

## **The Foundation in 1992-93**

### **Presidency of James R. Fazio**

The bookends of my term as president were two excellent annual meetings. The first was in Vancouver, Washington, where I recall cracking two ribs after tripping on a raised sprinkler head during my early morning jog, and the other in Collinsville, Illinois, at a time of unseasonable flooding. The year in between was one of the busiest in my life but as any past president will tell you, the memories are among the highlights of a lifetime.

Most of those memories are good ones, but some are not. It was my fate to have faced the challenge at both annual meetings of wrestling with local committees that believed they were entitled to the Foundation's 'profits' from the convention. Something close to \$2,000 was involved in each case, and both eventually acquiesced, but not until after some unpleasanties. This matter was eventually resolved for the future by stronger wording in the Foundation's policies about the money belonging to the Foundation. However, the hard work of local sponsors was acknowledged at our 1993 board meeting by providing a way for a share of excess revenues to remain local. Unfortunately, in my opinion, it also opened the way to higher costs by allowing for profit incentives and the paid services of meeting coordinators. Here are the rules as proposed by an ad hoc committee chaired by Bob Gatten and adopted by the board:

- a. The Foundation will guarantee to cover any loss from the annual meeting. It will receive any revenue over and above expenses within 30 days of the last day of the annual meeting.
- b. The Annual Meeting Committee will be encouraged "to break even" (reflecting the belief at that time that annual meetings should not be profit centers, but rather a service to members).
- c. The Foundation will continue to advance the necessary funds for preparation for the annual meeting; this advance is considered to be a loan and must be returned to the Foundation.
- d. The Annual Meeting Committee may budget for a meeting coordinator OR a "project" that promotes the Foundation's goals (and therefore provided the way to compensate local chapters or other entities for their work but that also unintentionally led to higher costs).

But back to the beginning. At Vancouver, Martin Plamondon was program chair and the meeting was held at the usual time in early August around Clark's birthday. Our energetic secretary, Barb Kubik, preserved the events in 30 single-spaced pages of minutes from the series of board and general meetings. She also volunteered to start a new project – searching through old minutes and compiling a list of policies. As she observed, "the board often makes a decision or reaches a consensus during a meeting that is then forgotten about."

Other officers at the outset of my term were Stu Knapp, 1<sup>st</sup> vice president, Bob Gatten, 2<sup>nd</sup> vice president, and John Walker, treasurer. John soon after resigned and John Montague took over that important post.

Not in the minutes, but indelibly embedded in my mind was having a retired printing executive, Harry Hubbard, sit next to me at one of the meals. Harry was not short on ideas or bashful about expressing them. In no uncertain terms he told me, "It is time to get serious about the bicentennial." In actuality, we had long had an ad hoc "Bicentennial Celebration Committee" and it was then chaired by Jerry Garrett. To me, the bicentennial seemed so far in the future it was not of much concern compared to other matters facing the Foundation. But it was to Harry. He wanted action and he wanted it now! His ideas included a federal commission of some sort, big events, and a daily "movement of flags" or other objects along the trail to coincide with movement of the expedition 200 years before. By the end of my term, Harry became chair of the committee and in the year afterwards -- after some twists and turns -- the Foundation created a separate-but-related entity, the National Council of the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial. Amid controversy and some mis-steps, Harry launched that effort of his dreams, but he did not live to see it come to fruition. I would name him Father of the Bicentennial, just as later Bob Archibald of the Missouri Historical Society would rescue it from financial disaster and truly become the savior and hero of that amazing 3-year-long commemoration.

Another highlight I recall from early in my term was an interesting proposal from Dr. James E. Starr to obtain National Park Service permission to examine Lewis' grave and possibly exhume his remains. The idea was to apply modern forensic methods to solve the mystery of Lewis' death. The Foundation supported Dr. Starr's proposal, but it got nowhere with the National Park Service. That was a big disappointment to me, as I thought that as president I would have the privilege of being there when they dug up poor old Meriwether. The closest I came was being at the re-dedication of Clark's grave when we were in the St. Louis area at the close of my term.

As a board we wrestled with another proposal, this one by Marty Erickson, editor of WPO. The idea was being tossed around of hiring a part time executive secretary (I argued for the more authoritative title of executive director). Marty volunteered himself for that position, which if combined with the \$5,000/year he received as editor, would give him a full time job with the Foundation. It was not to be, but the discussion was clearly a step toward the paid staff that eventually replaced our entirely-volunteer operation.

Another dubious distinction that came my way was to ask Dayton Duncan to return \$10,000 we loaned him! Well, sort of. The board had previously provided a grant in that amount for use as seed money in preparing a script for a video production proposed by Ken Burns. It was to be about the Lewis & Clark story and it might or might not receive funding. If it did, we were to get our money back. If it did not, then it was our loss. Happily, an eastern television station saw the potential of the project and funded the venture. We received a check for \$10,000 and a nice note from Ken Burns thanking the Foundation for its "early and important support."

At the start of my term, operating expenses for the Foundation were \$59,613 with income reported as \$62,883. Another \$164,000 was on hand from the sale of bronze statues. I well remember that on-going fund raiser that was in the capable hands of Wilbur Werner. At each annual meeting he would report on sales and the availability of bronzes. He would assure the audience that if they did not have the money, they could buy one using his lay away plan: “You buy it, and I lay away your bronze until you have paid for it!”

There was another fund-raiser underway at this time, the Fellows program. It was a project of the Planned Giving Committee, spearheaded primarily by past president Ed Wang and Bob Doerk. Bob Holcomb added the idea of presenting donors of \$1,000 or more with a distinctive presentation box made of cedar and containing a replica of the Jefferson Peace Medal. This raised quite a bit of money due to the hard work of these gentlemen and others who were concerned with the financial stability of our Foundation.

In 1992 there were 9 chapters (or ‘entities’) that were loosely affiliated with the Foundation:

Camp Fortunate	L&C Honor Guard
Discovery Corps	Sakakawea (North Dakota)
Metro-St. Louis	Traveler’s Rest
Headwaters	Portage Route
	Idaho

There was also increasing interest in the bicentennial. Concerns of Jerry Garrett’s Bicentennial Committee were:

- ♦ The need for a mission statement and a study of the successes and failures of the Columbus celebration (1492 – 1992).
- ♦ Listing good out-of-print books that might be brought back as a project.
- ♦ Addressing the question of “a separate corporation with full-time coordinator to handle all aspects of the Bicentennial celebration” (a term soon consigned as politically incorrect due to objections by Native Americans who agreed to ‘commemorate’ the bicentennial but not ‘celebrate’ it).
- ♦ Deciding whether the Foundation should focus on one or two major projects or act as a clearinghouse for local projects.
- ♦ Deciding if local activities and projects should have a “letter of approval” for use in promotion.

By the time of the board of director’s meeting on August 5, 1993, Harry Hubbard and the committee posed their questions and observations this way:

- ♦ Is there a need to set up another non-profit entity to protect the Foundation from liabilities incurred during the bicentennial?
- ♦ The committee would like to establish itself as the “National Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission.”

- ♦ The committee would like to create a ‘national advisory committee’ of prominent scholars, philanthropists, etc.
- ♦ There is a need for funds to plan the bicentennial; the committee would like the board’s permission to solicit the membership for ‘seed money.’

All of this generated considerable and sometimes heated discussion!

Continuing the tradition of other presidents, I regularly typed up a newsletter for distribution to the board of directors, committee chairs, past presidents, chapter presidents, and the WPO editor. It was the communication glue that held the Foundation leadership together between annual meetings. Today, as I write this, it is also a valuable resource for recollecting major issues of the period. From the five newsletters during my year as president, here are some of the highlights:

- 📖 We entered the Computer Age. Treasurers John Walker and John Montague made the transition from hand-written financial records to computerized records. It had to be the biggest leap forward since the typewriter replaced pen and ink.
- 📖 We had enjoyed a nice lull in bylaw revisions. Stode Hinds once pointed out, “We must finally be a matured organization as there have not been changes in the last two years.” That was about to change and we still haven’t reached “maturity.”
- 📖 Don Nell sorted and catalogued the late Bob Lange’s massive slide collection. Don reported that “one of its many attributes is that it contains many pictures of sites that have since been invaded by power lines and the like.”
- 📖 \$5,000 of computer equipment was received from the National Park Service to store the huge amount of site inventory data collected by Bob Doerk and his small army of volunteers across the entire length of the trail. I recall trudging through brush and completing forms for a number of sites along the Missouri River above and below Nebraska City. Later, Patti Thomsen would spend several 7-hour days at the NPS offices in Madison inputting the data.
- 📖 I requested our Past Presidents Council to advise on my suggestion that we change the term of president from one to two years (after my term!). This was eventually recommended as a bylaw change but it failed because opponents believed there was nothing stopping a president from having a second term under existing bylaws.
- 📖 Treasurer John Montague established a checking account in Great Falls “where it will facilitate deposits from mail picked up by Bob Doerk at the Foundation’s official post office address.” This turned out to be another step toward eventually establishing our headquarters office at Great Falls.
- 📖 Work on the Ken Burns film progressed. Half of an estimated \$825,000 needed for the film was secured by October 1992 and a PBS affiliate agreed to be the sponsoring station. Target release date: 1996.

- 📖 A wonderful, useful publication, *Member's Handbook*, was updated by John Montague.
- 📖 On January 1, 1993, I started my newsletter with a bit of homespun wisdom that is still true: "Happy New Year! And I do mean it. If we are not having fun in our Foundation, then we need to do some adjusting."
- 📖 Bob Carriker of Gonzaga University replaced Jim Ronda on the editorial board of WPO. By direction of the board, editor Marty Erickson was to use the editorial board more for the review of articles and for book reviews. We sometimes lamented the fact that few new books on Lewis & Clark were being issued, something that would sure change with the advent of the bicentennial.
- 📖 Jerry Garrett, Chair of the Bicentennial Committee issued a newsletter "to his large committee." Interest in the distant event continued to grow monthly.
- 📖 Fund raising was well underway for a visitor center at Great Falls to supplement federal funding for the facility. The target was \$300,000. A similar project in Nebraska City appeared "dead in the water at the present time with no organized effort ...to raise matching funds." This would change and a beautiful center, as at Great Falls, would eventually be completed.
- 📖 My newsletter on Valentines Day 1993 included this item: "Interesting tidbit of the month comes from Bob Doerk who reports that he received a call from a gentleman in Ohio who claims to have the 1768 flintlock that was used by York. It is the gun that was stepped on and bent when a buffalo swam the Missouri at White Cliffs and lumbered through the camp. Bob believes there is good evidence that this is the genuine artifact. More later, probably in WPO."
- 📖 Plans for the 1993 annual meeting at Collinsville, Illinois, were going smoothly. Winnie George reported "that there will be a ground-breaking ceremony for the Interpretive Center at Camp du Bois during our meeting."
- 📖 The Oregon Chapter was added after an organizational meeting at Lewis and Clark College. Molly King-Gilpin was the "main mover" for that event.
- 📖 Ed Wang and the Planned Giving Committee reported that gifts to the L & C Fellow Program now totaled \$29,800.
- 📖 The Foundation's archival material was housed at the C.M. Russell Museum in Great Falls. Archives Committee chair Ella Mae Howard reported the addition of slides from Don Nell and "the last of the Warden Collection."

- 📖 The Foundation was invited to send a representative on July 22, 1993 to the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary events sponsored by the Alexander Mackenzie Trail Association. Jim Large agreed to be our rep.
- 📖 Harry Hubbard was “busy talking with Congressional representatives” about the best procedure for upcoming Bicentennial.
- 📖 There was soon some nervousness expressed by the board for Harry’s enthusiastic approach for Congressional action on the bicentennial. The Executive Committee then voted in favor of “more fully discussing Bicentennial plans before further contact is made with Congressional delegations to request a special commission.” By April, 1993, my newsletter reported that although the Bicentennial Committee’s major activity had been exploration of the idea of having a federal commission formed to coordinate the Bicentennial, “After starting on that path, (Harry’s) investigations led him to change course and recommend that we not seek to have such a commission created. Instead, he recommends:
  - a. Establishing a National Advisory Council
  - b. Using the above to seek funds from Foundations and large corporations.
  - c. Create a separate non-profit corp. to plan and coordinate the Bicentennial, own the logo and do any licensing...
  - d. The above would retain a professional promotion and event development organization to organize the various events and do the promotion.”

The annual meeting at the end of my term went smoothly and as usual it was the Foundation’s social and educational highlight of the year. Dear, beloved Bev Hinds recorded it all on film as had been her custom for many years. She would then present the outgoing president with an album of the meeting’s events. Mine is a treasured part of my career memorabilia and I will always be grateful for this thoughtful gesture on the part of one of our members.

Barb Kubik again filled 30 single-spaced typewritten pages with detailed accounts of all our board and general meetings from July 31 – August 4, 1993. Her notes reveal considerable discussion about the editing of WPO, a possible dues increase, the nearly-complete trail site inventory, and what, exactly, it meant to be a “chapter” of the Foundation. There was also support expressed for a proposed new wilderness area surrounding Hungry Creek. It would be called the Lewis & Clark Wilderness Area and I was charged to provide testimony at upcoming hearings. That I did, but the area still has not been designated. It remains roadless and unlogged, a potential monument to the wild, rugged country traversed by the expedition and today found nowhere else along its entire route.

At our membership meeting, Gary Moulton reported progress on the University of Nebraska Press’ *Journals of Lewis and Clark*. Volumes 9 and 10 were expected to be published soon and there were already 750 standing orders for them. I am happy to report that my order was among them. Today, the complete set is the heart of my personal collection of

Lewis & Clark books, and my favorite is Volume 1. I won it at a raffle at the annual meeting in Billings – one of the luckiest things that has come my way!

The Foundation's total assets were reported at the meeting to be \$265,425.89 – most of it due to the generosity of artist Bob Scriver and the vision of our forerunners in selling his limited edition bronzes of Lewis and Clark as a means of support for WPO. We were in good financial condition, we had 1,487 members, and there was solid leadership within our board of directors and at the heads of our committees.

At our general meeting, there was a moment of silence in tribute to our former leaders who in the past year moved beyond their earthly journey to join Lewis, Clark and the others somewhere west of the horizon. These were:

*Winnie George*, past president. The meeting was dedicated to her memory.  
*Hazel Bain*, past president  
*Frenchy Chuinard*, past president and author  
*Lawrence Espey*, Chair of the Oregon L&C Trail Advisory Committee  
*Ralph Space*, author and Lolo Trail expert  
*Dick Clifton*, Washington State artist and interpretive specialist

On what is now a lighter note – but certainly wasn't at the time! – was the most embarrassing moment of my tenure. Bob Holcomb was the main person behind a re-invigorated Fellows program as a way to raise significant funding for the Foundation. It was his idea to enhance donations through offering the Jefferson Peace Medal reproductions in attractive presentation boxes. He not only had the idea, but he carried through with the production of them, and he was, himself, one of the donors. At the closing banquet, I dutifully read the list of Fellows and thanked them profusely for their generous donations to the Foundation. Somehow my eye slipped past Bob's name! He was waiting for me at the bottom of the stage stairs at what should have been my moment of greatest joy and relief at having successfully concluded my year as president.

At the close of my tenure as president, I wrote two parting thoughts in WPO that are probably worth quoting here.

First, there was the need to move more aggressively into the role of protector of the historic trail route environment. I wrote, "Although I am sure that chaining ourselves to a tree to stop a logging job along the Lolo Trail has little appeal to many of us, we do have to make our collective voice heard whenever any action threatens the integrity of the trail route. In the past year, this has meant speaking out against a condominium development in Seaside, Oregon, that would obliterate the site of a Clatsop village described by Captain Clark on January 7, 1806 – the last such site known to exist in an undisturbed condition. We also expressed displeasure to the USDA Forest Service about a permit for mineral exploration almost directly on the trail in Burns Gulch near the Salmon River. There was also a logging operation very near the Lolo Trail that would have led to "improvement" of a portion of the old motorway and closure of that unique roadway to all except logging trucks during the summer. In the future, there will be serious issues of overdevelopment of roads, trails and historic sites, the proposed

construction of high power transmission lines along Lolo Trail, more logging, and who knows what else. This is not pleasant business, but we must not shy away from confronting it.”

Looking into what was then our immediate future, I also opined, “Never before has our Foundation faced a greater challenge than we do as planning begins in earnest for the bicentennial. And never before has there been a greater opportunity for us than there will be during the bicentennial years. Instead of vying for the attention of the mass media, the media representatives will come looking for us. So will the touring public, hungry for information. So will communities, anxious for our endorsement of events that are already being planned, and elected officials who will not want to miss out on publicity that might be directed toward them or the areas they represent. We need to approach this opportunity with King Solomon’s wisdom and John Colter’s energy! This looms as the Foundation’s most important work in the years ahead.”

Those years are now behind us. We face new challenges and the need remains as much as ever for good people to volunteer to move the Foundation forward. I end with a quote from a speech at a roadside sign dedication in Washington State on a cold, windy day in May, 1985. Cheryll Halsey was the speaker. She was recognizing the generosity of Robert R. Beale, a deceased member of the state’s trail commission who made the interpretive sign possible. She said, “...This message is one covered in every act of giving. Each time a Bob Beale or a Marcus Ware serves as a volunteer, each time one of us reaches beyond ourselves to share with others or to be a better person, we can call ourselves one with the men who camped near here on May 3, 1806, for they were only striving to be their best.”