

## Mary's Bake Shoppe (continued from page one)

Mary told me her last day of business prior to the Monday night fire had been on Christmas Eve, a Friday. She wasn't normally open on the weekend and wouldn't have opened Monday. Monday after a holiday wasn't productive, she told me, so she had not planned to be open that day. After work on Friday (Christmas Eve) she had gone to Denver and returned on Sunday night. She went into the bake shop Monday morning but didn't go any further into the building than the front area. She went to check messages, phone orders, etc., so she could plan for the next day and beyond.

She showed me pictures of the interior of the building before the fire. They had been taken in September in preparation for a refinancing, which was later approved, contingent on a final building inspection.

The front area had two showcases, where she kept baked products for display. The door which led to the basement was to the west side of the entrance area. Pictures of the basement area showed the floor to be concrete and the area to be almost empty and clean. A hot water heater which she had had to purchase when she took over the space in 1996, sat to one side.

**In an astounding revelation during this interview, I was told that a Cheyenne real estate agent had made a verbal offer for the land to Mary's Fort Collins attorney. When told the offer would leave virtually nothing for Mary after satisfying the City's lien on the property (for the demolition), the agent told the attorney, basically, "If Mary sells the land for this hotel, the lien will go away." In other ways, it would be forgiven, waived or voided. How?**

A media report had referenced mannequins which were in the basement. Mary felt that might have been to suggest they had been used to fuel an arson. But they had been cleared a long time before the fire. Mary said they had been left by WRO and were more recently used for events like Halloween parties and the heads had red paint to make them appear to be bleeding. Mary had even given some to the police department here for their dummy in parked cars. The pictures shown to me were of a clean space.

On the Monday before the fire, Mary had a back-up in her drain and a sewer repairman was in the basement to clear the line. He commented to Mary that the space was tight and that he had to "keep knocking the water heater," to get at the drain pipe that was clogged. The water heater, as all appliances, was electric.

Mary did not go into the back area, which had the oven, sink, mixers, equipment, supplies, etc., that Monday morning. Nor did she check to see whether the alley door was open or closed. She is certain it was closed because trash had been removed on Christmas Eve and she used only the front entrance for access and departing. She probably would have been able to feel the cold air so it is likely the door was closed, whether locked or not at the time. She checked her messages and left. She said she hadn't turned on any lights and heard no noise from an oven which might have been left on. She was certain she could have heard the humming if it were on.

That was the last time she was in the store, she told me, until after the fire when she was allowed to see into the store at the front and back. In spite of reports of total destruction, she said the glass showcases in the front had tipped toward the hole created from the fire and collapse but they were not broken. Nor were they salvaged.

The mayor said everything was crushed like a beer can but post-fire pictures indicate otherwise - including glass cases.

The issue of demolition has also been

misrepresented, Mary said.

Mary has created a written chronology of all events after the fire. From two days after the fire until present, each conversation, each meeting, each exchange of information or documentation, she has a detailed written record.

At the first meeting after the fire (the skyway announcement), a briefing was conducted in which Bob Bradshaw discussed "state assistance to those affected by the fire," and Bob Clary was identified as a "city building inspector." It went downhill from there.

Mary believes the fire started accidentally, probably involving the electrical wiring or hot water heater in the basement and that no one started the fire. In the next two issues of the Herald, I'll cover much more of this story.

## SHOULD we all just get along?

The first presidential administration included George Washington as president, John Adams as vice president, Thomas Jefferson as secretary of state and Alexander Hamilton as secretary of the treasury.

Keep that in mind. Later, there'll be a quiz.

Here in Cheyenne, just 216 years after Washington became first president of the United States, we are hearing a loud screech about how the elected councilmen (and woman) cannot get along and be "civil" to each other.

Civil to each other?

This great nation was formed by individuals who not only could not stand each other's politics, but led to the first secretary of the treasury and the third Vice president engaging in a duel - in which Alexander Hamilton was killed. By the sitting vice president of the United States!

Can you imagine Hamilton whining to Jefferson, "Aaron will not be civil to me." "Well, just grab your second and kill him then," the president would have told him.

The president of our city council, a similar accomplishment to John Nance Garner's vice presidency ("not worth a bucket of warm spit"), believes they (the nine council members) cannot all work together if some don't grovel at his feet.

Not quite ready for the quiz yet, but pay attention.

Even though Aaron Burr served as Thomas Jefferson's vice president, they were adversaries. At the time, the House of Representatives elected the president.

The man with the most votes became president, the next most became his veep. In that election, Burr actually had as many votes as Jefferson but a third person threw in with Jefferson and, presto, T.J. became the third president and father to Sally Hemmings. (*John Quincy Adams was the first president elected by popular vote.*)

That early group worked so well together that Thomas Jefferson later pursued a treason conviction against Aaron Burr - two years after they had served as president and vice president. Not very civil.

Other than that brief display of pique, they all got along quite famously though, didn't they? They were always "civil" toward each other, no? No.

Question: Which signature on the Declaration of Independence became the term for your signature? John Hancock, of course. Obviously a remarkable man.

Alas, maybe not. John Adams said about Hancock: "A man without head and without heart -- the mere shadow of a man!"

Jefferson said about John Marshall, the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court: "His inveteracy is profound, and his mind of that gloomy malignity which will never let him forego the opportunity of satiating it on a victim." Wow! Not civil at all.

(*Inveteracy means "deep rooted." Malignity means "intense ill-will or hatred," and satiating means "gratifying to excess."*)

About George Washington, with whom he had served as vice president, John Adams said: "That Washington was not a scholar is certain. That he is too illiterate, unlearned, unread for his station is equally beyond dispute." James Monroe was more brief: "Insane."

John Quincy Adams of Jefferson: "A slur upon the moral government of the world."

Daniel Webster said of James Madison: "I do not like his looks any better than I like his administration."

And Jefferson said of Andrew Jackson: "I feel much alarmed at the prospect of seeing General Jackson president. He is the most unfit man I know for such a place ... he is a dangerous man."

The quiz: Would you rather have our Founder's incivility or Pat Collins' fealty?

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