

but the President has focused his country's efforts on building a "new economic and political model" that would strengthen its commercial and security relationships with the West. As a result, Kazakhstan has emerged as a regional economic leader, increasing its GDP to \$135 billion—six times greater than its \$22 billion GDP 10 years ago—in addition to increasing its foreign trade to more than \$80 billion. These economic strides and the increase in economic opportunities stand in stark contrast to life under communist rule and are enough to mirror similar opportunities in many western countries, which is no small feat in so little time.

Kazakhstan has also been a reliable ally to the United States, and President Nazarbayev has indicated that he looks forward to strengthening this relationship in addition to reinvigorating the OSCE. Proving his effectiveness and determination to tackle even the toughest of challenges, President Nazarbayev welcomes his country's new undertaking with the same gusto and leadership that helped him transform his country into the promising democracy and economic leader that it is today. Alluding to the many global challenges we face today, he issued a call to action to the member states, urging them to convene in a summit this year, for the first time in 10 years, in order to strengthen the role of the OSCE as we face "one of the most complicated periods in modern history."

One of the main issues he hopes to address and strengthen within the OSCE by holding this summit would be security matters and fighting terrorism. Accordingly, eliminating the terrorist presence and threat in Afghanistan is a matter of high priority that will not only benefit the region but will also have long-term positive implications for our own national security and international security.

The Kazakh president asserted that "it is a time when leaders of OSCE member states should demonstrate their political will and outline solutions to the difficult challenges facing our nations. The summit will not only give a powerful impetus to adapting the OSCE to modern challenges and threats, but also increase the confidence and respect among our peoples to the organization itself."

Madam Speaker and fellow colleagues, I once again commend President Nazarbayev for his steadfast vision and leadership and urge you today to support him as he sets out to reestablish dialogue among all OSCE member states by convening a summit this year. Such an assembly can only foster cooperation that will ultimately lead to increased security and stability for all.

RECOGNIZING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NOWRUZ AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF IRANIAN-AMERICANS

HON. EDWARD R. ROYCE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 19, 2010

Mr. ROYCE. Madam Speaker, on the evening of March 17, 2010, the Nowruz Commission held its inaugural event at the Library of Congress. Nowruz is recognized by many people around the world who celebrate the exact moment of Vernal Equinox as the beginning of a New Year. Mr. Nasser Kazeminy and

Ms. Gissou R. Kian, serve as Chairman and President of the Nowruz Commission, respectively. Ambassadors and senior diplomats of eight nations serve on the Commission.

Dr. Kamran Khavarani, the creator of "Abstract Romanticism" presented a special painting entitled "The Bird of Freedom" to the spirit of Thomas Jefferson. The painting was accepted by Dr. James Hadley Billington, the Librarian of Congress. This was witnessed by nearly 400 people of Iranian, Iraqi, Turkish, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, Russian, Ukrainian and Kurdish origins at the Coolidge Auditorium.

This is the first time in history that an Iranian American artist has presented a painting to the spirit of Thomas Jefferson, the man whose gift of books provided the beginning for the Library of Congress. Dr. Kamran Khavarani deserves to be recognized for his unique gift.

The Nowruz Commission, whose mission of bringing diverse people together in search of peace and friendship, deserves special recognition on the first day of spring, Nowruz, March 20, 2010.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LYNN A. WESTMORELAND

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 19, 2010

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I traveled home for the birth of my grandchild. As a result, I missed a number of votes. Had I been present, I would have voted the following:

"Aye" on Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass the bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 45300 Portola Avenue in Palm Desert, California, as the "Roy Wilson Post Office." (Rollcall No. 128)

"Nay" on Ordering the Previous Question providing for consideration of motions to suspend the rules. (Rollcall No. 129)

"Nay" on Agreeing to the Resolution providing for consideration of motions to suspend the rules. (Rollcall No. 130)

"Aye" on Motion to Refer the Resolution raising a question of the privileges of the House. (Rollcall No. 131)

"Nay" on Motion to Table raising a question of the privileges of the House. (Rollcall No. 132)

"Aye" on Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended State Admission Day Recognition Act of 2009. (Rollcall No. 133)

"Nay" on Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass the Agricultural Credit Act of 2009. (Rollcall No. 134)

"Aye" on Motion to Suspend the Rules and Agree to Recognizing the 100th anniversary of the Vermont Long Trail, the oldest long-distance hiking trail in the United States, and congratulating the Green Mountain Club for its century of dedication in developing and maintaining the trail. (Rollcall No. 135)

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 19, 2010

Mr. BECERRA. Madam Speaker, earlier yesterday I was unavoidably detained and

missed rollcall No. 132. If present, I would have voted "yea."

IN MEMORY OF FESS PARKER

HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 19, 2010

Mr. GALLEGLY. Madam Speaker, I rise in memory of an extraordinary actor, a gentleman, a family man, a successful vintner and hotelier, and a patriotic American, Fess Parker, who died Thursday after 85 years of making the world around him a better place.

My wife, Janice, and I were fortunate to call Fess Parker and his wife, Marcella, our friends.

I first met Fess in 1987 when by chance we were seated together on a flight from Washington, DC, to Los Angeles. He had just left the White House where he had been a guest of his old friend Ronald Reagan and I was on my weekly trip home.

From that chance meeting, we built a lasting friendship. I had the good fortune of visiting with Fess on several occasions at his home in Los Olivos. Fess was a humble man with a great sense of humor. He shared many great stories, like how he was discovered by Adolphe Menjou, the debonair movie star of the '30s and '40s.

At the time, Fess was a student at the University of Texas and president of his fraternity. Fess chauffeured Mr. Menjou on his visit to the university, they built a rapport and Menjou paved the way for Fess's own success in Hollywood.

There were many other stories, but none that I enjoyed more than how he met the love of his life, Marcella. It was a true love story that even the most talented of Hollywood writers could not have created.

My experience with Fess is typical. He never acted like a Hollywood star in private life.

After more than 20 years in Hollywood, Fess and Marcella moved to Santa Barbara County. There he produced Fess Parker wine from his 2,200-acre vineyard and opened two top-class hotels, the Fess Parker Wine County Inn and Spa in Los Olivos and Fess Parker Doubletree Inn in Santa Barbara. His wine bottles feature the familiar coonskin cap he made famous in his role as Davey Crockett, as do wine glasses sold at the winery. Fess Parker was known to spend hours signing wine bottles for visitors while regaling them with stories of Hollywood.

He and Marcella also were well-known in town, often seen walking hand-in-hand.

In addition to Marcella, with whom Fess celebrated 50 years of marriage in January, Fess Parker is survived by his son, Eli; daughter, Ashley; 11 grandchildren; a great-grandchild; hundreds of friends and millions of fans.

Madam Speaker, I know my colleagues will join me in offering our condolences to Marcella, Eli, Ashley and their entire family, and in remembering a Hollywood icon whose off-screen values and successes in many ways surpassed the successes of his onscreen personas.

HONORING DREW LINN

HON. PARKER GRIFFITH

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 19, 2010

Mr. GRIFFITH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and pay tribute to a fine American, Drew Linn, on an occasion when he and his business have received a prestigious honor: the International Circle of Excellence Award for 2009.

The Circle of Excellence, which is awarded by the International dealer organization of Navistar, Inc., honors International truck dealerships that achieve the highest level of dealer performance with respect to operating and financial standards, market representation, and most importantly, customer satisfaction. It is the highest honor a dealer principal can receive from the company.

Drew's business, Southland International Trucks, is headquartered in Homewood, Alabama, where it was founded more than 30 years ago, and includes two dealerships in my district, in Huntsville and Decatur. Under his leadership, it has grown into one of the pre-eminent truck dealerships in the Southeast and the entire nation, with 171 employees and five dealer locations throughout Alabama. It was recently named the International Dealer of the Year, an honor awarded to the one International dealer who exhibits the highest commitment to best-in-class customer service. Last year, Southland delivered more trucks than any other International dealer in the global network. With this most recent award, Southland International has now received the Circle of Excellence Award, under Drew's leadership, a total of 10 times.

Drew has achieved this level of accomplishment and recognition through many years of hard work and service to his industry and community. He has also built a successful truck leasing business, Southland Idealease of Alabama, which is a multi-year winner of the IdealGold Award for Excellence. He is a past president or chairman of the Alabama Trucking Association, its Workers Compensation Fund, and the Shelton State Foundation. He is an active member of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, the West Alabama Regional Commission, the West Alabama Bank Board of Directors and the University Transportation Center for Alabama.

Through his commitment to hard work and outstanding customer service, he has built an economically vital business of which he can be justly proud. Madam Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join with me in congratulating Drew Linn for his record of accomplishment and for his many contributions to his community, state and nation.

TO CELEBRATE THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BRYSON CITY LIONS CLUB

HON. HEATH SHULER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 19, 2010

Mr. SHULER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Bryson City Lions Club as they celebrate their 70th anniversary in Swain County, North Carolina. For the past 70 years, this outstanding volunteer organization has

worked tirelessly to help the visually impaired through their SightFirst initiatives, and I commend their outstanding efforts to promote civic projects in the community.

Many years ago, Helen Keller challenged Lions across the country to be "Knights of the Blind" and the Bryson City Lions Club has continued to live up to that challenge. The generous efforts of the Bryson City Lions Club include providing the visually impaired with glasses, eye surgeries, and vision screening, as well as awarding college scholarships to children of blind parents. The organization's members and their works are a source of pride to Western North Carolina. I deeply appreciate all they have done in the past 70 years to make the lives of the visually impaired citizens more comfortable and fulfilling. I also want to commend the leadership of Judy Burnett, the current club President and the first female to hold the position.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues today to rise with me in recognizing the inspiring good works of the Bryson City Lions Club, and the civic leadership they have demonstrated in Western North Carolina. I urge my colleagues to join me in celebrating this outstanding organization's 70 years of service to those in our community.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DOC HASTINGS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 19, 2010

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Speaker, due to an unexpected illness I missed two votes on Thursday, March 18, 2010. Had I been present, I would have voted "no" on rollcall votes 129 and 132. I would further like to note that I am a cosponsor of Mr. GRIFFITH's resolution, H. Res. 1190, requesting an up or down vote on the Senate health care bill.

RECOGNIZING THE ESTACADO MATADORS BOYS BASKETBALL 2010 STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. RANDY NEUGEBAUER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 19, 2010

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Madam Speaker, I proudly congratulate the Estacado Matadors boys basketball team of Estacado High School in Lubbock, Texas for winning the 2010 Texas Boys 3A State Basketball Championship.

The Matadors finished the 2009–2010 season with 33 wins and only 4 losses. The championship squad includes: seniors Eldon Gatewood, Barry Johnson and David Barnes; juniors Dallas Manahan, Kevin Wagner and Clarence Willard; sophomores Ti Russell, Nate Lewis, Anthony Robinson, Ryhiem Hunter and Kevin Manahan; and freshmen Dearius Poindexter, Tamarick Courtney and Tevin Faye. The Mats were led by head coach Tony Wagner and the 2010 Most Valuable Player, Clarence Willard.

Following a frustrating loss in last year's state championship game, the Mats' focus and determination throughout the season paid off in a stunning 69–63 victory over Dallas Madison. With this win, Estacado earned the first

University Interscholastic League boys basketball title for a Lubbock Independent School District team since 1951.

I applaud the Matadors' hard work and tradition of success. With great support from the community, the team proved itself as the best 3A basketball team in Texas. The Estacado Matadors exemplify the principles of competitive spirit and success both on and off the court, and I congratulate them on a well-deserved state championship.

HONORING MICHELLE RZEPKA

HON. THADDEUS G. McCOTTER

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 19, 2010

Mr. McCOTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Novi resident, Michelle Rzepka, for her contribution to the United States bobsled team during the 2010 Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver.

As a student at Novi High School, Michelle demonstrated extraordinary athletic ability as a varsity letter winner in basketball, volleyball and track and field. During her college career, Michelle was a two time All-American pole-vaulter and Big-10 indoor and outdoor pole vault champion for Michigan State University.

In 2007, Michelle began her bobsledding career when she joined the World Cup team. Since joining the team, Michelle has placed in the top ten in seven out of eight World Cup races. In Vancouver, Michelle joined teammate Shauna Rohbock as the sled's brakeman on the United States first bobsled team. The duo finished in sixth place.

Madam Speaker, as we recognize Michelle Rzepka for her participation in the 2010 Winter Olympic Games, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating her for her past athletic accomplishments and wishing her continued success in all future endeavors.

ATTACK ON KABUL, AFGHANISTAN

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 19, 2010

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, a team of militants launched a spectacular assault at the heart of the Afghan government on Monday, January 18, with two men detonating suicide bombs and the rest fighting to the death only 50 yards from the gates of the presidential palace.

The attack paralyzed the city for hours, as hundreds of Afghan commandos converged and opened fire. The battle unfolded in the middle of Pashtunistan Square, a traffic circle where the palace of President Hamid Karzai, the Ministry of Justice and the Central Bank, the target of the attack, are located.

As the gun battle raged, another suicide bomber, this one driving an ambulance, struck a traffic circle a half-mile away, sending a second mass of bystanders fleeing in terror. Afghan officials said that three soldiers and two civilians—including a child—were killed, and at least 71 people were wounded.

The war in Afghanistan is dynamic, fluid, and ever-evolving. What was true 9 months