

All thanks to Joseph Theodore Jr.

Better still, over the years, many American communities have started to follow New Bedford's lead, and now illuminate flags above their own public buildings.

But the retired New Bedford wiring inspector would love to go one step further. If he had his way, every nation's flag would be similarly lighted.

"My No. 1 goal is to get the United Nations to illuminate each country's flag." Not only in the United Nations, he emphasizes, but over every national capitol as well. "I want to illuminate every flag, everywhere, with lights for world peace."

A lofty objective?

Certainly.

But it is fueled by one man's genuine desire for global harmony and love of country. And he comes by this love honestly, he maintains.

"Uncle Sam grabbed me the day I got drafted for World War II * * * and he's never let go."

And while the self-described "just a little guy from New Bedford" downplays his four years of U.S. Army infantry duty with the 26th Yankee Division during WWII, his two Purple Hearts tell a different story.

Anyone wounded twice when two different vehicles were blasted out from beneath him by land mines is a pretty big man by anyone's yardstick. And when you couple that with how Joe Theodore went on to become an unwitting eyewitness to history in three entirely different—though equally impressive—ways, it does nothing but improve his stature.

One proud memory was his time spent as President Truman's unofficial bodyguard at the Potsdam Conference in July 1945. His job was to chauffeur the secret service group charged with protecting the president for the nearly month-long series of historic meetings with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet Premier Josef Stalin.

"I would see President Truman and Winston Churchill nearly every day," he recounted. And when he got one glimpse—however brief—of the highly protected Soviet premiere, as well, he calculated he was one of the few American GIs to do so.

That month-long Potsdam stint, however, is perhaps the only period of Joe Theodore's entire WWII experience that is not equated with horror and sadness.

Whether inspecting Hitler's underground bunker in Berlin mere weeks after the end mad architect of World War II committed suicide, or reacting to the repugnance of naked bodies piled high in the concentration camps, Mr. Theodore viewed some strange, horrible sights.

"Many things I'd like to forget," he adds softly.

Even more than he could possibly have known at the time, these experiences instilled a revulsion to war that has only deepened with the passage of time. "Wars are stupid. We simply have to learn to live with one another. Today we are friends. Tomorrow, we're killing each other."

And he has been on a quest for peace—and the illumination of flags—ever since.

"I'm living two lives," Mr. Theodore explains. "One for my family (his wife of 58 years, Hilda, their two children, and one grandson), the other for Uncle Sam."

Having seen the carnage of war firsthand, his rationale is simple. "When I saw those piles of naked bodies I didn't know whether they were Jewish, Polish, German * * * or even American * * * All I knew was they were human rights beings." He shakes his head sadly.

"That was enough."

[From the New Bedford Standard Times]

(By John Doherty)

NEW BEDFORD—City officials and members of the St. Paul's Methodist Church congregation hope the United Nations takes notice of a small ceremony held last night.

St. Paul's congregants joined Mayor Frederick M. Kalisz Jr. last night in lighting a "peace tree" at the church on the corner of Rockdale Avenue and Kempton Street.

The tree, a stately ginkgo, was planted 44 years ago as part of a worldwide observance of the formation of the United Nations.

"This will alert all people who enter the city from the west side of the dream of peace we all share," said the Rev. Dogba Bass, of St. Paul's.

Several of the schoolchildren—grown now, of course—who participated in the planting of the ginkgo in 1955 were present at the lighting ceremony last night.

The tree, strung with 200 white bulbs, is scheduled to stay lighted through the rest of 1999, and is one of the features of the planned millennium celebration in New Bedford.

The city was one of about 200 communities designated a Millennium City by the White House.

Joseph Theodore, a member of American Legion Post 1 in New Bedford, originally pushed for the lighting.

In remarks last night, he likened the lighting of the tree to another tradition that began in New Bedford.

The first American flag lit up at night as a symbol of peace was lit in New Bedford.

Now, American flags around the country and at U.S. embassies worldwide follow the example set here.

Trees were planted all over the world in observance of the formation of the UN, said Mr. Theodore, and it is not unimaginable to think the lighting at St. Paul's last night could be duplicated elsewhere.

MAYOR TO LIGHT 44-YEAR-OLD UNITED NATIONS PEACE TREE

NEW BEDFORD—Mayor Frederick M. Kalisz Jr. and The Rev. Dogba R. Bass of St. Paul's United Methodist Church will participate in a tree lighting ceremony this evening, to mark the 44th anniversary of the United Nations Peace Tree located in New Bedford's West End.

The peace tree, which stands in front of St. Paul's United Methodist Church at Kempton Street and Rockdale Avenue, was planted in 1955 by children of the congregation to commemorate the 10th anniversary of "U.N. Charter Day," or "World Order Day."

Chartered Oct. 24, 1945, the United Nations offered hope as a new forum for resolving conflicts before they escalated into war.

Mayor Kalisz is lighting the peace tree as part of the city's millennium celebrations, the theme of which is "illumination," Mayor Kalisz said. "The children of St. Paul's Methodist Church gathered on this very spot to plant this tree as a gesture of hope that all governments would join the United Nations and work toward world peace."

The suggestion to incorporate the event into the city's millennium celebrations was made by Joseph Theodore Jr., a longtime Americanism officer for New Bedford Post 1 American Legion.

Director of Tourism Arthur P. Motta Jr. researched the tree, a Ginkgo, and said it is a rare and ancient species that dates back to the Permian Period of the Paleozoic Era, some 230 million years ago.

"The Ginkgo survives today because the Buddhist Monks of northern China considered it to be sacred, cultivating it in their temple gardens," said Motta. "Because of its high resistance to disease and its medical

value, the Ginkgo has been referred to as the 'Tree of Life.'"

Several of the children who participated in the original ceremony in 1955 are expected to attend the event. The ceremony will take place on today at 6 p.m.

JOHN V. WELLS, PH.D., DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR FOR RAILROAD ISSUES ON THE GROUND TRANSPORTATION SUB-COMMITTEE, TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 14, 2000

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a special member of the staff of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Jack Wells, who is leaving us this week to accept an appointment as Deputy Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration. On behalf of the Committee, I am pleased to express our gratitude to Jack for his effective and loyal service, and valued friendship.

Jack has served on the Committee—and its predecessor, the Committee on Public Works and Transportation—since 1993, initially as the Staff Director of our Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee, and more recently as the Democratic Staff Director in charge of railroad issues on our Ground Transportation Subcommittee. As our resident expert on rail issues, Jack has been indispensable to me and all of the Members on our side of the aisle, advising us on rail safety, mergers and competition issues, and ensuring the survival of Amtrak's fair treatment of employees, and the development of high speed rail. Jack has the rare ability to explore problems in great depth, while never losing sight of the overriding basic issues involved. His briefing memos were models of outstanding staff work.

In the 104th Congress, Jack worked on the Interstate Commerce Commission Termination Act of 1995, which abolished the ICC, and the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Amendments Act of 1996, which increased daily unemployment benefits for railroad workers. In the 105th Congress, he worked on the AMTRAK Reform and Accountability Act of 1997 and the rail title of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). During his tenure, he drafted several bills dealing with railroad safety, labor and competition.

Jack Wells, a native of Wilmington, Delaware, received his Bachelor's Degree from Harvard and Ph.D. in Economics from Yale University. He originally came to the Committee from the United States General Accounting Office where he was the Assistant Director for Surface Transportation Infrastructure Issues. His expertise and reporting at GAO involved overall transportation policy, trucking competition and deregulation issues, antitrust and science technology policy, and general economics issues.

Of direct interest to our Committee, Jack did a lot of the leading studies and analysis on airline deregulation and airline HUB issues. GAO routinely recognized Jack's abilities with meritorious service and outstanding performance awards. I remember reviewing Jack's

resume which covered six pages—he did indeed need that much room just to get everything in—and being truly impressed with the multitude of official reports and publications Jack produced—extraordinary diversity that made him a perfect candidate to head up the Committee's investigations and oversight activities. Also, he has a wide range of teaching experience at the graduate and undergraduate levels.

While carrying out his heavy congressional workload, Jack has also been actively involved in his community as a PTA treasurer, and a member of the Victorian Lyric Opera Company, and has supported his daughters' athletic activities. Jack has such a breadth of experience that the label "Jack-of-all-trades" aptly applies.

I join with Jack's many friends in wishing him, his lovely wife Heidi Hartman, and daughters Katherine, Laura and Jessica, all the best. Jack, Godspeed and success in your career pursuits.

1999 PENROSE CITIZEN OF THE YEAR, GARY SCHENCK

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 14, 2000

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize the 1999 Penrose Citizen of the Year, Mr. Gary Schenck.

Gary received this honor from the Penrose Chamber of Commerce because of the manage things he has done to improve his community. He always presents a very positive picture of Penrose. He volunteered hundreds of hours at the Chamber of Commerce since 1996. He is also very active with the Penrose Community Library and the Fremont Contractors Association. In addition, he has assisted in fund raising for the Penrose Volunteer Fire Department. Gary has recently held free classes for senior citizens who want to learn about the Internet.

It is with this, Mr. Speaker, that I offer this tribute of thanks and congratulations to Mr. Gary Schenck. The community of Penrose is better because of him.

ANDY PAPPAS, ONE OF ALTOONA'S GREATEST ASSETS

HON. BUD SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 14, 2000

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, it is with deep sadness that I rise today to pay tribute to a dear friend and fellow public servant, Mr. Andronic Pappas. Andy passed away last Friday at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City, following a brief illness.

Andy was born in Altoona, PA, and to the betterment of central Pennsylvania he never left. Instead, Andy through his love of his hometown community made Altoona a better place to live, work, and raise a family. He graduated from Altoona High School, served his country during the Korean conflict, and later served as mayor and elected councilman

of Altoona, but this is only the beginning of Andy's contribution to our community. He went on to serve as Democratic Committee Chairman, Chairman of the Altoona City Authority, Regional Director for the State Department of Commerce, President of the Blairmont Country Club, President of the Blair County Arts Foundation, and President of the Wehnwood PTA, to name a few. In his spare time he managed to earn a bachelor of arts degree from Penn State University, dabble in local theater, radio, and television at the same time building a highly successful real estate company.

Andy and I have worked hand-in-hand on numerous projects throughout the Blair County area and I had come to rely on his insight and council regarding local interests. His dedication to the community has raised the bar on what it means to serve the public. His life long commitment to Altoona will not soon be forgotten.

Anyone who knew Andy, knew of his great love for his family, his wife Jographia, his two daughters Elena and Zoe, and his two grandsons Michael and Stephen James. Mr. Speaker, I will close by paying tribute to the life of Mr. Andy Pappas, my friend, may he rest in peace.

TRIBUTE TO DEXTER McCLEON

HON. CHARLES W. "CHIP" PICKERING

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 14, 2000

Mr. PICKERING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dexter McCleon of Meridian, MS. Dexter was an integral part of the St. Louis Rams' road to victory in the 2000 Super Bowl.

While at the Meridian High School, Dexter earned consensus All-American honors and was selected as the Super Prep Dixie Player of the Year. Like so many of the great athletes in Mississippi, Dexter showed athletic prowess on both the football field and the baseball diamond. He amassed over 1,500 yards passing and more than 500 yards passing while maintaining a batting average of .395 with 11 home runs and 56 runs batted in.

Dexter's persistence and determination led him to the St. Louis Rams as the 40th selection of the 1997 draft. Dexter has quickly become a cornerstone of one of the NFL's most feared defensive backfields. As one of the league's great emerging cover corners, Dexter's 1999 statistics read like those of many NFL Hall of Fame inductees.

Dexter's hard work and dedication to purpose reflect Mississippi's record as one of the premier proving grounds for high school athletes. By continuing this dedication and work ethic throughout his life, this young man will succeed in all of his future endeavors.

I want to commend Dexter on his work as one of the emerging professional football stars from the State of Mississippi. I would also like to commend Dexter for being a worthy ambassador for our great State. It is my distinct pleasure to be able to congratulate Dexter on his Super Bowl victory.

HONORING MRS. MARILYN LANCE, NEW YORK STATE TEACHER OF THE YEAR

HON. JOHN E. SWEENEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 14, 2000

Mr. SWEENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor New York State's Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Marilyn Lance of East Greenbush, New York. Mrs. Lance surpassed nearly sixty other candidates to win the highly coveted award, which is affiliated with the national Teacher of the Year program. Mrs. Lance is the first Capitol Region teacher to win the award in twenty four years.

Marilyn Lance has dedicated the last 27 years to upholding the hopes and dreams of hundreds of children in the Averill Park Central School District. Optimism and positive vibes permeate from her classroom. She believes every child can achieve and provide the spark required to ignite their creativity, imagination and interest. Children embrace her caring demeanor and rise to meet her high academic standards.

Mrs. Lance brings a special set of skills into her class of first and second graders. She never asks a child to do something they can't do and has a knack for bringing out the best in every student.

Student success is her top priority. Her reward is seeing students grow and learn. She truly cares about each and every student. Mrs. Lance meets their needs at every level: educational, emotional, and spiritual. Children in her class are treated with respect and learn the value of kindness and decency. I commend her efforts to provide a rich, intellectually stimulating environment in which children learn the vital skills required to be successful in our society.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Marilyn Lance on her selection as New York State Teacher of the Year. Also, please join me in wishing her the very best of luck in the upcoming National Teacher of the Year competition.

JOHN PORTER WINNER OF THE WAYNE N. ASPINALL WATER LEADER OF THE YEAR AWARD

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 14, 2000

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize the winner of the 2000 Wayne N. Aspinall Water Leader of the Year Award, Mr. John Porter.

Water is a very important issue to the State of Colorado. Coloradans have to be very sensitive to issues dealing with water and water rights, to ensure that those rights are protected. This award represents a person who has dealt with water issues to the best of his ability to ensure the best interests of Colorado water.

John Porter has been the General Manager of the Dolores Water Conservancy District since 1982. As a result of John's management of the District and the Project, the Dolores Project is one of the most efficient water