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Christmas comes to life

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CRYSTAL LAKE – Aside from sharing a place on Mount Rushmore, Thomas Jefferson and Theodore Roosevelt may have little in common. The third and 26th presidents were brought **to life** Saturday in a one-man performance by Clay Jenkinson. The performance, "**Christmas** at Monticello, Holiday Reflections with Thomas Jefferson and Theodore Roosevelt," at Raue Center for the Arts created a fictional dinner in which Jefferson invited Roosevelt **to** his sprawling Virginia estate, Monticello.

"These are two different men, from two different eras with much in common and much **to** divide them," said Brian Pappalardo, president of the Crystal Lake Library Foundation.

The lengthy monologues were followed by a question and answer session in which audience members questioned both presidents' views on modern-day issues such as health care.

Roosevelt, who introduced his idea of universal health care at a speech in 1910, also spoke of workmen's compensation, unemployment and fair working environments.

"If we are going **to** be an industrial nation, ... we need a minimum safety net for the long **life** of our laborers," Jenkinson said as Roosevelt. "It's in our best interest **to** keep them healthy longer and **to** take care of everybody."

Jenkinson, a scholar and author, spoke not only of the men's political views, but also how they would have spent **Christmas**. The lively and childish Roosevelt was a stark contrast **to** the logical and disciplined Jefferson. While Roosevelt would have loved **to** receive presents at Monticello, he likely only would have been met with Virginia ham and fine wine, Jenkinson said. He explained that Jefferson preferred

science **to** religion and did not honor **Christmas**.

“In my time, **Christmas** was wholly different than **Christmas** in your time,” Jenkinson explained as Jefferson.

Where Jefferson was a creature of habit, rising before the sun each day and upheld a detailed itinerary, Roosevelt preferred roughhousing and a chaotic lifestyle – often making top decisions without the advice of his Cabinet.

“I did almost everything by executive order,” Jenkinson said as Roosevelt. “Don’t you agree it would be so much easier **to** govern without Congress?”

Jenkinson succeed at drawing parallels **to** modern times.

“Everything that they stood for rang true today,” said audience member Bridget Norman of Barrington.

The event, moderated by WGN’s John Williams, will benefit the Crystal Lake Library Foundation and the Raue Center.

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