

## Tragedy Strikes Lafayette Family

*Count Gilbert De Pusy La Fayette loses wife and children in tragic car accident*

At approximately midnight on the evening of Sunday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, a tragic car accident on route A4 near Jossigny, France, claimed the life of Count Gilbert De Pusy La Fayette's wife, Irasema, and two of their three children, Caroline age 8 and Arthur age 6.

The only survivor of the accident was their oldest son, Alexandre, age 10. Count Gilbert De Pusy La Fayette was not in the accident.

According to French media at the memorial service, the funeral was held Feb. 4 at Our Lady of LaSalle church in Paris, where the Mass was held in both French and Spanish. Count Gilbert and his 10-year-old son, Alex, greeted guests at the door in a gesture of great dignity.

The Count de La Fayette, in bidding adieu to his wife and children, quoted from French poet Chardin, "We

## AFL Annual Meeting Set for Charlottesville, VA

**Please join us June 16-18**

**Keynote Speaker Philander Chase  
(see page 4)**



photo courtesy: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Lafayette\\_Square,\\_Buffalo,\\_NY.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Lafayette_Square,_Buffalo,_NY.jpg)

are not human without being spiritual. We are not spiritual without being human.”

Count Gilbert, who is an honorary member of the American Friends of Lafayette has participated in AFL events in the past, including attending the 1992 Annual Meeting. In addition to AFL events, Count Gilbert has been involved in Lafayette and Franco-American activities throughout the United States in Louisiana, Massachusetts, Washington D.C., and Virginia.

### **Three Presentations Set for Thursday Night at Annual Meeting**

There will be three presentations on Thursday evening, June 16<sup>th</sup>, to kick-off the Friends of Lafayette Annual Meeting, beginning at 8pm.

The first presentation will be given by AFL Treasurer, Chuck Schwam. He will be showing attendees a slideshow of his recent trip to France, which includes many sites associated with Lafayette and LaGrange.

The second presentation will be given by Diane Shaw. She will review the new project of digitizing images of Lafayette. This will be a great contribution for the future of Lafayette studies.

The final presenter is Marc Leepson. He is the author of “Saving Monticello.” He also recently wrote, “Lafayette, the Idealist General.” He will talk about Lafayette, and his books will be available for purchase following the presentation.

We hope you can join us on Thursday evening for this excellent lineup of speakers. It will be a great way to begin our annual meeting.

### **Long Time AFL Gazette Editor Len Panaggio Steps Down**

After years of generous service to the American Friends of Lafayette, Len Panaggio has chosen to step down from his many duties surrounding the Gazette.

Len has been the writer, editor, publisher, and all around main contributor for the Gazette for many decades, and looks forward to enjoying The American Friends of Lafayette events now more as a spectator.

“I’ve been involved in newspapers and publications my entire life,” Len says. It’s true; Len was even creating the publications at the military sites he was stationed at during World War II.

Len made a career out of journalism, and he was recognized for this a couple of years ago. In 2009, Len was inducted into the Rhode Island Journalism Hall of Fame which honors journalists who have been influential in their profession. He also has written about the Naval history of Rhode Island.

While this is obviously a great honor and celebration of his journalism career, the American Friends of Lafayette have also honored him for all of his service, dedication, and hard work. At the Wilmington meeting, Len became the fourth ever recipient of the Lafayette Liberty Award.

Len served as President of the American Friends of Lafayette for 20 years, and continued to work hard through the Gazette and in serving on the meeting committees, after Dr. Robert Crout replaced him.

Future issues of the Gazette will be edited by Dan Fitzpatrick, and will have a slightly different format.

Please be sure to thank Len for all of his hard work on the Gazette throughout the years, and for his tireless efforts assisting with many other ‘behind the scenes’ aspects of the American Friends of Lafayette.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR ANNUAL MEETING

### THURSDAY 6/16- ARRIVE IN CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA

- 'ON YOUR OWN' DINNER
- 8PM- PRESENTATIONS AT HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM

### FRIDAY 6/17- DAY OF TOURING AND BANQUET

- TOURING BEGINS IN EARLY MORNING. SITES TO INCLUDE:
  - JAMES MADISON HOME- MONTPELIER
  - LUNCH AT MONTICELLO- MICHIE TAVERN
  - Exclusive Tour of Monticello
  - University of Virginia- collection of Lafayette items
  - Universtiy of Virginia- Rotunda and lawn
- Annual Banquet held at hotel
  - Keynote speaker- Philander Chase
  - Special Guest- Dorothy Twohig

### SATURDAY 6/18- BUSINESS MEETING 9:30 AM

## AFL Member Spotlight Carmino Ravosa



"Where would you like the President to sit?" is a question that, American Friends of Lafayette member, Carmino Ravosa, still cannot believe he was asked.

The president was President Jimmy Carter, who was joined with this wife, and 600 other guests for the White House Halloween party, which featured a musical performance from Carmino Ravosa titled, "Ghosts in the White House."

Carmino Ravosa, has been entertaining members of the American Friends of Lafayette for

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## Philander Chase to give Keynote Speech at Annual Meeting



The American Friends of Lafayette is honored to be announcing this years Keynote Speaker, Philander Chase.

Philander is the retired editor-in-chief of the Washington Papers Project. This project is co-sponsored by the University of Virginia, and the Mount Vernon Ladies Association.

In addition to the Washington Papers, Philander is one of the leading authorities on Baron Von Steuben. Like Lafayette, Von Steuben is a foreign Revolutionary War hero. He also has a statue in Washington, D.C.'s, Lafayette square.

Joining Philander is the current editor-in-chief of the Washington Paper's Project. Her name is Dorothy Twohig and she will be attending the Annual Banquet as a guest of the American Friends of Lafayette.

Dorothy is also the author of The Washington Diaries, which will be on sale in paperback.

Philander has worked hands on with the Washington Papers for 35 years, and we look forward to him sharing his unique knowledge with us on June, 17.





Image of Lafayette's grave. Photo courtesy <http://www.fhsclassmates.com/lafayette.htm>

## **Lafayette College President Daniel Weiss Keeps the Marquis de Lafayette's Message Alive**

Daniel Weiss, President of Lafayette College, recently visited Picpus Cemetery, the largest private cemetery in France, and the resting place of Lafayette. There, the "spirit of Lafayette," brought him close to a young French student and his classmates.

While visiting Picpus Cemetery, President Weiss could hear and see school children just over the fence in the distance, and watched them all release balloons into the air for a school project. The school project was one in which all the balloons were filled with their classes contact information with the goal to see which student's balloon traveled the farthest and have the recipient reach back out to them. To his surprise, President Weiss found a deflated balloon resting on the tomb of Lafayette.

"It was an unbelievable coincidence," President Weiss shared. He also joked that by bringing the balloon, with its message, back to the America, that he all but, "guaranteed that young student would win the contest."

President Weiss did bring the balloon and its message back home, and chose to reach out to the student with many Lafayette College souvenirs and a warm note that Weiss says, "emphasized that the spirit of Lafayette had brought the two of them together, and that we should honor Lafayette and celebrate him for time to come."

Since, he has received very nice letters from the boy's classmates, teacher, and parents.

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years now with his performance of Lafayette and history themed music.

"I just feel that through music, the history becomes alive," Carmino says. "This is the best way to teach kids, young adults, and even adults."

"To this day, I still have kids who I taught decades ago get in touch with me and tell me, 'I still remember the song...'. It's great to know that I made that kind of impact," boasts Carmino. He definitely has made an impact.

In addition to giving a performance for the President, Carmino also performed his musical, "Seneca Falls", at the opening of the National Women's Hall of Fame. He also performed this musical at Carnegie Hall.

In regards to Lafayette, Carmino feels that he has captured Lafayette's message in some of his music, and he hopes that it will inspire a younger generation to look up to the man.

While he sincerely hopes his music will educate future generations, Carmino is always hard at work creating new songs.

This work ethic is partially inspired by Lafayette, who he appreciates when he states, "I am here to learn, not teach."

Undoubtedly, this music will continue to teach, for years to come.

**Questions/ Concerns?**

**Have an idea for a story for the Fall edition of the Gazette?**

**Have photographs from your travels or the annual meeting?**

**Please send them to Dan Fitzpatrick at [dfitzpatrick32@gmail.com](mailto:dfitzpatrick32@gmail.com)**



## THE AMERICAN FRIENDS OF LAFAYETTE

Dedicated to the memory of Major General Gilbert Motier, Marquis de Lafayette

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