George Washington Visits George, Washington

National Portrait Gallery Exhibition Tours Country, Opens in Minneapolis

The van itself wasn’t that unusual—an two-door, three-seat white Ford van. It was what was inside that caused all the commotion. People didn’t expect George Washington, in uniform, to come riding through town. Nor would he stop for gas or eat at the local diner. But that’s what he did in the state of Washington, in the month of March 2003, and the locals took note.

Dubbed “The George Tour,” this journey across Washington State was organized by the Seattle Art Museum in conjunction with its visiting exhibition “George Washington: A National Treasure.” The National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, has mounted this exhibition to tour the famous Lansdowne portrait painted by Gilbert Stuart in 1796. The painting has already visited four of eight venues across the country; the tour is made possible through the generosity of the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation of Las Vegas, NV.

George Washington, played by historical reenactor William Sommerfield, left Seattle on a cold, windy, 50-degree morning with four traveling companions: Carol Wyrick, education program director of the Seattle Art Museum, and Jennifer Vary and Erika Litsey, SAM staff. Joining them was Mayor Elliot Kooy and his wife Debbie, who joined them for lunch at Martha’s Inn, where baking secrets were shared.

Climbing up into the mountains, surrounded by snow, George and company arrived at their first destination, the small town of George, population 500, and home of “The World’s Largest Cherry Pie.” George Washington was everywhere—on street signs, road signs, billboards, and even at the Phillips’ 76 station that proudly displayed a bronze bust in its parking lot. Mayor Elliot Kooy and his wife Debbie joined them for lunch at, where else but Martha’s Inn, where baking secrets were shared.

Taking the stage at George Elementary School, Sommerfield as George Washington summoned several children forward. They learned to bow, curtsey, dance the minuet, plow a field, and even fence. Mimi Gates spoke to them about heroes and “she-ros.” And a mock press conference gave the kids a chance to question President Washington: “Do you have wooden teeth? Did you ever live in the White House? Were you hungry after the war? What do you think about our war with Iraq?” And of course, “Are you really George Washington?”

The tour continued on to the Moses Lake Museum and Art Center in Moses Lake and to St. George’s School in Spokane. Everywhere President Washington commanded respect; his six-foot, three-inch frame and 18th-century manners somehow demanded it. Everywhere, heads turned and kids were left wondering. “Was he real?”

The three-day tour came to a close at the Governor’s Mansion in Olympia. And reminiscent of Washington, DC, in the spring, the cherry blossoms were in full bloom for the occasion. Joined by National Portrait Gallery Deputy Director Carolyn Carr and Lansdowne Project Manager Michael Fox, congressmen, and educators, the National Portrait Gallery presented the state of Washington with a reproduction of the Lansdowne portrait. Governor Gary Locke declared March 26, 2003, Washington State Education Day. And for one last time, there beneath the cherry trees, the legacy of George Washington came to life. Then it was off to the airport and back to reality. But we can’t help wondering, “Does George Washington also fly in costume?”

Some Pie!

George, Washington, is the home of the world’s largest cherry pie, which is eight feet square. The pie is baked each July 4 and served to the public by the Georgettes, a local ladies’ club.

CRUST:
159 lbs. flour
72 lbs. shortening
salt to taste
water to right consistency

FILLING:
100 gallons cherries
200 lbs. sugar
75 c. tapioca
2 c. almond extract
1 1/2 c. red food coloring

Recipes provided by The American Bald Eagle. A non-profit organization. A 501c3 organization. Proudly serving the Greater Seattle Area since 1985.

“George Washington: A National Treasure” is organized by the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, and made possible through the generosity of the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation.
Washington Wins Election to House from Fort Cumberland!

FREDERICKSBURG, 1778—George Washington, son of Augustine and Mary Ball Washington, has been elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses while serving with the British regulars at Fort Cumberland. Although urged by friends to return to the colony of Virginia and “show his face,” Washington opted to remain with his men and was successful in winning a seat in the House from Frederick County.

General Washington Rallies Troops at Valley Forge

VALLEY FORGE, 1777–1778—General Washington struggles to keep his troops alive and well in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, this winter. Inadequate shipments of food, clothing, and supplies have left the regiments in shambles; poor hygiene and rampant disease threaten the lives of all the soldiers camped there. General Washington has made repeated appeals for increased supplies, but the mismanagement of the supply trade has yet to be resolved. In the meantime, General Washington struggles alongside his men while political rivals threaten to remove his power. Military and civilian critics, particularly Thomas Conway and Dr. Benjamin Rush, feel that there are several men who are better suited to lead the Continental army.

Martha Washington Buries Fourth Child, John P. Custis

YORKTOWN, 1781—After losing two children in infancy and her daughter Patsy to epilepsy, Martha Washington lost her last child to camp fever. John Parke Custis, known as Jacky to family and friends, passed away on November 3 at Yorktown, merely seventeen days after the surrender of Britain’s General Cornwallis. Jacky leaves behind a wife and four children. General and Mrs. Washington will raise the younger two children, Eleanor “Nelly” Custis and George Washington Parke Custis, at Mount Vernon, their home in Virginia.

Washington Unanimous Pick for President at Convention!

NEW YORK, 1789 (AP)—After many months of debate to establish our new American government, the first official election was held on February 4, 1789. George Washington has received all 69 electoral votes! Washington, who will be inaugurated on April 30 of this year, accepted his new office, despite his overwhelming desire to return to his estate at Mount Vernon: “I was summoned by my country . . . from a retreat which I had chosen with the fondest predilection, and . . . with an immutable decision, as the asylum of my declining years.” Washington and his wife Martha will move to the country’s capital, New York City.

Washington Graciously Delays Retirement for a Second Term

PHILADELPHIA, 1793 (AP)—President George Washington has won his second election to the presidency of the United States! The inauguration will take place on March 4 in Philadelphia, the new capital of the United States. However, the prospect of returning to the stress of presidential life has left Washington doubtful. Washington wrote to his friend Henry Lee “that it was after a long and painful conflict in my own breast, that I was withheld from returning to the walks of public life.” The next four years do in fact promise to be difficult; factionalism has already begun to sprout in government over constitutional interpretation. Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, who was the driving force behind the creation of the National Bank and National Mint, will remain in the service of the President. Edmund Randolph will replace Thomas Jefferson as secretary of state.

Whiskey Rebellion Shakes Pennsylvania

PHILADELPHIA, 1794—Western Pennsylvanians have turned their resentment over recent taxes on whiskey into a violent opposition. They are launching the first major civil disturbance of President Washington’s term in office. Last week, U.S. Marshal David Lenox met with resistance locally distilled liquor. Military action will be taken, much to the regret of the President: “I have accordingly determined to do so, feeling the deepest regret for the occasion, but withal, the most solemn conviction, that the essential interests of the Union demand it.” The army is being organized from other northern states, and it will advance into Pennsylvania shortly.
Valley Forge: An Eyewitness Account

In the winter of 1777, Commander in Chief George Washington moved his army to a winter camp at Valley Forge, some 20 miles outside of Philadelphia. For the next few months, the soldiers suffered from starvation, the lack of adequate clothing, and poor hygiene. Although morale was low, Washington managed to keep the struggling army together. A new quartermaster general, Nathanael Greene, and a German drillmaster, Baron von Steuben, helped bring supplies and order to the broken army. The following diary entry from Dr. Albigence Waldo describes the physical and emotional suffering endured by the troops at Valley Forge:

“December 14—Prisoners & Deserters are continually coming in. The Army which has been surprisingly healthy hitherto, now begins to grow sickly from the continued fatigues they have suffered this Campaign. Yet they still show a spirit of Alacrity & Contentment not to be expected from so young Troops. I am Sick—disconsolate—and out of humour. Poor food—hard lodging—Cold Weather—fatigue—Nasty Clothes—nasty Cookery—Vomit half my time—Smoke’d out of my sense [by the smoke created by the guns]—the Devils in it—I can’t Endure it—Why are we sent here to starve and Freeze—What sweet Felicities have I left at home; Devil’s in it—I can’t Endure it— Why are we sent here to suffer for the people. I am Sick— discontented—and out of humour. Poorハード—if barefoot, he labours thro’ the Mud & Cold with a Song in his mouth extolling War & Washington—if his food be bad, he eats it notwithstanding with seeming content—blesses God for a good Stomach and Whistles it into digestion. But harke Patience, a moment—There comes a Soldier, his bare feet are seen thro’ his worn out Shoes, his legs nearly naked from the tatter’d remains of an only pair of stockings, his Breeches not sufficient to cover his nakedness, his Shirt hanging in Strings, his hair dishevel’d, his face meager; his whole appearance pictures a person forsaken & discouraged. He comes, and cries with and air of wretchedness & despair, I am Sick, my feet lame, my legs sore, my body cover’d with this tormenting Itch—my Clothes are worn out, my Constitution is broken, my former Activity is exhausted and all the reward I shall get will be—‘Poor Will is dead.’ People who live at home in Luxury and Ease, quietly possessing their habitations, Enjoying their Wives & families in peace, have but a very faint idea of the unpleasing sensations, and continual Anxiety that Man endures who is in a Camp, and is the husband and parent of an agreeable family. These same People are willing we should suffer every thing for their Benefit & advantage, and yet are the first to Condemn us for not doing more!”

December 1790

PRESIDENTIAL RESIDENCE, 190 HIGH STREET, PHILADELPHIA. Senator Robert Morris’s dwelling at 190 High Street has turned out to be the best house available for the President’s use, and Mr. Morris has graciously agreed to move around the corner. Additions will be made to accommodate Mrs. Washington and her two grandchildren, Nelly, who is about twelve, and George Washington, who is about ten, as well as the President’s secretary and numerous servants. The bathing room has been turned into a study to provide for a room in which the President can do business, but unfortunately, it will be necessary for visitors to walk up two flights of stairs and pass by the public rooms and private chambers to get to it. The President has insisted that the house is to be finished in a plain and neat manner and has ruled out tapestry or very rich and costly wallpaper. He has also ruled that the back yard be kept as clean as the parlor since it is in full view from the best rooms in the house.

Throughout the coming months The Patriot Papers will address the issue of slavery during Washington’s time. In view of Washington’s many attributes and accomplishments, it is difficult to acknowledge his role as slave owner. Guest historians will share their perspectives; we invite you to share yours. Hopefully, through dialogue, we will increase our understanding.

—F.A. Pulles, editor

PatriotPapers@npg.si.edu

November 1796

RUNAWAY SLAVE. Mrs. Washington is greatly distressed by the loss of Olney Judge, her Mount Vernon servant so skilled in needlework. The girl, we hear, was lured away by a Frenchman who tired of her and left her stranded in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. President Washington has sent word that all will be forgiven if she returns to her mistress, but she has refused to come back unless promised her freedom. This puts the President in an awkward situation. Privately he has said that although he is sympathetic to her demand, setting her free would only reward her for running away, and would spread discontent among the rest of his servants (as he calls them), who by being faithful are more deserving of their freedom than the runaway. Above all, the President cautioned that no violent means should be used to bring her back, lest a mob or riot be excited. Rather than risk this happening, he would tell Mrs. Washington she must get along without the services of Olney Judge.

December 1790

FREEDOM TOO GREAT A TEMPTATION. President Washington has brought a handful of servants from Mount Vernon, but he will be faced with the difficulty of complying with the Pennsylvania law freeing adult slaves who have lived in Pennsylvania for six months in a row. It is believed that the President, therefore, will have to shuttle these servants back and forth and suffer the inconvenience of sometimes being without his cook Hercules. Asked if he feared his slaves might take advantage of being in the north to run away, the President has privately conceded that “the idea of freedom might be too great a temptation for them to resist.”

RUN AWAY FROM MY PLANTATION, called Newport News, on the 17th of January, a very likely Negro Fellow named Strawbury, about thirty Years of Age, has lost one of his fore Teeth, and had on a Cotton Waistcoat and Breeches, Plaid Stockings, and Negro Shoes. The Negroses upon the Plantation saw him go away with two Sailors; he can read, and I imagine he will attempt to go out of the Country on Board a Vessel. I do hereby forewarn all Masters of Vessels from carrying him away, as they shall answer it at their Peril. Whoever brings the said Negro to me, in York County, shall have TEN POUNDS Reward if he is taken in this Colony, and TWENTY POUNDS if out thereof.

WILLIAM DIGGES, Junior
April 23, 1789

HE COMES! HE COMES! George Washington, President-elect of the United States, has just set foot on the New York shore after an eight-day triumphal journey from Mount Vernon. The excitement here is unbelievable. Thousands line the streets—all you can see are heads standing as thick as ears of corn before the harvest. Ladies are crowded in every window, anxious for a glimpse of the illustrious man. "I have seen him!" we heard one young lady call out, "and though I had been entirely ignorant that he was arrived in the city, I should have known at a glance that it was General Washington. I never saw a human being that looked so great and noble as he does. I could fall down on my knees before him." Washington, it can well be believed, is more popular than the new government he is to head.

May 30, 1789

THE PRESIDENT’S LADY. Mrs. Washington, who needed some time to prepare for her journey, has now arrived in New York. The President’s lady will give no interviews to the press, but this correspondent has talked to many of her friends and acquaintances. Mrs. Adams, the Vice President’s lady, who first met Mrs. Washington when she came to be with the general in Cambridge at the beginning of the war, told The Patriot Papers that Mrs. Washington is a lady of patience and prudence. "Her manners are modest and unassuming, dignified and feminine, not the Tincture of haintness about her." Others tell us that Mrs. President Washington [no one thought to call her the first lady] is very friendly and likes to talk, but never about politics. "I little thought that when the war was finished that anything would call the General into public life again," she had told friends. "Yet I cannot blame him for having acted according to his ideas of duty in obeying the voice of his country."

July 9, 1790

WHERE IS THE CAPITAL TO BE? Ever since the old Congress left Philadelphia in 1783, arguments have raged over where the permanent seat of government should be built. At last, the residence is decided. The government is to leave New York and spend the next ten years in Philadelphia. The permanent capital will be a new city created on the banks of the Potomac River, the exact location to be chosen by President Washington. Some folks speculate that it will not be far from Mount Vernon. New Yorkers, after they have gone to so much trouble and expense to accommodate the government, feel betrayed, and one angry letter to the editor speaks of the President as the country’s “former favorite guardin and deliverer.”

February 1792

POLITICAL PARTIES. There’s not a word about political parties in the Constitution, but they are here and a passion. Federalists, who are friends of the government, and the Republicans, who find much to criticize, are at it tooth and nail. Most folks say the parties started over the differences between Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton and Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson. Hamilton, the friend of business and manufacturers, has pushed for a strong federal government; Jefferson, who wants to see America stay a land of farmers, is deeply suspicious of money and banks. But what has really stirred things up is the war between France and England, with the Republicans being passionately on the side of France, which has beheaded its king and become a republic, and the Federalists seeing the old mother country as an important trading partner. The President, who wants to keep both Hamilton and Jefferson in his cabinet and to steer a neutral course between France and England, is beset by difficulties.

August 2, 1793

THE PRESIDENT ENRAGED. Sources tell us that the President lost his usually well-controlled temper at a recent meeting of his cabinet. Shown a satiric piece describing his head being chopped off by the guillotine, printed in Republican editor Philip Freneau’s newspaper, the President went suddenly into a towering rage, spoke bitterly of the newspaper abuse to which he had been subjected in past months, and defied any critic to indicate one selfish act committed by him in office. He said he would rather be a farmer than emperor of the world, and yet that “rascal Freneau” insinuated that he would like to be a king. To add insult to injury, Freneau sent three copies of every issue to the President’s dwelling.

April 1796

GEORGE WASHINGTON LAFAYETTE. The fourteen-year-old son of the Marquis de Lafayette arrived in Philadelphia on the 11th of this month. His father, who had tried to save the King and Queen of France from losing their heads, remains in prison, and the lad has been sent to America to be under the protection of President Washington. “I will be his friend,” the President declared and has taken him into his household, even though he worries that the revolutionary government of France might take offense. He has instructed young Lafayette to study hard to be worthy of his father. Washington has a special place in his heart for the Marquis de Lafayette, who came from France to fight in the American Revolution when he was nineteen years old.
Washington’s Final Hours
PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS FROM TOBIAS LEAR

George Washington, beloved general and first President of the United States, has died at his home at Mount Vernon at the age of 67. His illness was short: after riding out in bad weather on Thursday, December 12, General Washington was taken with a fever and respiratory problems. Although doctors made numerous attempts to save his life, Washington passed on with the dignity and courage he had displayed throughout his many years of military and civic service.

Washington’s close friend and personal secretary, Tobias Lear, was with the general throughout his illness. Recounted here are Lear’s recollections of these final hours:

“I found the General breathing with difficulty, and hardly able to utter a word. . . . A mixture of Molasoes, Vinegar, and butter was prepared to try its effects in the throat; but he could not swallow a drop. Whenever he attempted it, he appeared distressed . . . and almost suffocated. Rawlins came in soon after sunrise, and prepared to bleed him. When the arm was ready the General, observing that Rawlins appeared to be agitated, said, as well as he could speak, ‘Don’t be afraid.’

Dr. Craik came in soon after and, upon examining the General, he put a blister of Cantharides* on the throat, took some more blood from him, and had a gargle of Vinegar and sage tea, and ordered some Vinegar and hot water for him to inhale the steam, which he did; but in attempting to use the gargle, he was almost suffocated.

Upon Dr. Dick’s seeing the General . . . he was bled again; the blood came very slow, was thick, and did not produce any symptoms of fainting. About half past four o’clock, he desired me to call Mrs. Washington to his bedside, when he requested her to go down into his room, and take from his desk two Wills . . . and bring them to him, which she did. Upon looking at them, he gave her one, which he observed was useless . . . and desired her to burn it.

He said to me, ‘I find I am going, my breath cannot last long. I believed from the first that the disorder would prove fatal.’ . . .

About ten minutes before he expired, . . . his breathing became easier; he lay quietly; he withdrew his hand from mine and felt his own pulse. I saw his countenance change . . . The General’s hand fell from his wrist—I took it in mine and put it into my bosom. Dr. Craik put his hand over his eyes and he expired without a struggle or a sigh!

During his whole illness he spoke but seldom, and with great difficulty; and in so low and broken a voice as at times hardly to be understood. His patience, fortitude, and resignation never forsook him for a moment. In all his distress, he uttered not a sigh, nor a complaint; always endeavoring to take what was offered him, and to do as he was desired by the Physicians.”

*blister of Cantharides: cantharides (kan thar_ë dez) n. pl. [ME cantarides<FL cantharides, pl. of cantharis, kind of beetle, Spanish fly, Gr kantharis, blister beetle] dangerous, sometimes fatal, preparation of powdered, dried Spanish flies, formerly used internally as a diuretic and aphrodisiac and externally as a skin irritant.

Did George Washington Stand a Chance?
Colonial Practice of Bloodletting Helped Cause Washington’s Death
—by Vicki Fama, assistant editor

Today, it is easy to criticize the medical methods performed in colonial times. When we read that George Washington died of a simple bacterial infection, we wonder why measures we now consider primitive, such as bloodletting, were even employed in the fight to save the first President’s life. Medical training was primitive as well: although some American doctors were fortunate enough to study in England or Scotland, others were less fortunate. American medical schools did not yet exist; thus, many doctors were self-trained. In view of our present medical understanding, did George Washington even stand a chance of being saved?

Colonial medicine was based on European medical methods and theories; no one then understood how diseases or infection spread. One of the main theories focused on the need for a total balance of tension and fluids in the body; this delicate balance was essential to both physical and mental health. This concept played an important role in Washington’s death.

On the morning of December 14, 1799, George Washington, who had felt ill for several days, sent for a plantation worker who could bleed him. Bloodletting was a common practice: by releasing blood from the body of a sick person, doctors believed they could alleviate excessive pressure and tension and return the body to a healthy balance.

Washington’s doctors may have thought that bloodletting would thus extract the constricting fluids around his throat. However, within two hours, Washington was bled several times, losing an estimated five pints of blood—approximately one-third of the blood in his body! This was certainly a factor in his death.

The doctors also tried other methods of withdrawing fluids. Washington was given an emetic, which induced vomiting. Again, this practice would have dehydrated him and lessened his chance of recovery.

Washington was also subjected to the intake of fluids. Doctors tried to administer mixtures of molasses, vinegar, and butter, hoping to heal his throat from the inside. They also used a gargle of vinegar and sage tea for the same purpose. But because of the severe swelling of Washington’s throat, both attempts were unsuccessful and even threatened to choke the sick General.

The most dramatic medical treatment, proposed by Dr. Elisha Dick, was a tracheotomy (the creation of an air hole in the throat to allow for easier breathing). While the other physicians treating Washington rejected the idea, some scientists today believe that a tracheotomy could have been beneficial. Nonetheless, the lack of sterile equipment and anesthesia might have easily caused a deadly infection or put Washington’s body in shock, an equally threatening possibility.

The doctors who cared for the dying George Washington did all that they thought medically possible. While it is tempting to judge their methods with the benefit of hindsight, we should appreciate the context and limitations of the colonial era. George Washington died the way he lived, with courage and a belief in a greater force beyond mankind.

A modern analysis by White McKenzie Wallenborn, M.D., concludes that Washington died from acute epiglottitis, which is a bacterial inflammation of the epiglottis, a flap at the root of the tongue that prevents food from entering the windpipe. However, some doctors today believe that the excessive loss of blood alone would have weakened Washington enough to kill him.
In Other Words...
Mistress Goody’s Column of Advice on subjects other than politics and war.

Respectfully based on The Rules of Civility
—BY MARLA MAIDEN

In 1745, in the colonial frontier town of Fredericksburg, Virginia, thirteen-year-old George Washington recorded The Rules of Civility in his workbook, probably as a dictation exercise. These “guidelines for the respectable gentleman” would influence him throughout life, guiding him in both social and professional situations. Translations and variations abound, but all stress etiquette, chivalry, and courtesy, often rather elusive concepts in the 21st century.

Fortunately, there is one who understands the rules well; in fact, she still recommends their use today. Let us recall a character from the past to assist with our everyday problems. We give you the “Toast of George Town” our own Mistress Goody, always informed, always respectable, and very, very good.

Mistress Goody,
We have assigned seats in my second period geometry class. I am alphabetically challenged in being seated beside the “class clown.” He makes so much noise that I can’t concentrate. This class is already difficult for me, but I don’t want to be a tattle-tale. What should I do?

It is highly inconsiderate for your clownish classmate to encroach on your time to angle with angles. Tactfully remind him that his behavior is inappropriate.

Rule 4: In the presence of others, sing not to yourself with a humming noise; nor drum with your fingers or feet.

Mistress Goody,
My best friend Valerie takes so much time doing her hair and deciding on her clothes that we are late for everything. We never see all of a movie or make it to a party on time. How can I ask her to speed it up?

Do impress on vain Valerie that beauty fades, while some friendships can last forever:

Rule 54: Play not the peacock, looking everywhere about you to see if you be well decked, if your shoes fit well, if your stockings sit neatly, and your clothes appear handsomely.

Mistress Goody,
I have been dating my girlfriend for six months, and I believe I am falling in love with her. Lately, I have heard rumors that she had a “bad reputation” at her former school. Should I believe my girlfriend or these rumors?

Sir, if you call this gnawing mistrust “love,” you are sadly mistaken.

Rule 50: Be not hasty to believe flying reports to the disparity of any.
Philadelphia, January 1791

MRS. WASHINGTON’S DRAWING ROOM. On Friday evening at eight, your humble correspondent was among the ladies and gentlemen in attendance at Mrs. Washington’s weekly reception. Mrs. Washington, plainly dressed, but in a gown of rich silk, sat on a sofa by the fireplace and arose to greet her guests with a courtesy which each lady returned. Each gentleman bowed low. Coffee, tea, and cake were served, and had I come in the summer, I would have been offered lemonade and ice cream. The ladies swish about, and as candlelight is a great improver of beauty, they appear to great advantage. President Washington circulating among the crowd, chatting agreeably with all the ladies. It is said that he keeps count of the numbers who come to pay their respects to Mrs. Washington and was pleased to find the room so crowded.

Philadelphia, July 13, 1793

RICKETT’S AMPHITHEATRE. Word that the President and his family were to attend a performance of Mr. John Bill Rickett’s dangerous feats on horseback brought a large crowd this evening to what is called the Circus. The acrobatic performance was held to raise money to buy firewood for the poor during the coming winter. Mr. Ricketts, demonstrating his agility by drinking a glass of wine while on horseback, raised his glass to the health of “The Man of the People.” This produced an immediate clap of applause and a loud hurrah from every part of the Circus. Mr. Ricketts has expressed his agreement with those who call General Washington the finest horseman of the age, saying “I delight to see the general ride, and make it a point to fall in with him when I hear that he is abroad on horseback; his seat is so firm, his management so easy and graceful, that I who am a professor of horsemanship, would go to him and learn to ride.”

Philadelphia, September 1796

PEALE’S MUSEUM. A visit to Mr. Peale’s museum, Prudence Pudding tells us, is well worth the admission fee of one fourth of a dollar, if only to see the huge American buffalo. Peale’s rooms are filled with monsters of the earth and sea, a rich array of birds, and a great collection of the bones, jaws, and teeth of tigers, sharks, and many other fearful animals. In one room are rattle, black, and spotted snakes, confined in cases enclosed with wire and glass. She was astonished to see Mr. Peale take out a black snake about four or five feet long, which he permitted to touch his cheek and twine itself around his neck. In the yard and stable were eagles, owls, baboons, monkeys, and a six-footed cow. Mr. Peale is also a painter, and there can be seen in his museum more than a hundred portraits of the more noteworthy personages of our country, including our illustrious Washington.

June 1791

THE PRESIDENT ON TOUR. When he entered upon the duties of his office, George Washington decided he would visit all parts of the United States to please the citizens and to see how they felt about the new government. Silas Silvertongue, who is with the President’s party, reports that they are nearing the end of their two-month journey of 1,887 miles. Everywhere there has been a remarkable outpouring of affection for the President, Silvertongue informs. Towns have been in a bustle of preparation, and at every stop the citizens have come out to meet him with addresses of welcome. Ladies, some rouged up to the ears, have bedecked themselves with sashes and headbands painted with images of the President and patriotic slogans. The festivities include the ringing of bells, bands of music, cannon salutes, and some very bad poetry. (See poetry box, upper right.)

Philadelphia, February 1797

NEW THEATER ON CHESTNUT STREET. We are informed that the President of the United States intends visiting the theater this evening and has sent his carriage to bring the Vice President and his family to join him. The play to be performed is Columbus, or, A World Divorced, and it will display scenery, machinery, and decorations, the likes of which have never been seen before. A representation of a storm, an earthquake, a volcano eruption, as well as a procession of Indians, await all who enter. Columbus will be followed by a farce called A Wife at Her Wit’s End.

POET’S CORNER... SOME VERY BAD POETRY

REVOLUTIONARY MOMENTS

Colonists took action and dumped the tea
They stood strong and would not flee
Some fought at Lexington, some at Concord*
This threat to the British could not be ignored.

*Bostonians pronounce Concord – [kahn • kad].

You’re right, that’s hard to rhyme!

Will the Real George W. Please Stand Up?

Actor William Sommerfield brings George Washington to your community for a three-day trip back in time.

Hailed by historians and politicians as the definitive dramatic portrayal of George Washington, William Arthur Sommerfield fascinates audiences with the insights, warmth, and humor of our first President. Sommerfield strips away the marble image of the ideal man and replaces it with a portrayal of George Washington, the intensely human being—a man of humor, anger, sorrow, failure, sacrifice, and love.

Check local venues for details.
**Gardening and English: Side by Side**

When English as a Second Language (ESL) students planted flowers in front of College Place Middle School in Lynnwood, Washington, few expected that the volunteer project would become part of the curriculum. The kids had paid for the flowers themselves. But when they asked to plant a second garden, teacher Merilee Bengtsson asked the Parent Club for funds and extended the project into a lesson plan. Soon students and parents planted side by side. Now the effort has expanded to include Master Gardeners and a unit of lessons for science, mapping, and math, as well as English. Bengtsson and the Master Gardeners hope the lessons teach the kids to make gardens both beautiful and environmentally sound.

One young African boy, who began the year speaking only a few words of English, has improved his English along with his gardening skills. “When I plant the flower, I feel great [but] I was so surprised to put the gloves on my hands.” He had planted flowers before, but never with gloves.

“This project has become a focus of community spirit and school pride,” said Bengtsson, “especially for students who sometimes have difficulty fitting into mainstream school activities.”

**FREEDOM—Captured on Film**

**12-Year-Old Thy Vu Wins Contest**

Challenged to illustrate how “Independent Courts Protect Our Liberties,” contestants in the 2003 Images of Freedom Student Photography Contest ranged from middle school through high school. Yet it was a 12-year-old who captured first prize. Thy Vu’s portrayal, _A Pure Court Thinking about Freedom_, made her the youngest student to ever win the contest. Jim Landman, associate director of the American Bar Association’s Division of Public Education and organizer of the contest, remarked that the theme for this year was particularly difficult, making Vu’s accomplishment even more impressive.

In April, Vu traveled to Washington, DC, to receive her award and tour the Capitol. Thy Vu began drawing cartoons at a young age to distract herself from the bullying that took place at her school in Vietnam. Now a seventh-grader at College Place Middle School in Lynnwood, Washington, Vu draws from real life to express her observations, hopes, and dreams. Although she still enjoys drawing, she no longer uses it as an escape.

“Vu credits her mother, also an artist, for encouraging her interest and teaching her about the use of light and nature in her work.”

It was this exceptional use of light and nature that Vu’s portrayal captivated the panel of judges noted in Vu’s winning entry. The photograph captures her classmates Mary Yilma set against a background of flag and foliage in blinding white, holding a gavel and a replica of the torch from the Statue of Liberty. “The girl in white represents purity,” explained Vu, “because judges should make pure decisions [and] follow only the law, so we will have freedom. No one has the right to influence them.” This picture illustrates the need for judges to make decisions based on the law, not on personal convictions or politics.

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**Pledge It Forward—Self to Service**

A Challenge from The Patriot Papers

—F. A. Pulles, Editor-in-chief

The Portrait Gallery’s Office of Education would like to recognize those who continue to care about community. We challenge you to _Pledge It Forward_—pledge time to your schools, youth organizations, senior centers. We’ll feature your stories and photos on our website at [www.georgewashington.si.edu](http://www.georgewashington.si.edu). Projects of particular merit will be published in _The Patriot Papers_. Get creative; get busy. And together, we can build a community of caring. Write to us at [PatriotPapers@npg.si.edu](mailto:PatriotPapers@npg.si.edu).