

[From the Am-Pol Eagle]

JACKIE SCHMID DIES

Am-Pol Eagle's polka columnist, polka promoter, Polish American and political activist Jackie Schmid, 51, died at home on Monday.

Schmid, an executive assistant to Congressman Brian Higgins, had just helped organize the Cheektowaga Polish American Arts Festival and General Pulaski Parade in Cheektowaga last weekend.

Schmid was a Cheektowaga Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year in 2012. She was presented the Polish American of the Year award by the Buffalo Bisons in 2008. At that time Judge Michael Pietruszka said of Schmid, "She is definitely one of the unsung heroes of Polonia. She works on all of these projects behind the scenes and just does wonderful things for the community."

Despite feeling ill, Schmid attended the Pulaski Parade and Cheektowaga Polish Arts Festival on Sunday. Last year Schmid stated: "The Polish Festival is really important to keep the Polish heritage alive and pass down the traditions. The younger generations need to keep the traditions going."

Ron Urbanczyk of the band City Side had said of Schmid: "She promotes not only polka music but the Polish tradition." Schmid planned the Pvt. Leonard Post Pre-Dyngus Day and Dyngus Day celebrations.

Schmid was vice chairwoman of the Cheektowaga Democratic Committee, general manager of the Cheektowaga Symphony Orchestra, a director of the General Pulaski Assn., Inc., an organizer of Squeezefest (an accordion festival and old-fashioned polka party), and a member of the Polish American Arts Festival Committee. She was also active as a polka promoter and member of St. John Gualbert Parish in Cheektowaga.

Cheektowaga Supervisor Mary Holtz has referred to Schmid as an "event planner extraordinaire" for the Cheektowaga Crabapple Festival. Schmid was also an active volunteer with the Cheektowaga Patriotic Commission which organizes the Independence Day celebrations including the parade in the town.

Schmid was born in Buffalo and raised in Cheektowaga, where she was active in local Democratic politics. She was a 1979 graduate of Villa Maria Academy. She also cooked for her family's restaurant, which was located on Broadway and Shepard Street on Buffalo's East Side, before it was moved to Cheektowaga. The restaurant was closed in 1985.

Brian Rusk, president of the General Pulaski Assn., lauded Schmid's collaboration with other directors as she served as co-chair of the parade for 10 years. He called her, "A fine and dedicated woman."

Rusk added, "She was a foundation of our Pulaski Assn. and parade for the last 15 years. We will miss her at the General Pulaski Assn. and I personally dedicate the parade yesterday in her memory."

Pulaski parade co-chair Mira Szramel said Schmid was always dependable. "I knew I could count on her," Szramel said. She added that she knew she could always "Call Jackie" and the job would get done.

Schmid is survived by her mother, Sandi (Alexandra), father William Sr., and brother William.

A wake will be held at Barron Miller, 3025 William St., Cheektowaga on Friday from 2-8 p.m. A Mass of Christian burial will be offered 10 a.m. Saturday at St. John Gualbert Church in Cheektowaga.

RECOGNIZING STAFF SGT.
JEFFREY KELLY

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2012

Mr. WEBSTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to express my sincere appreciation for Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Kelly's service to his country.

After joining the U.S. Army Reserves in 2000 and transferring to the Regular Army in 2006, Sgt. Kelly served three tours in Iraq. In 2008, during his last tour, Sgt. Kelly was seriously injured when his convoy came under rocket-propelled grenade and mortar fire. Despite his injuries, Sgt. Kelly completed his assigned mission.

Sgt. Kelly is a native of Central Florida and graduated from Westside Vo Tech in Winter Garden. Sgt. Kelly now lives in Clermont with his wife, Michelle, and two young children, Jade and Lindsey.

On behalf of the people of Central Florida, I am pleased to express our gratitude and to praise Sgt. Kelly for his courage and dedication to his country. His commitment to his country and his selfless service is an inspiration to us all.

CONGRATULATING GRAMBLING
STATE UNIVERSITY

HON. RODNEY ALEXANDER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2012

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to congratulate Grambling State University (GSU) on its 111th anniversary. This milestone is a testament that GSU is a true leader in education.

Opening on November 1, 1901, GSU was organized by a group of African American farmers who wanted to organize and operate a school for African Americans in north Louisiana. What began as an industrial school, Grambling State shifted its focus to rural teacher education in the late 1930s. GSU transformed in the early 1950s into an institution that offered students education in the areas of science, liberal arts, and business. The university now offers 68 degree programs to its students.

In recent years, Grambling has incorporated new academic programs and has added new facilities including a business and computer science building and school of nursing. Throughout the university's 111-year history, the value of each individual student has always been emphasized. GSU continues to be an institution "where everybody is somebody."

I commend Grambling State University on this significant milestone, and its dedication to positively influencing the lives of its students. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Grambling State University for this momentous occasion.

SEEKING FREEDOM FOR AMERICAN
TRAPPED IN BOLIVIAN
PRISON

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2012

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights, which I chair, held a hearing to shine a spotlight on and to search for a resolution of the extreme injustice being perpetrated by Bolivian government officials against Jacob Ostreicher, an American trapped in the infamous Palmasola prison. Charged with crimes for which the Bolivian Government has produced no evidence, either of the crimes themselves or that Mr. Ostreicher committed either one, he is being denied the most fundamental due process and human rights both under Bolivian law and international human rights standards.

On June 9, Sheri Rickert, my Staff Director on the subcommittee, and I went to Bolivia to meet with Mr. Ostreicher and to attend a court hearing for his release on bail which had been repeatedly delayed since September of last year. The testimony presented at the Subcommittee's June 6 hearing about this case revealed the repeated due process violations being committed by Bolivian officials.

On June 11, I had the opportunity to witness some of them myself. Two attorneys from the Bolivian Ministry of Government, who I understand should not be intervening in the case, aggressively threatened to take legal action against the judge if he refused to recuse himself. Although the judge rightly rejected the ludicrous reasons on which the Ministry of Government attorneys based their threat, they accomplished their goal of having the hearing postponed and Mr. Ostreicher returned to prison.

To underline the absurdity of the Bolivian judicial system, Mr. Ostreicher's case was then referred to a court where the judge is detained in the same prison as Mr. Ostreicher. It took fully six weeks for the hearing to be rescheduled in another court that has a judge. I've been told that, unfortunately, the same scenario as occurred at the June 11 hearing took place again on July 23. The Ministry of Government attorneys injected themselves into the hearing and aggressively threatened the judge if she failed to recuse herself. The judge rejected out of hand the basis asserted for the threat, but again postponed the hearing and returned Mr. Ostreicher to jail.

While in Bolivia, I met with the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Juan Carlos Alurralde, the Minister of Government Carlos Romero Bonifaz, and the Minister of Justice Cecilia Ayllón Quinteros to advocate for Mr. Ostreicher's release. Each one of them have made commitments with respect to this case but have not followed through.

And in the meantime, Mr. Ostreicher continues to face daily threats to his life in the violent, unsanitary, drug-infested Palmasola prison. He has been on a hunger-strike since April 15, and he was already extremely frail and weak when I saw him over a month ago. Both a private and a Bolivian government doctor have examined Mr. Ostreicher and recommended that he be referred to a medical clinic for evaluation. Given everything else that

has happened in this case, it is highly suspicious that the prison officials are unable to find police escorts to take him there.

Although our own State Department officials are finally acknowledging that Mr. Ostreicher's due process rights are being violated, they continue to seem hesitant and uncertain about what action to take on his behalf. The State Department was invited to testify at yesterday's hearing, but indicated that they were not available to do so this week. I look forward to arranging a follow-up hearing at the earliest possible date when they are prepared to discuss their efforts in this case.

Since undertaking my own advocacy efforts on Mr. Ostreicher's behalf in early June, I have received reports about several Americans who are imprisoned overseas and who are being denied their fundamental due process and human rights. Out of a sense of obligation to do all I can to help Mr. Ostreicher, but also to assist other U.S. citizens in similar situations, I am introducing legislation that will hold accountable those foreign government officials who are responsible for the violation of due process and human rights of imprisoned Americans.

This legislation is entitled the "Justice for Imprisoned Americans Overseas Act" or "Jacob's Law." It is premised on the principle that foreign government officials responsible for violations of fundamental due process and human rights of imprisoned U.S. citizens, as well as their immediate family members, should not have the privilege of traveling to the United States while our citizens unjustly languish in their prisons.

The bill would prohibit the issuance of a visa and deny entry to any foreign government official who is violating, or failing to fulfill a responsibility to uphold, the rights of an imprisoned American. The legislation would also deny entry to such officials if the American dies from any cause while in prison. These visa and entry prohibitions would likewise apply to these officials' immediate family members.

Entry to the U.S. would be denied only when an American's fundamental rights are being violated. Americans who violate the legitimate laws of foreign countries must accept the consequences of their crimes. But the United States cannot stand by and simply "monitor" the case when our citizens are being held hostage contrary to international human rights standards.

I would emphasize that already under current law, 22 U.S. Code Section 1732, the President must demand the release of any citizen who has been unjustly deprived of his liberty by or under the authority of any foreign government, and to undertake appropriate means to obtain the release of such citizen. This legislation provides the State Department with a tool that it should welcome in order to help it fulfill this responsibility.

We were privileged to have with us yesterday two attorneys who are representing Mr. Ostreicher in the Santa Cruz courts. I would like to thank them for coming all the way from Bolivia to participate in this hearing on Mr. Ostreicher's behalf. We also received an update about the case from Mr. Ostreicher's wife, Ms. Miriam Ungar, and his daughter, a constituent who resides in my district in New Jersey, Ms. Chaya Weinberger. Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to Mr. Stephen Moore, a retired FBI special agent

who has spent considerable time and effort investigating Mr. Ostreicher's case and who interrupted his book tour in Washington State in order to join us yesterday.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE SERVICE OF MAJOR GENERAL ANTHONY G. CRUTCHFIELD

HON. MARTHA ROBY

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2012

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Major General Anthony G. Crutchfield, Commanding General of the United States Army Aviation Center of Excellence, upon completion of his tour of duty at Fort Rucker.

Since August 2010, when Major General Crutchfield took command of the United States Army Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker, he has demonstrated a deep personal commitment not only to his troops, but also to their families and the surrounding community.

Major General Crutchfield's mastery of the area of Army aviation is well known, and his vision for the future of his branch has had a direct positive impact in the Army. But, equally important, Major General Crutchfield's well-known dedication to his soldiers is, perhaps, his most honorable attribute. Further, his devotion to the success of his soldier's training, performance, and morale illustrates his proven leadership among those who dutifully serve.

When Major General Crutchfield took command of Fort Rucker, there was an untenable backlog of would be pilots waiting to begin training. As one of his first directives, he challenged his staff to find a solution to this vexing problem. Despite counsel from many that this was an unreasonable task, the backlog has been eliminated. Such actions exemplify his "can do" attitude. The entire Army Aviation community has benefited as a result.

Always thinking about military families, Major Crutchfield would not accept that, despite the growing population on base, Fort Rucker was not scheduled to receive a new commissary until 2016. Through his efforts, Fort Rucker and its families will enjoy the benefits of a new commissary in 2013. However, this pales in comparison to his other efforts in support of military families. As an example, Major General Crutchfield would often participate in story time with children of deployed family members. To think that a man of this magnitude would make time in his busy schedule to spend with the children of deployed soldiers, on more than one occasion, speaks volumes about his genuine concern for his military families. It also says a great deal about his character as a man.

Major General Crutchfield has also built solid relationships with the Fort Rucker civilian community throughout his command. He took time to meet members of the community, and worked hard to get to know them personally. Most recently, after undergoing a coaching change at Enterprise High School, Major General Crutchfield spent some time with the football team and offered a motivational speech to those young adults. Such actions are typical of his efforts to bond with the community and will have a lasting effect on those student athletes for years to come.

Major General Crutchfield's tour as Commander of the United States Army Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker is a textbook example of our great military leaders. From his dedication to his troops and their families to his unwavering support of the local community, his leadership and commitment to excellence contributed significantly to our nation's defense.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am pleased to recognize the significant impact Major General Crutchfield has had on Fort Rucker and the surrounding community. My congressional staff, my husband Riley, and I each offer Major General Crutchfield and his wife Kim our most heartfelt gratitude for their service to our Nation and wish them fair winds and following seas as they move on to their new duty station at Camp H.M. Smith in Hawaii.

HONOR FLIGHT ALASKA RECOGNITION

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2012

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of a grateful Alaska Congressional Delegation, state, and country, to welcome four heroes to our nation's capital. On September 27, 2012, four World War II veterans are coming on an Honor Flight from Alaska to visit the World War II Memorial here in Washington, D.C.

The Honor Flight program was started in 2005 to provide national transportation to D.C. for veterans who might otherwise never see the memorials built in their honor. Initially run entirely by individual volunteers, the program has grown into a non-profit network of volunteers, organizations, and airlines that work together to extend this amazing opportunity to those who most deserve it.

The four veterans on this Honor Flight are World War II veterans: William Joseph Nuggett, Army Air Force; Louis Elmer Fessler, U.S. Army; Marc Stella, U.S. Marine Corps; Robert J. Ingram, U.S. Navy.

Mr. Speaker, these four veterans from Alaska join over 81,000 veterans, from across the country, who have traveled to our nation's capital since 2005 to visit and reflect on memorials built in their honor. This Honor Flight was made possible through generous public donations and contributions from those who wish to honor these heroes.

We truly can never repay the debt we owe the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines who put themselves in harm's way to protect our freedom. The sacrifices made by these heroes—and the families they left behind—are truly incredible. These servicemen returned home with heavy burdens and scars from war, and still helped our nation rebuild and achieve unprecedented prosperity. Their honor, courage, commitment, and sacrifice brought freedom to much of the world, and allowed us to enjoy the freedoms we cherish today.

Please join me in thanking these Alaska veterans for their selfless dedication, commitment, and service to our great nation. God bless America and these brave men.