

DAILY DOUBLE-WIDE

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 4, 2004

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, Aaron Tallent, a member of my staff, has written a very interesting and entertaining article for the current issue of the Washington City Paper.

He makes the very important point that just possibly some sophisticated city dwellers should not look down their noses at those millions around the country who live in mobile homes.

There are many good and intelligent people who live in these homes, and I would like to call this outstanding article to the attention of my colleagues and other readers of the RECORD.

[From the Washington City Paper, Apr. 30, 2004]

DAILY DOUBLE-WIDE

(By Aaron Tallent)

One night at the Capitol Lounge, after I'd been in Washington for a few months, I found myself talking to an aide for a Northern congressman. He was sharing a fact he'd picked up in a meeting with a housing-coalition representative that day: "Trailers are not considered real housing, because they depreciate in value the minute they are dropped off the truck."

Then he added, "Have you ever been in a trailer? They're downright trashy."

I let it slide. He didn't know that I come from Tellico Plains, Tenn.—population 900, according to the last census. Many of my closest friends still live in Tellico Plains. And many of them live in trailers.

My friend Chris, for instance, spent more than three years living in a single-wide after college. He's a high-school English teacher now, and his wife is a schoolteacher as well. He's also an ordained preacher. With the money they saved living up on blocks, he and his wife are now homeowners at 26.

No one in my group at the Capitol Lounge, freely cracking trailer jokes, was even close to owning a home. They weren't even able to take care of themselves. The Yankee socioeconomics expert ended the night puking on the floor. A self-proclaimed Southern belle kept talking about how frustrated she was because the guy she'd been hooking up with for two months still hadn't taken her out to dinner. I went out to get cigarettes with a lobbyist for a fiscally conservative nonprofit; he put Marlboro Lights on his Visa.

You want to talk about trailer trash? Put down your Stella, turn-off your Blackberry, and listen: You are trailer trash.

Just because your neighborhood is geographically broken down by blocks does not mean that you metaphorically don't live up on them. Urban America is full of trailer parks. You just have fancier names for them.

Let's stop by your studio apartment, shall we? You're proud of the location, naturally. In Dupont Circle, on Capitol Hill, in Georgetown—so sophisticated! So many urbane attractions: Now let's go inside.

Whoa! Almost tripped over your futon. Didn't expect it to be so close to the doorway! It seems your futon is the center of your place. Sitting on it, you can reach over to the bed and fluff your pillows with one hand, while you pop a DVD into your entertainment center with the other. How convenient!

Of course, I caught you at a bad time. Normally when you're expecting company, you

put the room divider up to hide the bed from the "living room." That's about as concealing as hair in a can. In the kitchenette, you have a two-burner stove and a counter with just enough room to make a peanut-butter sandwich. Is there a dishwasher? I think not. We could go into your bathroom, but with the clothes hamper, there's no room to move.

Your mini-estate, like a trailer, is simply the compromise you make to live on a lower income. And yours isn't necessarily the nicer compromise. Climb up on the porch and I'll take you inside a Tennessee trailer.

How about that! There's a living room with enough space for a couch, love seat, and recliner. Stick your head in the kitchen—the separate kitchen—and you've got a four-grill stove and a counter big enough for preparing dinner parties. Still convinced your prison cell is nicer? Walk down the hall and see, not one, not two, but three bedrooms! Then to top it off, we have a bathroom that can hold a hamper, a magazine rack, and two people. If you want to upgrade, there's room for a Jacuzzi.

On the inside, a well-kept trailer could hang with any nice apartment in the D.C. metro area. Step out the back door and . . . oh, look, it's a yard.

Most efficiency apartments don't even have a back door. But that's not your real home, you say. You're not planning on living there forever. You've just come to Washington to work for a politician or a nonprofit that stands for everything you believe in. The efficiency is just a stepping-stone, a place to lay your head until you figure out where you want to go with your life and career. Or until you buy a condo in Arlington.

Welcome to Tellico Plains. My college-graduate friends, starting out in nursing, physical therapy, or factory work, were able to buy or inherit pieces of land. They just couldn't build houses right away. So they bought trailers. Yes, their purchases depreciated fast. But not as fast as the \$12,000 you threw away in rent last year.

Now, some of the folks I went to school with may spend the rest of their lives in trailers. They've got low-income jobs and no means to find better ones. They can build a house now, or they can guarantee that their children will always have clothes on their back and three meals a day. It is no different from an urban family living in a cramped apartment.

I have received an e-mail no less than 10 times titled "Tennessee's Latest Lottery Winner." It contains a picture of a trailer with a limousine parked out front. Like most jokes based on stereotypes, it has some truth behind it. Growing up, I saw my fair share of broken-down trailers with new Corvettes in the driveway or satellite dishes in the yard.

But for every trailer owner who blows a third of his modest paycheck on lotto tickets, there is a D.C. studio-dweller running up a \$300 tab at McFadden's or Café Citron, then putting milk and bread on his credit card the next day. For every trailer with a brand-new, souped-up Ford F-150 in the driveway, there is a Washington efficiency with Brooks Brothers suits and a Burberry coat in the closet. And for every one of you who thinks a mobile home is the end of existence, trust me, there's someone who'd take one look at your one-room wonder, shudder, and thank the stars for his comfortable double-wide.

COMMEMORATING THE BIRTHDAY OF PRESIDENT JAMES MONROE

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 4, 2004

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the birthday of a great American president, and a son and servant of Virginia, James Monroe.

James Monroe was born in Westmoreland County, Virginia, on April 28, 1758, attended the College of William and Mary in Virginia, and served in the Revolutionary War, in which he was wounded at the pivotal battle of Trenton. After the Revolutionary War, Monroe was a member of the Continental Congress, the United States Senate, minister to France, governor of Virginia, was again sent to France to assist in negotiating the Louisiana Purchase, served again as governor of Virginia, as secretary of state for President James Madison, and briefly as secretary of war.

This extraordinary record of service to the Nation and the Commonwealth was further enhanced when James Monroe was elected president of the United States in 1816, and was reelected in 1820. It was in President Monroe's second term that he annunciated what would become a vital foundation of our Nation's foreign policy: the Monroe Doctrine. The doctrine announced American opposition to European colonization and interference in the Western Hemisphere, and served as a touchstone of American foreign policy for generations of presidents, helping to keep the Americas free of intervention by European powers.

After completing his second term as president, James Monroe retired to Oak Hill, his home in Loudoun County. I am proud to represent Loudoun County in the Congress, and proud of my district's association with President Monroe.

Mr. Speaker, I call the attention of the House to the life, legacy, and accomplishments of James Monroe.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 4, 2004

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, while attending meetings of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Parliamentary Assembly and fulfilling my official duties as a Vice President of the Parliamentary Assembly, I missed votes on April 20 through April 22. Additionally, while representing the U.S. Helsinki Commission at the OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism; I missed votes on April 27 and 28. Had I been present, I would have voted the following way:

Rollcall 118: "aye"; rollcall 119: "aye"; rollcall 120: "aye"; rollcall 121: "aye"; rollcall 122: "aye"; rollcall 123: "aye"; rollcall 124: "aye"; rollcall 125: "aye"; rollcall 126: "no"; rollcall 127: "no"; rollcall 128: "aye"; rollcall 129: "aye"; rollcall 130: "no"; rollcall 131: "aye"; rollcall 132: "aye"; rollcall 133: "aye"; rollcall 134: "aye"; rollcall 135: "aye"; rollcall 136: "aye"; rollcall 137: "aye"; rollcall 138: "no."