

commentary

from other pens...

Embassies are legacy of the Golden Age

By Lawrence L. Knutson

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — In Washington’s embassies, where crisis is mel-
lowed by the splash of fountains and diplomacy is practiced over gleam-
ing silver in frescoed rooms, nearly every stately facade harbors a story.
Not a few of these tales have nothing whatever to do with the ebb and
flow of relations between nations. Many of these diplomatic mansions and
mini-palaces had previous lives as a product of the wealth that washed over
the capital in the years between the Civil War and World War I.

Their original owners were the newly rich: moguls, tycoons, merchant
princes, gold-mine wonders and, in one case, a man who found his fortune
at the mouth of a beer bottle.

Consider Tom Walsh, for example. His 60-room extravaganza on Mas-
sachusetts Avenue was built in hope it would be splendid enough to wel-
come the king of Belgium. It is now the Embassy of Indonesia.

When Walsh emigrated from Ireland to America in the middle of the
19th century, his aim was to improve his place in life, not entertain kings.
A millwright’s apprentice, Walsh went west in the 1870s, discovered
gold high in the Colorado Rockies and watched his bank balance skitter
upward like a runaway kite.

He moved to Washington in 1897, and was ready for serious spending.
“Each morning we arose richer than we had gone to bed,” his daughter,
Evalyn Walsh McLean, said in her autobiography, “Father Struck it Rich.”

Walsh built his mansion on Massachusetts Avenue to entertain King
Leopold II of Belgium, whom he had met on a European tour. He was so
determined to make the king feel at home he had his architect duplicate
the royal dining room.

Leopold never visited Washington. The house remained ready for roy-
alty. In 1919, after Walsh died, his widow, Carrie, volunteered the man-
sion for a dinner in honor of Leopold’s nephew and successor, King Albert.

The table was set with gold from Walsh’s Camp Bird Mine, including
gold candelabra and a gold table service.

The family spending went on for years. Evalyn Walsh and her husband,
Ned McLean, bought the Hope Diamond, the world’s largest blue diamond.
It is now the star of the gem and mineral collection of the Smithsonian
Institution’s National Museum of Natural History.

Another tycoon’s money built the gray stone mansion a stroll from the
White House that first served the government of Russia in 1913.

In those 87 years, the flag out front has changed from the double-headed
eagle of the czars to the red and yellow hammer and sickle of the Soviet
Union to the blue, white and red tricolor of the Russian Republic.

In the icier years of the Cold War, American guests ascended the
embassy’s grand staircase under either a gigantic portrait of Josef Stalin
or an equally grim likeness of Vladimir Lenin.

They were often amused to learn that this American outpost of the Krem-
lin with its gilt-trimmed pillars, richly decorated salons and gleaming lights
held aloft by golden angels was built with money inherited from George
Pullman, the sleeping car magnate.

In 1914, Edward Hamlin Everett commissioned architect George Oakley
Totten to build a grand house backing up to Rock Creek Park.

Totten presumably did not object to Everett’s instructions: “Cost is no
object! And style and design are up to you!” Totten met both objectives,
spending Everett’s money freely and imposing his own taste.

Carol M. Highsmith and Ted Landphair, writing in the 1992 book, “Em-
bassies of Washington,” the source for these stories, described how the
new homeowner became rich.

“Everett earned his walking-around money in Texas oil and Missouri
beer, but he made his fortune on his patent for the simple, crimped cap that
sealed millions of bottles of that beer, and soft drinks,” they wrote. He
quickly became known as “The Bottle-Top King.”

The house Totten designed has a ballroom, conservatory, hand-carved
staircase, stained-glass bay windows, billiard room, velvet-covered walls,
teakwood floors, basement swimming pool and a rooftop garden with a
view of the city.

Totten had recently visited Turkey and many of the exterior details re-
semble houses he had seen along the Bosphorus.

That fact proved prophetic. The house has been home to ambassadors
from Turkey since 1933.

EDITOR’S NOTE—Lawrence L. Knutson has covered the White House,
Congress and Washington’s history for more than 30 years.



Trade with Cuba? A tea party in reverse!

What do Elian Gonzalez and Cuba trade have to do with farmers?

Well they are the manifestations of big govern-
ment.

When Castro took over the U.S. embargoed
sugar imports from Cuba, that was the beginning
of the irrigation economy in the heart of the wheat
belt.

Right, let the American farmer produce all they
can and just declare Freedom to Farm an arm of
the State Department.

For six months the Department of Agriculture
has been building a sugar reserve, of 174,000 tons
of refined sugar. Boy that sounds like a bigger
market than 11 million Cubans who can’t buy any-
thing.

You could call it the Cuban sugar syndrome.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has fallen
back to the ghost of the 1980s Payment In Kind
program for sugar. All growers have to do is to
submit to a un-cyberspace sugar reserve.

Well that’s good don’t you know, commodity
reserves make low prices, and now we can have
two bit (25¢), Cokes again. Yuk yuk, that’s a laugh,
but farmers better not payment in kind more than
\$20,000.

Mmm, I thought this was a cyberspace economy
and if you guys don’t down size, the Berlin wall
will fall on you. One things for sure, with these
farm prices the Berlin wall has fallen on farmers,



wayne gattshall

• wayne’s world

and this production control-government reserve
scheme is as isolationist as Herbert Hoover.

However, it is the new economy, and we want to
trade with a rouge nation of 11 million people.
Remember, they can not buy anything unless they
sell something first, like sugar. It could be worse,
Castro is apt to send us his surplus sugar and buy
nothing!

You don’t understand if we trade with Cuba it
would introduce capitalism. Yup, that sounds like
a tea party in reverse, the French, German, British
and Canadian money have been trying that for 30
years and it has failed. However, farmers have been
there and done that, before. It’s called “fool the
farmer one more time.”

So now why not expand the Lyndon Banes
Johnson war on poverty, for the world with a free
school lunch program, under the United Nations
Food and Agriculture Organization in Rome.

It’s like being called ugly by a frog, but the free
food pentagon (five food processors) would like it,
any way.

Predictive dialing is illegal in Kansas

Dear Attorney General Stovall:

Several times in the past few months, I have re-
ceived telephone calls and no one is there when I
answer. It is just silent. It was starting to frighten
me. The call would show up as “unavailable” on
my caller ID, so I didn’t know if it was a prank caller
harrasing me. Someone told me the calls are caused
by a new telemarketing system that dials several
phone numbers at once. Whoever answers first
hears the sales pitch and no one responds when the
other consumers answer their phones. Attorney
General Stovall, these phone calls are a nuisance
to say the least. Is it legal for telemarketers to use
this practice to contact Kansas consumers?

Dear Kansas Consumer:

You have been a victim of “predictive dialing.”
Many telemarketing companies routinely use
computers to call several consumers at once. This
technology was developed to help telemarketers
limit the amount of time wasted in unanswered
calls. However, I agree it is annoying to answer the
phone when nobody is on the other end. My office
has received numerous inquiries about this prac-
tice. It has become such a concern that the Kansas
Legislature amended the Kansas Consumer Pro-
tection Act (KCPA) during the 2000 Legislative
session to prohibit the use of predictive dialing,



carla j. stovall

• consumer corner

unless the telemarketing company making the call
can answer the call with a live person or an auto-
mated answering device within five seconds after
the beginning of the call.

When telemarketers contact consumers, they
must identify themselves and the business on
whose behalf they are soliciting. They also must
immediately explain the purpose of the call and
promptly discontinue the solicitation any time the
consumer gives a negative response. According to
the new amendment, if a consumer answers a
telemarketing call and a telemarketer is not on the
other end, then a recording must be presented to
the consumer. The recording must state the
telemarketer who is calling and what business the
telemarketer is representing. However, the re-
corded message can not be a sales pitch.

If the consumer hangs up, the automated answer-
ing device must release the call within 25 seconds.

Sale of weapons is bad public policy

**The Kansas City Star on Kansas Department
of Revenue gun sales:**

The Kansas Department of Revenue’s sale of
confiscated firearms has been postponed. Offi-
cials, who said they wanted more time to review
federal and state regulations, plan to reschedule the
sale in September. Regardless of when it is held,
the sale of weapons is extremely bad public policy.

Revenue Secretary Karla Pierce says the dispo-
sition is required by law. That law should be
changed, as Gov. Bill Graves attempted to do ear-
lier this year. The Legislature unwisely rejected his
request.

The gun sales are rooted in a wacky Kansas law
that requires illegal drug dealers to purchase state
stamps for marijuana and controlled substances.
When authorities find the drugs without stamps,
Pierce says, her department must sell property
seized — guns included — to satisfy the unpaid
drug tax bill.

Thus Kansas is in the unprincipled position of
putting more firearms into circulation amid deep
public concern over gun-generated violence. Other
jurisdictions are headed in the opposite di-
rection. They, including Kansas City, Kan., are
buying back guns to reduce murder and mayhem.

Graves’ gun proposal would have made the con-
fiscated guns available to law enforcement, state

historic collections or subject to destruction.
Incredibly the House Federal and State Affairs
Committee killed it. The Associated Press quoted
the committee chairman, Rep. Tony Powell, a
Wichita Republican, as saying the Graves plan was
“a bill in search of a problem.” Powell and good
judgment have seldom, if ever, been found in the
same place.

The Legislature needs to get this mess straight-
ened out.

Letter Policy

The Daily News encourages and wel-
comes letters from readers. Letters should
be typewritten if possible, and should in-
clude a telephone number and, most im-
portantly, a signature. Unsigned letters will
not be published. Form letters endorsing
political candidates will be rejected, as will
letters deemed to be of no public interest
or considered offensive. We encourage let-
ters by e-mail to: daily@nwkansas.com.

berry’s world



The Goodland Daily News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)

Member: Kansas Press Association

The Associated Press

Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association

Steve Haynes, President

Tom Betz, Editor/Editorial Page

Rachel Miscall, Managing Editor

Janet Craft, Society Editor/Reporter

Dana Sulsberger, Reporter/Sports

Doug Jackson, Cami Rodgers, Advertising Sales

Susanne Allaman, Advertising Production

Sheila Smith, Office Manager Debra Turner, Proofreader

Nor’west Press

Jim Bowker, General Manager

Ron VanLoenen

Judy McKnight

Richard Westfahl

Lana Westfahl

Betty Morris

Helen Dilts



nwkansas.com

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services (nbetz@nwkansas.com)
Evan Barnum, Systems Admin.(support@nwkansas.com)

Published daily except Saturday and Sunday and the day observed
for New Year’s Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanks-
giving Day and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.
Periodicals postage paid at Goodland, Kan. 67735; entered at the Good-
land, Kan., Post Office under the Act of Congress of March 8, 1878.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Goodland Daily News,
1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: daily@nwkansas.com.
Advertising questions can be sent to: gdnadv@nwkansas.com

The Goodland Daily News assumes no liability for mistakes or omis-
sions in advertising or failure to publish beyond the actual cost of the ad.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three
months, \$20; six months, \$35; 12 months, \$65. By mail in Kansas, Colo-
rado: three months, \$ 25; six months, \$45; 12 months, \$85. (All tax in-
cluded.) Out of area: three months, \$30; six months, \$50; 12 months, \$90.

Nor’West Newspapers

Haynes Publishing Company