

has already made his mark as a fair-minded and seasoned leader. He has driven the successful passage of several pieces of legislation, addressing Vermont's sexual abuse response system and legalizing same-sex marriage, among other important issues. Marcelle and I recently had dinner with Shap and his wife Dr. Melissa Volansky. We are both impressed with his commitment to Vermont.

I am looking forward to watching Shap Smith continue to lead the Vermont Legislature and build a record of fiscal and social responsibility. I wish him luck as he undertakes this challenging job during these difficult times.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of an April 20, 2009, Rutland Herald article about Mr. Smith be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Rutland Herald, Apr. 20, 2009]

SMITH LEADS WITH GRINNING STYLE

(By Susan Allen)

MONTPELIER.—Each speaker of the Vermont House has his or her own leadership style.

Ralph Wright growled.

Michael Obuchowski boomed.

Walt Freed ruled.

Gaye Symington analyzed.

And Shap Smith . . . well, he grins.

"I'm a friendly guy," said House Speaker Smith, new to the post this session, when asked last week about his style. Smith, himself a Democrat, reaches across the political aisle to work with Republicans, Progressives and Democrats alike.

But don't think he's a pushover.

"People know I take the issues pretty seriously," added Smith, a University of Vermont and Indiana University School of Law graduate who handles intellectual property, insurance coverage and civil litigation with the firm Dinse/Knapp/McAndrew during the off-session. "I can go toe-to-toe in debating issues."

Looking at the speaker, opponents might be tempted to underestimate his political skills. With a wiry frame from running, cross-country skiing and other athletic activities, and his wire-rimmed glasses, Smith looks about 25. He is, in fact, 43.

And anyone who thought he might be too young to lead need look no further than the recent House vote to override the governor's veto of the same-sex marriage bill. Smith needed 100 members to support the override, and going into the vote, the outcome was far from certain.

As he announced the final tally to the House floor—to the surprise of many, the needed 100 voted with the speaker and same-sex marriage would become law in Vermont—Smith stepped away from the podium briefly and appeared emotional.

"I have friends and colleagues to whom and for whom this bill meant a great deal," he said during a conversation last week in his window-lined Statehouse office. "I am very pleased we were able to do it. It was a great achievement."

Shap is actually Shapleigh Jr., a name that came from his grandmother, who was adopted into the Shapleigh family from the town of Shapleigh, Maine. His grandmother grew up in West Lebanon, N.H., where "there were all these Shapleighs," he added.

"I went to high school in Morrisville. I always wanted a different name," Smith said.

"Dave or Tim would have been just fine. Shapleigh is not a usual Vermont name."

Smith had an eye on public service since serving in student government in school. He followed politics closely in the 1990s while living in New York City and working for a law firm there, and started becoming more serious about a run after moving to Morrisville in 1999.

In 2002, with 2-month-old son Eli at home but an open legislative seat calling, he took the plunge, becoming what he described as the "Stealth" candidate knocking on doors, re-acquainting himself with friends from childhood and their families, and quietly winning the seat under the radar.

As all legislative leaders discover, juggling the pressing Statehouse agenda and a home life is challenging (he has two young children, and wife Melissa is a general practitioner).

"I go home almost every night," he said, adding that he tries to arrive in time to read to his children or at least put them to bed. "I'm the one that gets them up in the morning, which is a real reality check."

Things are less clear at the Statehouse, where Smith is focusing on his legislative agenda:

(1) Repairing and maintaining Vermont's transportation system—the roads and bridges;

(2) Expanding and improving telecommunications (computer broadband) in rural areas;

(3) Strengthening Vermont's public education system; and

(4) Trying to close the gap in educational performance between students on the lower economic scale and their wealthier peers—a disparity consistently documented in national and state school test scores.

Hanging over those priorities is the staggering challenge of trying to balance the state budget in dire economic times, with the state hemorrhaging red ink. It is, he said, a task that "keeps me up at night."

"How do you balance being fiscally responsible with meeting the needs of the state?" he asked rhetorically. And while not completely unexpected, the economic challenge has been "worse than some of us thought it would be."

Returning to the place he was raised, meeting and re-meeting neighbors, old friends and classmates, and watching his children grow up in the same area he did seems to drive Smith's political vision.

"I want to make sure we put in place policies that allow the next generation to have the opportunities that I did," he said.

REMEMBERING AL MYERS

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I am both proud and saddened today to salute Mr. Al Myers, a beloved teacher at Williston Central School in Vermont who recently passed away after being injured while working on the set of a school play. Mr. Myers was best known as a popular educator who was remembered by former school principal Lynn Murray as being "brilliant with children." As a U.S. Senator, I remember Mr. Myers bringing students to Washington, DC every year. He truly wanted them to understand the importance of living in the world's greatest democracy.

In memory of Mr. Myers, I ask unanimous consent that the following memorial article, by Matt Ryan of the Burlington Free Press, be printed into the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Burlington Free Press, Apr. 27, 2009]

MYERS' DEATH MOURNED

(By Matt Ryan)

WILLISTON.—Parents, students and teachers at Williston Central School are mourning the death of a popular educator who fell from a ladder and suffered a severe head injury while working on the set of the school's production of "The Wizard of Oz."

Al Myers was found in the auditorium Friday morning and transported to Fletcher Allen Hospital where he underwent surgery. He died Saturday morning, according to the school.

Julie Longchamp, the producer of the school play, worked with Myers for 20 years.

"He was an extraordinary man with a lot of passion," Longchamp said. "Everyone has come together and we're going to be putting Al's show on."

Longchamp prepared for the play near Myers' desk, in their office at the school Sunday evening. In the auditorium, parents and students quietly worked on the play's set and costumes, the Emerald City and Glinda's pink dress. Tickets for the show, which is scheduled for this weekend, sold out April 1.

"The play the Wizard of Oz will go on as scheduled under the direction of Julie Longchamp," principal Walter Nardelli wrote in an e-mail to parents. "Al and his family would have wanted it that way."

Counselors will be available today for students, and staff will attempt to keep the day as normal as possible, Nardelli said. He encouraged children to go to school. Students were on break last week.

The school was coordinating with Champlain Valley Union High School to support former students who worked with Myers, Nardelli said.

Myers had directed many theater productions over the years. Former students and parents of students posted thoughts about the teacher on several Facebook pages dedicated to his memory. They wrote about working with Myers on plays like, "Annie Get Your Gun," "Fiddler on the Roof" and "Macbeth," and catching his infectious love for music and theater.

"Mr. Myers was a wonderful teacher who took me under his wing as he did to so many others," David Stephens of Burlington wrote. "I remember the sing-a-longs that he had in class where he would pull out his guitar and would have 100 percent participation because it was so much fun. I can still remember a bunch of the songs we would sing, 'Feeling Groovy,' 'Blowin' in the Wind.'"

Former Williston Central School principal Lynn Murray remembered Myers being "brilliant with children."

"In my entire career, I have never met anyone with so much heart, so much talent and so giving a nature," Murray wrote.

According to one Facebook page, a celebration of his life will be held at noon, May 16 at the Williston Central School. As of 9 p.m. Sunday, more than 450 people joined the "In Memory of Al Myers" Facebook page.

"He's going to be a very, very missed man," Longchamp said.

AMERICAN CITY QUALITY MONTH

Ms. SNOWE. Madam President, I rise today to recognize that the month of April is designated as American City Quality Month. Through the continued efforts of the American City Planning

Directors' Council and the American City Quality Foundation, ACQF, the April 2009 theme is appropriately labeled, "Support Planning and Action for Better Quality Communities." For many years the emphasis promoted by the ACQF and its numerous professional organizations and supporters has been to call attention to the vital need for improving American cities through quality planning—via coordinated efforts to produce effective decisions, design, development, management, and action.

As our country's population growth projections appear to reach an additional 34 million people by the year 2020, the importance of proper urban planning as it relates to area surroundings, land conservation, and quality of life becomes a crucial component of the United States' strategy to halt urban sprawl and the waste of both human and fiscal resources. Subsequently, through the devoted work, development, and planning of the ACQF and interested parties, the recognition has surfaced—that coordinated efforts on the part of city, State, and Federal governments, and the private sector need to be exacted more than ever. Such a critical mission must continue until there is mainstream coordination throughout the nation to improve our country's urban settings in terms of cultural, practical, and land conservation amenities.

Therefore, through the efforts of the American City Planning Directors' Council, the American City Quality Foundation, and other interested parties, I thank all who have joined together to address the challenges posed by our burgeoning cities, as the integration of efforts has and will continue to provide us with a plan and hope for the future that assures quality growth for our Nation's urban settings. The ACQF's mission toward reaching that goal has secured both the attention and admiration of the American public.

TRIBUTE TO ADMIRAL ROBERT E. PEARY

Ms. SNOWE. Madam President, I rise today to pay tribute to the 100th anniversary of ADM Robert E. Peary's discovery of the North Pole—a truly exceptional accomplishment. It was a hundred years ago this month that Peary and his men completed their epic journey through the Atlantic and placed the American flag on the North Pole, marking the historic discovery. And as we commemorate this landmark occasion, the State of Maine has much to celebrate with the lasting legacy of Admiral Peary and all that he has done for our State, Nation, and the world.

Born in Cresson, PA, in 1856, Peary hailed from a long line of Maine lumberman and spent most of his formative years in southern Maine with his mother, following the passing of his father. In 1877 he graduated from Bowdoin College in Brunswick, ME,

after studying as a civil engineer. Commissioned as a lieutenant in the Civil Engineer Corps of the Navy in 1881, he went on to complete projects in Florida and Nicaragua, gaining an expertise that developed his love for the Arctic. Peary made his first expedition to Greenland in 1886 and for the next 23 years, he honed his skills and refined a deft intellect and acumen for the north seas, preparing him for his quintessential journey.

Although there are myriad contributions we could recognize, it is his adventure begun on July 6, 1908, that we most honor as Peary and his men sailed northbound in his ship, the *Roosevelt* whose plans he developed on Eagle Island in Casco Bay and which was built in Bucksport, ME. I might add! Having arrived at Ellesmere Island with 23 men, 133 dogs, and 19 sleds, on March 1, 1909, Peary set off for the final leg of his journey. For 37 days, they rode by sledge through one of our planet's most hostile environments. And it was on April 6, 1909, when Peary achieved his lifelong dream and history was made as he and his five colleagues were the first to step foot on the barren North Pole.

Although it may be easy to forget some of the challenges that Peary and everyone on his expedition endured, organizations such as the Friends of Peary's Eagle Island and the Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum at Bowdoin College have captured this storied history, providing crucial educational tools for all of our citizens, young and old, as we seek to learn more of the expedition's triumphs on this centennial anniversary. Indeed, the State of Maine and her people have much cause for pride as we celebrate Admiral Peary's contributions this month, honoring a phenomenal milestone.

IDAHOANS SPEAK OUT ON HIGH ENERGY PRICES

Mr. CRAPO. Madam President, in mid-June, I asked Idahoans to share with me how high energy prices are affecting their lives, and they responded by the hundreds. The stories, numbering well over 1,200, are heart-breaking and touching. While energy prices have dropped in recent weeks, the concerns expressed remain very relevant. To respect the efforts of those who took the opportunity to share their thoughts, I am submitting every e-mail sent to me through an address set up specifically for this purpose to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. This is not an issue that will be easily resolved, but it is one that deserves immediate and serious attention, and Idahoans deserve to be heard. Their stories not only detail their struggles to meet everyday expenses, but also have suggestions and recommendations as to what Congress can do now to tackle this problem and find solutions that last beyond today. I ask unanimous consent to have today's letters printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

My husband and I both work out of the home. He is a biology teacher at a high school in Nampa, and I work part-time for a utility company. I work because I have to, but I work as little as I can because raising moral children is the better thing to do. We love Boise! Our home is about equal distance from our jobs, but in opposite directions. I go east; he goes west. Recently, I have approached my employer to allow me to work three full days a week instead of five shorter days. This is solely to save on the expense rising gas prices have on our budget. With the costs of gas, food, electricity going up, we are in a tough spot. I have been with my employer for 8.5 years, and my pay is maxed out. I must rely on a cost-of-living adjustment at the beginning of the new year, but since that is never a guarantee, it is not included in our budgeting plans until it happens. My husband is in his fourth year of teaching, and teachers' pay? Well, you know how bad that is. He will receive an increase in his yearly salary of \$750 this year (for a total salary of just \$31,750), hardly enough to compensate for those rising costs previously mentioned. (What is been most troublesome to me lately is that an individual my father associates with gets \$36,000 a year in Social Security benefits for "psychological" reasons—most likely a result of years of drug use—and she spends \$50/day on marijuana. So while the state government does not even pay my husband enough to provide for a family, they are giving an extra \$4,000/year to support another person's drug abuse.)

The situation regarding higher gas prices is leading us to look into carpooling, keeps us from going out as much, and is a deterrent to buying a mini-van (we will try to squeeze three car seats into the back of our sedan when our third child is born). Several months ago, I considered biking to work; but with the traffic in Boise, I am fearful that I might be hit, and do not want to leave two children motherless. I would like to see more people carpool, or take other forms of transportation. Americans take energy for granted and in the past, have not been the least bit concerned about the impact of their selfish choices. I also looked into a bus route, but none runs very close to our home. In fact, the nearest pick-up is still several miles away.

What should America do? I do not know. Several months ago, I thought a gas ration would force conservation. Sometimes people need to be made to do what they will not willingly do themselves. Nuclear? I am concerned about the waste. Our own sources of oil? I guess I view them like I view my savings account—a reserve for emergencies. Using more of our own resources is a resort if/when we find that conservation is not effective enough. Conservation incentives? Seems that it would be rather hard to enforce, and many do not have the money to buy efficient upgrades. However, building requirements allowing only the construction of energy efficient homes might be a good start. If I am not mistaken, they generally use about 30% less power than a non-energy star home.

I think the only solution is a combination of solutions on a combination of problems. Sometimes you just have to fix everything at once—it is drastic, but the only way to make real change—even for the government. I do not have all, or even any of the answers, but a few brilliant minds, or even a few people who care, could figure it out together.

CHERIS, Boise.

You wanted to know how the rising cost of fuel is affecting me and my family. We, as of