

Sunday Currents

TRAVEL
Enjoying old-school travel in West Texas
IN CURRENTS, E7



REVIEW
Moore: 'Maze' gets lost in overfamiliarity
IN CURRENTS, E4

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THE SIDEBAR



Washington Post photo by Sarah L. Voisin
Several niche publishers produce pocket-sized copies of the U.S. Constitution such as these seen in the pockets of eighth graders from the poorest county in Texas.

Pocket-sized Constitutions grow in Idaho

Constitution Day just one more reason to have a copy handy

By Jessica Contrera
The Washington Post

Deep in the wheat fields of southern Idaho, the storage facility of democracy lies in wait. Seven thousand, two hundred square feet, galvanized-steel walls, and inside:

Thousands and thousands of tiny U.S. Constitutions.

The calls to the warehouse of pocket-sized Constitutions come from across the country: Bookstores who want to sell them, teachers who can't afford them, politicians who will pull them out at exactly the right moment to say, "This here is my copy of the United States Constitution, that I always carry, and it says..."

That trick was a favorite of the late Democratic Sen. Robert Byrd. A decade ago, Byrd was instrumental in establishing Constitution Day when he attached an amendment designating the holiday to an appropriations bill. Since then, on Sept. 17, the day the Constitution was signed in 1787, schools receiving federal funding and federal agencies must provide education about the Constitution. In the District of Columbia and across the country, there are student-led readings, political panels, tours of the National Archives and naturalization ceremonies.

Constitution Day means swift business for Idahoan Zeldon Nelson, a farmer who spends his down time packing and shipping pocket Constitutions. Nelson sells the booklets — \$1.10 a piece and wrapped with an image of George Washington — as the chief executive of a small nonprofit group called the National Center for Constitution

THE BLUES

Funding falls short for Boy in Blue project Committee members make final push for donations

By Jessica Bies
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With contractors to pay and construction deadlines looming ever closer, a group of local residents hoping to restore a civil war memorial has fallen short on funding.

The goal was to complete and dedicate the Lincoln Park neighborhood's historic "Boy in Blue" monument in 2015, before the end of the Civil War's 150th anniversary, project organizers say.

But with more than \$80,000 left to raise, any chance of making that deadline is starting to look slim.

"We're struggling to try to get this done by next year," said Arn Kind, Civil War reenactor and a member of the Boy in Blue project committee. "We may have to go into 2016."

Kind said he's not really surprised by the lack of funds. Raising money for veterans memorials is often difficult and often even larger, more popular projects are delayed because of shortages.

The Minnesota Vietnam Veterans Memorial in St. Paul was one of those — it took several years to secure funding for the more than \$200,000 project and in the end it was \$100,000 in state funding that enabled its construction.

Work on the monument was due to begin this year, but will now commence in the spring.

Feeling the crunch

The Boy in Blue committee is now feeling a similar crunch. Though members have organized several fundraisers and have traveled all over the area looking for potential donors, they have only managed to raise about \$83,300 of the \$170,000 needed to complete the restoration.

The group started fundraising in 2011, at the beginning of the Civil War's five-year sesquicentennial.

"When you start out, everyone's really enthusiastic, but \$170,000 is a lot of money," Kind said. "We're confident that it will happen, but sometimes people sit back and think, 'somebody else will do that, somebody will come up with the money,' and no one does."

The committee needs to raise at least \$15,000 by October



Photo by John Cross
Ron Goodrich positions a fork lift under the new Boy in Blue pedestal while Al Neighbors, a delivery man for the Alabama company Robinson Iron, places foam on the machines prongs so it doesn't scratch the newly casted iron.

Boy In Blue Civil War Cemetery Walk & Supper – Sept. 27

3-5 p.m. — Glenwood Cemetery Walk: See living history actors portray Civil War veterans now at rest in the Glenwood Cemetery, located at 711 Glenwood Ave. in Mankato. Guided tours leave every 20 minutes.

5-8 p.m. — Chili or Soup Supper: Head over to the American Legion Club Post 11, located at 222 E. Walnut St. in Mankato for chili or vegetable soup and pulled pork

or chicken salad sandwiches. A kids menu and vegetarian option are available upon request.

Tickets: Advance tickets can be purchased by visiting the American Legion Club Post 11, online at www.boyinblue.org or by mailing checks (made out to Boy in Blue) to Boy in Blue Project, P.O. Box 1105, Mankato, MN 56002-1105. Tickets can also be purchased at the door or

from any Boy in Blue Project committee member.

Prices are as follows (tickets for children age 6 or under are free):

Cemetery walk and supper — \$15 for adults, \$10 for students, \$5 for children

Cemetery walk ONLY — \$7 for adults, \$2 for students/children

Supper ONLY — \$10 for adults, \$8 for students, \$3 for children

installing an ornate cast iron pedestal and bowl at the center

has already been completed and will remain in storage until the

stand atop pedestal and the memorial will act as a fountain.

The Free Press / Sunday, September 21, 2014

BLUE: Funding falls short for Boy in Blue project

Continued from Page E1

The statue will be a replica of the "Boy in Blue," which was dedicated in 1893 and stood in the park for several years as a tribute to the more than 2,500 Minnesota soldiers that died in the Civil War. It was placed there by the Alexander Wilkin Post, Grand Army of the Republic, and depicts a Civil War private soldier holding a musket at parade rest.

Few have actually seen the memorial — it was torn down in 1927 after it was vandalized and fell into disrepair.

But the committee managed to hunt down the original blueprints, which are now owned by the Alabama-based business Robinson Iron, and plan on the new memorial being an exact replica of the original.

Pushing forward

Julie Schrader, secretary and treasurer for the Boy

"You're going to be surrounded by heroes. The people in that cemetery not only made a huge difference in our community, but on the nation."

ARN KIND

**Civil War reenactor
and a member of the Boy in Blue project committee**

in Blue committee, said the group strongly believes Blue Earth County should have a Civil War memorial.

"I think its important to note that the Civil War is the only war that is not memorialized in Blue Earth County because we lost this (fountain) and it was never replaced," Schrader said. "Though there's a small marker in Lincoln Park, the monument was never replaced."

James Olson, commander of Mankato's American Legion, agreed and said the monument will help remind residents of the Blue Earth County soldiers that gave their lives in what is known

for being an especially violent and deadly conflict.

"It's important to remember all veterans and the sacrifices they made, especially during the Civil War, the bloodiest war the U.S. has ever been in," Olson said.

Though fundraising efforts have stalled, Olson said he has hope the group it will meet its 2015 deadline.

"We'll keep plugging away at it 'til it gets done," he promised.

Hoping for a boost, the Boy in Blue committee will hold a large fundraiser Sept. 27 at the Glenwood Cemetery. Living history actors will portray the Civil

War veterans buried there during guided tours.

"It's just beautiful to come out and walk the cemetery and then see the people come to life and tell their stories," Schrader said.

Afterward, a chili/soup supper will be held at the American Legion Post 11, located at 222 E. Walnut St. in Mankato. Adult tickets for the events range from \$7 to \$15 and can be bought either in advance, or at the door. For more information, visit: www.boyinblue.org.

Kind said the Civil War veterans portrayed during the event are the same ones honored by the memorial. They not only fought to preserve the union, but helped build Blue Earth County. Both are good reasons to honor them.

"You're going to be surrounded by heroes," he said of walking through the cemetery. "The people in that cemetery not only made a huge difference in our community, but on the nation."