

Glen Park School for their meaningful commemoration of this special event. As America debates various ideas and proposals to improve education quality and standards, we should recognize those pioneers who, generations ago, committed themselves to guaranteeing every child born in our country the right to attend school.

For those of us from the Bay Area, this year's Public Schools Week has a special significance. One hundred and fifty years ago this month, on April 3, 1848, the first public school in California opened on Portsmouth Square in San Francisco. Six pupils attended classes that day under the tutelage of Thomas Douglas, a Yale graduate hired by the elected Board of Trustees for the then-reasonable sum of \$1,000 per year. Douglas offered his students instruction in a diverse array of subjects which included reading, writing, spelling and defining, mental and practical arithmetic, English grammar and composition, mental and moral science, ancient and modern history, chemistry and natural philosophy, geometry, trigonometry, algebra, astronomy, surveying and navigation, and Latin and Greek.

While these course offerings undoubtedly proved attractive to parents and students alike—by May, enrollment had grown sixfold to 37 children—one practical subject not included in the program of instruction was geology. Instruction in this field clearly would have benefited Douglas' students. Two months after the beginning of classes, the teacher and many of his pupils left San Francisco for the Sierra foothills in search of gold.

The California Gold Rush, which began with the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill on January 24, 1848, initially resulted in the mad dash of gold seekers from San Francisco, and this forced the school to close. Nevertheless, its legacy as the forerunner of California's outstanding system of public education is irrefutable.

On April 23, 1998, Mr. Speaker, Oriental Lodge No. 144 and Glen Park School will observe Public Schools Week by remembering this significant event. The theme of the evening presentation at the school auditorium will be "From Dream to Reality—From Portsmouth Square to Glen Park." The students of Grades 3, 4, and 5 will put on a multimedia presentation to focus attention on the development of public education in California amidst the tumult and upheaval of the Gold Rush. One class, I have learned, has even constructed a model of the first schoolhouse for the public to admire. The Masonic Lodge will present the school's distinguished principal, Marion Grady, with a new trophy case and a set of flags, which will be posted by the McAteer High School NROTC Color Guard. Mayor Willie L. Brown, Jr. and Anthony P. Wordlow, Grand Master of the California Masonic Grand Lodge, will join other distinguished guests at the event.

Mr. Speaker, this week's celebration of Public Schools Week is a reflection of centuries of activism in support of education by the Masons and, especially, the California Grand Lodge. Public Schools Week was instituted in 1920 by then-Grand Master Charles Albert Adams in response to a post-World War I education crisis that involved a critical shortage of teachers and the closure of 1,200 schools throughout the state. Adams and his fellow Masons hoped to focus attention on the problems facing public education and, in the proc-

ess, encourage citizens and legislators to seek solutions for these obstacles.

For 78 years Adams and his successors have unquestionably succeeded. The California Masonic Foundation, created in 1970 to provide scholarships to deserving college students, has awarded over one million dollars to young people to help finance their educational needs. In the past year alone 129 grantees received \$160,000 for this worthy purpose. The Masonic Student Assistance Program, now in its fourth year, serves California's youth with programs that range from issues of substance abuse to the increasing epidemic of violence in our public schools.

Local chapters, such as Oriental Lodge No. 144, have willingly and ably assisted community schools as well. In recent months, Bay Area lodges have contributed, among other noteworthy gifts, materials for a library program for Glen Park's first grade students and valuable instruments for the music program at Lincoln High School. The numerous Masonic contributions to public education in California are truly a credit to the fraternity and its outstanding members.

Wednesday's event is a direct result of the determined and devoted efforts of several prominent Bay Area citizens, most notably Dr. F. Armand Magid, a forty-year educator, history scholar, and Masonic leader who has worked tirelessly in organizing this week's activities; Worshipful Master Neil A. Carlson of Oriental Lodge No. 144, whose direction and guidance have greatly aided his fraternity's numerous educational initiatives; and Principal Grady, whose obvious love for her young pupils has been shown time and time again throughout her career.

In his essay, "When Is a Man a Mason?" the Rev. Joseph Fort Newton wrote: "When no voice of distress reaches his ears in vain, and no hand seeks his aid without response . . . such a man has found the only real secret of Masonry." The Oriental Lodge No. 144 and its many dedicated members have answered this call, showing us that examples from our past can and should be used to highlight the importance of our future.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to commend the Lodge, along with Glen Park School, the McAteer High School NROTC Color Guard, and the numerous other participants in the celebration of Public School Week for their commitment to public education in the Bay Area.

TRIBUTE TO CHARLES LEIDIG, RECIPIENT OF THE 1998 MAPLE LEAF AWARD

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 21, 1998

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call to your attention Mr. Charles Leidig of Maplewood, New Jersey, who is being honored with the 1998 Maple Leaf Award on this occasion of the 30th Annual Maple Leaf Award Ceremony.

Charles Leidig is being honored for his many years of extensive, and varied community service, especially amongst senior groups, his community neighborhood association, and for the Township of Maplewood. Charlie has

lived in Maplewood since 1920, and has attended Seth Boyden Elementary School, Ricalton—now Maplewood Middle School, and Columbia High School, from which he graduated in 1937. After attending New York University, he worked for a major corporation in the areas of Trade Show Coordination, Advertising and Sales Promotion, and Industrial Relations. Charlie's work often required extensive travel, with as many as 27 trips in one year.

While he took an interest in his neighborhood and its activities, it wasn't until his retirement in 1984 that Charlie became fully involved. Following a neighbor's suggestion, Charlie joined one of the Maplewood Senior Clubs, the local chapter of the AARP. Almost immediately he became heavily involved, serving first as Program Chairman and then as Vice-president. He was the group's first President to hold office for four years. Even now Charlie continues to serve as Trip Chairman.

In addition to AARP, the St. Joseph Rainbow Club was another senior organization that benefited from Charlie's endless energy and imagination. He served as the group's Vice President for two and a half years, and in 1992, was honored with the organization's Senior Citizen's Award.

Charlie Leidig has also volunteered his time and talents to Maplewood through his service as Director of the Police Advisory Committee, the Recreation Advisory Board, the Senior Advisory Board, the Maplewood TV Channel Advisory Board, and as an Election Day volunteer at Town Hall. Additionally, Charlie has served for many years as a Holiday Decorations Judge, a Lions Blood Bank helper, member of the Fourth of July Committee, and an Economic Development strategist. Charlie was a very active participant in the Ron Karnaugh Olympic activities and most recently, served on the Neighborhood Association. He is also volunteers as a collector for the American Heart, Cancer, and Cerebral Palsy Associations as well as working for the United Way and Deborah Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me, our colleagues, the family and friends of Charlie Leidig, and the Township of Maplewood in recognizing Charlie's many outstanding and invaluable contributions made to the community of Maplewood and to the State of New Jersey.

IN HONOR OF THE 16TH ANNIVERSARY OF LET'S CELEBRATE, INC.

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 21, 1998

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, for sixteen years Let's Celebrate has helped fight hunger and homelessness in Hudson County. They have helped people "move from hunger to wholeness," by providing counseling, job training, emergency food assistance, adult basic education and housing assistance.

Let's Celebrate now has 74 staff members, over 600 volunteers and 29 service and meal sites throughout the area. This impressive organization has helped countless families move toward self-sufficiency.

The organization's innovative job program finds jobs for 85% of its trainees. Let's Celebrate trains the homeless in the food service

industry through its own catering service. This invaluable, hands-on job training allows their clients to gain experience, develop job skills and learn to adapt to a work environment.

In addition, through the Emergency Food Network, Let's Celebrate serves over 70,000 meals to our neediest citizens every year. These four soup kitchens and 16 food pantries also help distribute clothing.

Furthermore, through the Housing Plus program, HIV positive individuals and their families receive counseling, medical attention as well as help with housing.

I would like to thank Let's Celebrate for its incredible service to Hudson County and for inviting me to its 16th Anniversary Mad Hatter Ball. This amazing organization truly gives us all a reason to celebrate.

TRIBUTE TO THE JEWISH
NATIONAL FUND

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 21, 1998

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Jewish National Fund (JNF) for their fund-raising efforts on behalf of the children of Israel.

The Talmud states that, "He who does charity and justice is as if he had filled the whole world with kindness." In the spirit of these words, the Jewish National Fund has taken steps to ensure that the preservation of the environment remains a top priority for Israelis now and for generations to come. The Jewish National Fund is the American fund-raising arm of Keran Kayemeth Leisrael (KKL), the official afforestation and land reclamation agency of Israel. Through fund-raising and their efforts to heighten awareness, JNF of America supports the KKL in its attempts to bolster environmental concerns, water conservation, recreation and agriculture, employment of new immigrants, tourism and research and development in Israel.

One of KKL's many projects is a summer camp designed specifically for young immigrant and underprivileged Israeli children. The camp provides children with first-hand knowledge of forestry and a chance to participate in enjoyable outdoor activities that they may never have participated in before. At the same time, the camp experience is a vital introduction into Israeli life. It provides the youngsters with an understanding of their common cultural heritage. They learn to share their hopes and dreams with each other and they benefit from the varying perspectives they encounter at camp. This month the Jewish National Fund will be hosting its eighth annual Friendship Cup Golf Classic in Westlake Village, California in an effort to raise money for the camp. I would like to wish good luck to all participants and join with them in promoting their common cause.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, please join me in honoring the Greater Los Angeles, Valleys, and South Bay Region of the Jewish National Fund for supporting the children of Israel and investing in their future.

AMBASSADOR SANDY VERSHBOW
ON NATO ENLARGEMENT

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 21, 1998

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, five weeks ago the Senate began the debate on the admission of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to the North Atlantic Alliance (NATO). That debate and the vote of the Senate to ratify the accession protocols of these three countries is expected to take place in the near future.

A few weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, two opinion pieces which were published in the Washington Post—one by David Broder and the other by Jim Hoagland—which questioned the extent to which the enlargement of NATO has been thoroughly discussed and evaluated prior to the Senate vote on this critical issue. I strongly disagree with the point of view that these two experienced journalists have expressed.

During the recent District Work Period, the Washington Post published an excellent letter to the editor from U.S. Permanent Representative to the North Atlantic Council, Ambassador Alexander R. Vershbow, "The Case for NATO Expansion."

Ambassador Vershbow is a career diplomat who has served our nation with great distinction as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for European Affairs at the National Security Council at the White House (1994–1997). Earlier he served as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs (1993–1994) and he was Deputy Permanent U.S. Representative to NATO (1991–1993). He also brings a sensitivity to the problem of Russia in the expansion of NATO, having served as Director of the State Department's Office of Soviet Union Affairs (1988–1991).

Mr. Speaker, I ask that Ambassador Vershbow's excellent letter, published in the Washington Post on Tuesday, April 7, be placed in the RECORD. I urge my colleagues to read his thoughtful views.

[From the Washington Post, April 7, 1998]

THE CASE FOR NATO EXPANSION

Critics have sought to give the impression that serious debate about NATO enlargement has never taken place and that the United States and its allies have failed to address important questions about Russia and the future security environment in Europe.

More than 1,000 articles published during the past year and a half have covered all aspects of NATO's evolving role. More than 300 conferences on NATO enlargement have been held in Europe and North America, including several in Russia. Twelve hearings before Congress in the past six months—with more than 550 pages of testimony—have explored the details of NATO's mission and membership and examined arguments from every point on the political spectrum.

Critics charge that NATO enlargement will poison relations with Russia. This might be true if NATO were seeking to isolate Russia, but the opposite is the case. Through the Partnership for Peace and the newly established NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council, NATO has created a network of security cooperation that has engaged all the states of Europe—even former neutrals. The new NATO gives Moscow a chance to move away

from the old Soviet pattern of confrontation to one of real partnership in Europe.

NATO-Russian relations are better and show more promise today than they have at any time in the past 50 years. They encompass everything from planning for joint action in civil disasters to joint military operations in Bosnia. And they are still developing. How counterproductive it would be if we undercut Boris Yeltsin's courageous decision to cooperate with NATO by bowing to the pressure of Russian hard-liners. That would strengthen the anti-democratic elements in Russia and encourage the belief that the Allies, in the face of Moscow's bullying, had returned Central Europe to a gray zone of instability and limited sovereignty.

As we work to adapt NATO to better fit the security environment of the next century, we understand that we must preserve the essential feature that has made this the most successful alliance in history—the integrated military structure and its capacity for collective defense. The three new members we have invited will significantly improve the alliance's defense capabilities. And having so recently regained their freedom after decades of totalitarian oppression, they can be counted on to stand with us, not just in defense of NATO territory but when the values we share are threatened—as they did recently during the confrontation with Iraq.

In postponing the vote on ratification for several weeks, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott declared that his intention was to "get a focus on the issue." It is proper to ensure a fair debate of the issue, but as Sen. Jesse Helms noted in sending the bill to the floor of the Senate, now is the time to act.

No one who favors democracy should want to keep the lines of security drawn in Europe where Stalin marked them in 1945. NATO enlargement is the right policy for the United States and the right policy for the future of democracy in Europe.

ALEXANDER VERSHBOW,
Ambassador, U.S. Mission
to NATO, Brussels.

TRIBUTE TO CARMELA "MEL"
CURRIER

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 21, 1998

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call to your attention Carmela "Mel" Currier of Passaic, New Jersey. Mel is being honored this evening on the occasion of her retirement after 21 years of service to the County of Passaic.

Mel began her career in Passaic County in June of 1977, working as a keypunch verifier/operator in the Administration Building. In April of 1979, she was transferred to the County Clerk's office in the Civil Law Department (Judiciary) as a Clerk Typist.

In less than a year, Mel was put into the Criminal Part of the office, entering bail recognizances, forfeitures, and reinstatements of bail. After proving herself to be a competent worker, she was given more responsibility by the County Clerk. Upon taking the Civil Service promotional tests and coming in first in a series of these tests, Mel worked her way up to become Chief Docket Clerk, the position which she has held until her recent retirement.

During her years prior to becoming a State worker, Mel was very involved in the Democratic Party. Throughout her 23 years of service to the Party, Mel has served as treasurer,