

the Great Depression, they invented their own wooden currency. It worked because this is a community where people trust each other, where they believe in each other. That kind of independent thinking is exactly what has brought the town resiliency today.

I am so excited to honor the legacy and future of this great city. I sincerely thank all the folks who put their shoulder behind the wheel of making it a great town.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF CHRIS RUST

Ms. PEREZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to thank retiring Superintendent Chris Rust for his 8 years of service to the Toledo School District.

During his tenure as superintendent, Chris demonstrated a passionate commitment to his students, staff, parents, and the community of Toledo. Throughout his career, Chris always sought to learn and improve, and he approached each new challenge with creativity and humility.

The construction of the Toledo High School is a testament to this. Under his direction, the school came in \$2 million under budget, and as a result, people in the town had lower taxes for 4 years.

Rust's dedication to our community is further demonstrated by his use of pandemic funding to bolster the district's mental health staff, proactively addressing this growing crisis and ensuring access in schools to a safe and supportive environment.

Leaders like Chris do not come around very often, but we are lucky to have them when they do.

I thank Chris. I wish him all the best in his well-deserved retirement.

THANKING RURAL FIREFIGHTERS

Ms. PEREZ. Madam Speaker, I rise to tell you about rural firefighters.

Rural fire districts are 100 percent volunteer staffed and can have annual budgets under \$100,000. That has to pay for medical supplies, fuel, vehicle maintenance, training, insurance, and administrative costs.

Because of these financial limitations, rural departments can offer training but not permanent paid positions. The result is effectively a farm system for more urban districts. Rural departments expend resources to train the firefighters who end up leaving for bigger towns, causing perpetual staffing shortages.

One emergency manager was telling me about their son, who started out his firefighting career in one of these rural districts. He was scheduled for a one-off, one-on for 6 days, but because of staffing shortages, he was on for 6 days nonstop, responding to life-critical emergencies while barely able to keep his eyes open, all without getting paid.

This type of schedule is not sustainable for any job, much less a volunteer gig, let alone one with the physical, mental, and emotional challenges of a firefighter.

I stand with my community in thanking our rural firefighters for their efforts and service. I will always

be an advocate for programs that support rural firefighters.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO DON BONKER

Ms. PEREZ. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to my distinguished predecessor, Don Bonker, a dear friend. I had the honor of knowing Don personally before he passed. His loss will be felt deeply by all of our community members.

HONORING THE LIFE OF PAUL NELSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. STEEL). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Paul Nelson, a longtime Erie, Pennsylvania, businessman who passed away on Sunday, May 21.

Mr. Nelson was 89 years old, but I don't think you could ever say that Mr. Nelson was old. Oftentimes, people compared him to a cross between Willy Wonka and Peter Pan. Why was that? Well, Mr. Nelson ran Waldameer Park & Water World.

Mr. Nelson started working there when he was 11 years old. He married the love of his life, Lane, and together, they ran Waldameer.

You can say many things about Mr. Nelson, but what you can't say is that he ever had a bad day because he never had a bad day.

I think when we talk about people at their passing, oftentimes, we are very sad, and we say it is horrible that we have lost him. I am different. I am just happy that we had him.

What if Paul Nelson had never been born? What if Paul Nelson had never been in Erie, Pennsylvania? What if Paul Nelson had never married Lane? What if Paul Nelson had never taken Waldameer and made it an iconic place for people to take their children?

When he was 83 years old, Madam Speaker, I was visiting with Mr. Nelson up at Waldameer, and he goes: Mike, how much time do you have?

I said: Mr. Nelson, as much time as you need.

He says: Come with me.

We went to his office. He looked around to see who else was there and pulled out a set of plans. He unfolded them.

I said: What are you going to show me?

He said: This is my 10-year plan for Waldameer Park.

I said: Mr. Nelson, I don't think you could define optimist other than an 83-year-old man with a 10-year plan.

His passing, yes, we grieve. We don't want to lose him, but what if we never had him? Where would the tragedy have been? The tragedy would not have been that he was here and died. The tragedy would have been if Mr. Nelson had never lived.

I think when we go through moments like this and have a chance to reflect on the people who we represent, we un-

derstand that we represent more than a person. We represent an attitude. We represent a legacy. We represent people who rely on us to come here and represent them.

Look, you can't say enough about Mr. Nelson. I told you, he is a cross between Willy Wonka and Peter Pan. I always found him to be so charming. We awarded him as a Community Champion of the district when I was able to see him.

I think people need to take time every once in a while to look not just at the birth date and passing date but look at the time in between. What did they do with that time? Was it time well spent? At the end of that time, can we look back and smile and say how blessed was I to have had something that made saying good-bye so hard to do?

This guy was incredible.

Madam Speaker, I will never yield this man's memory and what he did for Erie, Pennsylvania, and for childhood devotees who just couldn't wait to go to Waldameer in the summer.

PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO GUN VIOLENCE VICTIMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. EVANS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. EVANS. Madam Speaker, America is experiencing a gun violence epidemic, both in mass shootings and everyday gun violence.

More and more of our fellow Americans have to deal with mental health and physical injury in the aftermath of shootings. In many cases, they come out of the hospital with long-lasting disabilities.

The residents in my hometown of Philadelphia have become much too familiar with gun violence. In a poll taken 6 months ago, two-thirds of residents reported having heard gunshots in their neighborhoods.

Over Memorial Day weekend alone, 32 people were shot in Philadelphia. Seven of them died, including a 16-year-old boy. Those 32 families are changed forever.

The toll of gun violence on the victims is enormous. It is emotional, mental, and financial. It is not just borne by those who are shot but also by family and friends, as well as witnesses, first responders, and countless others.

I believe in prevention. That is why I signed the discharge petitions for the three gun safety bills. I also believe in helping those who have already been affected.

We are becoming a nation of victims and survivors. As a country, we must not forget those who are struggling in the aftermath of gun violence. That is why I, along with Senator CASEY, introduced the Resources for Victims of Gun Violence Act, H.R. 3962. This bill would create a council to assess the resources that are available and determine how we can ensure victims are getting the assistance they need.

It is important for all of us to realize that this affects everyone, that we must address this question of violence and must not take it for granted. It can affect any family throughout this Nation, and it is important that we do all that we can to send a message that this is just not acceptable.

Surely, we all agree on helping victims of crimes. The time to help victims is now. We must help victims. We must send a message that this is unacceptable, no matter where we live, no matter where we are, no matter where in this Nation.

For the victims who are being affected, we must rise up and send a message that this behavior is no longer accepted. It will take us all working together to make a difference.

I share with you, Madam Speaker, that it is important during this moment, like never before, that we come together and focus. No matter what city, no matter what State, no matter where in the United States, it is unacceptable.

□ 1045

HONORING THE LIFE OF SAMUEL BARNARD ADAMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Mr. Samuel Barnard Adams, a veteran, a banker, and a businessman from Savannah, Georgia.

Sam was a graduate of Roanoke College and a member of Kappa Alpha Fraternity. Sam served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam war. Afterwards, he worked as a banking officer with Citizens & Southern National Bank before beginning his own company, Intermodal Shipping Maintenance.

Sam was committed to community throughout his life, serving on the vestry of Christ Church, as chairman of the Tybee Island Beach Task Force, and a board member of both Hospice Savannah and Savannah Little Theater.

His contributions to the culture and vitality of Savannah will be felt for years, and his presence will be dearly missed.

RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF MICHAEL HOLTON

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the accomplishments of one of my constituents, Michael Holton.

Michael was recently recognized as the Most Fab School Support Staff member of 2023 by Effingham Living Magazine for his work at South Effingham Elementary School.

He is an alumnus of South Effingham Elementary where he currently works as instructional support staff in the technology department.

Outside of work, Mike was vice president of the Lowcountry Down Syndrome Society, and he was selected to

be 1 of 10 participants on Treasure Maps: The Georgia Storytelling Roadshow. Treasure Maps is a collection of short films that provide a personal viewpoint on living with a disability.

He also was an avid moviegoer, current event guru, and a very impressive equestrian.

I have had the opportunity to meet with Michael and I know personally that he is deserving of this award.

Madam Speaker, I congratulate Michael again, and I look forward to seeing what the future holds for him.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF TOMMY DUBBERLY

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and the legacy of Mr. Tommy Dubberly, a committed and heroic volunteer firefighter from Glennville, Georgia.

Dedicated to public service, Tommy spent 40 years fighting fires in addition to his work at the Department of Corrections where he retired as a sergeant.

At Tattnall County EMS, he served as deputy director, always leading by example and demonstrating unwavering care and support for his community.

Even when he was off the clock, Tommy still found ways to build community. As the vice president of his county's Shriners Club, he helped build fraternity and camaraderie among his peers.

Mr. Dubberly's devotion to serving others is emblematic of the virtues we should all strive to live by, and I mourn his loss dearly.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CONNOR MATHIS

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Connor Mathis, a 16-year-old whose tragic passing has impacted our entire community.

Set to enter his junior year at Glynn Academy, Connor was a joyous, young boy, always seen with a large smile on his face. His smile lit up every room he entered, and Connor's infectious energy and love, especially for sports, was constantly felt by those closest to him.

I mourn the loss of such a caring young man, and I give my most sincere prayers to Connor's family. His family now wears shirts with hearts colored green—Connor's favorite color—to honor him.

Madam Speaker, to those listening, next time someone wears green, I encourage them to think of and remember Connor, a life we lost far too early.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 48 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

PROCEEDINGS OF FORMER MEMBERS PROGRAM

The following proceedings were held before the House convened for morning-hour debate:

UNITED STATES ASSOCIATION OF FORMER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS 2023 ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS

The meeting was called to order by the Honorable Barbara Comstock, President-Elect of Former Members of Congress Association, at 8:42 a.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

God of the ages, we give You thanks for the past, for the present, for the future, and all the opportunities therein as we gather today, and we consider those whose past was dedicated to serving You and this country and their country with the abilities and the skill and the enthusiasm that You have graced upon them. Thank You that they have the opportunity, and we have the opportunity to honor their service in this moment together.

In our present, may we realize that You are not done with us yet, that You have continued to give us opportunity, even an opportunity like this one here, to connect with people we haven't seen in a while, to connect with people over the pond, to be able to see that in this time and in this place, yet, we are needed, and that You look to us once again to our graces, our abilities, our skills, our enthusiasm, to find a way to serve You in a different way with as much effectiveness and purpose.

So we give to You then our future that as we have dedicated ourselves in service to You and to our countries, we ask once again that You can look within us and You call within us a sense of reality, of purpose, and of hope that in our contributions, we will be effective, but most importantly, faithful in our service to You. We pray these things in the strength of Your name.

Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable Barbara Comstock led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. I now ask the clerk to call the roll of all former and retiring Members.

The Clerk called the roll and the following Members answered "present":

Mr. Altmire of Pennsylvania
Mr. Carnahan of Missouri
Mrs. Comstock of Virginia
Mr. Davis of Tennessee
Mr. DiGiardi of New York
Mr. Goodlatte of Virginia
Mr. Gordon of Tennessee
Mr. Gorman of Maryland
Mr. Nye of Virginia
Mr. Payne of Virginia
Mr. Ross of Florida
Ms. Sánchez of California