



President's Letter

On Jan. 18, 2003, the eyes of America turned to Monticello as the Thomas Jefferson Foundation inaugurated the National Commemoration of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. More than 3,500 people braved frigid temperatures to gather on the West Lawn and observe this milestone occasion, which was marked by the presence of Native American leaders, Lewis and Clark groups from around the country, representatives from federal, state, and local governments, scholars, artisans, musicians, and many others. It was truly an all-American program, and it drew broad media coverage.

The inaugural event at Monticello was the culmination of *Jefferson's West: A Lewis and Clark Exposition*, a weeklong program that was comprehensive, multidisciplinary, inclusive, content-based, and festive. Participants came from 41 states (three-quarters of them from west of the Mississippi), the District of Columbia, and two foreign countries.

These activities called attention to Jefferson's central leadership role in the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The Foundation is proud to have launched this important national commemoration, and we salute our many partners in the enterprise as well as our colleagues at Monticello (headed by Chief Operating Officer Kat Imhoff), many of whom have worked since 1998 to assure its success.

The January events at Monticello were merely the beginning of the Lewis and Clark bicentennial. Fourteen other "Signature Events" will follow across the nation through 2006.

We have continued to salute Lewis and Clark here at Monticello, too. Thanks to the generosity of the State Farm Insurance Companies, we have distributed 10,000 sets of posters to schools around the nation,

This Issue's Other Stories

-  FOUNDATION BOARD
-  FRAMING WEST TOUR
-  FRANCIS L. BERKELEY
-  GIFT REPORT
-  INDIAN OBJECTS
-  LEWIS & CLARK
-  LOUISIANA PURCHASE
-  MONTICELLO CABINET
-  NEWS & NOTES
-  PARKWAY DEDICATION
-  PYRAMID
-  WEB SITE

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE.

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MONTICELLO



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CONTINUED, PAGE **TWO**

giving students a colorful look at the many facets of the story. We also partnered with Colonial Williamsburg on *Jefferson's West*, an “electronic field trip” televised live across the country in March.

Finally, the exhibition *Framing the West at Monticello: Thomas Jefferson and the Lewis and Clark Expedition* can be seen in the Entrance Hall throughout 2003. This re-creation of Jefferson's famous “Indian Hall” – featuring Native American art objects, pieces on loan from other institutions, and many other significant items – is augmented by house tours focusing on Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, and the opening of the American West.

We cordially invite you to visit the mountaintop this year to become engaged with this exciting American saga and era of exploration.

President

COMMENTS? newsletter@monticello.org