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G. Brian Sullivan

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September 21, 1981

The Honorable
Senator Claiborne Pell
418 Federal Building
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Senator Pell:

I am writing to formally request your assistance and advice in support of a worthy cause for Rhode Islanders. In the course of some informal research two years ago, growing out of a developing interest in The Year of the French (1780-1781), I discovered Howard M. Chapin's Grolier Club edition of Gazette Française (1926). This work was subtitled: A Facsimile Reprint of a Newspaper Printed at Newport on the Printing Press of the French Fleet in American Waters During the Revolutionary War. For La Fondation Newportante/Newportant Foundation, Corporation I, as Executive Director, propose to obtain funding for a projected Bicentennial Republication of the Gazette.

Our goal combines with and extends Rhode Island's Year of the French Bicentennial Commemorative events. This French-language, pamphlet-format, news gazette typified revolutionary-era communications. It symbolized and substantiated the French presence in Rhode Island before the English and the rest of the world. It represents, moreover, an integral and unique feature of Rhode Island literature and literary history: it includes the French language. The history contained in its thirty pages comes alive through the eighteenth-century typography. It should be translated. And some day the story of the Making of the Gazette Française should be created for international television. My Foundation hopes to realize this vision, and the help of all Rhode Islanders is welcome.

The first step is to republish a facsimile, unbound, portfolio edition—just what was distributed to the six thousand Officers and soldiers under General de Rochambeau. The souvenir Year of the French portfolio is intended for distribution in the United States, French Canada, and in France.

My letter (enclosed) to Senator Robert J. McKenna, Chairman of the Rhode Island Heritage Commission and the Rhode Island Publications Society will help explain the Project. Also illustrative is the xerox of Gazette Française (No. I) Du Vendredi 17 Novembre 1780 (enclosed). A third enclosure is Howard Chapin's article published in Antiques (1926). Also, I have enclosed Mr. McKenna's thoughtful letter of June 10, 1981, which shows his helpful alignment with the cause of republication which has extended about a year.
Others are needed. Could you and your offices please help the accomplishment of the rediscovery of this important bibliographical, typographical, and historical find on both sides of the Atlantic, so that thereby French and American shores will be less far apart?

Cordially,

C. Brian Sullivan, Ph.D.
Executive Director/Pres.

cc: Sen. Robert J. McKenna
Prof. Eugene Lappin
William Janowsky

4 enclosures

GBS/jk