

Thomas Jefferson

MONTICELLO

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From the President

"This ball of liberty, I believe most piously, is now so well in motion that it will roll round the globe."

— JEFFERSON, 1795

I arrived last fall just in time to unveil the 21st-century gateway to Monticello, a testament to the visionary leadership of Dan Jordan. The Thomas Jefferson Visitor Center and Smith Education Center transforms the visitor experience and is launching a dynamic new era of audience engagement. Inspired by the film, exhibitions, and classroom programs, visitors are spending more time and gaining a deeper understanding of Jefferson's world-changing vision.

The Thomas Jefferson Foundation seeks to engage a global audience in a dialogue with Jefferson's ideas. We will move ahead with engaging schoolchildren, scholars, thought leaders, and tourists worldwide. Two major assets propel this vision: the historic site itself, a UNESCO World Heritage site embodying the genius of Jefferson; and the Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies, the academic nucleus for the study of Jefferson's multiple legacies. It is at the intersection of this powerful place and the enduring relevance of Jefferson's ideas, that we begin this dialogue.

We are engaging audiences in new and exciting ways far beyond our geographic boundaries. In January we launched Jefferson Today, an interac-

tive Web site focused on the currency of Jefferson's ideas. In April we attracted media coverage in Australia for a symposium in Sydney focused on the relevance of Jefferson in our times.

Here on the mountain, we will devote our restoration efforts to Mulberry Row. As Jefferson's autobiography, Monticello has a powerful sense of place. Yet the built environment of those who literally powered the place—enslaved people—is largely invisible. Thanks to Jefferson's systematic recordkeeping and decades of research by staff, Monticello is an unparalleled site for understanding plantation slavery in early America. Over the next few years, we will bring to life the story of Mulberry Row, the "main street" of African-American activity on the mountain.

We also will nurture existing traditions, especially the annual Independence Day Naturalization Ceremony. There is no more meaningful way to celebrate Jefferson's vision for liberty than by honoring people from across the globe, as they begin new lives as U.S. citizens. In his rousing 2007 speech at Monticello, Sam Waterston exhorted the new citizens to "put the participation back in 'participatory democracy.'" He added: "We are all lucky, the old citizens in what we got for free, and you, the [new] ones, in knowing what it's worth. We have a lot to tell one another. Congratulations. Bravo. Yay. The conversation begins now."

As I start my first year here at Monticello, I invite you to begin a con-



The restoration of Mulberry Row ranks high on the Foundation's list of priorities.

versation with us. Post a comment on jeffersonstoday.org. Visit our Facebook page and tell us what you and your family would like to see on Mulberry Row. If you're a teacher, let us know how to reach your students. We are excited about the next chapter at Monticello, we have a lot to do, and we wouldn't dream of doing it without your input. The conversation begins now.

Leslie Greene Bowman, President
email: president@monticello.org

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COMMENTS?

newsletter@monticello.org

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