

With many of its members descended from Lithuanians and Poles, evidence of Central European ethnic pride can be seen throughout the interior of the church. Numerous parishioners have used their artistic talents to beautify the facility. The altar and stained glass windows were hand-crafted and donated by church members. Parishioner and local artisan, Richard Kiebdaj, carved the candlesticks and baptismal font. He also created the main crucifix in the church, which is made from amber donated by various members of the parish.

Sharing its geography with the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, St. Ann of the Dunes' peaceful setting is inviting not only to the people of Beverly Shores and surrounding communities, but also to the visitors from the nearby state and national park campgrounds. During the summer months, parishioners and travelers come to celebrate mass outdoors in the beautiful and natural setting of the neighboring park amphitheater.

The generosity of the parishioners is typical of the care and dedication they show for the church and each other. The parishioners are committed to a tithing program, dedicating 10 percent of the weekly parish collection for local, national and international causes to assist people in need.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in congratulating the parish family of St. Ann of the Dunes, under the current guidance of Father John B. Barasinski, as they celebrate their 50th anniversary. All past and present parishioners and pastors should be proud of the numerous contributions they have made out of the love for their church and devotion to their community throughout the past 50 years.

HONORING PRIME MINISTER ATAL
BIHARI VAJPAYEE OF INDIA

HON. MARTIN T. MEEHAN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2000

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, today I honor Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee of India. As you know, the Prime Minister will be addressing a joint session of Congress to provide us with his personal perspective on the role India plays and will play in our new world order and economy.

U.S. foreign policy is increasingly focusing on the importance of India, and appropriately so. India is slated to out-populate China by 2035. It is an important strategic democracy in a volatile and strategically important geographic region—a region for which there are hopes of permanent peace.

Since India's inception 53 years ago as an independent country, it has maintained a constitution based on the same democratic principles that our Founding Fathers valued. The Indian Constitution safeguards all its people from all forms of discrimination on grounds of race, religion, creed or sex. It guarantees freedom of speech, expression and belief, assembly and association, migration, and acquisition of property. It maintains a government where five national parties and 14 prominent state parties can co-exist in a coalition government.

Furthermore, India reaffirmed its commitment to human rights when it signed the Warsaw Declaration in June of this year. This declaration emphasized the interdependence between peace, development, human rights and democracy. Signatories agreed on the right of every person to have equal protection under the law; freedom of opinion and expression; freedom of thought; equal access to education; freedom of peaceful assembly; access to a competent, independent and impartial judiciary and that all human rights—whether civil, cultural, economic political or social be promoted and protected.

Moreover, India is also making its mark as an economic entity. For the past 10 years, the U.S. information technology (IT) industry has made increasing investments in India. They have recognized that India is capable of providing an educated, ambitious workforce that can meet the needs of the world's technology-driven economy. This has allowed India to help cultivate the growth of its IT sector. India has successfully educated its workforce with IT skills and established successful partnerships with industry leaders. India is second only to the United States in the number of Microsoft-certified professionals.

India recognizes the important link between political freedom and economic development. As India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru said "We talk of freedom, but today political freedom does not take us very far unless there is economic freedom. Indeed, there is no such thing as freedom for a man who is starving or for a country that is poor." This symbiotic relationship between economic success and personal freedom is the foundation for a just, stable world order.

The prioritization of economic success and personal freedom is also reflected in our Indian-American population. There are over 1.5 million Indian-Americans, and their contributions to engineering and technology, art and literature, and education and culture are prominent across the nation. They work in our hospitals as doctors, they start local businesses as entrepreneurs, and they serve in our government as public servants. They fill our temples, teach our children and participate in our civic processes, and so embody and exemplify the ideals of the American Dream.

As a member of the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian-Americans, I recognize that it is time for the United States to further its relationship with India. Our economic and political relationships with India and Prime Minister Vajpayee have accelerated greatly in recent years. President Clinton urged us further along this path with his visit this past March to India. The President met with government officials, traveled in India with Indian-Americans as his foot soldiers, addressed their parliament, and met with India's citizens. Through these exchanges, the United States strengthens and prioritizes its relationship with India. I am especially proud of the fact that in my district, some of the finest citizens of Indian heritage have been contributors to our economic and social fabric. We complement our relationship with India by recognizing the importance of our Indian-American community. We validate it through continued dialogue and discourse.

INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION
CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNI-
VERSARY OF THE UNITED NA-
TIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR
REFUGEES

HON. TONY P. HALL

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2000

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, today, I am proud to introduce a resolution which honors and recognizes the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on the occasion of its 50th anniversary for its contributions on behalf of the world's refugees. On December 14, 2000, UNHCR will mark a half-century of helping millions of the world's most vulnerable people. I am pleased that Representatives BENJAMIN GILMAN, SAM GEJDENSON, CHRISTOPHER SMITH, and TOM LANTOS have joined me as original cosponsors on this legislation.

UNHCR has been mandated by the United Nations to lead and coordinate international action for the world-wide protection of refugees and the resolution of refugee problems. It is one of the world's principal humanitarian organizations helping 23 million people in more than 140 countries.

Mrs. Sadako Ogata has served as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees now for nearly 10 years. It is one of the toughest jobs and Mrs. Ogata has done a superb job of bringing both professionalism and compassion to the organization over her decade of service.

This resolution also calls on the international community to work together with UNHCR in efforts to ensure that host countries uphold humanitarian and human rights principles for refugees, to lessen the impact of refugees on host countries, and to promote the safe voluntary repatriation, local integration, or resettlement of refugees.

I would urge my colleagues to adopt this legislation.

TRIBUTE TO NORM SILLS

HON. NANCY L. JOHNSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2000

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Norm Sills of Salisbury, Connecticut, for being named to the Appalachian Trail Conference's (ATC) Honor Roll of Volunteers. In this 75th anniversary year of the Appalachian Trail, the ATC is recognizing 75 individuals for their commitment to the trail. The honor roll seeks to recognize people for their dedication to the trail based upon the number of hours each has worked, their willingness to mentor new volunteers and their overall leadership skills.

Over the last 34 years, Mr. Sills, has clearly exhibited all of these qualities. A retired farmer, Mr. Sills has contributed over 2,500 hours of his time to help maintain the Appalachian Trail. In addition to his work on the trail itself, Mr. Sills is co-editor of the Massachusetts-

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EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

September 14, 2000

Connecticut Appalachian Trail Guide and a 34-year member of the Appalachian Mountain Club. The Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) is one of many organizations that helps to coordinate maintenance of the trail, largely by volunteers. Founded in 1876 as a hiking and climbing club, the AMC is now responsible for maintaining 122 miles of the Trail in Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Pennsylvania. AMC has created a 4,200 person nationwide volunteer network that spent 181,500 hours in 1999 alone managing this national treasure.

First established in 1925, the Appalachian Trail Conference linked several northern hiking groups, such as the AMC, regional planning groups and the then young national forest system to coordinate creation, and later maintenance, of the trail. In 1984, the National Park Service delegated day to day upkeep of the trail and the accompanying Forest Service lands to the ATC. The trail now runs 2,167 miles from Maine to Georgia, through 14 states, and through my district, the northwest corner of Connecticut. The 14 states have col-

lectively contributed over 180,000 acres through which the trail passes to the ATC.

No other nonprofit organization is responsible for the daily oversight of such a large tract of land or one with such a rich history. Volunteers, such as Mr. Sills, are crucial in ensuring the continuing use of the trail. Given Mr. Sills' longstanding dedication, there can be no doubt that Mr. Sills has been instrumental in maintaining the trail and he is truly deserving of this award. I congratulate Mr. Sills on this honor.