

HONORING BENJAMIN B. DUTTON,
JR.

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2008

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to share with our colleagues the news about an outstanding recognition recently given to one of our House employees, who I am proud to say is a member of my staff. I pay tribute today to Benjamin B. Dutton, Jr., a man who is called "Mr. Winchester." I am fortunate to have Ben representing my office in Winchester, Virginia, one of the best small cities in America.

Along with diligently serving constituents not only for my office since 1990, when Winchester became part of the 10th Congressional District, but also for my predecessors George Allen and the late French Slaughter, Ben has played an active and key role in the Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival since it began in 1927.

The Apple Blossom Festival is a special event in Winchester each spring and I look forward to participating in the Grand Feature Parade every year. Ben was recognized this year in the Festival program as the "Keeper of the Flame" for the Festival. He served as the president of the festival from 1970–1972 and currently serves on the Board. Even as Ben approaches his 83rd birthday this June, he is still actively involved in making sure the Apple Blossom Festival is a success every year.

Ben is very deserving of all the honors and accolades coming his way and is truly committed in his service to his community. I am proud that he is a member of my staff and I am proud to call him my friend. The Festival program recognition of Ben as "Keeper of the Flame" follows:

BEN DUTTON: KEEPER OF THE FLAME

The Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival® is constantly in a state of flux; constantly reinventing itself. At the same time, the Festival works very hard to maintain its balance; to maintain its place in history; and, to never lose contact with its roots and its purpose. We know all too well how the Greatest Generation is being taken from us at an alarming rate these days; but, one of the "Keepers of Flame" for the Festival; one of the guardians of our roots, Mr. Ben Dutton, is still carrying on an active role in the Festival world even as he approaches his 83rd birthday.

When asked recently when he reckoned that his involvement with the Festival started, Ben replied, "From the beginning!" Shortly after the Festival was founded, the Washington Post ran a pictorial article in 1927 called "The Little Blossoms of Winchester"; and, Ben, aged two, was one of the local children featured in the article. Ben is quick to credit his Mother's very close friendship with Tom Baldrige, the original "Mr. Apple Blossom", for instilling in him early in life a great love and devotion for the Festival. Mrs. B. B. Dutton, Sr., was the Chairman of the Queen and Court Department those many years ago; and, Tom Baldrige had started his incredible run as Director General of the Festival in 1937 when Ben was just a child. Growing up around Mr. Tom's boundless enthusiasm, seemingly inexhaustible energy and undying love for the Pink and Green lit a Festival fire in young Ben that has never been quenched.

Following graduation from Handley High School, Ben served three years in the U.S.

Army during World War II; graduated from the University of Virginia in 1950; and, married his lovely wife, Jean Whipple Dutton, in 1952. They began their family of three beautiful daughters shortly thereafter; and, Ben began working in the insurance business in Atlanta, Louisiana and Southwest Virginia. In 1963, Ben returned to Winchester for good; joining the firm of J. V. Arthur as a Vice President and partner; and, immediately returning to the Apple Blossom World. He served as President of the Festival in 1970, 1971, and 1972. He served as the Festival's volunteer Executive Director in 1971; and, professionally in that capacity from 1995 to 1997.

Ben remembers fondly from the early 70s, the establishment of the ties between the Festival and the then-new Disney World in Orlando; and, the beginning of the visits of Disney's World Ambassador (always a pretty girl); and, of Mickey Mouse. He also enjoyed helping to establish an adults' beer, peanuts and dance party at the National Guard Armory called "Your Father's Mustache". Another memory from the past: the balls that used to be held in old, dry, wooden packing sheds, filled with wooden apple crates and bulk bins; and, decorated with cascades of crepe paper and lanterns. While the memory sounds quaint and charming, it is obvious that the insurance agent in Ben winces at the thought of the old-fashioned barn-dance-type fire hazards involved.

When asked to describe his favorite Festival guests from the early 1970s, Ben had no problem zeroing in on two very special people; people who are not only very special in their places in the history of the world; but, who are obviously very special people in Ben Dutton's life. In 1972, Ben sought out and received the services of the Reverend Billy Graham as Grand Marshal of the Festival. It is not at all hard to imagine the electric effect Graham had on the Festival crowds that year. It is also obvious, listening to Ben tell the story, that his time spent with Dr. Graham is something that he will never forget. Ben says that he met him at Dulles Airport and that Billy told him that "he had always wanted to cross the Blue Ridge and descend into the Shenandoah Valley in the springtime." Ben's other favorite was the Festival appearance in 1971 of Admiral Alan Shepard, who was in town to crown his daughter, Juliana, as Queen. Shepard had recently returned from an Apollo Mission to the Moon. Ben is still fascinated by the fact that the raucous crowd at the Stag Luncheon was instantly hushed to silence when Admiral Shepard stepped to the microphone to describe his trip to the Moon.

When asked how he feels after all these years when he sees the lead units of the Grand Feature Parade coming up Washington Street Hill, Ben said that "He still had; and, always would have a tender spot in his heart for that scene." He continued, "What would springtime be like without it?" Ben, admittedly, had a rough winter of 2007–2008. Health problems kept him away from one Festival Board Meeting after another; and, this was tough for a man who has remained active enough in the Festival to have played a key role in the establishment of a new event, the Men's Commonwealth Luncheon, just two years ago. The February 2008 Board Meeting had already started when, unexpected and unannounced, in the door walked Ben Dutton. The immediate burst of applause was instantaneous, genuine, affectionate and relieved. Festival people do know who the Keepers of the Flame are; and, they are cherished!

IN TRIBUTE TO CHARLES M. HAIR,
M.D.

HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2008

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, last week the Livingston Memorial Visiting Nurse Association celebrated its 60th anniversary and, in doing so, paid tribute to Charles M. Hair, M.D., for his enduring devotion to the organization.

I, too, rise in tribute to Dr. Hair, Chairman of the Board of Livingston Memorial Visiting Nurse Association.

Dr. Hair was raised in the farming community of Santa Paula, California. He joined the U.S. Army after earning his M.D., at the USC School of Medicine, and served two years in an Army field hospital in post-World War II Salzburg, Austria.

He returned to his home in Ventura County, California, in 1948, and embarked on a career as a family doctor. He and his wife, Gerry, whom he met when he was a student at Ventura College and she a student at Ventura High School, raised five children here.

Dr. Hair retired from family practice in the mid-1980s, but his dedication to his profession and the ill continues undaunted. Throughout his tenure with the Visiting Nurse Association, Dr. Hair has overseen the direction and growth of the agency to meet the complex and ever-changing home health needs of Ventura County.

In doing so, Dr. Hair brings a rural family doctor's perspective and philosophy to Livingston Memorial Visiting Nurse Association. The Association was founded to provide home care services as an alternative to institutionalizing the frail, elderly, sick and disabled, an idea dear to the heart of a family physician. In 1965, Medicare certified the Association as a home health agency. In 1987, it developed a Medicare-certified Hospice program.

Today, Livingston Memorial Visiting Nurse Association is Ventura County's only not-for-profit home health agency with a Medicare-certified home hospice program. Livingston services are provided for every individual in need, regardless of ability to pay.

Livingston Memorial Visiting Nurse Association's continued ability to provide professional, licensed, compassionate home care that is high quality and cost effective is in no small measure due to Dr. Hair's vision and direction.

Mr. Speaker, I know my colleagues will join me in tribute to Dr. Hair and his vast contributions to comforting and treating the ill and thank him for a lifetime of healing.

**FORECLOSURE PREVENTION ACT
OF 2008**

SPEECH OF

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2008

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, let me first commend Chairman FRANK and Chairman RANGEL for their leadership in moving the American Housing Rescue and Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2008 forward. This is an intelligent and measured piece that addresses

the devastating effects of the mortgage crisis. For years, Washington was asleep at the switch. But now, this Congress is addressing and preventing foreclosures.

Nearly 650,000 foreclosure filings were issued in the first quarter of 2008, which represents 1 of every 194 households. Every day that goes by without action means more families are at risk of losing their homes.

This crisis—like so many other components of the current recession—hit low-income and minority neighborhoods the hardest. Each home lost to foreclosure affects entire neighborhoods. Chairwoman WATERS' bill H.R. 5818—of which I am an original cosponsor—allows homeowners to fight back.

I want to particularly highlight a provision I pushed to get added to this fine legislation. Many homeowners ended up in foreclosure because they didn't get sound mortgage advice. They need someone on their side—we all know the bank will be well represented. I am proud to have worked with Chairman FRANK and several of my Financial Services Committee colleagues to ensure that low-income homeowners and veterans in high foreclosure areas have access to professional counseling. Many distressed homeowners need sound advice now more than at any other time in their lives. Our legislation provides the help they need.

When a family loses a home to foreclosure, they lose more than four walls and a roof—they lose their economic stability. The housing package we are debating not only addresses immediate needs but is a solid strategy for preventing a future housing downturn.

I urge a "yes" vote on the American Housing Rescue and Foreclosure Prevention Act.

H.R. 5720—THE HOUSING
ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2008

HON. BILL FOSTER
OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2008

Mr. FOSTER. Madam Speaker, I am submitting this statement to record my strong and enthusiastic support for H.R. 5720, the Housing Assistance Act of 2008.

As everyone knows we are facing a foreclosure crisis the likes of which have not been witnessed since the Great Depression. According to RealtyTrac, a site that tracks foreclosure data, there were a total of a little over 2.2 million foreclosure filings—default notices, auction sale notices and bank repossessions last year, up an astronomical 75 percent from the previous year. In addition, more than 1 percent of all U.S. households were in some stage of foreclosure last year.

My home State of Illinois has not been immune to the crisis. Again, according to the latest statistics from RealtyTrac, there were almost 91,000 foreclosure filings last year, an increase of over 25 percent from 2006 and an increase of over 94 percent from 2005.

This common-sense legislation has many provisions designed to spur the sagging real estate market. First and foremost, this bill would provide first-time home buyers with assistance in making a down payment on a home by providing these individuals with a refundable tax credit that is equivalent to an interest-free loan equal to 10 percent of the purchase price of their home, up to \$7,500.

Moreover, the bill helps struggling taxpayers. Specifically, the bill would provide home owners who claim the standard deduction with an additional standard deduction for State and local real property taxes. The maximum amount that may be claimed under this provision is \$350, \$700 for joint filers.

I have introduced a similar proposal H.R. 5790, the Universal Homeowner Tax Cut Act of 2008. This bill would allow taxpayers who do not itemize a deduction for State and local real property taxes. I fully support providing these hard-working Americans tax relief and I hope some version of real property tax relief is enacted this year.

In addition to these core provisions, the bill contains other provisions regarding mortgage revenue bonds and tax simplification designed to spur homeownership.

This bill, in conjunction with a slew of bills that the House passed last week designed to stem the foreclosure crisis and restore the housing markets, will help us weather these turbulent economic times.

I support this bill and hope Congress will expeditiously send it to the President for his signature.

STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVE
FILL SUSPENSION AND CON-
SUMER PROTECTION ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. PETER WELCH

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 13, 2008

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman DINGELL for his leadership and commitment to getting gas prices under control.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit this letter from Congressman RON KIND for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Mr. KIND has been a leader on this issue starting in January when he sent this letter to the President urging him to take action in suspending shipments to the SPR.

Mr. Speaker, in the face of skyrocketing fuel costs and growing economic concerns, Congress must take action.

Today we take the small but important step of temporarily suspending the fill of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Taking this action sends a strong message to the market that will lower fuel prices and provide immediate relief to consumers.

With the price of gas today at nearly \$4 a gallon and crude oil trading at a record high of \$126 a barrel, we cannot continue the outdated policy of topping off a full SPR.

Since 2002, the price of oil has risen a staggering \$100 a barrel, and prices at the pump have more than tripled. We must stop taking 70,000 barrels of oil off the market every day while hard working Americans are struggling to fill their gas tanks.

By continuing to top off our oil reserve, consumers are paying not once, but twice.

Taxpayer dollars are being used to pay record high prices for SPR oil, while the act of buying that oil is actually driving gas prices higher.

The reserve is currently 97 percent full and maintains a stockpile of over 700 million barrels of oil. By taking this action today, we can

offer short term economic relief to the market and to all consumers.

This is a short term solution, and by no means a replacement for the long term energy policy we need to end our dangerous and costly addiction to oil. Last year this Congress made real progress by increasing CAFE standards for the first time in 2 decades by committing to combat oil and market manipulation, promoting the use of more affordable American biofuels, and making large investments in renewable energy development.

The U.S. consumes nearly 20 million barrels of oil a day. Prices are high in part because supply has not kept up with demand. The Department of Energy recently reported that suspension of shipments to the SPR could reduce prices by about \$2 a barrel of oil and 5 cents per gallon of gasoline. Other experts have estimated that the suspension could diminish speculation in the market, and lower the price by anywhere from 5 to 25 cents a gallon.

This action would provide real and immediate benefits. Twenty-five cents would add \$300,000 to the bottom line of a local trucking company in my district. A rural school district in E. Montpelier, Vermont would save \$30,000 in taxpayer financed busing costs. Families, workers, seniors and students need this relief.

Over the last 8 months, the Bush administration has purchased over 10 million barrels of oil to top off the SPR. In that same period of time the price of oil went from \$40 a barrel to over \$120.

In 2006, facing record high oil prices President Bush said "... by deferring deposits until the fall, we'll leave a little more oil on the market. Every little bit helps." Every little bit does help, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to take this opportunity to provide them immediate relief.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, January 22, 2008.

Hon. GEORGE W. BUSH,
The White House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: I write to urge the U.S. Department of Energy to suspend oil shipments to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) to allow more oil to remain on the market and available to consumers. This action is necessary to address record prices and stimulate a precarious economy.

While the escalating cost of crude oil has made headlines for the past several years, never before have we seen as dire a situation for consumers as the one we are experiencing now. Even the price spikes following Hurricane Katrina did not come close to the \$100 per barrel oil we saw last month, yet your Administration wisely responded to that crisis by temporarily suspending purchases for the SPR. That action was successful in providing the type of immediate, targeted relief we need now.

The writing is on the wall: our country is clearly in danger of recession. Unemployment is up, retail sales are slowing, housing prices continue to slide, and consumers and lenders alike continue to suffer the fallout from the sub-prime mortgage crisis. Average families are feeling the effects more painfully than ever as they experience the worst inflation in 17 years, largely because of escalating food and fuel prices.

Suspending the 12.3 million barrels of oil scheduled to be delivered to the SPR over the next six months is a simple step your Administration can take immediately to lower gas prices, put money directly into the wallets of Americans, and save taxpayer dollars. Congressional investigations and independent experts have found that purchasing