George Celebrates Birthday in the Hollywood Hills
Smithsonian Exhibition Opens in Seattle in March

Driving through the sunlit streets of Los Angeles, I saw him, suspended from a lamppost on Fairfax Avenue, just off Wilshire Boulevard. As I caught a glimpse of the Hollywood Hills, there he was again, shrouded by the morning mist. George Washington had come to LA to celebrate his birthday, and hundreds were flocking to see him. The event: “George Washington: A National Treasure,” an exhibition from the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery. The place: LACMA—The Los Angeles County Museum of Art.


Painted in 1796 by artist Gilbert Stuart, the portrait is considered one of the most important visual documents of the founding of our nation. Its historical and cultural significance has been compared to that of the Liberty Bell and the Declaration of Independence. At the tour’s end, the portrait will return to its permanent home in the Portrait Gallery.

I thought it was going to be small,” said Patricia Vargas, visiting with her mom, Lupe. “But it was huge!” The 8-foot life-size painting does dwarf many of its younger visitors. Museum docents lead daily school tours as hundreds of children stare wide-eyed at all 6’3” of Stuart’s George Washington. “Do you think he was a good man?” “Of course,” answered ten-year-old Gabe Vargas, visiting with her mom, Lupe. “But it was huge!”

The iconography—the rainbow, the flag, the inkwell, the sword—was another favorite topic of discussion. “And what do you think that scroll is, rolled up on the desk?” “I think it’s the Declaration of Independence,” volunteered Gabe. But his sister Linda had a more inventive idea. “Maybe those are George Washington’s bills.” Good answer. You might be right, Linda. After all, it costs a lot to start a country, right Gabe?

Tennessee Catches the Spirit and Declares GW Education Day

Tennessee caught the spirit and declared December 17, 2002, George Washington Education Day throughout the state. West Elementary School in Mount Juliet hosted the event where educators from the Smithsonian presented the state of Tennessee with a framed reproduction of the original “Lansdowne” portrait of George Washington. The day was celebrated with tricorn hats, wooden teeth. (Actually his teeth were made from ivory) and sold their wares at a mock market square. Watch for how kids around LA are studying history through ser…

Get on the Bus, Gus ...

LA Schools Support Local Communities. What’s Your Plan?

The kids from Malibu jumped on board. Lorraine Staab and her kindergartners from Webster Elementary School in Malibu led the way on a school initiative that supports the School on Wheels. The kids collect backpacks, lunch pails, pencils, crayons, and other assorted school supplies to equip this traveling school bus that tutors homeless kids in Santa Monica. Read on to see how kids around LA are studying history through service, benefiting both school and community.

★ Virginia Goodrich from Monterey Hills Elementary School in South Pasadena and her 5th-grade class chose to support the Rare Breeds program at Colonial Williamsburg. Using the culinary arts to raise money, they chose a recipe from the historic Raleigh Tavern, baked gingerbread cookies in the shape of rare breeds, and sold their wares at a mock market square. Watch for the recipe in the next issue.
Washington Wins Election to House from Fort Cumberland!

FREDERICKSBURG, 1758—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. His friends urged him to return to Virginia and “show his face,” fearing that he would lose the election. But he chose to stay with his men, and was still successful in winning a seat in the House.

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 serious disease threaten the lives of all the soldiers camped there. General Washington has appealed for more supplies, but has not been successful. In the meantime, General Washington struggles alongside his men, while his political enemies threaten to remove his power. Some critics feel that others 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 5 at Yorktown. This happened just 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 months of debate to establish our new American government, the first official election was held on February 4, 1789. George Washington received all 69 electoral votes! Washington, who will be inaugurated on April 30 of this year, accepted the presidency, even though he wished to return to his estate at Mount Vernon and retire. “I was summoned by my country,” said Washington. He and his wife Martha will soon 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, Washington is doubtful about being the President again. He wrote to his friend Henry Lee “that it was after a long and painful conflict in my own breast, that I was withheld from requesting, in time, that no votes might be thrown away upon me; it being my fixed determination to return to the walks of private life.” The next four years could be difficult; there are debates over the interpretation of the Constitution. Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, who helped create the National Bank and the National Mint, will continue to work with the President. Edmund Randolph will replace Thomas Jefferson as secretary of state.

Whiskey Rebellion Shakes Pennsylvania

PHILADELPHIA, 1794—Western Pennsylvanians have started a violent opposition to government taxes. They are launching the first major civil disturbance of President Washington’s term in office. Last week, U.S. Marshal David Lenox was trying to collect taxes on locally distilled liquor in Westmoreland County. 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 they will advance into Pennsylvania shortly.

On Tuesday next, being the 14th Instant, A new COMEDY, called

FALSE DELICACY

By the author of A WORD TO THE WISE

(It may not be improper to give Notice that the Theatre in Williamsburg will be closed at the End of the April Court, the American Company’s Engagements calling them to the Northward, from whence, it is probable, they will not return for several years.)

The Glorious Washington and Gates, detail from Bicknells Boston Almanack, 1778

THE PATRIOT PAPERS

The Patriot Papers serves students of all ages. It is published quarterly by the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, P.O. Box 32902, Washington, D.C. 20035-7012

By the author of A WORD TO THE WISE

Editor-in-chief: Felice A. Pulls
Assistant Editor: Vicki Fama, Hana Field
Review Editor: Dee Dowdy
Editorial Consultants: Kate Finn, Sheree Lampkin
The pudding papers: Margaret Christian

The opinion expressed in The Patriot Papers are not necessarily those of the Smithsonian Institution or the National Portrait Gallery.

Teaching materials to accompany the exhibition “George Washington: A National Treasure” are available to educators at no cost by visiting www.george washington.si.edu or by calling 1-866-NPG-KITS.

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Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery
November 1796

RUN AWAY 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.”

- George Washington was only 11 years old when he inherited 10 slaves from his father in 1743.
- By the time he was 22 years old, George owned approximately 36 slaves.
- At his death in 1799, Washington had 316 slaves at Mount Vernon, 123 of whom belonged directly to him. The remaining 193 were “dower” slaves—the ones he acquired through his marriage to Martha.
- Approximately 75 percent of the slaves at Mount Vernon worked in the fields. Of these, nearly 65 percent were women.
- Washington did not buy or sell his slaves after the Revolutionary War.
- Washington allowed his slaves to marry, although such arrangements were not legally binding at that time.
- In his will, Washington freed all of the slaves he owned. His personal valet, William Lee, was released by payment of $30 per year for the rest of his life, a considerable sum in those days.

Did You Know...?

- Washington came from a blended family, having two older stepbrothers and one stepsister; he was the eldest of the children by his father’s second wife.
- He was actually born February 11, not February 22.
- England changed its calendar when he was a boy, causing his birthdate to become February 22.
- His father died when he was 11 years old.
- He often had a bad temper but slowly learned to control it.
- He loved horseback riding, dancing, and farming.
- He was not always a good student.
- He did not always get along very well with his mother, who was bossy and controlling.
- His older half-brother Lawrence was one of the most important people in young George’s life.
- He had two stepchildren, but no children of his own.

Possessions

Today, most of us own many more things than we really need to live on. When Washington was 11 years old, his family made an inventory (or list) of their possessions. Here is what they owned, besides their land:

- 16 pairs of sheets
- 17 pillowcases
- 13 beds
- A couch
- Desks
- Chairs
- A fireplace set
- Tablecloths
- Napkins
- A looking glass (mirror)
- One silver-plated soup spoon
- 20 slaves
- A sword
- 11 china plates
- 7 teaspoons
- A watch
- A bowl
- 18 small spoons
- A fork

How many of these same items are owned by your family today? Are you surprised to see “slaves” listed as part of the inventory of possessions? If you were to make an inventory of every item in your home, how long do you think the list would be? How many items would be unfamiliar to George Washington?
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 never have known at a glance that it was General Washington: I must fall down on my knees before him."

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 Pudding Papers that Mrs. Washington is a lady of patience and prudence. "Her manners are modest and unassuming, dignified and feminine, not the Tincture of fashion about her."

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 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 guardian and deliverer."

February 1792
POLITICAL PARTIES. Not a word about political parties in the Constitution, but they are here and with 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.
George Washington Dies at 67

After riding outside during very bad weather last Thursday and Friday, George Washington became ill on Saturday, December 14. An infection known as epiglottitis gave him a sore throat, fever, and difficulty breathing.

Doctors tried a practice called bloodletting: they made small cuts on his arm to take out blood. They hoped to relieve the pressure in his throat so he would be able to breathe better. Unfortunately, bloodletting did not help. Doctors also gave him many different fluids to gargle or swallow, including a mixture of vinegar, molasses, and butter. None of these cures helped the former President breathe easier.

His friend Tobias Lear wrote that Washington grew calm late in the evening, checked his own pulse, and then died peacefully in his bed. His wife Martha was with him, as well as several servants, doctors, and friends.

An elaborate funeral is planned for Wednesday, December 18, including gun salutes and a procession.

Would you sign a loyalty oath?

During the Revolutionary War, the British would have required you to sign an oath similar to this:

“I voluntarily take this OATH to bear Faith and true Allegiance to His MAJESTY KING George the Third; — and defend to the utmost of my Power, His sacred Person, Crown, and Government, against all Persons whatsoever."

Would you have signed? How many colonists do you think were loyal to the British crown?

I intend to leave the colony soon.

THOMAS HOGG

Philadelphia Porter, Beer, and Cider.

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 think that medicine during the colonial era was crude and painful. Many doctors at the time were self-trained. If he had lived today, George Washington could have been cured with antibiotics. But in 1799, could Washington have gotten better after the treatments he received?

Colonial medicine was based on European medical methods and theories. No one 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. To achieve this balance, Washington’s doctors bled him several times. They may have thought that removing extra blood would lessen the swelling in his throat. Unfortunately they took so much blood that it was hard for Washington’s body to fight the illness.

Doctors also made Washington gargle with mixtures of vinegar, molasses, and butter. These were used to open up his throat. But his throat was too swollen, and he had a lot of trouble swallowing. He almost choked a couple of times too.

Finally, doctors tried to make him vomit to take out any bad fluids. This can cause the body to lose too much water, and that can make someone sicker.

Even though Washington’s doctors did a lot of things that modern doctors would not do, they tried very hard to help him. They used medical practices that were believed to be the most helpful. Washington knew that he was very ill, and he died peacefully.

The President with No Teeth!

When George Washington became the first President of the United States in 1789, he had only one of his teeth left in his mouth. As a boy, he had cracked walnut shells with his teeth and, as a result, many of them fell out before he was thirty! Over the years, Washington wore several sets of false teeth. Even though many people today believe that these teeth were made of wood, there is no proof that he ever had wooden teeth. His dentures were often a combination of human teeth, animal teeth, and ivory. They were put together with wire and a spring, which allowed the dentures to open and close. Throughout his life, Washington had trouble speaking, chewing food, and smiling. The false teeth could be painful and they sometimes made his cheeks and lips puff out. Fortunately, modern dentistry now allows painless smiles for even the greatest of walnut lovers.
Imagine! Walking around in front of strangers in your bath was in danger. Melody finally convinced me to stay, so I reluctantly put on the robe and sandals. Clutching the robe tightly, I nearly ran right out of Vittorio’s for fear that my virtue was about to happen. After applying more hot wax to my face, I passed out as she began applying the hot wax above my eyes. She said she was simply removing hair from my face. I turned away in horror, but the woman grabbed strips of paper and put them on top of the wax. After a moment, the woman told me to relax and, grabbing the edge of the paper, she ripped it from my face. “AAAAAH!” I shrieked. “Why are you doing this to me! I will not succumb to your torture—I will not join your religion!” I struggled to get out of the chair, but the woman kept applying the horrible hot wax. I passed out as she began applying the hot wax above my eyes. After . . . but I digress. My advice to you, my dear, is found in Rule 56: Associate yourself with men of good quality if you esteem your own reputation. For ‘tis better to be alone than in bad company.

I woke up some time later in a dim room with my feet in a toilet. Reclining in a large, leather chair, I was surrounded by hundreds of tiny bottles of colored liquid. A woman came into the room and told me she was going to give me a “pedicure.” “A pedicure? A cure? Oh thank you! Finally, something to soothe me after that exorcising hot wax torture!” She sat down on a small stool in front of my feet. She pushed a button and the toilet started to gurgle and swirl. I jerked my legs up and away from the flushing toilet. The woman asked me to please put my feet back in the water. “No thanks,” I said. “I’ve already been covered in glue and I don’t want my feet sucked into a toilet.” The woman looked at me strangely but agreed to turn it off. Once the swirling stopped, I slowly lowered my feet back into the water. Just then the woman pulled open a drawer and began to remove shiny silver scalpels and scissors from the drawer. It was then I realized her diabolical plan. I jumped from the chair, pushed the woman down, and ran screaming through the hall. The woman began to chase me with her torture instruments. Slipping and sliding on wet feet, I searched frantically for the exit. Turning left and right, down hallway after hallway, I finally saw a sign that said, “Tranquility Pond, this way.” I was sure that was the answer. The sign would lead me back to the nice men of the cloth from the white room and they would help me. I heard the woman behind me, calling my name. Faster and faster I ran, burning through the door to the Tranquility Pond and flying headlong into a pool of mud. Mud splashed all around me, covering the woman and one of the religious men standing over the pond. I was mired in a pond of mud, but for the first time in weeks, I felt at home.

Well, I’m willing to try almost anything once, but once was enough for me. No more hands-on healing, hot wax torture, or gurgling foot toilets for me. I’ll stick to beauty the old-fashioned way—with a pinch to the cheek and a touch of powder to the nose.

Mistress Goody’s Column of Advice on subjects other than politics and war.

Respectfully based on The Rules of Civility

In Other Words...

Mistress Goody, always informed, always respectable, always set at meat, scratch not neither spit, except with a pick tooth [i.e., a toothpick].

Rule 56: Associate yourself with men of good quality if you esteem your own reputation. For ‘tis better to be alone than in bad company.

I, My, my, this is a distressing dilemma. Mistress Goody recalls a situation of her own. It was 1796 at the George Town Ball. I cut quite a stunning figure that evening in my green taffeta gown and brocaded mules. Miss Prudence Petticoat of Philadelphia was pursued by a most evocative gentleman, but when her dance card was full, he pursued me! I’m afraid that a most unladylike tiff ensued shortly thereafter . . . but I digress. My advice to you, my dear, is found in Rule 22: Show not your self glad at the misfortune of another.

To join the gentleman in frivolity so soon after her heartbreak is unbecoming, not to mention terribly tacky. It certainly shows little regard for your intimate friend and calls into question your upbringing. Heed also Rule 110: Labour to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience.

Have you misplaced yours, my dear? —by T. Powell Harris
Philadelphia, July 13, 1793

RICKETTS’S AMPHITHEATRE. Word that the President and his family were to attend a performance of Mr. John Bill Ricketts’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

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 fire-place and arose to greet her guests with a curtsey 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 circulated 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.

Social Notes from All Over...

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 fire-place and arose to greet her guests with a curtsey 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 circulated 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, 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 Discovered, 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

GEORGE

There was a young General named George
Who led troops in the Valley at Forge
His horse was a dolly
Who took bullets to get by
And now he has a horse no more.

REVOLUTIONARY TEA

There was an old lady lived over the sea
And she was an island queen.
Her daughter lived off in a new country
With an ocean of water between.
The old lady’s pockets were full of gold
But never contented was she,
So she called on her daughter to pay her a tax
Of three pence a pound on her tea,
Of three pence a pound on her tea.

We take no responsibility for the quality of the work herein. GOOD POETRY SOUGHT.
Submit to PatriotPapers@ngs.si.edu

Will the Real George W. Please Stand Up?

Actor William Sommerfield brings George Washington to your community for a 3-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.
**The Kids Who Care**

**Webster Elementary**

The Kids Who Care Club, advised by teacher Michelle Miller, pitted House against House (each grade has 3 Houses) in a weeklong battle that saw the penny triumph. (Sorry, George!) Each House placed its penny jar in plain view and began collecting pennies, in hopes of winning the coveted ice cream party at battle’s end. But the spies from fellow Houses set out to sabotage the best-laid plans with silver and GW dollars. Pennies garnered positive points, but a quarter from the opposition eliminated 25 pennies; a dollar wiped out 100. “It’s always more fun to sabotage the enemy,” said Miller. “The kids are just waiting for someone to put in a $5 bill!”

After the jousting was over and casualties counted, the Houses of Escalibur, the Knights, and the Nobles proved victorious. And so did Toys for Tots. The Kids Who Care Club raised $4,000 in one week and went shopping for gifts. Student representatives presented the gifts on a live broadcast airing on KARE 11 News on December 12. “In all my years in Hudson, I’ve never seen anything like it,” said teacher Carol Gilbert. “The kids accepted the challenge and really got into the game.” The Patriot Papers salutes you, Hudson.

Thanks for Pledging It Forward.

Thanks to teacher Carol Gilbert for submitting this story.

**Tina King’s 4th-grade class chose 4 stars this year. Students contributed what they could, and then Special Santas went on a shopping spree, selecting just the right gifts for their adoptees. Dolls, trucks, an Xbox, even bicycles soon followed beneath the tree for that special someone, promising to make Christmas shine a little brighter for all. “It cheers your heart,” said Kiarra Clemons, “when you give to others the things they can’t buy that you get.” Andy Coggins was a little more practical. “I think it’s very nice to help people,” he said, “because I would feel very bad if I woke up on Christmas morning with no presents under the tree.”

So would we, Andy. The Patriot Papers salutes you and all of the stars at West Elementary for Pledging It Forward.

**Pledge It Forward—Self to Service**

Students from West Elementary School in Mount Juliet, Tennessee, decided to play Santa over the holidays and spread some Christmas cheer to needy children in the Nashville area. They set up a Star Tree covered with the names of kids who wouldn’t find much under their Christmas tree. Then students, parents, and classes selected stars from the tree labeled with a child’s name and age. Each child then shared his list of the toys, clothes, or shoes that he or she hoped Santa would bring. “I think it’s a good idea,” said Tyler Cothren, “because I feel a lot better when I give something to somebody.”

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