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Not much to celebrate on Presidents Day

Wednesday, March 10, 2010
SUBURBAN TRENDS

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Not much to celebrate on Presidents Day

dear editor:

In the Suburban Trends editorial on Feb. 14, it discussed "Presidents Day" and that Theodore Roosevelt was a president who deserved recognition, along with Washington and Lincoln. I don't know the criteria you use to determine which of our past presidents was "great" or not. I use the Constitution, as originally intended by the founders, for my guide, in which case I have to say that very few presidents, past or present, warrant any kind of holiday in their honor.

Space and time do not permit me to go down the roster for the past 200-plus years, so we'll stick with your newfound hero, Theodore Roosevelt.

On domestic policy, he was a believer in interventionism, in what should be private-market-based economic choices. "TR" really didn't trust the free-market to function on its own and believed, as others did during the Progressive Era, that government oversight and assistance was needed.

Those policies only distorted the marketplace and created problems that needed...you guessed it... more government intervention. These policies and programs have been like a giant snowball rolling downhill for the last century. Capitalism and the free-market didn't "fail," rather they weren't allowed to function unhindered thanks to Theodore Roosevelt and his successors.

On foreign policy, Roosevelt was, like his distant cousin Franklin Roosevelt a generation later, a blatant interventionist abroad. The wise advice of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson to avoid foreign intrigues, entanglements, alliances and adventures was thrown out the window by Theodore Roosevelt. He beat the drum for war with Spain in 1898, and in 1917, he was all for America getting involved in World War I. If the United States had stayed out of World War I, the warring nations in Europe would have worked out a negotiated peace and there wouldn't have been a World War II!

If you want to learn more of the damage done to our Constitutional Republic by Theodore Roosevelt, I would highly recommend the book "Bully Boy" by Jim Powell from the Libertarian Cato Institute. Mr. Powell's 2006 book demolishes many of the myths that have grown up around Theodore Roosevelt's image that has been cultivated and nurtured by establishment historians and the political class that they serve.

Maybe instead of a Presidents Day, we need an individual Liberty and Historical Truth Day!

Mark Richards,

West Milford

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