

Editor's Note

This issue of *La Louisiane* was prepared during troublesome times.

Because of the required amount of pre-press production, the magazine's content is always finalized at least a month before giant presses' ink ever hits paper. So, this Editor's Message is being written 11 days after war began between the United States and Iraq.

Several months ago, *La Louisiane* planned to publish, in this Spring 2003 issue, an article about the new University Art Museum's inaugural exhibit, "Paintings in France: 1803-2003." Beginning Dec. 20, the museum will display the work of some of the most famous artists in history as part of a statewide celebration of the bicentennial of the Louisiana Purchase.

The United States has gone to war without the support of France, who has historically been an ally. France's refusal to back the United States has angered some Americans. Now, for example, a state senator wants to "un-invite" French President Jacques Chirac, who has been asked to attend some bicentennial Louisiana Purchase events. Closer to home, a Lafayette civic group wanted to end Acadiana cities' relationships with "twinned" cities in France. (It has since changed its stance.)

In light of such a strong reaction to France's position, I began to worry about the headline we had planned for the article about the museum's first exhibit. We had chosen "The French Collection," which is a twist on the title of a popular 1971 movie, "The French Connection." Should it be rewritten to downplay that, well, French connection?



The Louisiana Purchase was, undeniably, one of the most important events in history. Attorney and author Roger K. Ward has neatly summed up the real estate transaction, negotiated in 1803 by Robert Livingston and James Monroe at U.S. President Thomas Jefferson's behest. In an article published

in a recent issue of the *Louisiana Bar Journal*, Ward noted that Jefferson had authorized the two men to pay \$5 million to Napoleon Bonaparte for the purchase of New Orleans and the Floridas.

Unexpectedly, Napoleon was willing to sell all French-owned territory in North America for \$10 million. "Livingston and Monroe sought to buy a city; instead they bought an empire," Ward wrote.

In the end, we chose to keep the "French Collection" headline, hoping that the majority of readers will not let emotions of the day lessen the significance of UL Lafayette hosting such a remarkable exhibit during a celebration of such an extraordinary moment in history.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *La Louisiane*.

—Kathleen Thames