



Georgia Council for  
the Social Studies

# News Notes

[www.gcss.net](http://www.gcss.net)

September, 2015

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## *From the President*

Tammy Ponder



*GCSS Conference is Almost Here!*

As we inch closer towards Fall and the days become cooler and the nights longer, my mind turns to football, pumpkin patches, meandering mountain drives, and the Georgia Council for the Social Studies annual conference. Over the years, this annual event has been added to my list of favorite things of Fall. Some might say I am addicted. I remember my first GCSS conference well. It was as a college student that I was approached along with several of my classmates to present at this conference. Excited and nervous, I stood in front of groups of veteran teachers and presented a Georgia Studies archeology project that involved clay pots, markers, and large trash bags. At the time, I had no idea that over fifteen years later, I would have the honor to serve as the president of this great organization. So, what brings me back year after year from my first year as a pre-service teacher to now my time as social studies teacher turned GCSS President? Quite simply, it's the relationships.

Teaching is a tough field. Few outside of the profession understand the hours spent writing lesson plans, grading papers, and surfing the web for that one perfect primary document to introduce a new unit. Few understand what a struggle it can be

*(continued on page 2)*

## Conference Keynotes Open Our Eyes to the World

DR. SARAH PARCAK &  
DR. WILLIAM GAUDELLI

The keynote speaker on Thursday, Dr. Sarah Parcak, promises to propel Social Studies into the 21st century, as she shares tools and methods for mapping the ancient world from space. Parcak is an Egyptologist and deeply involved in satellite archaeology, using futuristic tools to help unlock the secrets of the past.



Parcak was born in Maine and studied at both Yale and Cambridge Universities. Currently she is Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Laboratory for Global Observation at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She enjoys traveling, hiking, biking, camping, gardening, and bluegrass guitar.

Dr. Parcak's talk is sponsored by National Geographic Learning/Cengage Learning.



On Friday, the keynote speaker will be Dr. William Gaudelli, who will discuss global citizenship education. In addition to global education, Dr. Gaudelli's research relates to pedagogy of visual media, curriculum practice, and teacher education/development. He received his degrees from Rutgers University and is currently Chair of the Department of Arts and Humanities and Associate Professor at Teachers College/Columbia University.

Dr. Gaudelli's keynote session is sponsored by the Mary Hepburn

Scholarship Program at the University of Georgia.

Register NOW for the Conference at [www.gcss.net](http://www.gcss.net)

*(From the President, from pg. 1)*  
to connect students to a subject that many believe to be long ago and far away. Of course, few can also understand the fire that can be lit inside you when a student in class has that “aha” moment, when they finally “get it”. Teaching is an addiction. It hooks you. It sucks you in. And as with any drug, it comes with the highest of highs and sometimes the lowest of lows. Few understand that. Few that is, except other teachers. Our annual conference allows social studies teachers to connect with other teachers who understand the passion that keeps us working when the whole household has gone to bed. GCSS connects us with people who share the same addiction. People who can’t stop tweaking a lesson until it’s just right—until it has just the right balance of content and inquiry. GCSS connects teachers from across the state. Through those relationships the Socratic seminar you learned about last year is now also being taught in Moultrie and Columbus. And in that shared experience, teachers are critiquing, making additions, and edits - sharing it all via email, emails that were exchanged while sitting at the same table during a luncheon.

For me, our GCSS conference is my support group. It’s where I reconnect with others whom I’ve known for years, others who share my addiction. What makes GCSS different is that unlike most support groups, I don’t go to get clean; instead I go to feed my addiction. It begins on Wednesday, when I first drive into Athens racing to meet fellow educators for dinner, friends whom I’ve gathered over years of attendance. And it ends on Friday as I leave the final meeting (hopefully with a door prize). And when I leave, I leave feeling invigorated. I leave with amazing ideas. I leave with exciting things to

implement. I leave knowing others share in my passion – share my addiction to all things social studies.

I can see Fall around the corner. I can almost feel the cool nights, the crispness in the air. And I can hardly wait. It’s almost time for the GCSS annual conference. I hope to see you there.



## ***Highlights of the Upcoming GCSS Conference***

*GCSS Conference Coordinator Diane Sloan reminds us of the following special conference events:*

### **AWARDS LUNCHEON**

Observe your colleagues receive well-deserved accolades along with a delicious meal on us! Thursday, October 22  
Athena F-J, 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

### **GENERAL SESSION**

#### **What Does Social Studies Look Like Across Georgia?**

A leadership panel will discuss professional development, successes, challenges, and strategic plans they have implemented in their school systems to increase student engagement and performance in social studies. A DOE update will follow.

Facilitator: Shaun Owen, State Social Studies Program Manager (K-12)  
Thursday, October 22  
Athena F – J, 4:45 – 5:45 p.m.

### **KEYNOTE ADDRESSES (see page 1 story!)**

### **DOOR PRIZES**

Donated by our exhibitors and sponsors. Tickets are in your nametag and should be deposited at the door when you enter for the drawing.  
Friday, October 23  
Athena F-J, 3:10 p.m.  
*(You must be present to win)*

### **GAEE LUNCHEON**

Friday, October 23 (This is a ticketed event)  
Grand Hall 5, 11:45 – 12:45 p.m.

**BE SURE AND VISIT THE MINI-SESSIONS IN OUR  
PREFUNCTION AREA AND THE EXHIBIT HALL!**

# Dr. Glen Blankenship

## Reflects on His Years With GCSS



*Recently Dr. Glen Blankenship, long an essential fixture at every GCSS function and most recently the GCSS historian, announced that he would be stepping down from his board responsibilities. As he transitions to a new chapter of his life, one featuring more relaxation and well-deserved rest, we took this opportunity to interview Glen on his work with GCSS. We hope you are inspired and motivated by his devotion to become more involved in your GCSS.*

### **What led you to get involved in GCSS?**

I've been involved with GCSS since my first year of teaching in the City Schools of Decatur. My first GCSS conference was in 1977 and I've been a member since then...38 years. My motivation for being involved in GCSS came from several sources: *First*, the isolation of being the only 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher in the building and therefore wanting an opportunity to network and see what others were doing; *Second*, after my first conference and meeting my idol Ed Jackson at the Vinson Institute of Government. I wanted to be able to do workshops like him at the state meeting! *Third*, university mentors who made a difference to my teaching and made sure I stayed connected – among them Dr. Charles Crosthwaite and Dr. Carole Hahn.

### **What has been the most rewarding part of that involvement?**

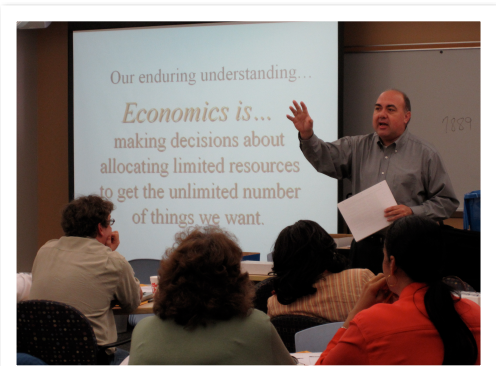
The most rewarding part of my involvement has evolved over the years. Initially the reward was interacting with teachers who taught the same subjects; next, I found an outlet to share in GCSS conferences what I was doing with my students; then I moved to curriculum director at a central office and the networking was important to share on a larger stage. Later I served on the Board of Trustees, then as President of GCSS, and finally many years as the Council Historian informing the new leadership of their institutional history so that they could make informed decisions.

### **How does GCSS improve teaching and learning in Georgia?**

The Council improves teaching in Georgia by providing both content, pedagogy, and networking opportunities for social studies professional who attend the conference.

### **What do you think the most pressing issues are facing social studies in our state and nation at this time?**

The most pressing issue in my mind for social studies is the development and maintenance of a solid, academic curriculum, void of partisan political influence related to what is taught and how it is taught. Those decisions need to be made by certified professionals based on research that takes into consideration historical, geographic, economic, and political accuracy. We need to increase the standards for certification as professionals, and then get out of the way and let them teach. The biggest threat to public education at the moment is an overemphasis on standardized testing. Nowhere in the real world do adults take multiple choice tests other than to get a driver's license! Historically, public education in this nation provided citizens the content and skills needed to build the United States into the world's leading economic and military power. Why not go back to those roots before all the standardized testing?



*While Blankenship was GCSS president, GCSS had the largest conference attendance in council history. He plans to spend his time now writing instructional materials, doing yardwork, and enjoying life. We hope that he remains visible in GCSS even as he enjoys this new phase of his life.*



## *Pam Knauer* *Leaving the GCSS Board but Not GCSS*

*Pam Knauer has served in many roles within GCSS, including being a past president and currently an Outstanding Social Studies Supervisor. As she leaves the board she looks forward to new roles with the organization and reflects back on her experiences so far.*

**What led you to get involved in GCSS?** I had attended the annual conference in years past. I knew GCSS sponsored the conference so I wanted to play a more active part in the organization.

**What has been the most rewarding part of that involvement?** The most rewarding part of my involvement in GCSS has been helping with the conferences. The year GCSS sponsored the national conference was a highlight of my years on the board. Also, serving as GCSS President was very rewarding. I have enjoyed working with my colleagues across the state.

**How does GCSS improve teaching and learning in Georgia?** GCSS is a wonderful advocate for social studies teachers in Georgia. GCSS promotes social studies education in our state. GCSS provides resources to its members such as election resources. GCSS has partnerships with GCEE, The Georgia Humanities Council, The Georgia Department of Education, The Georgia Center for Civic Engagement, and The Jimmy Carter National Historic Site as well as others. These partnerships provide Georgia's social studies teachers with numerous resources.

**What do you think the most pressing issues are facing social studies in our state and nation at this time?** The most pressing issue for social studies education today is keeping social studies education relevant in the STEM world. Students need an education in all content areas. Social Studies education is vitally important for our country as it provides skills for active citizenship. It also provides an understanding of global, national, and personal economics.

**Tell us a bit about yourself and how you spend your time and energies (past or present).** I have recently retired from the Houston County school system after 32 years. I am now spending my time with my new granddaughter, traveling, and working part-time with Middle Georgia RESA as a Social Studies School Improvement Specialist. I still hope to remain active in social studies education in Georgia as the social studies standards are revised.

**Anything else you'd like GCSS members to know...** Stay involved in YOUR state organization! GCSS can only be sustained and grow if social studies teachers become participants.



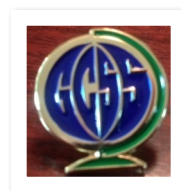
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### *GCSS Election - Vote by Sept. 28 !!*

Don't forget to vote for president-elect and board positions! The last day to vote is **September 28**.

Candidate bios: <http://www.gcass.net/site/page/view/2015-gcass-election-bios>.

Ballot: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BFMBBCDDgcass2015>.





## National Archives/Atlanta Cold War Symposium

*The Long Simmer: Cold War Symposium* will be held on Saturday, September 19, 2014, 9:00 – 4:30. These NARA records include documentation of the space program, nuclear research and development, civil defense and the effects of these programs on the social and political environment of the Southeast. The National Archives is located at 5780 Jonesboro Road, Morrow, Georgia. Pre-registration is required. Registration is free and limited to 200 participants. To register online go to: <http://www.archives.gov/atlanta/symposium/cold-war/>.

Register by email: [atlanta.archives@nara.gov](mailto:atlanta.archives@nara.gov).

## NOMINATE FOR AWARDS!!

At every conference, outstanding social studies teachers and programs are recognized. For more information, go to <http://www.gcass.net/site/page/view/awards>. The deadline for nominations is September 18.

*Did you know:*

*The **Mission** of the Georgia Council for the Social Studies is to advocate for, support, and celebrate the advancement of quality social studies teaching for Georgia students.*

*The **Vision** of the Georgia Council for the Social Studies is to prepare students to be knowledgeable, effective decision makers and engaged citizens in a globally interdependent world.*

## ACT NOW!! ESEA Act & Social Studies

*GCSS members have the rare chance to model active civic engagement and advocate for social studies as this important legislation is renewed. Don't let this opportunity pass you by! Here is the latest update from NCSS:*

Negotiations to finalize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) will resume when Congress returns to Washington, D.C. after Labor Day. Members of the House and Senate will be meeting to iron out the differences between the versions of the bill passed by each body. The Senate bill includes four provisions that create funding for high quality American history, civics, geography, and economics education. The House bill does not.

Some House Majority Conferees have already declared their top priority in conference to be eliminating as many new programs and grants as possible. This poses a direct threat to the Senate provisions that could inject much needed funding into the social studies.

Please urge your council members to contact their House Representative so that he or she can sign on to the '[Dear Colleague](#)' letter that supports key provisions designed to improve history, civics, geography, and economics education for all students as soon as possible before September 11th!

A sample letter as well as tips and instructions are available at the NCSS Action Center: <https://www.votervoice.net/NCSS/campaigns/41959/respond>

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to be in touch.

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**Preparing Students for College, Career, and Civic Life**

## Teacher Opportunities & Resources

**Teaching Georgia Studies Just Got Easier.** The *Georgia Center for Civic Engagement* has announced the 2015 training for Georgia Studies teachers. The workshop is scheduled for September 28, 8 AM to 3:00 PM. The cost is \$10 per person and includes lunch. Registration is limited to 300 teachers, so please register now at <http://georgiacivics.org/index.php/resources/workshops.html>.

### **American Historical Association Conference in Atlanta - January, 2016**

The AHA invites K-12 history and social studies teachers to attend the 2016 annual meeting in downtown Atlanta on January 7-10, 2016. We have an engaging and informative program of events crafted for educators across the discipline. At our panels, workshops, roundtables, and receptions, you'll learn about teaching strategies, network with your peers, share best practices, and discuss topics of common interest. K-12 attendees can attend for only \$45 and can bring their students for only \$10 each. One highlight of the program is Saturday's K-12 Workshop on Teaching the Long Civil Rights Movement, featuring Carol Anderson of Emory University and Brenda Santos of Achievement First Amistad High School. Participants will leave with a lesson plan of their own design drawn from newly available primary sources. Find out more about the meeting at [historians.org/annual-meeting](http://historians.org/annual-meeting).

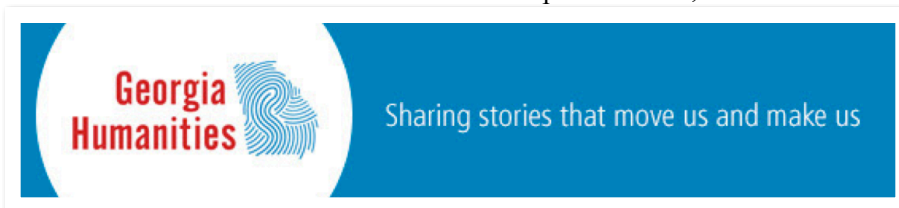


### **News from the Georgia Geographic Alliance**

Check out the Georgia Geographic Alliance's website at <http://georgiageography.org> and new Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/georgiageography>

The webinar **"Georgia Secession Debates (1859-1860)"** has been archived. Go to [www.trrcobbhouse.org](http://www.trrcobbhouse.org), click *Education* on the home page, *Teachers* on the next page and then click *Lesson Plans*. The webinar is lengthy, so you may want to sample pieces of it to see what you want to hear. The lesson plans were developed recently using Cobb House resources. More lessons and documents will be added in the future.

**The Jimmy Carter National Historic Site Education Program** is sponsoring "Fluttering through Plains: Peanuts and Butterflies" which is the annual Post Card Contest surrounding President Carter's birthday on October 1. For contest details, go to [www.jimmycarter.info](http://www.jimmycarter.info). The program is open to students in grades K-12. The deadline for submission is September 11, 2015.



### **Georgia Humanities Council**

Keep up with the activities of our friends at the GHC. [www.georgiahumanities.org](http://www.georgiahumanities.org) Be sure to sign up for their newsletter and receive updates on their many history and arts programs.

### **Resources for Constitution Day from NCSS**

Access to free materials as well as NCSS member resources related to teaching about the U.S. Constitution are available at <http://www.socialstudies.org/resources/constitution>

## Mark Your Calendar:

🌐 **GCSS Conference 2015** - *Social Studies: A Map for Life*, October 22 - 23, 2015, at the Classic Center in Athens, GA. Register now at [www.gcss.net](http://www.gcss.net)

🌐 **NCSS Conference, November 13-15, 2015** in New Orleans, LA. More details at [www.socialstudies.org](http://www.socialstudies.org)



## 🌐 Get connected:

🌐 *Georgia Social Studies Journal* - The current issue can be found at [www.coe.uga.edu/gssj/current-issue/](http://www.coe.uga.edu/gssj/current-issue/)

🌐 Think about becoming more active this year:

- 🌐 Participating in this year's Social Studies Fair
- 🌐 Attending the GCSS conference
- 🌐 Becoming a more active GCSS member and recruiting new members
- 🌐 Sharing your idea for *News & Notes*.

*Need to contact GCSS?* Please notify Eddie Bennett of changes in contact information at [gcss1964@gmail.com](mailto:gcss1964@gmail.com) or send notice to P.O. Box 675, Avondale Estates, GA 30002



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