

Close to 700 volunteers come together to facilitate the bazaar, which funds scholarships, Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, and the Dharma School supported by the church. The Sacramento Buddhist Church's Annual Bazaar has been invaluable to Sacramento in its promotion of cross-cultural understanding and unity in Sacramento's diverse community.

Mr. Speaker, as the community of the Buddhist Church of Sacramento Hongwanji Betsuin gathers to celebrate the 70th anniversary of their Annual Bazaar, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in honoring their commitment to preserving and sharing the rich traditions of Japanese culture with the wider community.

**CELEBRATING THE 70TH
BIRTHDAY OF GARY BROGAN**

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 6, 2016

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 70th birthday of Gary Brogan. A proud veteran and devoted family man, Gary is a pillar of the Round Rock, TX community.

A son of the American heartland, Gary was born September 8, 1946 in Winfield, Kansas. It was there he learned the values of hard work and integrity that made him the man he is and that he has used in service to others.

Gary felt the call to serve and joined the U.S. Navy in 1966. He soon volunteered for combat duty and spent a year in Vietnam, earning a Vietnam Campaign Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, and an Honorable Discharge. Like many of those brave warriors who served, Gary was never given a proper welcome upon his safe return to our shores. He was even advised not to wear his uniform in public to avoid the scorn of protestors.

Following his move to Round Rock in 2007, Gary has become a beloved citizen of my home town. He and wife Vicki have been supporters of the Heart to Heart Gala, which benefits the Sacred Heart Community Clinic as well as supporting local high school booster clubs and numerous charities in Round Rock. Both are proud and devoted members of St. Williams Catholic Church.

Gary's family and friends are making sure he gets a celebration befitting a hero. On August 6, the Legion Hall in Round Rock will be packed with well-wishers saluting a great man who has both served his nation and positively impacted his community.

Gary Brogan's commitments to freedom, community, and family reflect the best values of Central Texas. I join all lucky enough to know him in wishing him a happy birthday and best wishes for the years ahead.

HONORING MS. DANA SIMON

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 6, 2016

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dana Simon, who is

being honored today by the Napa County Office of Education as a 2017 Napa County Teacher of the Year.

Ms. Simon grew up in Lafayette, California and completed her Bachelor of Arts in English at the University of Southern California. After completing her English teaching credential at San Francisco State University, Ms. Simon began teaching at Pleasanton Middle School in 1996, and has worked with middle schoolers ever since. She completed her Master of Science in Education focusing on Curriculum and Instruction in 2007, and has been working with students at Robert Louis Stevenson Middle School in St. Helena, California since 2010.

Ms. Simon makes her classroom a creative and fun environment to inspire students to become engaged learners. She sets high expectations for her students and provides them with the support and encouragement they need to achieve great results. Outside the classroom, Ms. Simon is a member of the school's Technology Committee and the Advancement Via Individual Determination Site Team, ensuring all students have access to the resources they need to succeed.

Even with her busy teaching schedule, Ms. Simon has found time to engage with important civic causes. She serves as a member of the Napa Family Law Justice Center's Strategic Planning Committee, and she previously sat on the board of Congregation Beth Shalom.

Mr. Speaker, Dana Simon has dedicated two decades of her career to inspiring students in our community to learn and strive for excellence, both through her engaging work in the classroom and as a community leader. It is therefore fitting and proper that we honor her here today.

**OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL
DEBT**

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 6, 2016

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$19,481,571,141,221.67. We've added \$8,854,694,092,308.59 to our debt in 6 years. This is over \$7.5 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

**TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE JOE
HOCKEY, THE AUSTRALIAN AM-
BASSADOR TO THE UNITED
STATES**

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 6, 2016

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask the House of Representatives to join me in recognizing the Honorable Joe Hockey, the Australian Ambassador to the United States, who has become the honorary patron of Washington DC Youth Rugby.

The Embassy of Australia has been a partner with Washington DC Youth Rugby for the past six years, reaching out to underserved youth in the District of Columbia's inner city, promoting health and physical fitness, and teaching valuable life skills through the international sport of rugby.

Recognizing rugby as the fastest growing sport at the youth level, the Embassy hosted over 300 guests at a sports diplomacy reception on August 25, with proceeds benefiting Washington DC Youth Rugby. That evening, Ambassador Hockey will be highlighting the participation of the Australian Wallabies and USA Eagles in the Olympics for the first time since 1924.

Founded in 2004 with just seven players to field a team, Washington DC Youth Rugby has grown from a summer-only touch program in Northeast DC to sponsoring a tackle program for high school boys and girls at Bell Multicultural High School in Columbia Heights. While using rugby as a vehicle for social inclusion and youth development, Washington DC Youth Rugby is offering flag rugby in over 20 District elementary and middle schools in physical education classes and afterschool program.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in thanking the Embassy of Australia for showcasing sports diplomacy in DC and making a difference for the youth of our city in terms of health, self-esteem, teamwork and social skills development. I would also like to thank the coaches, volunteers, donors, partner schools, students, parents and alumni of Washington DC Youth Rugby on their steady growth and accomplishments over the last 12 years.

**HONORING BERKELEY MT. ZION
MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH**

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 6, 2016

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Berkeley Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church, located in Berkeley, California upon its 70th Anniversary as a strong religious pillar in the East Bay community.

Berkeley Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church was founded in 1946 by Reverend Neal Lee Peterson, Deacon Fred Williams, Brother Harrison Williams, and Sisters Mattie Mae Peterson, Lula Williams, Ethel Mae Posey, Nora Sargent, Morrell Posey, Maxine Lyons, and Thelma A.J. Upchurch, who met at the home of Sister Maxine Lyons to fulfill the vision of Reverend Peterson.

During its early years, Berkeley Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church met in the homes of various members, and held services at the Codornices Village Recreation Center.

In 1949, Berkeley Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church was able to purchase its property on Camelia Street and establish its first permanent position. Services were held there for 12 years. As time passed, the church outgrew the small space, and in January 1961, the church moved into its newly-completed home on Eighth Street.

In 1966, Reverend Doctor M.T. Thompson answered the Lord's call to Berkeley Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church, where he led the

congregation for nearly 40 years. Under his leadership, the ministries of Berkeley Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church expanded and grew.

One of the most notable newly-established ministries of Berkeley Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church was established in March 1993, under the direction of Pastor Thompson. The Helping Hands of Zion Outreach Ministries seeks to reclaim and redirect the lives of families and individuals who have fallen through the cracks in our society by providing them with food, clothing, education, and employment assistance.

Pastor Thompson retired from Berkeley Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church in November 2005, after nearly 40 years of faithful service. In November 2006, Reverend Brian D. Hunter was elected Senior Pastor of Berkeley Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church, and he currently serves as pastor.

Throughout the years, Berkeley Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church has been steadfast and faithful in her efforts to fulfill the mission of the church: evangelism, discipleship, and mission.

On behalf of the residents of California's 13th Congressional District, I extend my sincerest congratulations to Berkeley Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church on the special occasion of its 70th anniversary. I wish Berkeley Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church many more years of faithful and compassionate service.

RECOGNIZING PROCTER & GAMBLE'S MEHOOPANY PLANT UPON THE OCCASION OF ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. LOU BARLETTA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 6, 2016

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, it's my honor to recognize Procter & Gamble's Mehoopany Plant, and the employees that work there, on the occasion of their 50th anniversary. P&G is a global producer of consumer goods that prides itself on passing down core values and principles to future generations. The Mehoopany plant is an essential part of Northeastern Pennsylvania, employing thousands of my constituents who take pride in being active members of our community.

Opened in 1966, P&G's Mehoopany plant has grown to be one of their largest in the world. Driving down Route 87 into Mehoopany, you can't miss the plant sitting on the Susquehanna River. Its sheer size puts their impact into perspective. In stores all across the country, you're seeing products that were made by Mehoopany employees, such as Bounty paper towels, Charmin bathroom tissues, and Pampers diapers. The plant became P&G's first energy self-sufficient facility in 2013 with the construction of two natural gas-fired cogeneration turbines which utilize gas from Marcellus Shale beneath the 1,100-acre property. In 2012, 50 percent of the plant's electrical needs were met using Marcellus gas, and, for the previous 45 years, the Mehoopany plant was the largest electricity and natural gas customer for our local utility companies.

P&G's slogan, "Touching lives, improving life," is in use every day as their employees

have made community involvement an essential part of their daily operation. In 2015, for the seventh straight year, the plant broke its previous year's fundraising effort by donating over \$500,000 to several Northeastern Pennsylvania United Ways. P&G has always been committed to ensuring that its employees have the resources necessary for success, both during and after their careers. That's why it's not surprising that over a quarter of its workforce are third generation employees. For example, P&G Mehoopany Credit Union opened in 1971 to benefit its members with affordable services they pride themselves on providing, where each member is greeted by name when they enter the building. Even after their careers at P&G are over, employees find that groups such as the P&G Mehoopany Retirees Association keep them involved in the community through volunteer projects, while also providing the opportunity to fulfill lifelong dreams by organizing trips around the world with their former coworkers.

Mr. Speaker, it's my honor to recognize Procter & Gamble's Mehoopany plant and their generations of employees for five decades of successful operation in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Through a commitment to quality products, employee appreciation, and local engagement, the Mehoopany plant has become a symbol of what can be accomplished when a community-first approach is taken. On behalf of my constituents, I wish the employees of Procter & Gamble's Mehoopany plant the best as they continue to bring prosperity and employment opportunities to my district, and I look forward to the facility's success and innovation in the years to come.

RECOGNIZING THE DEDICATED SERVICE OF MAJOR CHARLES E. "DOC" MERKEL, JR., PH.D., U.S. ARMY (RET.)

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 6, 2016

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Major Charles E. "Doc" Merkel, Jr., Ph.D., U.S. Army (ret.) upon the occasion of his retirement from the 53d Wing, Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. Dr. Merkel has dedicated more than 45 years in support of our Nation's defense. His service began with a 20 year career in the U.S. Army, then as a member of the private sector supporting development of air armament systems, and culminating with a civil servant career with the 53d Wing. It is my privilege to pay tribute to his lifetime of honorable service to Northwest Florida and our great Nation.

His active duty military career saw a variety of assignments. As an Army aviator, Dr. Merkel flew UH-1H helicopters as a member of Casper Platoon of the 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) in the Republic of Vietnam, where he also helped collect and distribute school supplies and clothing to a Christian and Buddhist orphanage in the village of Bong Son.

He was assigned to the United States Army Signal Center and School and then commanded the Fort Monmouth Ceremonial Unit for a year prior to being selected as a test pilot for the U.S. Army Electronics Command. During his final two years at the Signal Center

and School, Dr. Merkel served as the Commanding Officer of the 800-man Headquarters and Headquarters Company.

Upon completion of the Infantry Officer Advanced Course and Airborne School at Fort Benning, Georgia, Dr. Merkel was assigned to the 2nd "All Infantry" Brigade, 2nd Division, Camp Hovey, Republic of Korea as an S-2 intelligence officer and S-5 civil affairs officer. For his humanitarian work while in Korea, he was elected as [Honorary] Mayor in Kwang Am-Ri (Tokko-ri) and was recognized by People to People International.

When he returned to the U.S., Dr. Merkel served on the United States Army Aviation Board as a test project officer and later as division chief of the Electronics Systems Test Division. While on the board, he performed operational testing to enhance pilot and aircraft survivability.

He then served as Senior Assistant Professor of Military Science and Professor of Military Science at Valley Forge Military Academy and Junior College in Wayne, Pennsylvania, before completing his military active duty career in the Army as a United States Army Tank-Automotive Command test engineer and Assistant Program Manager.

Dr. Merkel retired from the Army as a Master Army Aviator with over 3000 hours of total flying time, and decorations that include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star with one oak leaf cluster, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal with eleven oak leaf clusters, Army Commendation Medal with four oak leaf clusters, and an Army Achievement Medal.

Upon his transition to civilian life, Dr. Merkel continued his service by working as a contractor with the Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missile Program, during which he was recognized with the Outstanding Achievement through Value Engineering Award for 1993 for his efforts managing special test vehicles and evaluating value engineering change proposals.

Most recently, Dr. Merkel served as a historian, responsible for covering military actions and civil disasters around the world, including in support of the Global War on Terrorism and Operation Enduring Freedom. While attached to the 451st Air Expeditionary Wing in Kandahar, Afghanistan, in addition to his responsibilities as wing historian, Dr. Merkel established a campaign to provide the children in the province with school supplies. For his efforts, he was awarded the Exemplary Civilian Service Medal, a Global War on Terrorism Medal, and a special award from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Additionally, Dr. Merkel received the Exemplary Civilian Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, and the Air Force Expeditionary Service Ribbon while in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and attached to the 386th Air Expeditionary Wing.

His education includes a Master of Science from Troy University and Master of Arts from Temple University. He also completed the United States Army Command and General Course at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and received his Ph.D. in history from Florida State University. He is an adjunct professor of history at Troy University, Northwest Florida State College, and Central Texas College.

His additional awards and accolades include: the John L. Geoghegan Alumni Citizenship Award in 2009 from the Widener-PMC