

commentary

from other pens...

Painting represents calm determination

By Lawrence L. Knutson

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — On an April morning in 1796, a tall, dignified man in a black velvet suit walked into the Philadelphia house of painter Gilbert Stuart and resigned himself to sitting again for a formal portrait. George Washington had been so often set upon by artists that he had come to regard the process as an ordeal to be avoided if at all possible. And while Stuart's ability was highly regarded on both sides of the Atlantic, the president and the long-winded painter had not hit it off. Perhaps to Washington's surprise, Stuart's full-length portrait became an instant sensation, generating demands for more copies than the ambitious painter could easily produce. For many, the self-confident presidential portrait offered assurances about the lasting qualities of democratic institutions and the nature of the presidency itself. "At the time of Washington's presidency the nation was very conscious of its newness, its fragility," said Marc Pachter, director of the National Portrait Gallery, which owns the portrait of Washington. "It needed this representation of strength, stability, resolution and a kind of calm determination; the conviction that one will get where one needs to get as a nation."

Those values continue to be important in a 21st century America jolted by terrorist attacks and in search of sources of strength and determination, Pachter said in a recent interview.

The portrait was commissioned by William Bingham, a Philadelphia merchant and one of the new nation's wealthiest people. His beautiful socialite wife, Anne, used her charm to persuade the president to pose.

Washington may have been swayed by the argument that the portrait was to be a gift to the Marquess of Lansdowne. A former British prime minister, Lansdowne had been sympathetic to the American cause before the revolution and was regarded as a friend of America.

Today, after spending more than two centuries in the hands of a series of British owners, the Lansdowne Washington has been rescued from the auction block by a \$20 million gift from the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation of Nevada.

Pachter believes Americans will grasp the painting's strong and optimistic message despite any shortcomings it might have as a work of art.

"It has a symbolic power that made it a founding icon of our republic," he added. "And I believe it is the most important historical painting in American history."

Stuart portrayed Washington as a civilian and a citizen, not as the soldier he had been.

Washington is shown in his black velvet suit. He gestures with his right hand beyond the edge of the frame toward an unseen audience.

The president stands on an Oriental carpet in what appears to be a Roman colonnade, its sides partly covered in red draperies.

Stuart has surrounded the president with national symbols. The American shield is carved on the back of a gilded chair. American eagles clutch bundles of arrows on the carved legs of a grand table.

Handsomely bound books bear titles summarizing the fledgling republic's history: "American Revolution," "Constitution," "Federalist" and "Laws of the United States."

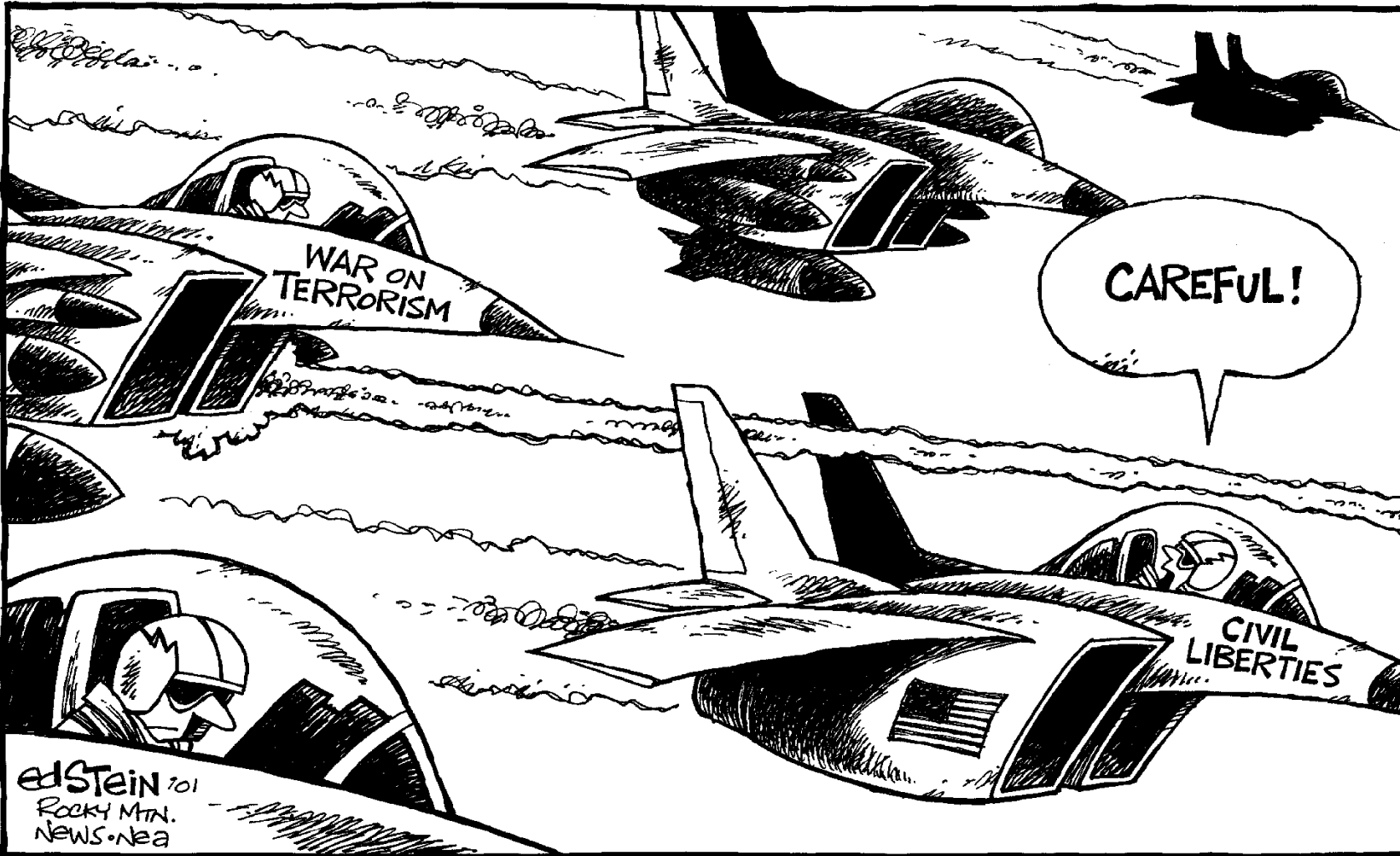
And in a show of optimism, a rainbow throws an arch across the sky. "I don't feel I am exaggerating, this is the one visual document that is important to the establishment of our national life," Pachter said. "It is comparable to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution."

And he believes it is still relevant.

"After September 11," he said, "the whole nation is focused on its strength, its continuity, its essence as a people. I think this painting speaks to all of those and more."

In other words, Gilbert Stuart's rainbow still shimmers over George Washington's shoulder.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Lawrence L. Knutson has covered the White House, Congress and Washington's history for 34 years.



Bailouts are as American as apple pie

It was just the New York City stock market that was closed. The Dow is important but it is just part of the national economy.

The Chicago Board of Trade still traded world currencies. Consumers spending is two-thirds of the economy. If the heartland of America was a nation it would be the fourth largest economy in the world. Still the Dow lost \$100 billion in two days, and that's a lot of kitty litter

Maybe! But puff went 15 million square feet of office space, too. So dial "I love you New York City" and eat those 20 ounce steaks made from Argentine beef.

It's so bad they are afraid to fly to Vegas. Then there might be a baby boom don't you know.

Did you know in 1997 when we had a world wide currency crisis the Dow lost 500 points. But Uncle Alan made Alexander Hamilton out of the New York City hedge funds when he started the printing presses and bailed them out with money from Joe and Jane six pack.

For 25 years the Dow has thrived on bailouts and they call it a flea, ah I mean, free market? Yup, a Willie Sutton lock box, (that's where the money is) in Washington.

American people should work harder too. Congress just gave \$15 billion to 6,000 victims as part of the airline bailout. Now they can afford health care. But that still is better than litigation. You know how New Yorkers are, they would sue till the year 3000.

All of a sudden Alan Greenspan is relevant. He has injected \$80 billion to give the U.S. banks, money to save the Dow. We would not want them to close their doors then he would be Herbert



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Hoover Greenspan. So he would kick the printing presses into overdrive and open the discount window with another 45 billion.

Yeah, but don't forget our friends in Europe they needed \$90 billion to cover their margin calls. Without the bailout it would have closed down the Chicago Board of Trade, and we can't have that. The derivative traders needed the money to make their margin calls on the International Monetary Market.

The cost of this bailout is the granddaddy of them all and came to the total of \$215 billion. And Congress complained when the International Monetary Fund (IMF) wanted a mere \$18 billion to bailout those Muslim nations in Asia.

You know this farm subsidy is costing too much. No doubt about it but it still is a bargain.

The Free-Food-Pentagon (food processors) would be an earned tax credit without it. They slurp at the trough of big government that covers food stamps; Women, Infants and Children (WIC); military procurement; and even the McGovern-Dole free school lunches for the world. So what's next give food to Afghanistan? Yup, you got it.

Say, have we changed our opinion about big government? Well wouldn't go that far. But racial profiling is back so is the report that the terrorists shorted the market of the two hijacked air lines

American and United Airlines.

Trading also rose on certain insurance companies that stood to face massive claims. Then there is Stanley Dean Wittier & Co., the largest tenant in the Twin-Towers Complex, It's stocks took a shellacking, too.

In the case of the American Airlines their trading shorted 1,535 contracts that were worth \$337,700 at the end of trading on Sept. 10 but were worth \$1.6 million a few days later.

It is a mathematical impossibility that all of these U.S. companies should suffer such shorting of their stocks if there was not a connection.

However, the report really got legs when regulators in Germany, Japan and Hong Kong, began to look into the transactions. You know they better look out they might lose some money if they get too nosy. Well don't worry its like a Chinese spy so what if they did.

It's even too late to be patriotic. This attack on the vaunted U.S. military-complex and just as powerful U.S.-nuclear-capitalism may have been slightly less than sex for these religious fanatics who hoped to be with beautiful women. But the horrible thought is that it may have just been some good ole New York City capitalism.

While Joe and Jane Six-Packs are asked to be patriotic and buy into the U.S. stock market the big New York City hedge funds was shorting the market like it was a Chinese factory that had just lost its contract to make American flags.

That's how patriotic they were. Bet hedge fund owners like George Soros and Leon Cooperman laughed all the way to the bank.

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Research Sept. 11 relief efforts before donating

Dear Kansas Consumers:

The tragic events of September 11 have provided many opportunities for the public to give to charitable organizations. The majority of us are unable to personally make visits to the sites, and the monetary needs of those who lost loved ones and those involved at "ground zero" are great. Therefore, Americans feel they can meet a need by contributing.

I have provided some suggestions below on how you can make a wise choice when giving to a charitable organization which claims to be giving assistance to those affected by the New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania attacks. Everyone wants to know that their money is going directly to address the needs, but to find out later that none, or only a small percentage, of the money made it to those who were victimized would be very disappointing. Please take the time to look over these suggestions to help you determine where you might want to give your money.

1. Take time to research an organization. Do not feel you must contribute the very day a solicitor asks for a donation.
2. Carefully check the names of those soliciting aid. Some bogus charities switch around words, add words, or change a spelling in a name in order to sound like a well-known reputable charity.
3. Ask for financial statements. One thing to check is how much money the organization spends on expenses such as salaries, fundraising,



carla j. stovall

• consumer corner

and day-to-day operations. This will give you a good idea as to how much of your donation will go to those you want to help.

4. Ask if the organization is registered with the Kansas Secretary of State's office. This is the minimal qualification for a bona fide fundraiser or bona fide charitable organization which solicits funds. However, even if the organization is registered that does not mean it is approved or endorsed by the state. It merely means the organization has filed the required documents to solicit funds in Kansas.

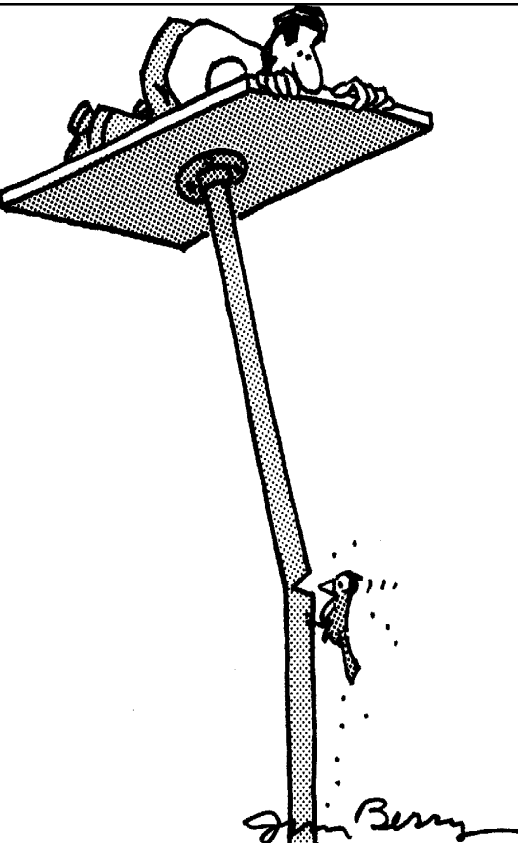
5. Some charities send unsolicited merchandise along with their request for a donation. Common token gifts include return address labels, greeting cards, calendars, or key chains. Under Kansas law, these are deemed unconditional gifts to the recipients and you are under no obligation to pay for or return unordered merchandise.

You may also want to contact your local Better Business Bureau for information on specific charities. Additional information is available for a fee from the Philanthropic Advisory Service at 4200 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 800, Arlington, Virginia

22203-1804. There is also a specific section of the website www.give.org, which is maintained by the Better Business Bureau of New York, devoted to information on charities serving the September 11 victims. While not all of the charities have been reviewed by the BBB, the relief effort of each group is outlined and contact information for each group is given.

Attorney General Carla J. Stovall offers this public service to help you avoid becoming a victim of consumer fraud. Although some of the details have been changed, the cases appearing in this column are based on actual complaints. For further information or to file a complaint, please write Attorney General Carla J. Stovall, Consumer Protection Division, 120 SW 10th, 2nd Floor, Topeka, Kansas 66612, or call the toll-free Consumer Hotline, 1-800-432-2310. Leave your name, number and subject of your inquiry with the receptionist and an agent will return your call promptly.

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