



# THE COCKADE

LAFAYETTE ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

ISSUE I SUMMER 2021



## FROM THE CHAIR

BY Richard Ingram

Welcome to this first edition of "The Cockade."

I have been thinking.

When I say this Janice seats herself and braces.

The courage eludes me, for now anyway, but when a candidate asks my vote would it be beyond bounds of propriety to ask to see the content of his or her Kindle? I mean, wouldn't that see past the aphorisms and platitudes of campaign rhetoric? Wouldn't it give inkling as to what makes that person wake up to face morning? For example, what depth of moral imagination is implied by a pairing of Tolstoy and Malcolm X? What expanse of literary imagination by E.

### *The Spirit of Lafayette*

#### *Inspire*

One person can change the world. Cicero said all virtues hinge first on gratitude; Aristotle said courage foremost. Lafayette speaks to both.

#### *Illuminate*

One person can be heroic. It takes perseverance. It takes vision. Lafayette owned both.

#### *Unite*

Liberty, equality, and justice are verbs. They take work. Lafayette believed them to be at the heart of the idea of America.

B. White alongside James Joyce? There again, content listed but unread might suggest a candidate short on time, big on ego, or for that particular person maybe it is not the thing, as Schopenhauer says, but the idea of the thing.

The officers and the Board of the Lafayette Alliance hope to stoke your interest in what we know to be worthwhile work. Here, then is our Kindle, open, with a bird's eye view of what each of its four volumes is about. The whole has this purpose: To Inspire, To Illuminate, and to Unite, all in the Spirit of Lafayette.

First, the Book of Narratives. Certain narratives deserve to be heard, the ones that are touchstones for our loftiest aspirations. They extol what's right and they clarify what needs remedy. They accomplish this task by employing all five means of telling story: Speak It, Sing It, Stage It, Craft It, and Write It. The Marquis de Lafayette, Hero of Two Worlds and Apostle of Liberty, leads the cast, and like the Atlantic Ocean whose waters touch the shores of four continents and tag other seas to touch the rest, he extends his reach to touch ideas, people, and events beyond his own time. His story is the maypole onto which others attach.

Second, the Book of Imagination. We intend to invite the amateurs among us---that league of nonprofessionals out to be artisans apart from what they do day to day---to take a turn at perhaps what they have dreamed of doing but never found occasion to do; that is, to try one's hand at playwrighting or songwriting; to design a station at a Lafayette Festival Arcade; in short, to suffuse a blank page with an idea, and figure out how to make it walk. This is about craft, about making a product of imagination as good as it can be. Paul Valery said he never finishes a poem; he abandons it. By which I take it he means that he could always do better, but at some point you let it go, move on, with the hope that the next poem is better than the one before. This is a community platform for powering up pistons of imagination, on the strongly held assertion that imagination is latent in LaGrange and Troup County. It needs out. Oliver Wendell Holmes said what may be true of many: "Most of us go to our graves with our music still inside us, unplayed."

Third, the Book of All Hands. The scope of this work is monumental. It calls for cooperative effort from every corner of community. We need hands of all shapes, sizes, and colors. Hands that doodle; hands that halt; and hands that wave go. Hands that build trust and deliberately partner to bridge racial divides. Gordon Allport, professor of sociology, first laid tracks of trustbuilding over fifty years ago when he delineated the necessary criteria, confirmed since by more than five hundred studies: trust grows when people work together, as equals, cooperatively, on a common task which elevates community in the doing of it. Diversity and Inclusion is not stock phrase; more than mere statement, it is philosophy; more than the thing to do, it is the right thing to do. Respect and Reciprocity are the soul of democracy. This is to say, beyond the social capital it can stoke, there is

much work to do and we need All Hands to get it done.

Fourth, the Book of Destination. Here is an idea so pretentious you cannot help but want to see it come to pass. Its impression tracks that of twenty-six year old Henry James on first meeting the English novelist George Eliot: her ugliness, he said, was so shocking as to pull him up short, only to discover that he was overwhelmed by her charm and her intelligence; he fell in love with her. Perhaps you do not fall in love with the idea, but hear it out. It does have, I think, charm. The idea is that this work in all its aggregate could make of LaGrange and Troup County a "self-sustaining destination landmark," to purloin a catchphrase from the National Monuments Foundation. People throughout the Southeast, from New Orleans to Nashville to Newport Beach might, one day, style vacations "In the Spirit of Lafayette," where introductory flourishes by costumed guides at the foot of the fountain on Lafayette Square are followed by Lafayette-linked theater, festivals, and musical performances, accompanied by newly created culinary delights, a Lafayette-LaGrange flambé perhaps, and keepsake crafts as souvenirs, all the while enjoying other amenities on offer.

There you have it. There will be the skeptic, never mind the cynic, who cries overreach; it takes too much, calls for too many. I do not quarrel with this view, which is to say I do not debate it outright as its premise upstream is that America cannot be dissuaded from bowling alone. Perhaps. I do give this reply, In the Spirit of Lafayette, when he said,

*I have been reproached  
all my life for giving in  
too much to my hopeful  
disposition; I will re-  
spond that it is the only  
way to do something out  
of the ordinary. One  
would, indeed, never try  
anything extraordinary  
if one despaired of  
success.*



## OUR GROWING IMPACT

BY Joanna Baxter

The Lafayette Alliance is excited and proud to now have a permanent presence on Lafayette Square in LaGrange. On November 6, 2020 a modern, colorful “wayside informational sign,” of the same quality as seen in United States National Parks, was placed and dedicated by the Lafayette Alliance and the City of LaGrange. This sign can be seen on the northeast corner of the square facing the statue of the Marquis de Lafayette. Happily, though, this is not its permanent location. The City of LaGrange plans to have it moved to a spot at the edge of the fountain and right in front of Lafayette as part of a proposed updated landscaping of the Square. The final placement will not only be visible from a major US Highway, but will also permit wheelchair accessibility.

The concept for this project was begun in January, 2020. Many people have remarked that the question is often posed, “Who is the man in the statue on our square and why is he there?” Even local citizens are often unaware of whom the statue embodies. The mission statement of the Lafayette Alliance is “to inspire, to illuminate, and to unite, all in **the Spirit of Lafayette.**” There are two brass plaques on the square with information about Lafayette and the statue; but, with the new hotel and more visitation to the square, maybe it was time for new signage to be put in place – something colorful with pictures and information that would grab the attention of a visitor. The concept was to have this sign go beyond presenting just historical information about Lafayette’s involvement fighting with the colonists to win the Revolutionary War; but inspiring, illuminating, and presenting the reader with the understanding of Lafayette’s character and basic values of courage, friendship, loyalty, sacrifice, and perseverance which was the basis of his actions.

A local graphic designer, Katie Roberts, was chosen to take the sign from concept to a striking panel. The Pannier Graphics company in Gibsonia, Pennsylvania, well-known for their work with the National Park Service, was contracted for production. The panel would be embedded in weather-proof fiberglass and presented in a tilted metal frame set in the ground.

The process went through approval stages before the final production contract was given. The Alliance committee approved the design. The town square is a “city park,” so the design and the desire of the Lafayette Alliance to give this signage to the city as a gift was presented in a City Council meeting for approval. The City Council voted unanimously and with excitement and appreciation in favor of this project. Requested at this City Council session was that QR Codes be added for visitors to scan for the Visit LaGrange and Lafayette Alliance websites. The sign arrived from Pannier to the city receiving garage in mid-August and was promptly installed by city workers. Before its official unveiling and dedication by Lafayette Alliance committee members and city officials on November 6, an engraved brass plaque was added to the side bar of the frame identifying this is a gift to the City of LaGrange from the Lafayette Alliance.

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## Upcoming Events

July 9 at 6:00pm Julien Icher will continue the Lafayette Speaker Series

September 6, Lafayette Day video release

September 10 at 6:00pm, Linda McMullen for the Lafayette Speaker Series

March 11, 2022 at 6:00pm Lloyd Kramer for the Lafayette Speaker Series

May 13, 2022 at 6:00pm Lindsay Chervinsky for the Lafayette Speaker Series

July 8, 2022 at 6:00pm Stephanie Dray for the Lafayette Speaker Series

September 9, 2022 at 6:00pm Alan Hoffman for the Lafayette Speaker Series

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