

Speaker after speaker at the annual beekeeping conferences tell us that North Carolina has the best State wide organization of beekeepers in the entire Nation. Many people in many organizations deserve credit for this success.

In 1975 Dr. John Ambrose came to work for North Carolina State University as an extension bee keeping specialist. Dr. Ambrose led an important era of growth for beekeeping in North Carolina, expanding the position to a major teaching and research position that is now held by Dr. Tarpy. This position is one of the best of its kind in the entire Nation.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture bee labs also play an important role in finding and developing new ways to protect of the honey bee.

J.D. Foust has been president of the North Carolina association of Beekeepers for the past 3 years and has led the organization through its fastest growth ever. Brady Mullinax of Forsyth County, has been a stalwart in the organization for more than half a century. Steve and Sandy Forrest, proprietor of Brushy Mountain Bee Farm in Wilkesboro, have build a thriving business out of supplying beekeepers with equipment and supplies and are now the third largest beekeeping supplier in the entire Nation.

The typical beekeeper in North Carolina not unlike the solitary yeoman farmer who, with an ax and hoe, carved North Carolina's vast agri-business economy from the wilderness that once swept from the Atlantic and Mississippi River. He takes his chances and usually at the end of another season, there is sufficient honey for him to sell at his roadside stand and leave enough for the bees to survive another winter.

For many beekeepers in my district the honey they produce is their Christmas money and an important part of their annual disposable income. I am proud of our beekeepers, for they are the residual spirit of the early pioneers who built this country on little more than strong backs and a desire to be free.

If Albert Einstein was correct in his fear that the survival of mankind depends in large part on the survival of the honey bee, I am confident that the honey bee is in safe hands among so many North Carolina passionate beekeepers.

□ 2320

HONORING JUDGE WILLIAM M. STEGER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, this week, America, Texas and East Texas mourn the loss of Federal District Court Judge William Merritt Steger.

As former law clerk and good friend Andy Tindel said, "Judge Steger was

one of the finest, fairest, most honest man I have ever had the privilege of practicing law before."

While Bill Steger was studying prelaw, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. And within 24 hours the 21-year-old had withdrawn from Baylor University and volunteered for service. The Dallas native has always wanted the opportunity to become a pilot, and with the Nation entering World War II, he took a chance.

On November 9, 1942, he got his wings. Then after training he was sent to Casablanca and flew 56 combat missions for which he received an air medal and four oak leaf clusters.

While later training other pilots, Captain Steger also tested the first U.S. jet airplanes.

Once his Nation was secure, Bill Steger went back to school and received his law degree from Southern Methodist University, that is, their law school.

He married his wife, Ann Hollandsworth Steger, on Valentine's Day in 1948. They had one child, the late Merritt Reed Steger, who was one of my younger brother David's closest friends.

Judge Steger entered and engaged in private practice in Longview and Tyler and headed up numerous east Texas campaign clubs for Dwight D. Eisenhower for President. After the election, President Eisenhower appointed Judge Steger in 1953 to the position of U.S. attorney for East Texas at the young age of 32.

In 1960, he and a good friend debated which one should run for governor and which one should run for senator. Their goal was to bring the Republican party into popularity in the State of Texas. Because Texas was conservative, it seemed to Judge Steger that it would be a good fit, but he was blazing a trail. He ended up being the one to run for governor against a very popular John Connally, and Judge Steger's good friend John Tower ran for senator. The Republican party had never before then received enough votes to hold a primary, and though Judge Steger knew he would not win the race, he hoped he would get the requisite 200,000 votes so the Republican party could hold a primary in the next election. Judge Steger actually received more than 600,000 votes.

In 1962, Judge Steger was persuaded to run for Congress and received 49 percent of the vote, lacking only 1,300 votes to beat his Democratic opponent who was the incumbent.

Bill Steger became a Federal district judge for the Eastern District of Texas in December of 1970 after President Richard Nixon nominated him. He truly loved being a jurist, and he was a hardworking, dedicated, cerebral, no-nonsense, constitutional constructionist judge whose discerning intellect could always cut straight to the heart of any issue.

In 1987, Judge Steger assumed senior active status duty, but since then still

continued to handle a full docket. December 1, 2005, marked 35 years on the Federal bench for Judge Steger, and since his appointment in 1970, he had handled more than 15,000 cases.

Judge Steger received the Justinian Award May 7, 2004, at the annual Tyler Law Day luncheon for his community service, legal ethics and professionalism.

He was a Baptist, a charter member and a deacon of Green Acres Baptist Church, helping to nurse it through its early days of going from nonexistent to its current 12,000 members. He was a confidant for me, a friend and a wise sounding board.

He and Ann endured the worst heartache a couple can face in the loss of their only child, Reed, in a tragic scuba diving accident, but the manner in which Judge Steger dealt with such devastation and allowed his faith, God's help, and Ann's companionship to help overcome the horrendous blow will help inspire me the rest of my life.

Judge Steger was a heroic patriot; a caring father; a loving husband; an even-handed, clear-thinking, constitutionally reverent judge; a personal mentor; and a cherished friend whom I came to know through my brother 25 to 30 years ago.

Always having had the courage of his convictions despite the odds against him, Judge Steger was and is a profile in courage whose memory will continue to inspire me the rest of my life.

God bless the Stegers and God bless America.

REMEMBERING NORMANDY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise with my colleague from California (Mr. HUNTER), the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, to recognize that it is now the 61st year to remember Normandy, to remember that special time when the world waited and hoped that the allies, led by the United States, dominated by the United States, would free Europe, the European mainland, from the effects of fascism, the effects of allowing a petty dictator to build an Army and begin expanding his borders.

Mr. Speaker, I find it particularly appropriate that just a week ago at the Memorial Day commemoration at Mt. Soledad in San Diego where Congressman HUNTER and I both live, we were faced with the exact same situation that we see in Normandy: crosses. We were faced looking at a memorial that remembers all of our fallen heroes from previous wars that was put there because of our fallen heroes of the Korean War and now is in jeopardy of being taken away because somebody says that if it is in the shape of a cross, it must by definition be a religious statement.

My colleague and I, I believe, are here tonight to remember Normandy and remember those many crosses that we have seen across the land and above the cliffs of Normandy and remember that those crosses do not stand for Jesus Christ or for religion. Those crosses stand for the men and women buried below.

With that, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), my colleague, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding, and I think it is appropriate to recall the days of Normandy.

The gentleman said those days when the world waited to find out whether or not that very difficult mission would be successful, and you know, the theme I think that we should take from Normandy or the message from Normandy was that our soldiers came not to conquer but to liberate. That is consistent with the American theme throughout the last century, and it is consistent with the theme that is being carried out by about 130,000 men and women in the sands of the Iraqi desert right now.

And that is, that all the wars that we fought in the last century, wars in which we lost 619,000 Americans killed in action on the battlegrounds and the oceans and the airways of the various wars, we did not conquer, we did not covet land. When we won the Spanish American War, we gave back Cuba and the Philippines, gave them their freedom. When we went to save Europe the first time, we gave back all that ground that had been hard won by the Marines at Bellawood and by the U.S. Army and so many difficult battles. In World War II, having liberated Europe a second time in that century, we gave back all that land that had been so dearly won.

And today, in Iraq, we are not engaged in military operations so that we can somehow derive material benefits from that country or somehow enslave the inhabitants of that country and turn them toward our political benefit and our economic benefit.

We do it because we think that it is in the interests of the United States to spread freedom, to change the world, and I think lots of Americans understand that if we do not change the world, the world is going to change us.

Those heroes who have won now some 45,000 Bronze Stars for meritorious service and for valor in the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan I think are every bit as courageous and, in many cases, are related to and the descendants of those incredible people who climbed the cliffs at Normandy and went up those beaches.

Some of those landing craft opened up and the Americans were machine gunned before they could get out of the craft, and there were men bobbing in those waves, some of them dead before they hit the water. Others got to the beach and went down, and you can see the dramatic newsreels that show

Americans falling as they are taking that beach, and then still others got to the base of the cliffs, and then some scaled those cliffs.

Of course, we had others that came in, paratroopers, some of whom landed in dug-in positions that the enemy had established and were killed before their chutes could reach the ground. Others that went in in gliders, not an avocation that is conducive to longevity, and others simply went in the old-fashioned way, but they went in for freedom. They went in for America, and they liberated, and that is the theme of Normandy.

I thank my colleague for yielding this time.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and I thank the Speaker for the opportunity to remind the world that the only land we ever covet are the small plots around the world in which we bury our dead.

□ 2330

THE DEBT, THE DEFICIT, AND THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) is recognized for half the time remaining before midnight as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, this evening I rise on behalf of the 37-member strong fiscally conservative democratic Blue Dog coalition. We are 37 fiscally conservative Democrats that are united in the name of fiscal discipline and common sense. We are very concerned about the debt, the deficit, and the future of this country that we are leaving for our children and grandchildren.

As you can see right here, today, the United States national debt is \$3,369,917,837,082 and some change. And if we divide that number by every man, woman, and child, including those being born today, everyone in America's share, including the children, amounts to about \$28,000. It is what we call the debt tax, D-E-B-T, and that is one tax that cannot go away until we get our Nation's fiscal house in order.

Because, Mr. Speaker, you see, our Nation is spending about \$5 billion a day not paying principal but simply paying interest on the national debt. One half billion dollars a day. Give me 3 days' interest on the national debt and I can build Interstate 69 through Arkansas. Give me another 3 days' interest on the national debt and I can complete Interstate 49 in Arkansas. Give me less than a day's interest on the national debt, and I can complete the Hot Springs Expressway. Give me less than a day's interest on the national debt, and I can complete I-530 through Arkansas. Give me a couple days' interest on the national debt and I can make the Red River navigable all

the way up to Fulton, Arkansas, at Interstate 30.

It is these type of priorities that can create economic opportunities and jobs for our people that will continue to go unmet until our Nation, until this Republican Congress gets its fiscal house in order.

You will find these posters, Mr. Speaker, that change daily. Unfortunately, the number continues to increase daily. But you will find these posters by the door to every one of the 37 members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog coalition. You will find this by our doors in the halls of Congress because we want America to know. We want America to know that this reckless spending, this reckless spending that has been provided to us under the leadership of this Republican Congress must stop.

You know, this is the first time in well over 50 years that the Republicans have controlled the White House, the House, and the Senate. And what have they given us? They have given us failure after failure. They failed in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. They failed with their energy policy. They have failed with their war policy in Iraq. They have failed with their Medicare prescription drug plan implementation. And they have failed by giving us the largest deficit ever in our Nation's history for a fifth year in a row.

The projected deficit for fiscal year 2007? You will hear a lot of people say it is \$350 billion. Not so. The real deficit for fiscal year 2007 is \$545 billion. Because, you see, when the Republican leadership tells you the deficit is \$350 billion, and that is bad enough, it is one of the largest deficits ever in our Nation's history, but the reality is when they say it is \$350 billion, they are counting the money that they are borrowing from the Social Security Trust Fund. Without the Social Security Trust Fund, the real deficit projected for fiscal year 2007 is \$545 billion.

The first bill I filed when I got to Congress was a bill to tell the politicians in Washington to keep their hands off the Social Security Trust Fund. Now I am beginning to understand why the Republican leadership refused to give me a hearing or a vote on this bill, because today they are using the Social Security Trust Fund to help pay for this reckless spending, this deficit spending.

But this is not new. In fiscal year 2006, the deficit was \$372 billion. In 2005, it was \$318 billion. In 2004, it was \$412 billion. In fact, this Republican administration, this Republican Congress has given us a deficit every year since 2002. It is hard now to believe that we had a balanced budget in this country from 1998 through 2001, but we did.

And why is this important? Why is this important? The total national debt from 1789 until 2000 was \$5.67 trillion. But by 2010, the total national debt will have increased to a whopping \$10.88 trillion. Mr. Speaker, this is a doubling, a doubling of the 211-year