

# commentary

from other pens...

## Recognition sought for U.S.'s first architect

Preservationists celebrating Benjamin Henry Latrobe, lauded as America's first architect, are finding that the imperious voice of Frank Lloyd Wright insists on joining the conversation.

Wright's name bobbed up repeatedly last week as representatives of nine institutions that guard Latrobe's heritage laid plans to elevate their hero to the heights Wright has long occupied.

To do that they have created a united front called "Latrobe's America," which plans a \$50 million effort to restore Latrobe's surviving buildings and spread the word of his achievements.

One participant noted while Wright, who died in 1959, remains the 20th century's most celebrated American architect, Latrobe is hardly a household name.

Latrobe left his mark on the White House, designed the great interior spaces of the U.S. Capitol and built America's first Roman Catholic cathedral, a Baltimore landmark now considered his masterpiece.

There are parallels between Latrobe, who helped set the architectural style of the young republic, and Wright, who revolutionized American architecture in the first half of the 20th century and despised the classic style Latrobe had championed.

Both were skilled draftsmen and capable engineers who scorned their rivals. Both were frequently short of ready cash, always ready to break the rules of traditional architecture and supremely confident of their talent.

Wright said when he needed ideas he shook them out of his sleeve. Latrobe said: "My designs come of themselves, unasked in multitudes."

Latrobe's partisans are launching an effort to tell his story and preserve his remaining work. Meeting at Decatur House in Washington, which Latrobe built in 1818 for naval hero Stephen Decatur, they lost no time getting started.

"He initiated the American architectural profession," said Patrick Snadon, a University of Cincinnati scholar and author of a forthcoming book on Latrobe's domestic architecture.

"Frank Lloyd Wright was a great designer; Benjamin Henry Latrobe was a great Capital A architect, period," said William Dupont, an architect representing the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

"More will know about him, his gifts, his fiery temperament, the delicacy of his drawings and watercolors, all against the backdrop of a forming nation," said William Seale, a chronicler of White House history.

America and the English-born Latrobe proved an easy match.

Sailing to the United States in 1795, Latrobe caught the eye of America's most ardent amateur architect, President Thomas Jefferson. In 1803, Jefferson installed him as Surveyor of Public Buildings, and put him to work at the White House and Capitol.

Latrobe designed the old chambers of the Senate and Supreme Court and the old hall of the House of Representatives, now Statuary Hall. His most popular creations were his corn cob columns, whose tops were modeled from half-shucked ears of American corn.

Latrobe envisioned the North and South porticoes of the White House. Nearby, he built St. John's Episcopal Church.

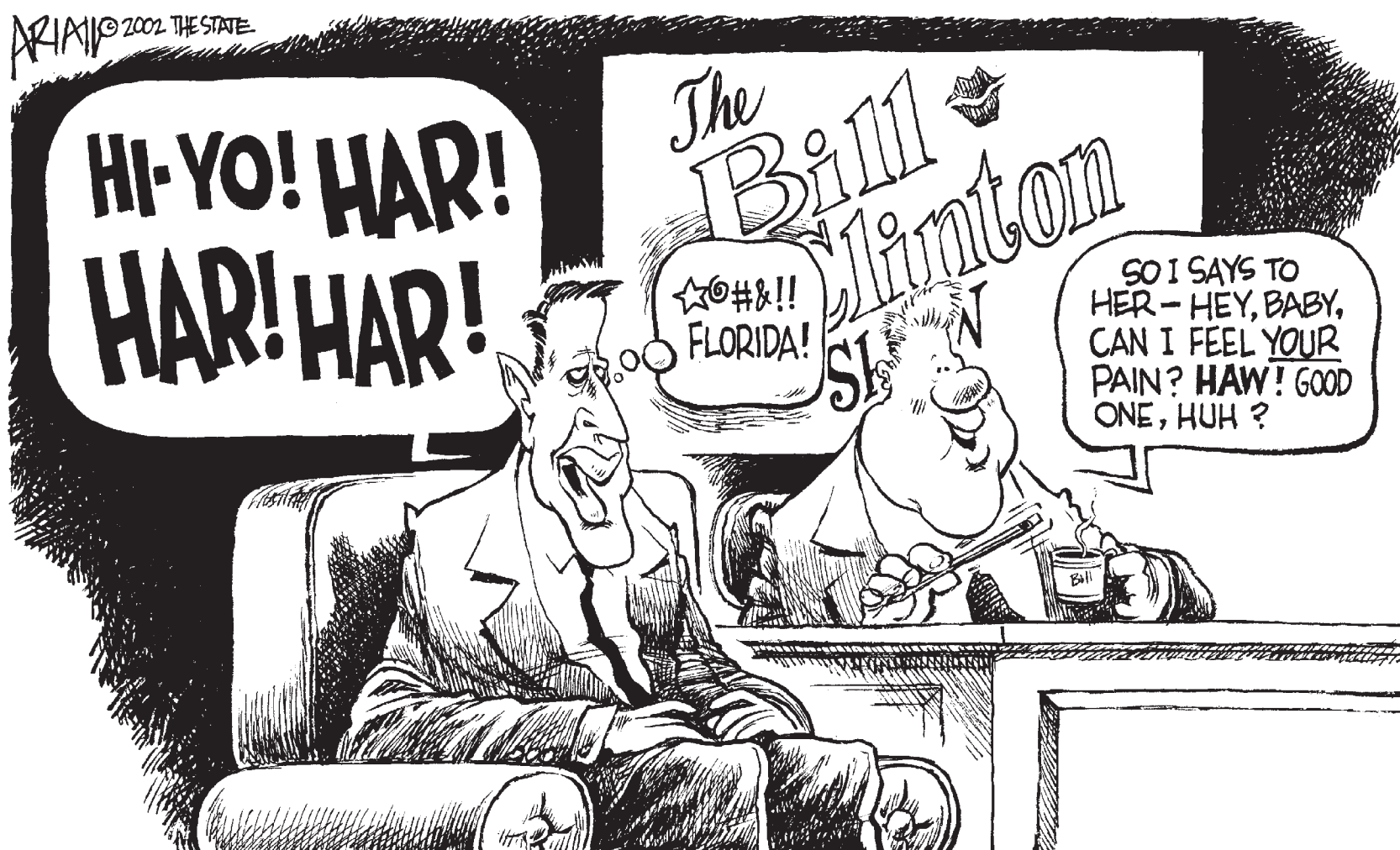
The Decatur House participants agreed Latrobe's masterpiece is his Greek-revival cathedral in Baltimore where efforts are under way to raise \$25 million to restore the dome's 24 skylights and flood the dim interior with light, just as the architect intended.

Decatur House itself is one of just three of 60 Latrobe houses surviving in America; all plan restorations. Latrobe died of yellow fever in New Orleans in 1820 and was buried in an unmarked grave. His influence survived him through his work and the young architects he trained.

Cincinnati's Snadon says a chart of six generations of American architects, beginning with Latrobe and including his apprentices and the architects they trained, leads directly to the Chicago drafting rooms of architect Louis Sullivan.

It was Sullivan who hired Frank Lloyd Wright.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Lawrence L. Knutson has reported on the White House and Washington's history for 34 years for The Associated Press.*



## Democrats had reasons to delay end of session

Democrats had plenty of attitude during the Legislature's long wrapup.

They didn't hide their grumpiness over being blamed by majority Republicans for holding up the end of the session, eventually the longest in Kansas history at 106 days.

House Democrats faced particularly strong criticism when their chamber struggled with passing a package of tax increases to fill a budget hole. GOP leaders said they refused to help govern, were vague about what they wanted and planned to vote against everything.

And the session would have been shorter — perhaps by a few days, perhaps by more — if they had been more accommodating.

But Democrats had reasons for not being more accommodating; some, political; some, personal. They also had a serious disagreement with Republicans about tax policy.

"Was it worth it?" said Senate Minority Leader Anthony Hensley, D-Topeka. "The debate over this was worth the price of democracy."

If the problems facing the Legislature were difficult, they weren't complicated.

By May 1, legislators faced a gap approaching \$800 million between expected revenues and required spending for the state's 2003 fiscal year, which begins July 1. The spending was a combination of both items required by federal and state law and promises made in previous years.

Legislators had to either find more money or spend less, or a combination of both. The problem was large enough that tax increases had to be part of any discussion.

Early in their wrapup, lawmakers approved a \$4.4 billion budget for fiscal 2003 but left it about \$290 million short of balancing.

That budget suggested that legislators, collectively, weren't willing to cut enough spending to avoid tax increases.

Even though Gov. Bill Graves and legislative leaders concluded tax increases were necessary, Democrats provided few of the votes — two of the 22 in the Senate and eight of the 63 in the House



**john hanna**

• ap news analysis

— for the final package, worth \$252 million.

And those few votes came after Republicans added a proposal to double fees corporations pay for doing business in Kansas, decreased the size of a proposed cigarette tax increase and were more generous about providing relief to poor Kansans.

"If they'd been getting any help at all from the Democrats in the House, this would have been over with a lot sooner," said Senate President Dave Kerr, R-Hutchinson.

But Democrats were inclined to let Republicans work out the budget problems on their own.

They viewed the budget problems as the GOP's mess, caused by the financial mismanagement of Graves and the large GOP majorities in both chambers. Republicans noted that many states were suffering and pointed to the slumping economy, especially since Sept. 11.

But Democrats already felt abused by a lengthy legislative redistricting process. Last year, when it started, Republicans suggested that Democrats would fare as well as GOP mercy would allow.

"The message was, 'We don't need the Democrats,'" said Rep. Marti Crow, D-Leavenworth, during one caucus meeting.

Democrats also argued they were left out of budget and tax negotiations, that proposals such as higher income taxes for wealthy Kansans and more legalized gambling were ignored.

"They're not even listening," Rep. Bob Grant, D-Cherokee, complained during one caucus.

Republican leaders insist Democrats wouldn't be pinned down on the specifics for any package. Furthermore, Kerr said, the alternatives Democrats offered would have cost any package more Republican votes than they would have picked up from Democrats.

"I think we could have been out of here substantially earlier if Democrats had joined with us in a true dialogue," said House Speaker Kent Glasscock, R-Manhattan.

Republicans suspected Democrats were trying to help their presumed gubernatorial nominee, Insurance Commissioner Kathleen, by making the GOP seem unable to handle governing. The same chaos could have helped Democratic legislative candidates, too.

Privately, Democratic staffers gave another reason. In years past, they said, Democrats have provided the votes for tax increases, only to see Republican candidates beat up their incumbents, despite a heavy GOP influence on the policy being attacked. Those experiences bred distrust.

Finally, though, tax policy itself was an issue.

Republicans didn't want to increase income taxes, fearing both that it would stymie economic growth and would be political suicide. Democrats insisted that Kansans would accept such increases, if the burden fell on the wealthy.

Democrats did have one early victory — inclusion of an increase in inheritance taxes. But the final package, like others before it, relied heavily on sales and cigarette taxes.

The minority party argued that poor and working class families would bear a disproportionate burden because the cost of consumer goods would rise.

Making the problem worse for Democrats were tax breaks for businesses included in the bill.

"It's totally unfair," said Rep. Bruce Larkin, D-Baileyville, the negotiator for House Democrats on tax issues. "They're protecting their wealthiest country club Republicans."

So, yes, Democrats were the most dedicated obstructionists of legislative session, particularly in the House.

But they had their reasons. It will be up to voters this fall to determine whether those reasons were good enough.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Correspondent John Hanna has covered state government and politics for The Associated Press since 1987.*

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## Technical college will graduate 304 Wednesday

Wednesday is graduation for 304 students at the Northwest Kansas Technical College.

The commencement exercise will follow the tradition set by previous years and be held at 7 p.m. MDT in the Max Jones Fieldhouse. Approximately 2,000 family members and friends are expected to attend.

This year all graduating students will wear caps and gowns for the commencement exercise. This is a change from previous years and it is felt this will make the event more formal and special for the graduates and family members.

Floris Jean Hampton, a Kansas Board of Regents



**kenneth clouse**

• college notes

member will provide the commencement address. Floris Jean's speech is entitled "You're It Today."

Floris Jean is a long time advocate of technical education. Floris Jean is from Dodge City and has served on the Dodge City Community College Board of Trustees. Many of her children have pur-

sued technical careers in health care. She and her husband live on the farm and operate a grain and livestock business.

This year's commencement exercise will feature several students receiving their associate degree. This is the second year for students to complete and receive the degree. Thirty-eight graduates will be awarded the associate degree.

I would like to wish our graduates the best of luck and success in their future.

All have worked very hard to achieve this milestone in their lives and deserve the reward of a productive future.

## Where are Kansas slush funds?

To the Editor:

Maybe you can tell me where all the slush funds of Kansas have gone, and maybe you can tell me where the lottery money has gone, and maybe you can tell me why the water in Goodland is so very bad.

Maybe the rotten water comes from the well over by Collingwood Grain. The last I knew, they still had old liquid nitrogen tanks buried nearby their facility and have never been made to dig them up.

Ruth Nichols  
Kanorado

P.S. I am really sorry, but the education of our kids is the last place to cut in my opinion.

*Editor's note: We checked with both the City of Goodland and Collingwood Grain about the question of underground tanks near a city water well. City Manager Ron Pickman said the city well is north and east of the Collingwood tanks, and there is no evidence of any contamination in that well.*

*"I do not know of any underground tanks in that area," Pickman said. "I think we have very good water."*

*Collingwood Manager Ed Cook said there are no underground tanks at the Goodland facility, and that all the above ground tanks have adequate secondary containment systems.*



from our readers

• to the editor

"We don't have any underground tanks," Cook said. "All of our tanks are above ground and we don't even have a fuel tank at our site. All of the tanks have containment systems that meet the federal safety guidelines."

### Letter Policy

The Goodland Daily News encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, and must include a telephone number and a signature. Unsigned letters will not be published. Form letters will be rejected, as will letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and good taste. We encourage letters, with phone numbers, by e-mail to: [daily@nwkansas.com](mailto:daily@nwkansas.com).

### berry's world

