

country, old-time, and bluegrass recordings for the major labels.

Over the years, the label has released nearly 200 different recorded projects. In addition to producing CDs for release on Copper Creek, the label has been active in producing historical reissues for other groups and labels that have ties to the Commonwealth of Virginia.

By sharing the history of bluegrass and vintage music and remaining active in current musical styles, Copper Creek Records has enriched our nation's cultural and historic understanding. Again, congratulations to Copper Creek Records on their 25th year.

ANTONIO CHAVEZ HONORED FOR
30 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE
COMMUNITY

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2004

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the achievements of Antonio Chavez and would like to recognize his extraordinary and tireless service to our community.

His first job with the County was in the Public Guardian's Office in 1974. Later, he was hired by Tom Guerin to work in Personnel's Affirmative Action Unit, and then worked in the Recruitment and Examining Unit as an Analyst. Antonio moved on in 1978 when he heard his true calling—job placement at Social Services. During his 15 years with JTPA, he focused on job development. In 1993 a new adventure began with the Gain Program, which later became CalWORKs. Later, at 1888 Senter Road Employment Connection, he earned the title, "Mr. Job Placement."

Throughout much of the time when he worked with GAIN/CalWORKs, he also held another position in the community for which he selflessly devoted long hours for many years: President of the Personnel Management Association of Aztlan (PMMA, now known as CHISPPA). This non-profit organization was truly a benefit to the Latino community, providing many professional development workshops for job seekers and scholarships for college students.

That organization also developed a mentorship/internship program that helped many college students and graduates gain valuable experience and employment. Under Antonio's leadership, PMMA also played a major role in the planning and implementation of many of Jobs America's Diversity Job Fairs.

Antonio Chavez has devoted his life to enrich and advance his community, and his contribution deserves to be honored to serve as an inspiration a new generation of San Jose residents.

I want to thank Antonio Chavez for his many years of service to our community and wish him nothing but the best in this next phase of his life.

TRIBUTE TO GORDON AND MARY
ELWELL

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2004

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate a recent achievement of two people who, in celebrating their 50th year of marriage, have provided an inspiring example to all Americans. On June 5, 1954 at Holy Family Church, South Buffalo, New York sweethearts Gordon Elwell married Mary Mattimore. With not much more at the beginning to call their own except their marriage, their faith and vast opportunities afforded by this great country, Gordon and Mary have come a long way in the 50 years of marriage.

Gordon became a respected house builder in the Buffalo, New York area. Mary ran the household and tirelessly provided a loving and nurturing home environment for her husband and eight children. Throughout their incredible life together, Gordon and Mary have dedicated their lives to each other, their and children and grandchildren. To date they have been blessed with twelve grandchildren to spoil as only grandparents can.

In a society with one of the highest divorce rates in the world, Gordon and Mary have provided their children and grandchildren with a shining example of a successful marriage. It is all about hard work, a sense of humor and yes, a love that will not quit. Gordon and Mary have been truly blessed by the first 50 years of this magical marriage, and here's hoping that the best is yet to come. On behalf of my colleagues, let me join the many friends and admirers in wishing Gordon and Mary, and their family, all good fortune during the next 50 years.

WHEN "UP TO CODE" JUST ISN'T
ENOUGH

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2004

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, last year we saw an alarming increase in the number of fire related deaths in nursing homes. Fires at nursing homes in Hartford, CT and Nashville, TN claimed the lives of 31 residents, many of whom were elderly or bedridden.

In both cases, these buildings were considered "up to code," in that they met all fire codes and regulations applicable to their age and construction. These codes exempted both buildings from laws requiring them to be equipped with sprinklers because they were considered too old, and too costly, to retrofit. Most in the nursing home industry say this is an economic decision, that homes simply cannot afford the cost of retrofitting their facilities with sprinkler systems. The people of Hartford and Nashville, however, would say that this gap in fire protection is too high a cost where the safety of their loved ones is concerned.

With reduced mobility and health related impairments, the nursing home population is significantly more vulnerable in fire related emergencies. Although it has been repeatedly prov-

en that the presence of fire sprinklers significantly improves the chances of survival for older adults during a fire, the GAO reports that 20 to 30 percent of the approximately 17,000 nursing homes nationwide do not have an automatic fire sprinkler system. While some states have already taken action to ensure that their nursing homes are equipped with sprinklers, far too many lack such life saving and common sense requirements.

Today, even after last year's fires, there is no comprehensive federal standard for the inclusion of sprinklers in the nation's nursing homes. While the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services last year adopted the 2000 edition National Fire Protection Association's Life Safety Code, which required that new and renovated nursing homes be equipped with sprinklers, this new policy did not address the lack of sprinklers in already existing older homes. As a result, thousands of homes are allowed to operate "up to code," yet lacking a life saving sprinkler system.

Last week the GAO released a study on nursing home fire safety which concluded that "the substantial loss of life in the Hartford and Nashville fires could have been reduced or eliminated by the presence of properly functioning automatic sprinkler systems." The report also found that "federal oversight of nursing home compliance with fire safety standards is inadequate," and has led to inconsistent monitoring of fire safety standards, incomplete data on sprinkler coverage, and an alarming gap in nursing home fire protection. Above all, the report underscored the need for immediate action.

To this end, I have introduced the Nursing Home Fire Safety Act to eliminate the threat of fire for the 1.6 million elderly and disabled Americans living in nursing homes. Under this bill, all nursing homes participating in Medicare and Medicaid would be required to be fully equipped with automatic fire sprinklers within 5 years. With 97 percent of all nursing homes participating in these programs, this bill would protect the greatest number of Americans possible.

This bill also addresses what is generally seen as the biggest hurdle to installing sprinklers—the cost. Under my bill, any nursing home that has to pay to install sprinklers to meet this new requirement would be fully reimbursed through either Medicare or Medicaid. These reimbursements would be for the total cost of installing a sprinkler system, and would in no way impact any payment, service or program already offered through either program.

Although the 108th Congress is winding to a close, I feel it is important to introduce this bill now and take this crucial first step to begin a long delayed dialogue on nursing home fire safety. Many groups have been looking at this problem for over a year now, and will all undoubtedly have different ideas on an ideal solution. In light of the new information put forward in the GAO report, I look forward to working with them to improve this legislation and to find the best way to ensure that our nursing homes have the safety equipment they need to keep their residents safe from fire.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government has turned a blind eye to this problem for far too long. "Up to code" is simply not enough when it comes to protecting the lives of our nation's nursing home population. The fires in Hartford and Nashville demonstrate the terrible and unacceptable consequences of allowing nursing

homes to continue to lack vital life saving safety equipment. It is time for Congress to take action to protect our nation's most frail and vulnerable, and prevent similar tragedies in the future.

I urge my colleagues to join me in helping to make nursing homes in their districts, and around the country, safe from the threat of fire.

A SALUTE TO COACH GAYLE HATCH AND HIS SELECTION AS COACH OF THE U.S. OLYMPIC WEIGHTLIFTING TEAM

HON. RICHARD H. BAKER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2004

Mr. BAKER. Mr. Speaker, as many in this chamber now know, Coach Gayle Hatch of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, will be the coach of the U.S. Olympic Weightlifting Team at the 2004 Summer Olympiad in Athens, Greece.

I can think of no one associated with coaching, even at the highest levels, more deserving of Olympic recognition. The Olympics is the venue where the best of our world's athletes compete and pursue the ideals of sportsmanship.

Hard work, hard work, and hard work are three of the most important elements of preparation. Talent is certainly important, but commitment to principle is essential. There is no other challenge to an athlete that holds out the highest standards of conduct, as the minimum standard for admission. This makes participation in the Olympics a rare honor. To be selected as a coach of such competitors is even more special.

It is likely that most in the House who listen to this text would assume it is written as a casual political statement to acknowledge Coach Hatch's recent success. Few would know of our long-standing friendship.

It was well over 20 years ago when I first brought my son Brandon to Coach Hatch's training facility. I thought well enough of him then to trust his guidance with my own son. To the exclusion of all other sports, Brandon trained with a commitment I have not seen before. Today my son is a hard working and disciplined person, in large measure due to the principles instilled in Coach Hatch's gym.

I also know the same is true for many men and women who have been part of the "Hatch" family. Whether in sports or other endeavors, graduates of the "Hatch School of Hard Work" always found ways to succeed in life. This is why I rise today to speak to my colleagues in the House.

Coach Hatch's contribution to the Baton Rouge and sporting community goes far beyond helping a talented young athlete finish in first place. Coach Hatch's work, by instilling principles of decency into young people, is of immeasurable value.

The Olympic Committee has selected Coach Hatch to lead young Americans in the most difficult athletic challenge they will likely ever face. This is a big deal. But I know that our team members will bring honor to America, because of their principled conduct which Coach Hatch will require. Their athletic success will only be an additional reward.

Long after Coach Hatch returns home from Athens, returning I hope, to coach more young

people, the awards and acknowledgments will continue to come. Some may be from an Olympic Committee, or an Olympian here or there, but hundreds will come from dads like me. We know, Coach Hatch, what you have given of yourself to help mold our children into principled and committed young adults.

Although it can't be found or put on a shelf, I hope you take pride in hearing all us dads say, "Thanks Coach".

For those who don't know Coach Hatch, it is worth noting that he has been active as a weightlifting and strength coach for more than 30 years, and the Gayle Hatch Weightlifting Team has won more than 40 men's Junior, Senior, and Masters national championships. Coach Hatch is a member of the USA Weightlifting Hall of Fame, the National Master Weightlifting Hall of Fame and the USA Strength and Conditioning Coaches Hall of Fame. He holds USA Weightlifting's highest certificate ranking, Senior U.S. International Coach, and is the director of USA Weightlifting's Southern Regional Training Center.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 105TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL COURT REPORTERS ASSOCIATION

HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2004

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor America's stenographic court reporters and captioners as they celebrate the 105th anniversary of their association.

For centuries, scribes have captured the spoken word to record major and everyday events in recorded history. Shorthand reporters were vital to the preservation of our Nation's founding documents, including the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. We use them every day in Congress to record the proceedings of our body.

They also provide a valuable service in reaching the hearing-impaired by providing broadcast captioning through Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART). This service benefits millions of Americans every day.

Mr. Speaker, I join with other Members of Congress in honoring and celebrating the efforts of all stenographic court reporters and captioners on July 30, 2004, as they celebrate the 105th anniversary of their association.

FOOD ALLERGEN LABELING AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT

HON. MARTIN T. MEEHAN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2004

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act. I would like to thank Representative NITA LOWEY for her leadership on this issue, and I would also like to thank Abby Giarrosso of Methuen, Massachusetts for bringing this important bill to my attention.

Abby and her family request a meeting with my office because Abby wanted to share her

experience as a child with celiac disease and to get legislation passed making it easier for her to eat safely. She shared letters that she had received from food companies in response to her requests for lists of products she could eat. The response letters were telling. Some gave her examples of gluten-free foods and others said that it was just too hard for them to break down their ingredients.

After Abby came in to my office, I immediately cosponsored the bill, and commissioned a certificate for Abby making her an honorary Legislative Assistant for her work to pass this bill into law.

Abby's story is so touching and compelling. At a birthday party she recently attended, they served pizza and cake and all of the children were given an assortment of goodies as party favors. She has a hard time in situations like that because while the other kids can eat the food, she has to just watch. Her parents do a fantastic job working around the problem. At the party they had her bring her own gluten-free pizza. It seemed reasonable to me that if manufacturers are going to sell products that have serious adverse health effects for a large number of consumers, the least they can do is disclose those ingredients.

The Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act will make it easier for people with food allergies to more easily identify a product's ingredients. By requiring food labels to list what, if any, of the eight major food allergens are contained in a product, the bill will protect people with food allergies from the risk of dangerous and even life-threatening reactions.

The bill will also help the estimated three million Americans who suffer from celiac disease, an autoimmune disease that's triggered by the consumption of gluten. The legislation instructs the Department of Health and Human Services to define what constitutes "gluten-free" food and how the term should be used on food labels. For those who suffer from celiac disease, like Abby Giarrosso, accurate and easy to read food ingredient labels are critical to their health and well-being.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

PROTECTING RAILROAD OPERATORS, TRAVELERS, EMPLOYEES, AND COMMUNITIES WITH TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ACT OF 2004

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2004

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, today my colleagues, Congresswoman BROWN, the Ranking Democratic Member of the Railroad Subcommittee of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Congressmen LIPINSKI, DEFAZIO, CUMMINGS, BLUMENAUER, LARSEN, and MEEHAN, join me in introducing H.R. _____'s, the "Protecting Railroad Operators, Travelers, Employees, and Communities with Transportation Security Act of 2004," PROTECTS Act.

On March 11, 2004, a coordinated terrorist attack against the commuter train system of Madrid, Spain, killed 191 people and wounded more than 1,800 others, making it the deadliest terrorist attack against European civilians