

commentary

from other pens...

Saga of T. Jefferson's statue, and his house

By Lawrence L. Knutson

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — In 1832 an American naval lieutenant sought out the most prominent sculptor in Paris and commissioned an imposing statue of Thomas Jefferson.

Spending his own money and with no official commission, the officer intended the statue to be a gift to Congress and the American people.

Two years later, Uriah Phillips Levy, by then a commander, took his devotion to the author of the Declaration of Independence a step further.

Levy purchased Monticello, the third president's mountaintop home. The Levy family owned the house for nine decades, preserving it for the future and keeping Jefferson's masterful architecture largely untouched.

The story of the statue and the house is told in "Saving Monticello, The Levy Family's Epic Quest to Rescue the House that Jefferson Built," by history writer Marc Leepson.

Levy, who built a fortune in New York City real estate, never fully explained why he bought the house where Jefferson died in 1826, deeply in debt. But religious belief may have played a part.

Writing from Paris in the fall of 1832 he called Jefferson "one of the greatest men in history" and the statue "a small payment for his determined stand on the side of religious liberty."

Born in 1792 in Philadelphia, Levy was a fifth-generation American, the descendent of an accomplished Jewish family that arrived in 1733.

Levy's naval career was stormy. He killed a man in a duel. He was court-martialed six times, but always was returned to duty. He reached the rank of captain by the time of his death in 1862.

In Paris, Levy borrowed a portrait of Jefferson from the Marquis de Lafayette and made it available to sculptor Pierre-Jean David D'Anger.

The bronze statue D'Angers made stands 7 1/2 feet tall. It shows a standing Jefferson holding a quill pen in his right hand and the Declaration of Independence in his left.

Back in the United States, Levy presented the completed statue to Congress after adding an inscription identifying himself as the donor. Some called the proposed gift presumptuous, saying the lieutenant held too humble a rank to be giving statues to governments.

Others objected to a Jefferson statue when no statue of George Washington was yet in the Capitol. Others may have objected on grounds of Levy's religion.

In the end, while many House members opposed the gift, it was accepted on a 69-55 roll call and placed in the Capitol Rotunda.

In 1847, the statue found an admirer in President James Polk, who called himself a Jeffersonian. Polk ordered the statue removed from the Capitol and set up in front of the White House.

Levy's testimony to Jefferson remained through the Civil War and presidents of both parties.

By 1874 more than a quarter-century of summer thunderstorms and winter freezes had taken a toll. Jonas Levy, the commodore's brother, demanded Congress give the statue a safe harbor or return it to the family.

The statue was cleaned up, hauled back to the Capitol and installed in the Rotunda, where it remains.

After much turmoil, including the seizure of the house by the Confederate government during the Civil War, Monticello became the property of the captain's nephew, the appropriately named Jefferson Levy.

In 1923, Monticello was transferred to the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, which continues to make it open to the public.

The story of the Levy family's stewardship is inscribed on a plaque installed at Monticello in 1985 near the grave of Rachel Levy, Uriah Levy's mother. It reads in part:

"At two crucial periods in the history of Monticello, the preservation efforts and stewardship of Uriah P. and Jefferson M. Levy successfully maintained the property for future generations."

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



Jim Crow and fast trick is back

Are you now or have you ever been:

- A cocaine kingpin?
- A money launderer?
- A smuggler?
- A terrorist?
- A farmer?

If you answered Yes, you may lose your constitutional rights.

Out here in the heartland Jim Crow is back.

Only the votes of the guys that voted yes have the right to vote in the last years pork producer checkoff. The way they use producer taxes would make the house banking scandal look like money to a soup kitchen.

All of this has come to the forefront since the new tribal Chiefette at the Department of Agriculture set aside the results of the hog checkoff vote.

Mandatory checkoff money is collected from producers who sell hogs, but it is a government sanctioned taxation without representation. It is supposed to be used to promote farmer's markets but it's used for foreign junkets and a great big slush fund in behalf of another food processor subsidies farm bill. Farmers pay the money but the free-food-pentagon, (IBP, ConAgra, Excel and Smithfield-Murphy hog farm) gets the money.

Now that Chinese agent the Secretary of Agriculture has introduced her own 2002 farm bill.

She says the one that the House of Representatives passed was not good enough. Has the constitution been revoked? When did she become the food czar of the world? So now, Congress can go home and get on the Internet. You know some would be for that but we won't get into that right now.

It's really getting bad when farm subsidies could be justified by the same argument as tax cuts for the rich. Those gypsy moths back east say you don't understand we are not getting our share. But who are they talking about? They live out in their



wayne gattshall

• wayne's world

own little stix in their million dollar estates and fear urban sprawl more than anthrax. They don't produce anything but their own wet land. And they want the Department of Agriculture and Joe six pack to pay for their woods the way they think God would make them.

So when they say the last free-food farm bill gave too much to that bunch of rich guys we know who they are talking about!

When was it a crime for the ones that produce the most grain to get the biggest payments? Isn't it the same thing as those tax cuts for the rich?

Oh, for an activist Secretary of Agriculture like this statue of liberty Alan Greenspan and his Federal Reserve. They think that it would be the end of the capital markets if farmers who produced the grain got the most money. Yes another free-food farm bill isn't capitalism but the American farmer might be better off in some cave in Afghanistan. At least the military-industrial-complex would drop a peanut butter sandwich to them. The food drops to Afghanistan have peanut butter sauce and peas in them. No meat!

Which brings up this twenty first century food processor subsidy by Czar Venerman. It was not enough to call for another free trick—trade bill, it's not enough to increase the spending for eco-terrorists by 80 percent, she thinks another \$9 billion had ought to do it. That may be politically correct but what does a buffalo commons produce? More grasshoppers? Beginning in 1980s the eco-terrorists succeeded

in ham stringing the U.S. oil exploration. Their matra was sun panels and windmills or better yet ride bicycles. Now they want to turn the great farm belt into a buffalo commons without the Indians.

So here we go again. When do we ever learn? The ones that holler the loudest about gas prices say don't drill in my back yard in fact don't drill in the caribou's back yard either.

Does anyone remember when gas got to \$2 a gallon? It was the end of civilization as they knew it. Now some will go to Allah (God) believing it was the price gougers that did it. Then again could it be Saddam?

Well when we import more oil every year don't be surprised if Yassar and Saddam decide to show that bunch of white guys who is boss. Some one had better think about what would happen if we became as dependent on food imports as we are on oil.

Since the introduction of North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) America's food chain has been at risk. Remember the Jack In The Box hamburger contamination?

They called it ecoli but when they find ecoli on such things as cantaloupes and strawberries from Mexico, it makes us wonder if it were not Montazuma's revenge.

Ecoli is normally associated with poor sanitation in meat packing plants, it also comes from the blending of foreign beef with domestic meat, too. While some fear freezing the assets of tax dodgers and terrorists is a violation of their human rights, we are importing one third of our fresh fruit.

It's really bad when Pat Buchanan is right. We might call him isolationist when he says close our borders. But this fast trick import everything is not everyone's money tree. It would be stupid to find ourselves as dependent on food imports as we are on oil.

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Navy jazz band put on wonderful show

The Navy Commodores put on a great show at Max Jones Fieldhouse, and at *The Goodland Daily News*, we were pleased with the turnout and the comments about the program.

It is a pleasure to work with the military bands, and we hope to be able to bring other bands in the future.

Our hats off to the fieldhouse custodian, who helped arrange the building and took care of the handicap lift. He was a great help, and his efforts made the set up of the band go pretty smoothly.

We did learn some things from this program. In the future, the location of the performers may need to be changed so people can use the new elevator. This time, it was impossible to bring people through the band if they used the elevator.

We enjoyed the letter from Deb Heinrich, who said she and her family were coming to the Navy concert because it was her birthday. When we saw her at the concert, she seemed to be enjoying the music. We are glad she had a good birthday.

Congratulations to Judy Daniels and Bill Frank, who won the two special compact disks the Commodores and Navy Recruiter Russell Cundiff gave away during the concert.

Cundiff has his office in Garden City, and handles all of the western part of Kansas. He said he does not get a lot of calls or referrals out of the Goodland area, but I think he was surprised at the number of Navy veterans and families who came



tom betz

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to the concert.

As a Navy veteran myself, it was nice to see all the sailors standing during the playing of "Anchors Aweigh" — the Navy hymn.

I told Cundiff a lot of young people from this area head for the Air Force, but quite a number do consider the Navy. One reason is that the large fields of wheat do appear to have waves in the spring when the winds blow — OK, sometimes it looks more like a storm squall.

Go! Navy!

The American Red Cross seems to be taking it on the chin in the past week as they are being criticized for some of the decisions they are making and because of some erroneous information.

We understand why the Red Cross felt they should divert some of the Liberty Fund money to their general needs, but it was not explained very well and people got upset.

Remember that the Red Cross is spending money every day at the scene of the World Trade Center disaster to help those who continue the job of cleaning up and occasionally find another of the missing. This is part of the overall effort, and it would seem proper that some of the money given to the Liberty Fund could help in the continuing effort to find the missing as well as taking care of the living survivors.

It's possible the issue was not handled properly and people felt their donations were being used in a different manner than they had understood. I think the broad plan of the Liberty Fund would include some of these costs, which are in a manner of speaking assisting the survivors as they cope with the tragic loss.

The bigger problem was a story saying that there is more blood than the Red Cross can use and that a large amount was "destroyed" because it could not be used.

This is simply not true. The blood donations over the past two months have tripled the supply of red blood cells, but new donations from 25,000 people a day are needed to maintain the level of supply.

"Thanks to the donations, the Red Cross has a 10-day red blood supply," said Jimmy Hendricks, director of communications for national agency. "The worst thing that could happen is if people think that we have enough blood and they stop donating."

"No one who has donated blood since Sept. 11 should feel as if their contribution was not needed. All donations that met our safety and quality requirements were used and provided red blood cells, platelets or plasma for patients."

"It is imperative for our nation and the daily treatment of patients that Americans continue to donate blood. This act can, and does, save lives."

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