

TRIBUTE TO MR. KEN BURNS

HON. ROBERT W. NEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 4, 2004

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, it is with sad tidings that I announce the loss of Ken Burns, a dedicated House employee that many of us had the pleasure of working with.

Ken began his career with the House working for House Information Resources as a Communications Specialist in November 1999. During his time there, Ken served as the PBX administrator and supported video conferencing for all congressional offices. Ken also served as a Move Coordinator during the last transition. He was always very helpful and dedicated to the customer.

Ken received numerous letters of recognition for his cheerful and positive attitude. He never hesitated to go the extra mile to make sure his customers were totally satisfied. He made himself available to assist customers no matter when he was needed. He was a real pleasure to work with and always maintained an upbeat attitude—even when you knew things were not going well for him.

And for the past year, Ken worked at the Recording Studio, handling all the video teleconferences for Members. He was very knowledgeable about the systems and stayed on top of new technologies. Ken was always very helpful in many areas of that operation—he helped answer phones at the front desk and operated television cameras in the House studios regularly. Ken's personality was infectious, always positive, upbeat, and never had a bad word to say about anyone.

I feel privileged to have known Ken as a person and know that he will be sorely missed by all who had the pleasure of working with him.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF
FIRE CHIEF MICHAEL P. BIRRELL**HON. JOHN D. DINGELL**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 4, 2004

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my friend Michael P. Birrell on the occasion of his retirement from the Dearborn Fire Department after 29 dignified years of service.

Serving as the Chief of the Department since March 2000, Mr. Birrell has shown tremendous dedication and leadership throughout his long-lasting career. He joined the Department on December 9, 1975 as a probationary firefighter. Promoted to Firefighter 2 in 1980 and Firefighter 3, an engine driver, in 1985, Mr. Birrell's achievements resulted in him becoming Fire Lieutenant in 1990, Captain in 1994, and Battalion Chief in 1995.

In addition to serving in the Fire Department, Mr. Birrell finds many ways to channel his supportive energy into the community. He is a Certified Instructor of the Michigan Firefighter Training Council and a National Fire Academy Instructor of Incident Command and Emergency Response to Terrorism.

Mr. Birrell graduated from Saint Alphonsus High School in 1968 and attended Henry Ford

Community College and Eastern Michigan University. A veteran of the U.S. Army from March of 1970 to January of 1972, Mr. Birrell served with the Military Police and was honorably discharged as Specialist 4.

Mr. Birrell and his wife, Elaine, have one daughter, Kathleen, who is a senior at Edsel Ford High School. His stepson, Stuart Debrowsky, is also a Dearborn Firefighter.

As Mr. Birrell enters his retirement years, I would like to give him my best wishes for a relaxing and enjoyable future. I would like to thank him for all of his hard work and commitment to the Dearborn Fire Department and Dearborn community.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask that my colleagues join me in commending Chief Birrell for leadership in both his Department and community, as we celebrate his 29 years of dedication to the Dearborn Fire Department.

FREEDOM FOR LIBRADO RICARDO
LINARES GARCÍA**HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 4, 2004

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about Librado Ricardo Linares García, a prisoner of conscience in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Linares is an engineer who was expelled from Castro's totalitarian Communist Party in 1992 after he called for economic reforms. Following his eviction, Mr. Linares decided the most effective way to fight Castro's brutal repression was to join the dissident movement. Eventually, Mr. Linares became president of the Cuban Reflection Movement.

Between 1995 and November 1999, Mr. Linares was continually harassed, arrested, detained, and fined by Castro's ruthless machinery of repression. Despite these constant setbacks, Mr. Linares persevered in his quest to obtain basic human rights for every Cuban citizen. Unfortunately, on March 18, 2003, the tyrant Castro had Mr. Linares arrested and convicted on sham charges.

According to Amnesty International, in the sham trial verdict, Mr. Linares was accused of "using his human rights work as a front for alleged counterrevolutionary activities such as meetings, conferences and seminars."

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Linares is suffering because of the gross human rights abuses and outrageous repression that continue every day in totalitarian Cuba. Mr. Linares is languishing in the totalitarian gulag because he believes in basic human rights for every Cuban. It is that simple, Mr. Linares is confined in a dungeon because he believes in freedom and the tyrant Castro believes in repression.

My colleagues, we must stand as one and demand freedom for Librado Ricardo Linares García and every prisoner of conscience in totalitarian Cuba.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RUBÉN HINOJOSA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 4, 2004

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I was unavoidably detained. Had I been

present, I would have voted "yes" on rollcall No. 12.

HONORING JUSTIN GREGORICH

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 4, 2004

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Justin Gregorich, one of my young constituents who recently saved someone's life.

Justin was walking home from football practice last week when he witnessed an elderly man lose control of his car, drive into a retention pond, and begin sinking in the snake and alligator-filled water. Justin instantly dove into the water, and with the help of two other passers by, pulled the man from his submerged car to safety.

Justin's two helpers, Michael McBayer and Shawn Brady, live in Chairman BILL YOUNG's congressional district, which borders mine. Justin credited Mr. McBayer and Mr. Brady for saving the car's driver, though he said his only thought when he saw the crash was that "I gotta save that guy." I think that Justin's mother, Alice, must have taught her son to be humble and help others, which is exactly what he did that day. She certainly deserves credit for raising such an outstanding young man.

Mr. Speaker, Justin, Michael, and Shawn are heroes in the truest sense of the word. They disregarded their own safety for that of another. Their selfless actions should remind us all of the fundamental goodness and humanity that so many of our countrymen exhibit everyday. I urge our colleagues to join me in thanking them for their actions and for reminding us of the spirit of compassion and courage which makes our country great.

A BILL TO PROVIDE FOR TAX-EXEMPT
FINANCING FOR UNITED
NATIONS FACILITIES**HON. AMO HOUGHTON**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 4, 2004

Mr. HOUGHTON. Mr. Speaker, today I am joined by my colleague from New Jersey, DONALD PAYNE, in introducing a bill to provide for tax-exempt financing for new United Nations facilities. This is a bipartisan effort by the two of us, as the current Congressional delegates to the United Nations.

The bill is straightforward and, like a provision in effect before 1986, would allow the use of tax-exempt bonds for the building of new UN facilities, other than the UN Headquarters itself. As a result of the 1986 changes, the UN is now treated as if it were a for-profit company for purposes of tax-exempt bonds, much less favorably than charitable hospitals, universities or State or local governments.

Most recognize that the United Nations Secretariat and Headquarters facilities are now more than 50 years old and greatly in need of renovation and reconfiguration to increase the efficiency of UN functions, improve security and life safety, and reduce overhead and administrative costs.

Let me give you a few examples of the need for the renovation. Most of the building

systems have passed their life expectancy: The plumbing was installed in 1952 and most of the electrical systems in the Secretariat building were installed in 1949. These are clearly outdated. The building contains asbestos and it does not have sprinklers, both of which create significant safety hazards. And, of course, the buildings were not built with today's terrorist threats in mind. These needs have been carefully and extensively studied not only by the UN but also by the United States General Accounting Office, which concluded that the UN's planning for renovation has been reasonable.

In the President's budget released earlier this week, he proposed that the United States provide the United Nations with a 30-year, \$1.2 billion loan to finance the renovation, another recognition of the importance of moving forward with the renovation.

The work cannot commence without a series of preliminary steps. These include financing and constructing a new building for the UN in New York City that the UN General Assembly, UN Secretariat and other UN personnel at UN Headquarters would occupy while the needed renovation and reconfiguration of Headquarters space proceeds. Due to the extent of the needed work and existing asbestos conditions, the current Headquarters space must be vacated until the Headquarters renovation and reconfiguration are completed.

New York City and State propose to provide the land for the new building without cost and to have a public benefit tax-exempt agency of the State arrange to finance, construct and operate the new building. The bonds that would be issued under this proposal would be secured by rent paid by the UN for its use of the new building until the bonds are paid, at which time the UN may become the owner of the land and new building. The UN will undertake the Headquarters renovation and reconfiguration independently, including payment of the cost for the work, without financing or other financial assistance from New York City or State.

Following completion of the new building, which is estimated to cost approximately \$475 million, the renovation and reconfiguration of the UN Headquarters facilities can begin. That work is expected to be completed in 2011 under the current schedule. When the work is completed, the new building will permit all UN Headquarters space and activities that are now scattered in different locations in New York City to be consolidated at that single location connected directly to the renovated and reconfigured Headquarters space.

Expedient work on the needed renovation and reconfiguration is very much in the interest of the UN and in our national interest. The work when completed will strengthen the effectiveness of the UN organization, address security and life safety requirements and improve efficiency, thereby significantly reducing ongoing costs. Moreover, the work will further cement the presence of the UN in the United States, which not only benefits the United States internationally but also provides substantial employment and business opportunities with tens of millions of dollars for Americans and for New York.

We ask for your support of this important legislation.

THE DECEMBER 22, 2003 EARTHQUAKE IN SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

HON. WILLIAM M. THOMAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 4, 2004

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a resolution expressing the sense the House of Representatives with respect to the earthquake that occurred in San Luis Obispo County, California on December 22, 2003. Most importantly, I would like to recognize and commend the public safety and law enforcement personnel, elected officials, and the people of San Luis Obispo County for their courageous and effective response to this disaster.

This earthquake occurred at 11:15 a.m. on December 22, 2003. Its epicenter was in San Luis Obispo County, approximately 6 miles northeast of San Simeon and 24 miles northwest of Paso Robles. The earthquake measured 6.5 on the Richter scale, the largest quake to hit the area since 1952, and it was felt from Los Angeles to San Francisco with the most extensive damage occurring in the City of Paso Robles.

Tragically two lives were lost and more than 40 persons sustained injuries. Thankfully, the loss of additional lives was averted through the quick and professional response provided by the public safety and law enforcement personnel and elected officials who serve the people of San Luis Obispo County and the State of California.

San Luis Obispo County experienced a massive disaster but it is evident that recovery has begun as a result of the vibrant actions taken by its residents and leaders. When complete, this renewal will serve as a reminder of the fierce determination displayed by the community and local, state, and federal governments to rebuild in the wake of this disaster.

Accordingly, I ask that this resolution be supported in order to recognize and honor those local officials, public safety and law enforcement personnel, and individuals, who served San Luis Obispo County in the aftermath of this natural disaster.

TRIBUTE TO RICHARD ROA

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 4, 2004

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I pay tribute today to the life of Richard Roa. Richard recently passed away, leaving a legacy of community work and commitment to those he loved. He was a magnanimous figure who was dedicated to his family, his friends, and his roots. It gives me no greater pleasure than honoring his memory today.

To all those who knew Richard, he exhibited generosity of spirit, love for his fellow man, and dedication to his work. He constantly challenged the status quo and was never afraid to speak his mind, undoubtedly leaving an immeasurable impression on his community.

The life of Richard Roa took him from Riverside, California, where he was born and raised, to Japan and Korea, where he was as-

signed to active duty as corporal for the 40th Infantry Division.

After completing his military service, Richard turned to business, working for Helgeson Buick, before moving on to community work. He was soon named Community Relations Coordinator for the City of Riverside and became the first president of the Casa Blanca Community Action Group (CAG), helping to address the problems of an area that needed his caring touch. At Casa Blanca, Richard found himself fighting for improved housing, increased business development, and the creation of important neighborhood public services. He always advocated for those in need and was beloved by those around him.

I join today with family and friends in paying my respects to Richard Roa. He was a generous and gentle man who fought the good fight and will be deeply missed by all.

CONGRATULATING BUSH
CHAUDHARY, ON HIS ACHIEVEMENT

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 4, 2004

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I proudly rise today to congratulate Mr. Bush Chaudhary of Providence, Rhode Island on his receipt of the prestigious Ambassadors for Peace Award. The Ambassadors for Peace Award is bestowed upon 50 outstanding American and other international leaders for exemplary service in the arena of interfaith reconciliation and cooperation amongst Christians, Jews, and Muslims. Mr. Chaudhary will be presented with the award at a ceremony on the 4th of February 2004.

As the founding President of the India Museum Heritage Society, Mr. Chaudhary has played a tremendous role in fostering interfaith tolerance in his community. As the past President of both the India Association of Rhode Island and the American Freedom Coalition, Mr. Chaudhary has served as a community leader for over 25 years.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I hope our colleagues will join me in congratulating Bush Chaudhary for his achievement, and I wish him great success in all of his future endeavors.

IN MEMORY OF JOHN GELFF, SAN
JUAN CAPISTRANO CITY
COUNCILMEMBER

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 4, 2004

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember and pay my respects to an individual whose contributions to his community were exceptional. San Juan Capistrano City Councilman John Gelff recently passed away and today I would like the House of Representatives to recognize his contributions to his community.

John's life is marked by his service to community and others. He served in many public capacities throughout Orange County during