

concerts, events, an interpretive trail system, a botanical garden and the Nevada State Museum and Historical Society where Nevadans and tourists alike will find a unique, educational experience about the history of Las Vegas.

Seeking the rich California coast, Spanish traders of the early 19th Century forged a path west that became known as the Old Spanish Trail. Upon discovering a vale of sanctuary, they named it "Las Vegas"—Spanish for "The Meadows." In the years that followed, the Las Vegas Springs welcomed weary travelers, explorers, traders, settlers and Mormon missionaries—all of them drawn here by one common denominator—water from the springs.

Enticing many to remain and make use of its waters, land near the springs was purchased by the railroad, which created the Las Vegas town site. It was water from the natural springs that powered the railroads' steam locomotives. In later years, the Nevada Legislature created the Las Vegas Valley Water District. Among the Water District's inherited holdings was the Las Vegas Springs property.

In 1978, the 180-acre Springs Preserve, located approximately three miles west of downtown Las Vegas, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The site represents one of the richest and most unique cultural and biological resources in Southern Nevada. As the largest commercial straw-bale construction project in the United States, the Preserve is erecting seven new green buildings intended to join an elite list of buildings nationwide that have achieved "Platinum" Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification from the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC).

Today, the Springs Preserve site is still owned by the Water District—a steward of water resources in the Valley for more than 50 years. During this time, human progress has surrounded this timeless plot of land, but operational wells and water distribution facilities saved the site from development. The Las Vegas Valley Water District and the Springs Preserve Foundation have formed a public-private partnership that will serve as a unique model for teaching cultural and environmental sustainability. Beginning next month, the story of the Las Vegas Springs will be told through both guided and self-guided tours, interpretive stations and several museum galleries.

As the representative of Nevada's First Congressional District, it gives me immense pride to recognize this outstanding and unique educational facility in the heart of my congressional district. With this example of pioneering preservation, sustainable construction and innovative education, visitors to the Las Vegas Springs Preserve will be inspired by what they see and be motivated to implement the ideals of preserving our past, while simultaneously creating a livable future.

Again, I proudly urge my colleagues to join me in honoring this outstanding public-private educational facility.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL ANDREW WEATHERSTONE

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 5, 2007

Mr. ORTIZ. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Major Andrew Weatherstone on the

occasion of his promotion to Lieutenant Colonel on June 1, 2007. Andy is an Army Fellow in my Congressional office this year, and he is an extraordinary soldier and human being.

He is a great leader, a motivator of men and women in his command, a seeker of creative solutions . . . an officer uniquely suited to the United States Army at a moment we need all the great soldiers and officers we can get.

We were lucky to get Andy this year; his last assignment was in Iraq. So my team and I have had the benefit of his counsel at a pivotal moment in our history, as we seek solutions to the ongoing conflict in Iraq and the many readiness issues Iraq has highlighted.

A graduate of the University of Tennessee, with a Masters from the University of Central Michigan, Andy is a soldier's soldier. He came up through the ranks, starting as a platoon leader and battery officer in 1993, to operating a 1,200 strong Task Force and a Forward Operating Base in Taji, Iraq, in 2004.

Andy understands the needs of a battlefield soldier; and he understands the political machinations that surround the conduct of our military policy. He may not be patient with that, but few of us are these days.

He understands that democracy must be defended; and he knows that democracy means involving everybody and all opinions in determining policy.

He knows that freedom is not free, and in wearing the uniform of the United States he is one of those paying the price for all our freedoms on battlefields around the world.

Andy's story would not be complete without including his wife, Jennifer, his "champ," and their daughters Lauren and Elizabeth. Andy got to be home when Elizabeth was born this year.

For all that he has learned in the field, in combat, in training, and in teaching other soldiers . . . LTC Andy Weatherstone will be a remarkable leader in the U.S. Army.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Andy—and his family—on the occasion of his promotion to Lieutenant Colonel.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 5, 2007

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, on Tuesday, May 22, 2007, I was unavoidably detained on official business.

I request that the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD reflect that had I been present and voting, I would have voted as follows: rollcall No. 395: "No." On motion to recommit with instructions (H.R. 1427).

IN LASTING MEMORY OF HAROLD VENABLE

HON. MIKE ROSS

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 5, 2007

Mr. ROSS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Harold Venable, of Grady, AR, who passed away June 4, 2007, at the age of 78.

Mr. Venable had two passions—farming and public service. He served on the Lincoln County Quorum Court for 24 years and was a member of the Grady City Council. Mr. Venable was a retired farmer recognized as an accomplished agriculturist who won multiple awards at the Arkansas State Fair and was a past recipient of the Farm Family of the Year Award.

Mr. Venable spent a lifetime giving back to his community and his dedication and numerous contributions to agriculture will never be forgotten. Anyone who ever knew him will always remember his smile and good-natured spirit as he always made time for anyone who wanted to talk.

Perhaps most important was Mr. Venable's gracious nature which he bestowed upon his fellow man, something that was deep-seated in his strong faith. He was an active, lifelong member of the First Baptist Church of Grady where he served as a Deacon. In addition, his humble influence and natural ability to lead was evident in all he did. He was a charter member and past President of the Grady Lion's Club, a member of the Long Lake Drainage Board, the Lincoln County Farm Bureau, and the Big Island Hunting Club.

My deepest condolences go to his beloved wife of 59 years, Charlene Venable of Grady; his two daughters, Sondra Ashcroft of Pine Bluff and Billie Issacs of Grady; his three grandchildren Lee Drake of Star City, Christian Ashcraft of Pine Bluff and Britten Ashcraft of Pine Bluff; and to his three brothers Clyde Venable of Grady, Leonard Venable of Little Rock, and Robert Venable of Grady. Harold Venable will be greatly missed in Grady, Lincoln County, and throughout the state of Arkansas.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2317, LOBBYING TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2007 AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2316, HONEST LEADERSHIP AND OPEN GOVERNMENT ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 24, 2007

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, today we stand on the verge of passing two pieces of lobby reform legislation that mark an important step toward greater transparency and accountability for Congress. This is a welcome and much-needed response to the growing dissatisfaction of the American people, who do not approve of the increasing role and influence that special interests have on our democracy. There is, however, much more that Congress must do.

In the November 2008 election, the American people made it clear that the corruption that has been seeping into government cannot be tolerated. It is now the task of Congress to raise the standards of ethics in lobbying and campaign finance in order to meet the expectations of the public. We must take action now to remove the grip that private money has on our democracy. I urge my colleagues to support these lobbying reform measures on the floor today, but believe our work is not yet done.

We must break the link between private financing of campaigns and the electoral process. During the 109th Congress, Chairman OBEY introduced legislation to do just that. His bill would have set specific expenditure limitations for general elections, established the Grassroots Good Citizenship Fund to provide public funding for House candidates' expenditures, and banned independent expenditures in House elections. This bill would take money laden with strings and political debts out of House elections. I cosponsored this bill last Congress, and I hope Chairman OBEY will be reintroducing it soon.

We must also take the job of reorganizing districts out of the realm of partisan politics and special interests. H.R. 543, the Fairness and Independence in Redistricting Act of 2007, introduced by Representative JOHN TANNER, would establish an independent commission for the purpose of doing the work of redistricting. I am a cosponsor of this legislation, and hope that this Congress will look very seriously at passing it.

We must utilize the public airways to make campaigns less costly. Most of what is spent in an election is spent on advertising. We can change this. By fairly utilizing publicly owned airways to run campaign ads, the exorbitant cost of campaigns can be reduced, and the associated fundraising, and perceived corruption could be curbed.

IN RECOGNITION OF DR. WESS STAFFORD'S 30 YEAR ANNIVERSARY AT COMPASSION INTERNATIONAL

HON. DOUG LAMBORN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 5, 2007

Mr. LAMBORN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Dr. Wess Stafford's 30th anniversary with Compassion International. A widely respected child advocacy organization, Compassion International has helped over one and a half million children since its inception in 1952 and currently operates in 24 developing countries worldwide.

Dr. Stafford began his work with this worthy group on May 1, 1977 and was elected its president in 1993. Raised by missionary parents in a poverty-stricken town in the Ivory Coast, Dr. Stafford witnessed first hand, immense suffering and tragedy. This experience led him to become a passionate advocate for children all over the world. An admirable Christian, Dr. Stafford believes that all human life is precious and deserves to be protected and cherished; a value he extols in his book *Too Small to Ignore*.

The mission of Compassion is to "release children from poverty in Jesus' name," and Dr. Stafford has tried to do just that. Today, the organization not only provides a child sponsorship program, it has also put into action an AIDS Initiative, Child Survival Program, and Leadership Development Program. Since becoming its leader, Dr. Stafford has increased the number of children served by Compassion from 180,000 to over 800,000.

Dr. Stafford's evident enthusiasm for his work and selfless dedication to the service of others are a true inspiration. He and those with whom he works are undeterred by the

enormity of the problems they seek to solve. Rather than feeling that the mission is an insurmountable challenge, they understand that victory is achieved when one life is saved. Today I offer Dr. Stafford my congratulations on this milestone and appreciation for his work. I am proud and humbled by the privilege of representing him, and all of those who are a part of Compassion International.

TRIBUTE TO JIM BURGER

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 5, 2007

Mr. SHUSTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Jim Burger, Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Helsel Lumber, who has been named the Small Business Association's Regional Exporter of the Year. Jim was presented with this award at the SBA's annual awards luncheon on May 25th in Pittsburgh, PA, and will also be recognized at the St. Francis University Small Business Development Center's annual luncheon on June 12th.

The SBA Exporter of the Year is chosen from companies in Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and Washington, DC. This award recognizes exceptional business professionals whose business has seen an increase in sales and profits as well as growth in the number of employees as a result of exporting. Jim was nominated by the St. Francis University Small Business Development Center.

Mr. Burger began his career with Helsel Lumber, an exporting company in Duncansville, PA, at the age of 16 as an after-school job, returning to the mill full time after graduating from Penn State University and working his way up to vice president and co-owner of the facility in 2001. As vice president, Jim has worked tirelessly to lead the business to become an active and successful exporting company. His efforts have paid off, as Helsel Lumber has grown to include export sales to Europe and Asia and has recently done significant work in China. Helsel Lumber received an Export Achievement Award from the U.S. Commercial Service in 2006.

Jim has made a significant contribution not only to the betterment of Helsel Lumber, but to the region's economic growth and success as well. Our small business leaders are key to the continued economic vitality and success of our communities. The company and the community are lucky to have such a devoted leader, and the members of our community who have benefited from the efforts of Helsel Lumber and Jim Burger would certainly join me in thanking him for his contributions to the community and economy.

BREAST CANCER AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH ACT

HON. MICHAEL E. CAPUANO

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 5, 2007

Mr. CAPUANO. Madam Speaker, more than three million American women are currently living with breast cancer. The American Can-

cer Society estimates that this year, approximately 179,000 new cases of breast cancer will be diagnosed among women in the United States and that 41,000 women will die from the disease. According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), breast cancer will affect one in eight women over the course of their lifetime. Although important advances have been made in screening for and treating breast cancer, we still do not know what causes this disease, or how to prevent it.

There is currently a dearth of studies providing conclusive evidence regarding the effects of environmental factors such as pesticides and other toxins on the development of breast cancer. Further study of these and many other factors, suspected of playing a role but not yet comprehensively examined, could be invaluable in helping to prevent breast cancer.

Many of us have voiced our support for this critical research by co-sponsoring the Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act over several Congresses. The legislation, H.R. 1157 in the 110th Congress, would authorize \$40 million a year for five years for the National Institutes of Health to make grants on a competitive, peer-reviewed basis, for the creation of multi-disciplinary Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Centers of Excellence. The Centers would be the first federally funded entities established specifically to study the potential links between breast cancer and the environment. The Centers would be required to collaborate with community organizations such as those representing women with breast cancer.

Breast cancer is a disease that has unfortunately touched the lives of almost every family in our country. Those of us who have supported programs such as the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program and the DOD Breast Cancer Research program must be equally willing to support efforts to uncover the causes of this terrible disease. H.R. 1157 is an important piece of legislation and I urge my colleagues to support it.

TRIBUTE TO THIRLEE SMITH, SR.

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 5, 2007

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Thirlee Smith, Sr., one of the preeminent role models of our community. A man of great repute and high standing who enriched the lives of so many community members throughout Miami, Thirlee Smith, Sr. lived a meaningful and fulfilling life dedicated to the betterment of our society through acts of good will.

We have lost an outstanding leader, but we are blessed to have been touched by his greatness. It is our collective responsibility to carry forward and continue the good works and deeds that Thirlee Smith, Sr. practiced on a daily basis.

Thirlee Smith, Sr. led voter registration drives throughout the community, because he understood that voting is a civil right. Thirlee Smith, Sr. stood at the forefront of this civil rights voter registration fight. Our democracy is more vibrant, our community is better represented, and our voices are now heard thanks to his tireless efforts.