

wind, scintillating drops of dew falling down to join their brethren on the glistening grass. Air conditioning with the twist of a knob.

This is America!

But luxuries, the majority of which can be purchased by money, do not define what being an American means to me.

Freedom. Yes, there are rules and regulations, a moral code, and systems of punishment for those who infringe and sever them. They are in place to protect the people, however, and are not oppressing as some governments, which implement so many restrictions that the citizens are suffocated by the layers upon layers of laws.

I can keep my lights on through the night, if I so wish. No policies prohibit me from befriending a Jew, a Muslim, or a person of color. And only my own predilections will rule my summer afternoon activities, be it in-line pick-up hockey on the basketball court down the street, or a lazy afternoon perched before my computer, like a dog passing away the hours chewing on rawhide.

Being a United States resident, to me, translates into the simple joy that I can ride my bike to the places that defined my care-free youth, mainly the elementary school's playground. And if I so wish, I'll stray from the paved trail and take the long route, or cut across the grass.

Most importantly, I possess no fear when being out alone. For I feel safe, in this country, that I will not be a victim of hostility based on any outward appearance. And I'd never really noticed how wonderful and rare that is until I spent three weeks on a teen tour with students from 21 different countries.

My best friend became a girl from Hong Kong, and, as we were walking along one overcast afternoon, she stated, "I hate the Beijing government." Then, she added, "If I said that in Hong Kong, in a casual conversation, I might be okay. But if I was in Beijing, I could get shot. That's why I like America, it's free for opinions."

Never experiencing any sort of political oppression, it's difficult for me to grasp what she must feel, or the fear of a simple slip translating into death.

And this country is not perfect.

But as the anthem states, this is "... the land of the free." Sovereignty is a daily part of life. What may have seemed like a burden—all the decisions one must make, and the consequences that can only be blamed on an individual—now seems liberating.

Existing in America means much to me, but the most poignant example is that I can pray, out loud, in Hebrew, with the shades drawn up and the door gaping, invitingly open.

On the trip, while occupying a dorm room, I prayed every morning, just as I do at home. The glaring difference was that the people who passed by my open doorway were not all Jewish. Openly, I expressed my faith and reinforced my beliefs to myself, my dedication to the Hashem.

How far we've traveled, in place, time, and pure progression, since my grandmother hid below ground in Germany, with but one dress, and could not even talk, let alone pray aloud, for fear of SS men. And the advances since my grandfather fought for survival in the same foreign country, with outlandish limitations, are miraculous.

Could, I wonder, either of them imagined a time in which their granddaughter—yes, a family!—could be so audacious as to flaunt her prayer?

It's not the passing of years, though, but the changing of countries that made it possible.

America may never be able to be defined, as being American means so many different

things to millions of unique people. For the country, when drawn, should not be its traditional shape, as seen on a map, but as a 3-D shape, with as many angles as it has citizens, for the people shape America as much as the land.

Being an American means choices, luxuries, decisions, freedoms, and a feeling of not importance, but responsibility, in illustrating the greatness of my country, and endeavoring to uphold the lofty ideals of the founders of this Nation, inhabitants who, like my grandparents, escaped tyranny and a role of inferiority to pull freedom to their chests and keep it there, chained 'til a death that does not come prematurely due to discrimination.

Being an American means I am an individual and have the independence to be just that—an American, because I believe in the country and the opportunity. While it may take a little digging, opportunity is available; even if found, one must clean off the dirt before pursuing it.

I am a living, breathing, original American, and that I can exist unscathed is what being a citizen of this realm is all about. Existing as a member of this free country means, to me, that if in 60 years my family can go from savoring every drop of water to survive to having a house with a mezuzah on each doorway, I can savor the prospects presented by freedom and find a way to take it a step farther.

After all, my door is always open.●

TRIBUTE TO MARY KAY ASH

● Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Mary Kay Ash.

On November 22, 2001, America and Texas lost a great person Mary Kay Ash.

Throughout Mary Kay Ash's life, her unswerving devotion to principles and to doing what is right enabled her to exert an influence unique in a society that was known for strict rules of hierarchy, specifically male hierarchy. She flourished where many fail, or simply remain in the shadows of obscurity. By doing so, she blazed the path for many women after her, we have all profited from her success.

Over her career, Mary Kay sacrificed a lot to fulfill her dream, do her duty to her family and her God, and to stand by her principles. It is women and men of that caliber who have made our country great.

Her savvy created an incredible business from a profit point of view, but, most important, she created a business that offers women the chance for personal and professional fulfillment and success. It is no wonder that Mary Kay Cosmetics is considered by Fortune Magazine as one of the top ten best companies for women, indeed, it is also recognized as one of The 100 Best Companies to Work for in America.

But Mary Kay never stopped with work, she did not even start with work. Her priorities were always clear: God first, family second, and career third. It is why, when her husband died from cancer, she put her endless energies to work in that arena as well, creating the Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation in 1996. This nonprofit provides funding for research of cancers affect-

ing women, and it has recently expanded its focus to address violence against women.

Since she was a fellow Texan, I was never surprised by her zest for life. E.B. White once wrote, "I arise in the morning torn between a desire to save the world and a desire to savor the world. This makes it hard to plan the day." Not for people like Mary Kay, she knew how to accomplish both.

Mary Kay remembered what was important yet still reached for the stars—and all of us are the better for it. Thank you Mary Kay, I hope you are driving a beautiful pink Cadillac up in heaven.●

TRIBUTE TO KAREN NYSTROM MEYER

● Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, Karen Nystrom Meyer was appointed to serve as the Executive Vice President of the Vermont Medical Society (VMS) in 1988. Throughout her tenure in office, Karen's work has been characterized by great integrity, compassion and a strong understanding of the critical role physicians play in improving the quality of life in the Green Mountain State. Many Vermonters shared my sense of loss when Karen Meyer recently announced her resignation in order to accept a new position in the field of higher education.

The fourteen years she led the society were years of great change and accomplishment for the organization. It was Karen's first job as an office assistant in a large internal medicine practice that gave her a real appreciation for the struggles and rewards of practicing medicine. The first woman executive of a State medical society in the country, she completely restructured the governance of the society moving from the traditional House of Delegates representative structure to an annual membership meeting format where each VMS member may participate in making Society policy. While Vermont was the first State to restructure its governance structure in this way, many other State societies have followed Vermont's lead.

During Karen's tenure at VMS, the society was able to achieve many of its policy initiatives at the State and Federal level. These include passing the "Clean Indoor Air Act," supporting lead screening for children, ensuring coverage of clinical trials, increasing access to health care for Vermonters, funding anti-tobacco programs, and developing a strong education program for physicians around end-of-life care.

Karen was also instrumental in helping to establish the Vermont Program for Quality in Health Care (VPQHC). Over the years, VPQHC has achieved national recognition for its important work developing clinical guidelines, reporting on health care quality in Vermont and educating physicians and practitioners. Karen has also demonstrated outstanding leadership and gained national recognition for her

work with the American Medical Association and the American Association of Medical Society Executives, where she has participated on many work groups and policy teams.

Prior to becoming Executive Vice President of the Vermont Medical Society, Karen was the Commissioner of Housing and Community Affairs for the State of Vermont. As Commissioner, she worked tirelessly to increase the availability of affordable housing in Vermont. However, I am sure she will say that her most enjoyable job was working for me as a legislative assistant in the 1970's when I represented Vermont in the House of Representatives. Based on our work together, I can personally attest to her grace, competency and sense of humor—all of which are the key characteristics of a successful public servant.

While Karen is leaving the medical society, she will continue to play an important role in improving the social fabric of Vermont. She has accepted a new position at the University of Vermont where she will work with the acting President to develop a renewed sense of mission for the University. I know that I speak for thousands of Vermonters in thanking her for extraordinary service to the Vermont Medical Society and conveying our best wishes in her future endeavors.●

TRIBUTE TO MONICA TENCATE

● Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to a departing Senate Finance Committee staffer, Monica Tencate. She has served the Senate with great distinction, and it is with much sadness that I am bidding her goodbye. I'd like to take a few moments to describe her contribution.

Monica came to the Senate from California in 1998, and joined Chairman Roth's Finance Committee health team. After effective service there, she moved to Senator FRIST's Subcommittee on Public Health, making a tremendous contribution on a broad range of challenging HELP Committee issues. I know her years with Senator FRIST were very rewarding ones for her, so I was delighted that she was willing to return to the Finance Committee to work with me, as Director of the Finance Committee's health policy team.

As I look back at this year, Monica was a real leader in the Committee's effort to strengthen and improve Medicare for the 21st Century, including prescription drug coverage for Medicare beneficiaries. She did a stellar job in helping to assemble a Tripartisan group, which put forward a framework for future success in this area. Due to the September 11 terrorist attacks, making major improvements to Medicare will have to wait until 2002. I believe, however, that we've laid a solid foundation for next year's efforts, and Monica's contribution was indispensable.

Monica also played a key role in the Committee's efforts to help provide

coverage to the uninsured, to streamline Medicare regulations for beneficiaries and providers, and to address potentially serious problems posed by the new hospital outpatient payment system. She's done all this while keeping in mind the reality that our federal health programs aren't free—it's hard-working Americans who pay for them. It's easy to lose sight of that fact here inside the Beltway, but Monica never has.

Monica's contribution to me and to the Senate, in fact, went beyond policy and politics. She was a true team player, earning the respect of everyone she worked with, and the affection of her fellow Finance Committee staffers. And she did all this during one of this body's most tumultuous years in recent history—a year we'll all remember for the 50-50 Senate, the change in party control, the September 11 attacks, and finally the anthrax attack that drove many of us out of our offices. She served in her extraordinarily challenging job under these difficult circumstances with grace, commitment, and good humor. She will be sorely missed.

Now Monica is heading home to San Diego, to rejoin her husband Mike, who's also serving the nation in the United States Marines. I wish her and Mike every blessing in this new phase of their life, and I extend to her my deepest thanks.●

200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CARLISLE FIRE COMPANY

● Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, among the images of September 11th that we will never forget, are the pictures of the firefighters rushing into the buildings to help, as everyone else who was able was trying to get out to safety. At that moment, without discussion or explanation, an appreciation for the extraordinary service and leading citizenship of firefighters became a prominent and, I hope, permanent feature of our collective consciousness.

In my State of Delaware, we have a rich heritage of local fire companies serving our communities, a tradition of neighbors helping neighbors. And I rise today to honor one of those local departments, the Carlisle Fire Company, which serves the City of Milford, Delaware and which will celebrate its 200th anniversary in 2002.

Originally founded under charter from the State Legislature, as, simply, a "Fire Fighting Organization," the company began its service in the spring of 1802, a full 90 years before the first water mains and fire hydrants were installed in Milford. A hand drawn hook-and-ladder was acquired, and was stored along with other equipment at a building owned by Mrs. Angeline Marshall, appropriately, on Water Street.

In 1915, the department reincorporated as the Milford Fire Company, and that same year, there was a 10-day fund drive which raised money to purchase a triple combination fire truck

Milford's Truck No. 1. A second name change followed in 1918, to honor Paris T. Carlisle, a Milford resident and member and officer of the Fire Company, who was killed in France during World War I. In 1921, the Company broke ground to build its first fire station, and in 1923, after another successful fundraising drive, Truck No. 2 was purchased and Truck No. 1 refitted to better serve the community. Ground was broken for the current fire hall on Northwest Front Street in 1977, and as the folks in Milford will tell you with well-earned pride, they paid off and burned the mortgage in 1990. At about the same time, ambulance service was added.

From that hall on Front Street, the Carlisle Fire Company responds to more than 1,800 calls per year. With an active Ladies Auxiliary, founded in 1963 with Peggy Jester as its first president, and a Junior Member program, created by then-Chief Marvin Hitch in 1973, the Company is truly a center of community life in Milford. And it also has a special place in our statewide fire-fighting community; the Delaware Volunteer Firemen's Association (DVFA) was organized in Milford in February of 1921, and the first president was Charles E. Varney, who was also president of the Carlisle Fire Company. The Company has continued its leadership in statewide programs ever since.

It is my privilege to share some of the history and hopefully some of the spirit of the Carlisle Fire Company with my colleagues and with our fellow citizens today. We honor the Company's 200th anniversary, and the extraordinary commitment and service that it represents, with gratitude to local firefighters, our neighbors who are there when we need them most. Congratulations to President Francis Morris and Fire Chief Kevin Twilley, and to all the officers, members and friends of the Carlisle Fire Company again, with great respect and with thanks.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:42 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks,