

commentary

from other pens...

James Madison and inventing America

By Lawrence L. Knutson

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — For a short, shy man, James Madison casts a long, emphatic shadow.

Its measure is being taken again on the 250th anniversary of the birth of a Virginian many consider the architect of the American republic.

Madison is invoked in every meshing of the gears of the Constitution: as the president acts, Congress votes, the courts rule, politicians vie for office, newspapers publish and people assert their rights.

"He now appears so central he has been called 'THE founding father,'" Lance Banning, a professor of history at the University of Kentucky, told a symposium on March 16, Madison's birthday.

"Scholars almost universally acknowledge this great Virginian was so absolutely central at so many points in the creation of the federal republic that the well-informed can hardly fail to see its founding partly through his eyes," said Banning, author of the 1997 book, "Sacred Fire of Liberty, James Madison and the Founding of the Federal Republic."

The scholarly, widely read Madison was the Constitution's chief engineer. He was responsible for its intricate counterbalancing of competing political and governmental powers. He helped build the case for its ratification as one of the writers of The Federalist Papers,

"What is government itself, but the greatest of all reflections on human nature?" Madison asked in Federalist No. 51, as he explained why the rule of law must be universally accepted:

"If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external not internal controls on government would be necessary."

Convinced of the need, Madison wrote the Bill of Rights, the first 10 amendments to the Constitution, considered the cornerstone of American civil liberties. He championed the amendments on the floor of the House of Representatives, calling them "prescriptions in favor of liberty" designed to protect the minority from being trampled by the majority.

The darkest moment of Madison's half-century and more of public service came in 1814, during the second of his two terms as the nation's fourth president, when British troops drove him from the capital.

Banning said scholars suggest Madison grew less capable as the years moved on and became "the fumbling president who stumbled into war and fled into Virginia while the British burned the White House."

But others note when Madison left office his countryman saw him favorably and viewed the inconclusive War of 1812 as a reaffirmation of American independence, especially after Andrew Jackson's convincing victory at New Orleans.

When Madison died in 1836 at age 85, he was the last surviving leader of the generation that won independence and built the institutions necessary for the new nation's survival and growth.

Like Thomas Jefferson and George Washington, he sprang from the planter aristocracy of Virginia. His father's house, Montpelier, was his home all his life. After graduating from Princeton University, then the College of New Jersey, he faced his future.

By 1781, Madison was the youngest delegate to the Continental Congress established under the flawed Articles of Confederation. From that point, his public career never really ended.

Madison's principal memorial, soon to be reincased in titanium, is the Constitution itself, on display at the National Archives.

His studious approach to public affairs gets its ultimate tribute at the James Madison Building of the Library of Congress, an appropriate shrine for someone who believed that books and knowledge were underpinnings of human understanding and a free government.

"What spectacle can be more edifying or more seasonable than that of liberty and learning, each leaning on the other for their mutual and surest support," Madison wrote in 1822.

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

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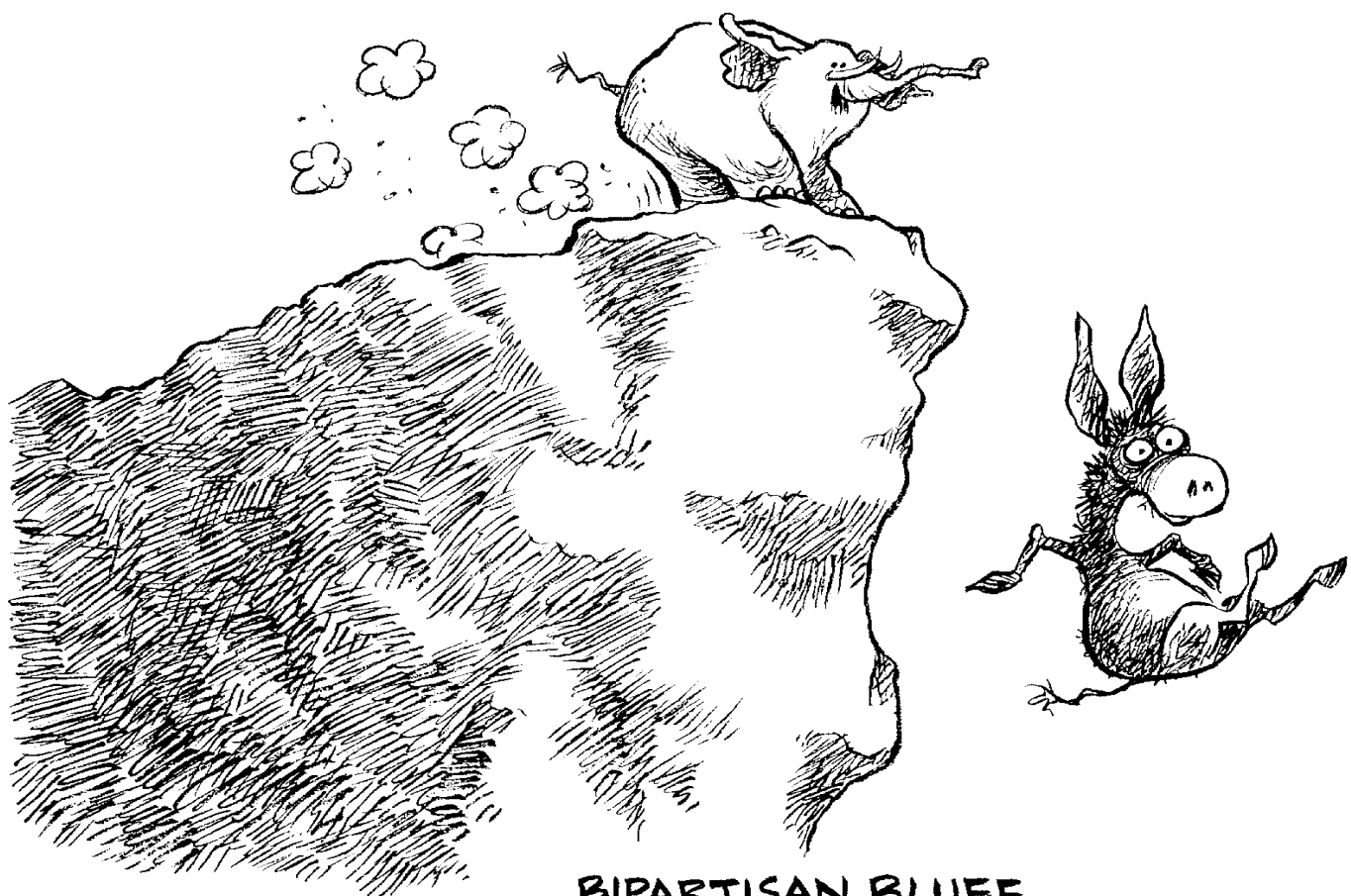
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BIPARTISAN BLUFF

Bootlegger's toe winds up in a drink

In Dawson City, up in the Yukon, some people's idea of a good time is kissing a wrinkled, dried-up, brown, dead, human big toe.

It's a popular pastime, as more than 18,000 people have joined the Sour Toe Cocktail Club since it began in 1973.

I'm not a member, but I'm pretty sure I have a friend who is.

Amy, a sports writer for a newspaper in Fairbanks, Ala., volunteered to cover the 1,000-mile Yukon Quest International Dog Sled race last month, spending two weeks traveling through Yukon Territory in Canada writing race updates and odd feature stories.

She wrote about a man who finished the race despite only having one leg, about a racer who lost because one of his lead dogs was in heat and too busy to run and about the Sour Toe Cocktail Club.

I've watched television specials about courageous disabled people and I've read romance books, but I've never heard of anything like this crazy cocktail club.

Amy said joining is simple. All you have to do is drink a shot of alcohol that has the big toe (she swears it's real) floating in it, making sure the toe touches your lips. For that, you get your name in



**rachel
miscall**

● unraveling

the log book, a certificate and lifetime bragging rights.

The club started in a bar in Dawson City's Downtown Hotel, Amy said, and it's so popular that people actually donate their toes. She said one dog sled racer, who because of a back injury and a strange blood disease has to have his leg amputated, planned to donate five of his toes to the club.

Supposedly the first sour toe belonged to a bootlegger during the time of prohibition. Legend says the bootlegger was sneaking rum into Alaska when his toe became severely frosted and he had to cut it off.

He put the toe in a jar of rum and hid it under the floor boards in his Yukon cabin, where a man, appropriately named "Capt. Dick," found it 44 years later in 1973. Cutting a long story short, the captain was a strange guy who used the toe to start a strange tradition.

Advertising lessons from the farm

Most of you regular readers know that I was raised as a financially challenged person of the soil — that's the politically correct way of saying dirt poor, farm boy. However, since we've added more than 100,000 readers since last year, I need to mention it to establish the groundwork — no pun intended — for this column.

Most of my formative years were spent caring for livestock, putting in field crops and hating chickens. I often see parallels between the lessons I learned in those 21 years and sound business practice today.

In previous columns, I've written about some of those lessons. I've discussed the fact that you always reap what you sow; you can shear a sheep many times, but can only skin it once; grease is cheaper than parts and sometimes you have to go out on a limb to find the fruit.

I'm comfortable using farm analogies in my business presentations. Recently, I stated in a seminar that advertising was a lot like farming. Later I was asked to explain the statement. I explained you have to plant the seed before you raise a crop. That is, you have to make an investment before you can reap the harvest.

I decided this week to expand a little on this concept with you. My hope is that you will turn up an idea or two that will germinate in your fertile minds



**don
taylor**

● minding your own
business

and grow into something really profitable.

Reaping a bumper crop

It starts with a plan. On the farm you must evaluate your fields, decide what to plant and where to plant it. For promotion to be effective, you must decide what to say and who to say it to.

Then you must get ready. On the farm the next step is to prepare the soil. Unless you're a trash farmer, you're going to stir it up good and work it until you have a good seedbed. Advertising takes some preparation as well. You need to work your product selection and prices over, select your target customers and line out the media you will use to carry the message.

Next you plant your seed. In the field you've got to plant the seed before you reap the harvest. Profitable farmers — and there are still a few out there — select the best variety of seed, adjust the seed count per acre and apply the right balance of nutrients to get a bumper crop.

Amy said the bartender told her it's not easy to find unattached human toes, so the bar has to take good care of the one it's got, storing it in some kind of preservative while it's not floating in a drink.

The skin was flaking off the brown, wrinkled toe, Amy said, and the bartender told her the nail had recently fallen off and had to be glued back on. She didn't say so, but I'm pretty sure the bartender talked Amy into joining the club.

It makes my stomach turn a little just thinking about it, and apparently Amy's bosses felt the same. She sent the story in — complete with pictures — for the weekend edition, but it never made it in the newspaper.

Amy said her story about the lovesick lead dogs angered teachers whose students were keeping track of the dog race by reading the newspaper. She said her editors didn't want to push it by running a story that could make people ill.

I guess I don't blame them, but a lot of people probably would have enjoyed the story just because it's strange, unusual and gross — especially with a nice big, color photo of a human toe floating in a drink.

If you want to see it go to <http://members.delphi.com/toe2/index.html>.

Effective promotion works the same way. You've got to select the right media, purchase enough ads or space to carry the message and then apply the extras like adequate inventory, good merchandising, customer service and follow-up.

How much do I spend?

The question I'm asked more than any other is: "How much should I spend on advertising?" The answer is now as it has always been: it depends.

Actually, there is no easy answer to how much a business should spend on promotion. You should consider several factors, such as: current success level, competition, size of market, target customers, pricing strategies, business location, past promotion success and the type of business.

Since so many business owners struggle with this concept, I've created a new tool. It's called the "Promotion Spending Guide." It asks 20 questions about your business and gives you a "spending range" based on your answers.

For a free copy, send a self-addressed envelope with a 34 cent stamp on it to no postage meters to: Don Taylor/Promotion Spending Guide, PO Box 67, Amarillo, TX 79105. Because of our present volume of mail, if you do not follow the above instructions, we will not be able to respond. Column sponsored by Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce Business Development Committee.

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