

as the town of Philipsburg by petition on November 29, 1864.

Although the face of Philipsburg has changed in its evolution, its most basic tenets have not. Since its formation, Philipsburg has been a growth-oriented community well-known for its residents' strong work ethic and sense of family values. Residents truly appreciate the value of an honest day's work and take great pride in their efforts. These characteristics make the town and the Moshannon Valley as a whole very attractive to business and industry. Indeed, the success and expansion of several local businesses offers testimony to the caliber of the work force. The fact that several national corporations have chosen Philipsburg as home also reflects their overall confidence in the region.

Nevertheless, there is more to a community than its history and development. For some, the most important component of a community is its character, especially for those individuals seeking an exception quality of life. True to form, Philipsburg does not disappoint in this category either. The beauty and serenity of the surrounding hills truly make it an ideal place to live. Each season distinctly enhances the town's natural beauty, whether it be the colorful fall foliage of the peaceful blanket of winter's snow. Recreation and other activities abound within the area. Festivals, parades, church suppers, and youth sports are embraced by the community as a whole and evoke a sense of hometown atmosphere to native residents and newcomers alike. Visitors are not viewed as strangers as is so often the case today, but treated as family.

Mr. Speaker, I am indeed privileged to serve such an idyllic and distinguished community. I urge you and all of our colleagues to join me in wishing the citizens of Philipsburg a very happy 200th anniversary with positive outlook for another 200 years of continued growth and prosperity.

AMITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
CELEBRATES ITS 200TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 1997

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in recognition of the Amity Presbyterian Church's 200th anniversary. It has served the spiritual needs of the people of the Warwick township in Orange County, NY for 200 years, and God willing, it will serve the people for many more years to come.

The Amity Presbyterian Church has grown as America has grown. It was organized when our Nation was just 21 years old under the name of the Presbyterian Society of Amity. At the time of the organization, John Adams was President, and our Nation was in its first year without the father of our country, George Washington. As our Nation grew so has the church. The Amity Presbyterian Church has been there during our Nation's moments of triumph, and during our darkest times. For 200 years, the Amity church has heard the prayers, and problems of Americans. It still stands, much like our Nation, strong, proud, and glorious.

The Amity church moved into its present building just after the conclusion of the War

Between the States, and was remodeled in 1931. The church is presently undergoing a renovation, which started in 1994, which will hopefully restore it to its former glory.

Mr. Speaker, I invite our colleagues to join with me in extending our congratulations to the congregants of the Amity Presbyterian Church as they celebrate this significant milestone.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT (BUTCH)
BEMMES

HON. ROB PORTMAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 1997

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge to many outstanding contributions of a good friend and constituent, Robert (Butch) Bemmes, who is retiring as a member of the city council of Reading, OH, on July 15, 1997.

A lifelong resident of Reading, Butch Bemmes has spent years giving back to his community. He is a carpenter by trade and owned the Butch Bemmes and Sons Construction Co. He volunteered for years with the Valley Youth Organization, coaching Little League baseball. For 30 years, he volunteered by carrying down markers at Reading High School football games. This year, he personally collected donations to purchase a wheelchair lift for Veterans Stadium in Reading to allow the disabled to enjoy the Friday night football action. He also served as president of the Reading athletic boosters during the 1970's.

Butch has also been active in public service. He served two teams on the Reading city council, where he served as chairman of the recreation committee; chairman of the zoning, planning and environment committee; and a member of the laws and contracts committee. He also served as Reading's city representative to the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments, city representative for the Mill Creek Watershed committee and liaison for council and the school board committee.

Even with all these accomplishments, his first love has always been his family. Butch and his wife, Paula, raised nine children to whom they are devoted. And their family now includes 26 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, throughout his life, Butch Bemmes has worked to make his city and his country a better place to live. I salute his many contributions and wish him well.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. FRANK A. LoBIONDO

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 25, 1997

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1119) to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 1998 and 1999, for military activities of the Department of

Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal years 1998 and 1999, and for other purposes:

Mr. LoBIONDO. Mr. Chairman, I rise alongside my colleagues from the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee in strong support of the amendment to H.R. 1119 offered by my good friend, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.

Mr. Chairman, the Delaware Bay, which stretches across the width of the second district, is a high-traffic area for tankers transiting to and from Philadelphia. From Cape May Point, watching the tankers on the horizon, I am reminded that a disaster like the *Exxon Valdez* spill could happen again at any time—so I am thankful for the much-needed safeguards put in motion by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 [OPA 90].

The double hull provisions in OPA 90 were created expressly for the purpose of preventing another disaster like the *Valdez* spill. Anyone who doubts the wisdom of these requirements should visit the bayside communities in the second district. It would be plain to see the amount of wildlife and coastal vegetation that would be affected by a spill is too staggering to comprehend. Commercial and recreational fishermen who rely on the Delaware Bay would face certain losses as well.

That is why I strongly object to shippers attempting to remeasure or reduce their vessels' gross tonnage in order to evade the double hull requirements. Each year that owners or operators extend the life of older vessels only increases the chance of a disastrous hull breach. Mr. Chairman, we can close this loophole in OPA 90 now, or agonize over why we did not after the next spill occurs.

While I am a strong supporter of American cabotage, and believe that international shipping is vital to the commerce of the United States, we cannot have shippers abusing the law. Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN's amendment is a commonsense improvement, and I urge its support to all my colleagues.

TAXPAYER RELIEF ACT OF 1997

SPEECH OF

HON. MAX SANDLIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 26, 1997

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2014) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to subsections (b)(2) and (d) of section 105 of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 1998:

Mr. SANDLIN. Mr. Chairman, east Texans are overburdened by taxes. They work hard and take home too little of their paycheck. I understand that the deficits of the 1980's have limited the amount of tax relief we can offer to the people, but I feel strongly that we must offer what we can. Families need help covering the expenses of raising their children. They need help paying for the expenses of higher education. They need to be able to keep more of the money they earn from their long term investments. And they need to be able to pass family farm or a family business to their children without having to sell it to pay taxes when they pass away.

East Texans need tax relief, and that is why I voted for H.R. 2014, the Taxpayer Relief Act.

No legislation is without flaws, and I hope to see a slightly different bill when it comes back from conference committee. Tax relief should be directed toward working middle class families—the backbone of our Nation—and I am concerned that the current bill gives too great a tax break to those with higher incomes at the expense of hard working families. However, this bill is an important step in reducing the tax burden of the people in east Texas.

The budget agreement crafted by Congress in 1993 put us on a path for tax relief. Our deficits have fallen significantly over the past 4 years, and it is now time to reward the people for shouldering their share of the load. Today, we passed legislation to give families \$500 for each child they are raising, to offer tax breaks on tuition for students in higher education, to reduce the capital gains tax, and to increase the exemption for the estate tax.

As I said, this bill is far from perfect. For example, the legislation does not adequately protect worker's rights and fails to immediately raise the estate tax exemption. The exemption, now \$600,000, would increase to \$1 million with this bill, but not until 2007. Many families in east Texas who own farms or small businesses could end up losing significant portions of their family property waiting for this provision to be implemented. The exemption should be \$1 million now, not 10 years from now.

I voted for this bill in spite of its imperfections which must be corrected in conference committee. I voted for this bill because I want tax relief for working families in east Texas. Over the next several weeks, I will be working with my colleagues to improve the bill so that we offer tax relief in a fair and equal manner; today, however, I am proud to say that I voted to save the taxpayers \$85 billion in taxes over the next 5 years.

BLENHEIM CELEBRATES 200 YEARS

HON. GERALD B.H. SOLOMON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 1997

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, the true character of America was shaped, not in its largest cities, but in countless small towns and villages.

The spirit of pride, patriotism, and voluntarism is alive and well in these smaller communities, where everybody knows and cares about everybody. I'd like to say a few words this morning about one such community, one of my favorites.

The town of Blenheim was the largest of six towns formed in Schoharie County on March 17, 1797. Its most famous landmark is the Blenheim Covered Bridge, the longest single span wooden covered bridge in the world and a national registered landmark. The town's most famous son was Hezekiah Dickerman, who built a large tannery after moving there in the 1840's.

Another famous figure was Capt. Jacob Hager, who, along with his brothers fought in the Revolutionary War and had several encounters with the Iroquois Indians in the Schoharie Valley. Some of the present-day Hagers still live on part of the original Hager property.

The town of Blenheim is also home to Lansing Manor, home of Judge John Lansing's daughter and her husband. Lansing played a role in developing our Bill of Rights. The Lansing Manor is currently home to the New York State Power Authority Visitors' Center.

The town still has a one-room school house which has been reopened as a museum. Every year, third and fourth graders visit the school to learn about the Revolutionary War heroes who came to Blenheim to lease land on the Blenheim patent. The museum is also used for collecting, preserving, interpreting, and promoting interest in the art, history, and culture of the town of Blenheim and surrounding area.

In the period immediately after the Revolutionary War, the area was primarily agricultural. The town of Blenheim has adjusted to the modern era, but not at the expense of its small-town charm, which present-day residents have been careful to preserve.

On Saturday, July 12, the town of Blenheim will celebrate its 200th birthday. The celebration will feature the New York State champion fiddler and many exhibits on the theme of the Revolutionary War.

Mr. Speaker, let us today express our own birthday wishes to this most American of small towns, and wish her and all her residents best wishes in the future. Better yet, Mr. Speaker, come up and visit the town of Blenheim some time for a good glimpse of what made this Nation great.

HONORING NORMAN L. GEISLER

HON. JON D. FOX

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 1997

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a heroic and selfless man, Mr. Norman Geissler. Mr. Geissler is a valuable citizen in the Elkins Park, Montgomery County community, and a keystone of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Mr. Geissler devoted most of his life in service to the people of Montgomery County. Starting at the age of 18, Mr. Geissler progressed through the ranks and became a chief figure in the fire-fighting force of Pennsylvania. His positive leadership and heroism make him a role model in the eyes of both the citizens of Pennsylvania and its most elite firefighters.

Mr. Geissler grew up in Abington Township. In 1946, shortly after his 18th birthday, he joined his father's fire company and he soon advanced to assistant chief. In 1950, he joined Elkins Park Fire Company in Cheltenham Township and became the chief engineer and secretary of the active crew.

Advancing yet again in 1957, Mr. Geissler became the secretary of the Montgomery County Fireman's Association. This role was especially significant because he followed in his father's footsteps, and he remained in this leadership rank for 26 years.

In 1970, Mr. Geissler advanced to the president of the Fireman's Association of the State of Pennsylvania and in 1971 he chaired their convention in Erie.

Elected president of the Keystone State Fire Chiefs in 1987, Mr. Geissler continued to put forth effort and dedication to his duty for the next 2 years. On February 24, 1985, he was

inducted into the Chapel of Four Chaplain and given their award for heroism. Mr. Geissler was also honored with the prestigious James A. Miller Award for Meritorious Service at the Firemen's Association convention, the highest award given by this eminent association.

Mr. Geissler holds several highly ranked leadership positions. He is the parliamentary emeritus of the Firemen's Association, as well as the parliamentarian of the Montgomery County Firemen's Association and their representative to the Firemen's Legislative Federation. In addition, he is the chairman of the by-laws-committee for the Keystone Fire Chiefs.

Mr. Geissler received his 50-year award in March 1990 by the Elkins Park Fire Co. at their annual banquet. Paul Ditzel, a renowned historian of the fire service, gave special recognition to Mr. Geissler in his book, "A New Look at the Old Firehouse."

In addition to well deservedly receiving all of these awards and prestigious positions, Mr. Geissler is a dedicated fireman in practice. The most exemplary incident occurred on April 21, 1963. Mr. Geissler heroically rescued Sharon, Laurie, and Paul Newman from suffocation from a fire in the kitchen. Despite the potential danger to himself, Mr. Geissler entered the dwelling, crawled to the second floor, gathered the children, and carried them downstairs. In recognition of this life-threatening and heroic act, the commission awarded him a well-deserved bronze medal and \$500 award.

The fact that Mr. Geissler progressed all the way through these prestigious positions and the multitude of well-deserving awards illustrates his dedication to his job as well as to his State. Not only do his neighbors think highly of him, but across Pennsylvania he is thought of as a man with integrity, heroism, and extreme loyalty to the Commonwealth.

In addition, Mr. Geissler is devoted to the many fire-fighting organizations of which he has been a part or a leader. His genuine heroism, desire and ability to improve, and dedication to task combines to provide him as a positive leader, ideal role model, and keystone in the fire-fighting force of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

As Mr. Geissler and his family have just celebrated his 75th birthday, I extend to him my personal warm wishes and ask that the Congress of the United States honor him for a lifetime of devotion to his family, his community, and his Nation.

NO TAXATION WITHOUT RESPIRATION

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 1997

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, taxes on inheritance ought to be abolished, and the sooner the better.

In Congress, we are moving toward our goal of eliminating the tax on property and savings when inherited by descendants.

Even though total elimination of the tax may take several years, we have already approved a measure to protect more Americans from the ravages of inheritance taxes.

The tax, often called the death tax, currently attacks individual estates of more than