich.edu/mga)

291 Dow Science \* Central Michigan University \* Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859 \* 989-774-3723

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## COORDINATOR'S

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**Dr. Michael Libbee**

### **Big Ideas!**

The Michigan Geographic Alliance, working with Dr. Phil Gersmehl, has developed a new CD of resources for teaching about major world regions.

The Michigan Big Ideas CD provides teacher materials, student activities, a scaffolding diagram, and one or two PowerPoint presentations aligned with Michigan GLCEs for each major region. Each PowerPoint develops one Big Idea and its consequences in the region and is included in two versions: a presentation version and a questions version which aligns with the NCSS College, Career and Civic Life standards. See page 4 for a more complete description.

*Check out all the Alliance Resources on our website:  
[cst.cmich.edu/mga/](http://cst.cmich.edu/mga/)*

MGA will be doing several sessions at the MCSS conference using the Big Ideas CDs. In addition, any teacher willing to go through the introductory PowerPoint and look at the materials at the MGA booth can have a CD for free.

### **And one Giant Map of Africa**

MGA and Macomb ISD are sponsoring the National Geographic Giant Map of Africa to come to the MCSS Conference.

See pages 2 and 3 for more details about the conference!

### **And speaking of standards...**

Roundtables at MCSS will be set up to discuss possible revisions of the Michigan Social Studies Content Expectations.

**And don't forget our sessions with  
World and US GeoHistoGrams,  
elementary geography and much more.**

**JOINT SOCIAL STUDIES**

**CONFERENCE**

**Nov. 6-7, 2014**

**REGISTER NOW!**

**[www.mcssmi.org](http://www.mcssmi.org)**

*See page 2*

**More inside....**

*Geography Awareness Week*

*National Geography Bee*

*Travel to Teach and Learn*

*25th Anniversary*

*Cool Links*

**See you at the Conference!**

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# 2014 Joint Social Studies Annual Conference

Thursday, November 6  
Friday, November 7, 2014

Best Western Plus Hotel  
6820 S Cedar Street  
Lansing, MI 48911

Presented by:

- Michigan Council for the Social Studies
- Michigan Center for Civic Education
- Michigan Council on Economic Education
- Michigan Geographic Alliance

***The Joint Social Studies Conference provides:***

a great opportunity for teachers to learn about best practices.

new materials and activities.

sessions for elementary, middle school and high school teachers.

current educational research

a chance to talk with social studies teachers from around the state.

Registration fees:

Member \$160  
*Full Conference*

Non Member \$200  
*Full Conference*

Student \$60  
*Full Conference*

Hotel Room Rate:  
\$98.50 per night  
(use code MCSS1114)

SCECH hours offered

***What does the Detroit bankruptcy mean to you and your students?***

A stellar panel of experts will explain the situation and impending results in a panel discussion. Led by **Nathan Bomey** of the Detroit Free Press, panelists include **Chief Judge Gerald Rosen** (Federal District Court, E.D. Michigan), **Sonya Mays** (special advisor to emergency manager Kevyn Orr), and **Brad Williams** (of the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce) Follow up: Karen Thomas-Brown, from UM Dearborn and a writer of the C3 will discuss the geographies of the Detroit bankruptcy. For background on the pressing current issue, go to: [http://www.freep.com/article/99999999/NEWS01/120322073&template=theme&theme=detroit\\_financial\\_crisis](http://www.freep.com/article/99999999/NEWS01/120322073&template=theme&theme=detroit_financial_crisis).

***Can we make social studies content standards clearer, fewer and higher?***

The Michigan Department of Education is embarking on a one year project to review Michigan Social Studies Grade Level Content Expectations through the lens of the NCSS C3 document. The intent is to edit and clarify the existing standards as a basis for a revised social studies assessment.

Roundtable discussions for input into the content expectations revision will be an integral part of the conference. Come and share your expertise and experience so we can improve social studies education in Michigan.

***AT THE CONFERENCE -  
VISIT THE MGA BOOTH!***

**Free Materials  
Maps**

**For more information  
or to register,  
please visit  
[www.mcssmi.org](http://www.mcssmi.org).**



# MGA's Geography Strands at the SS Conference

All MGA sessions will be presented by Dr. Michael Libbee, Dr. Phil Gersmehl, or by Michigan Geographic Alliance Teacher Consultants.

## MS-HS World History & Geography

- GeoHistoGram Introduction and Activities  
*Visual representation of both time and place - make the connections!*
- River Valley Civilizations  
*Integrate the Five Themes of Geography into the Early River Civilizations.*
- Big Ideas: Latitude in Africa  
*Latitude and longitude using the Africa Slave trade on the Atlantic.*
- Big Ideas: Elevation in South America  
*Integrate elevation and spatial thinking into a South America unit.*

## MS United States History & Geography

- US History and Geography  
*Using clickable maps to explore connections.*

## Elementary Geography

- Linking the Land (US Regions)  
*Six regions show physical differences and links to trends in history.*
- Regions in Michigan and the U.S.  
*Agricultural regions in Michigan/US show connections to geography and history.*
- K-4 on the Floor  
*How do children learn to "read" maps and graphs?*

## Celebrating 25 years! Re-union.....Re-connect.....Re-activate

The Michigan Geographic Alliance was started by Dr. Michael Libbee (CMU) and Dr. Joseph Stoltman (WMU) in 1989, responding to the National Geographic Society's call to improve geographic education across the country through state alliances. Since then the mission of the Michigan Geographic Alliance hasn't changed – "to provide high-quality, affordable resources and workshops for teachers". Subsequently, MGA has trained 300 Teacher Consultants who have offered over 80,000 hours of

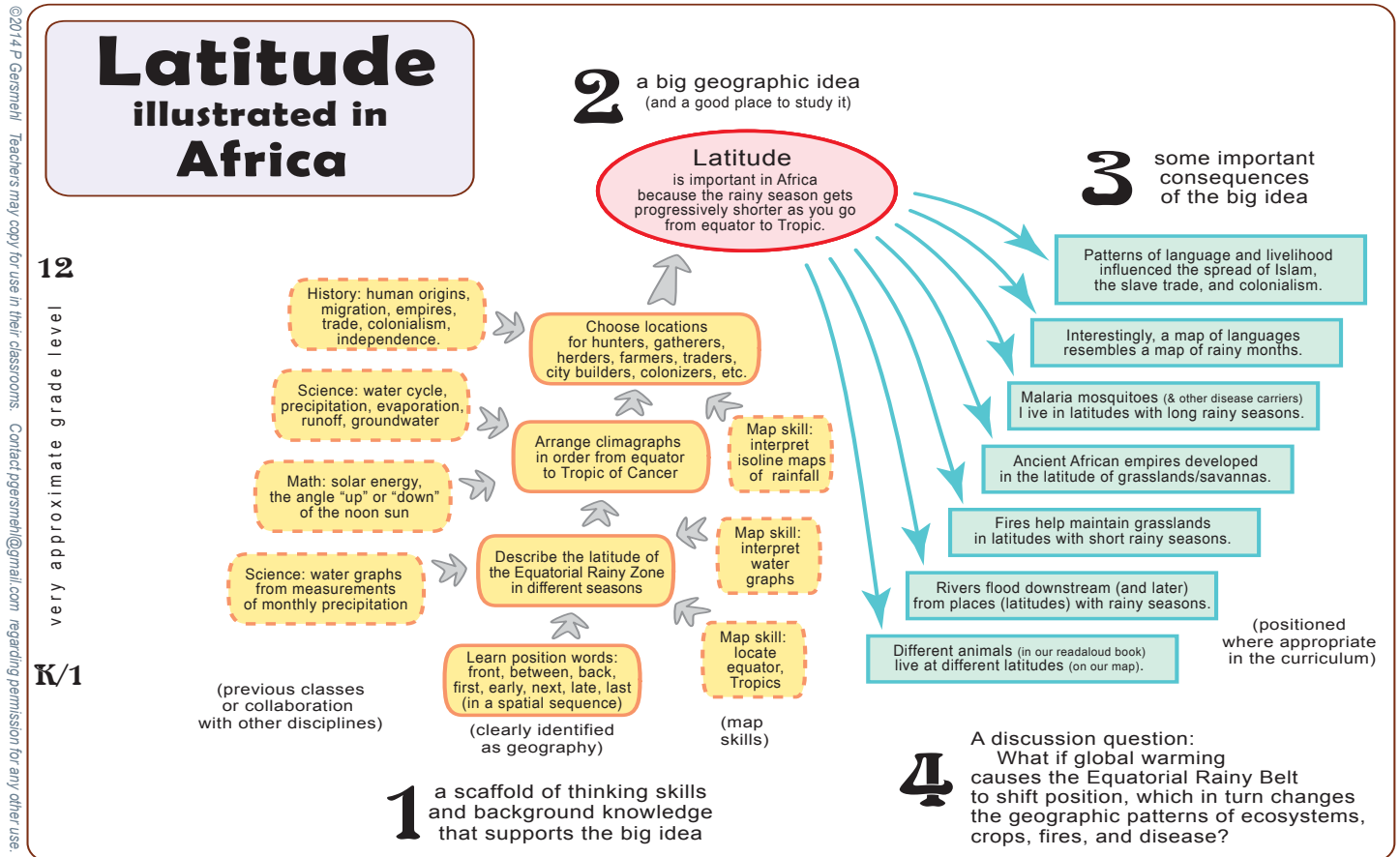


professional development to 8000 participants. MGA is grant-funded, including yearly support from the Connie Binsfeld Endowment in Geography Education held in the National Geographic Education Foundation.



This year marks the 25th anniversary of the MGA. In honor of that event, a reunion was held this summer at Central Michigan University. Over 30 TCs from around the state attended, sharing pictures and stories to reconnect with colleagues. The reunion served to revitalize the alliance, re-activating several TCs who had not been active in recent years.

# Fireworks Diagram! Scaffolding a Big Idea




## The Michigan Big Ideas CD

This CD contains 10 regional units. Each unit has 4 folders: *Teacher Information* (containing the Fireworks Scaffold for the region); *Big Ideas Presentation* (containing a PowerPoint presentation of the information); *Activities* (containing a set of student activities for different levels); and the *Atlas*.

The PowerPoints are based on regional maps developed as clickable PDFs; the atlas allows teachers to custom design their own maps. These maps constitute an easy-to-use Geographic Information System, introducing students to geographic thinking, without the technological hurdles.

The materials are aligned with the Michigan Content Expectations. The units will be available on the Michigan Geographic Alliance website ([cst.cmich.edu/mga/](http://cst.cmich.edu/mga/)) by November 1.



**CELEBRATE GEOGRAPHY**

**Geography and  
"The Future of Food"  
GeoWeek 2014  
Nov. 16-22**

Celebrate Geography and "The Future of Food" November 16th through the 22nd in 2014. See how the rest of National Geographic Society is focusing on food all year round, check out a new suite of resources all about geography as a field and discipline, and even more tips and tools to plan your own GeoWeek celebrations!

Geography Awareness Week is all about geography, why it is important, and how you can get to know it better. Start by checking out more resources below!

**Check out more information!**  
[geographyawarenessweek.org/](http://geographyawarenessweek.org/)



# TC TIDBITS

## Traveling to Teach

Retired MGA Teacher Consultant **Patt Wylie** traveled to Zambia this summer with a group of teachers from her school district, Byron Center. The group offered teacher training in critical thinking and geography to over 100 teachers. All teaching is done in English (Zambia's official language) after 2nd grade. Knowing about the lack of text books, maps and teaching resources, Patt and her colleagues collected beach ball globes, maps, posters and other materials to share, and taught geography lessons to both teachers and students.

There is a great need for classrooms and education in Zambia. Many hundreds of children are on a waiting list to go to school. Education is highly valued but only those families with money can send their children.



*Working with African teachers*

The community school Patt worked with provides a free education, trains teachers, and helps these teachers become government certified so the government then pays the teachers.

***“I worked with five 11-year old boys learning to read because they finally made it to the top of the waiting list and for the first time were able to go to school. Never have I seen more eager learners.”***



*The bright face of a child in Zambia*

Check out Patt's goal for better education in Zambia, and more pictures of her experiences on page 8!

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## Traveling to Learn

MGA Teacher Consultant **Bev Feldkamp**, Valley Lutheran in Saginaw, travelled to Ghana West Africa for two weeks in March, 2014 as part of a US State Department Cultural Exchange program co-sponsored by IREX — (International Research Exchange) called Teachers for Global Classrooms. This year-long program for middle and high school teachers involves online education in global competency, a Washington, DC symposium with fellow participants and culminates in a two to three week travel to one of six countries to work with secondary school teachers and students in schools. This year's countries included Morocco, Ghana, Russia, Philippines, India, and Colombia.



*Working on an MGA lesson*

***“The one word that best comes to mind in describing Ghana is HOT (5 degrees North latitude and 2 degrees West longitude). Excluding the heat, the best word is AKWAABA—the Fante word for Welcome. Ghanaians are very welcoming people and eager to share and learn from their American counterparts.”***

She was part of a cohort of twelve teachers who travelled to Ghana. Their experience began in the capital with an introduction to Ghanaian education, meeting with the Education Ministry, visits to schools both public and private and some “sightseeing”.



*1600 girls at morning assembly Archbishop Porter Takoradi, Ghana*

Once assigned in teams to cities and schools, Bev was placed at Archbishop Porter Secondary school for Girls in Takoradi (on the Atlantic Coast). Bev taught her MGA lesson on monotheistic religions, a lesson on comparative proverbs and one on US holidays and met with social studies teachers to exchange ideas.

Anyone interested in learning more about this program (including a travel stipend for host country expenses) can check out this link. <http://www.irex.org/project/teachers-global-classrooms-program-tgc>.

Bev developed a website with resources for teachers from her Ghana experience: <http://feldkamptgc.weebly.com/>

**GO GREEN**

Check out how you can “GO GREEN” with this newsletter on page 8.

## ***Journey to Understanding***

This summer MGA Teacher Consultant **David Hales** participated in a special project with the River Raisin National Battlefield Park. They received a National Park Foundation 2014 America's Best Ideas Grant for "**Journey to Understanding - Creative Connections with the Wyandotte and Shawnee Nations**". This initiative united teachers from southeast Michigan with the American Indian Tribes to develop partnerships, educational connections for students, and curriculum designed to build a greater understanding of the diverse cultures that once inhabited our region. David traveled with a small team of leaders comprised of the River Raisin National Battlefield Park Superintendent, the president of Eastern Michigan University, the Mayor of Monroe, the president of the Monroe Community College, the chief of the Wyandotte Nation of Anderon, and the social studies consultant at the Monroe ISD. We met and worked with teachers and tribal leaders in Kansas and Oklahoma.



## **THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC BEE!**

The National Geographic Bee is an exciting opportunity for fourth to eighth grade students to learn about their world and get them kick-started on the path toward understanding how the world works. With your efforts to promote the event in your state, we can reach our goal of enrolling 14,000 schools in the competition this year.

The contest is designed to encourage teachers to include geography in their classrooms, spark student interest in the subject, and increase public awareness about geography. Schools with students in grades four through eight are eligible for this entertaining and challenging test of geographic knowledge.

Below you will find a link to a toolkit that contains the promotional resources for the Nat Geo Bee. These are assets that can be shared in your social, web, and email campaigns.

**GO GREEN**  
Check out how you can  
"GO GREEN" with this  
newsletter on page 8.

Toolkit link: <https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B0K7u0do0LjITTBjV0NBUWIMelk&usp=sharing>

## ***SOCIAL STUDIES OLYMPIAD***

The Michigan Council for the Social Studies Olympiad is a state-wide competition for students in grades fourth through twelfth. The goals of the competition are to increase student and teacher interest in the education of social studies by offering contests that lead to improvements in social studies curriculum and facilitate instructional practices. The Olympiad provides opportunities for students and teachers to gain individual and team recognition for academic accomplishments. This event encourages the educational development of a strong social studies skill set, participatory experience, social and intellectual interactions, and strengthens personal confidence by asking students to plan activities as a group.

### **Timeline for Olympiad 2015**

February 9, 2015- Registration deadline

May 16, 2015- Day of the Olympiad

Details (available after November 15, 2014)

Questions can be directed to  
Sean McBrady, Chair,  
at [smcbrady@mysd.net](mailto:smcbrady@mysd.net)  
or by calling the MCSS Office  
at 248-209-2005

### **2015 National Geographic Bee Dates:**

Online Registration Opens - September 15  
School Level Bees - November - January  
State Level Competition- March 27, 2015  
National Level Bee- May 11-13, 2014

### **Find out more:**

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/geobee/>

## GeoGuessr - Let's explore the world!

<https://www.geoguessr.com/>

GeoGuessr is a geography game which takes you on a journey around the world and challenges your ability to recognize your surroundings.

## Online Stop Watch

[www.online-stopwatch.com/](http://www.online-stopwatch.com/)

A Free flash online stopwatch!  
Quick, easy to use!  
Also an online countdown!

## Crash Course in World History

<https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/crash-course1/crash-course-world-history>

John Green teaches you the history of the world in 42 episodes of Crash Course. Learn, study and understand all the important civilizations, empires, wars, and revolutions the world has seen so far.

## Free Table-Top State Maps

National Geographic has a new resource for educators!

The maps were designed to reflect spatial thinking research at the elementary level. All maps are the appropriate size and visually represent the appropriate amount of information for K-5 students. However, they can be used by any grade level.

The U.S. State Tabletop MapMaker Kit maps include state boundaries, interstate highways, rivers, and the top ten most populous cities in each state. Each state map is available as a downloadable tiled PDF that you can print, laminate, and assemble to engage students in group work to learn about their state's geography. The tiled map is a large map that prints out on several 8.5" by 11" sheets of paper for easy assembly and convenient printing. The map is also available as a "poster version" that you can print on a large-format printer.

Follow this link to find the map of Michigan:

[http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/maps/michigan-tabletop-map/?ar\\_a=1](http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/maps/michigan-tabletop-map/?ar_a=1)

## National Conference on Geographic Education

was held in Memphis in early August. MGA Teacher Consultants **Cindy Bloom**, and **Marty Mater**, along with **Dr. Joe Stoltman** and **Dr. Phil Gersmehl** presented lessons based on newly developed Alliance materials.



The meeting was held at the Peabody Hotel, and along with many educational sessions, guests enjoyed watching and learning about the Peabody Ducks. Field trips included exploring the Mississippi Delta, learning about the music history of the region, and canoeing around Memphis.

## World of 7 Billion

Back by popular demand, the **World of 7 Billion** student video contest can help you bring technology and creativity into your high school geography classes. The contest challenges your students to create a short (60 seconds or less) video illustrating the connection between world population growth and one of three global challenges dealing with either the sixth extinction, available farmland, or global education. Students can win up to \$1,000 and their teachers will receive free curriculum resources. The contest deadline is February 19, 2015. More can be found at [www.worldof7billion.org/student-video-contest](http://www.worldof7billion.org/student-video-contest).



# Teachers Teaching Teachers in Zambia

Continued from page 5



*African Market*

Patt has set a goal to raise the money needed for a classroom. The parents will build the walls from the red clay. \$5000 is needed to put on a tin roof, a door, and two windows. This is a life-line out of poverty for these children.

To make a tax free donation go to Grace Ministries International <http://www.gracem.org>. On the bottom left click on "Make an online donation to GMI." Then under designation, pick 'Nakoli Community School.' "Every bit counts. None of us can do a lot, but we can all do a little."



*A typical classroom although I also taught under a tree and a tire.*

# Celebrating 25 years!

Continued from page 3



Michigan Geographic Alliance  
Headquartered at Central Michigan University



**NATIONAL  
GEOGRAPHIC**

This project is funded, in whole or in part, by a grant from the National Geographic Society Education Foundation.

## GO GREEN!

This Michigan Geographic Alliance newsletter is posted on our website, [cst.cmich.edu/mga/](http://cst.cmich.edu/mga/). In honor of trying to 'go green', you can choose your method of newsletter delivery: have it sent by email (pdf), read it on the site (Newsletter Archives), or continue to receive a paper copy.

Visit [cst.cmich.edu/mga/](http://cst.cmich.edu/mga/) and CLICK "Join the MGA Information Family" to send us your current information. We encourage all newsletter recipients to provide us with an update of a preferred method of receiving MGA communications.

Please feel free to email your information or preference to: [mga@cmich.edu](mailto:mga@cmich.edu) or call 1-800-279-1423.

We invite your suggestions and articles for publication. Submissions should be sent to our address or emailed to [mga@cmich.edu](mailto:mga@cmich.edu). If you have any questions or comments, please call 1-800-279-1423.

The Alliance mailing address is:

Michigan Geographic Alliance  
Central Michigan University  
291 Dow Science  
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859