

The die was already cast, however, and the Carter Administration (having already declined to name public members) simply let the Assay Commission whither away until, in 1980, it expired with the passage of Public Law 96-209 (March 14, 1980). The irony is that only a short time later, the Mint was once again producing precious metal coinage. As the new millennium is on the verge of commencement, a movement initiated by former commissioners (most of whom are members of the Old Time Assay Commissioner's Society, OTACS for short), has talked about proposing revitalization of this old commission. There are reasons why it could succeed, and some why it should. There are a number of reasons why the Assay Commission ought to be reconstituted, and any proposal to do so will require a legislative initiative in Congress. Toward that goal, I was asked by an ad hoc advocacy group to try my hand at it. If you've got an interest in the Assay Commission, perhaps you'd care to send a note to your Congressman or Senator (U.S. Capitol, Washington, D.C. zip for the House 20515, Senate 20510) with a copy of this article, and the draft legislation. You can encourage them to do the rest.

TRIBUTE TO KATHLEEN ROMIG OF ROYAL OAK, MI

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 28, 2001

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Kathleen Romig of Royal Oak, Michigan who has been selected as one of the 12 George J. Mitchell Scholars for 2001. Kathleen was identified in a nationwide competition organized by the United States-Ireland Alliance, a non-partisan, non-profit organization based in Washington, DC.

The scholarship is named in honor of Senator Mitchell's contribution to the Northern Ireland peace process. Scholarships are awarded to individuals between the ages of 18 and 30 who have demonstrated intellectual distinction, leadership potential and commitment to community service.

I first met Kathleen in 1996 in my congressional office where she was introduced to public service and social action. She was one of our youngest interns, an eager learner, a fine writer, and a compassionate young woman.

Kathleen is a Michigan State University senior and the University's first recipient of the George J. Mitchell Scholarship. During the one-year program, she will pursue a master's degree in social policy at the University College in Cork. She will have formal courses of study, seminars and independent research in her thesis area of social policy.

In her application essay, Kathleen wrote,

There are alternative ways of viewing the problems of juvenile justice and alternative methods of solving it. Some of the most compelling are being discussed and tested in Ireland and Northern Ireland right now. One such alternative is restorative justice, a fascinating approach that seeks to balance the needs of offenders, victims and communities.

After graduation, Kathleen hopes to work in Washington, DC, and continue her interest in juvenile justice dealing with the plight of disadvantaged children.

Kathleen is also the recipient of the 2000-2001 Jeffrey Cole Excellence Award, the Walter and Pauline Adams Scholarship, the Gordon and Norma Guyer Public Policy Internship, and the Royal Oak Rotary Club and Oakland County MSU Alumni Association Scholarships. She is a member of the MSU Honors College, Phi Beta Kappa and a National Merit Scholar.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Kathleen Romig, an exceptional young woman who has a passion for learning and a commitment to social justice. I wish her good health, happiness, and success as she embarks on new challenges as a George J. Mitchell Scholar.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BALDWIN

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 28, 2001

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, the First Presbyterian Church of Baldwin on St. Luke's Place will celebrate its 75th anniversary on Sunday, May 20, 2001. The church's history and the congregation's contributions to Baldwin and the Long Island community are remarkable and noteworthy.

A new church became a necessity in November 1923. A development of nearly 300 homes had been built north of the railroad, but the five churches in Baldwin were located south of the railroad. The expanding community recognized the need for a new church, and they began to use the Fire Department on Baldwin Avenue for Sunday School and church worship services. On May 14th, the church was recognized by the Brooklyn-Nassau Presbytery with a charter membership of fifty-nine people.

The congregation and church building went through many changes over the years. In 1926, the congregation held its first worship service in its own portable "building," which had been moved from Queens to Baldwin. This became too crowded for the growing membership, and the cornerstone for a new church building was laid on November 30, 1930. The St. Luke's Place building was completed in 1931. Although badly damaged by a fire in 1940, it remains the central structure of the church to this day.

By 1960, membership was nearing 900. An education building had been built 10 years earlier to accommodate the growing Sunday School. Many organized groups were founded for both adults and children, and church facilities were being used by community groups. A new sanctuary was added in 1961, and considerable renovations to the original building were made. A church member opened a full-time state licensed nursery school, now in the thirty-seventh year of operation.

Today, the First Presbyterian Church of Baldwin at 717 Luke's Place is a mini-complex of buildings that serves the community not only as a Christian congregation, but as a meeting place for many non-religious groups such as the Girl and Boy Scouts, and Alco-

holics and Gamblers Anonymous. The nursery school provides pre-school education for seven-year-olds and four year olds.

I congratulate the entire congregation, past and present, on their remarkable achievement and contribution to Long Island.

TRIBUTE TO AUSTIN "BUSTER" AND DELORES WORKING

HON. BILL LUTHER

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 28, 2001

Mr. LUTHER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity today to recognize Austin "Buster" Working and his wife Delores for their hard work and dedication on behalf of Minnesota's veterans.

Buster and Delores were recently chosen to lead Pup Tent 11, the Honor Degree of the VFW and its Auxiliary. Their long years of proudly serving Minnesota's veterans make them uniquely qualified to hold the important positions of Commander and President. They have continuously served our veterans with dedication and commitment. For example, during the past 20 years, Buster has organized over 18,000 hospital visits to Minnesota veterans. Delores has baked and delivered over 31,000 cookies to Minnesota Veterans homes. These tireless efforts, paired with enthusiastic selfless service and a willingness to invest personal time and energy, serve as an outstanding example of the spirit of volunteerism that we should foster today.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of my constituents. Buster and Delores are serving those who served our country. I can think of no better way to show our gratitude to those who risked their lives for our freedom. I thank them for their service.

THE BIKE COMMUTER BILL

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 28, 2001

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today, Congressman MARK FOLEY and I are introducing legislation to extend commuter benefits to bicyclists. This important legislation includes bicycles in the definition of transportation covered by the qualified transportation fringe benefit.

Currently, employers may offer a Transportation Fringe Benefit to their employees for commuting to work. Employees who take advantage of this benefit may receive a tax exemption benefit totaling \$175 for participating in qualified parking plans or \$65 for transit or car-pool expenses. Employees may also opt to take cash compensation instead, which is subject to employment taxes. The Bike Commuter Bill would extend these same Transportation Fringe Benefits to employees who choose to commute by bicycle.

It's time to level the playing field for bicycle commuters. At a time when communities

across the country are seeking to reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, and increase the safety of their neighborhoods, bicycles offer a wonderful alternative to driving for the more than 50% of the working population who commute 5 miles or less to work. The Federal Government should do its part to support these goals by providing transportation benefits to people who choose to commute in a healthy, environmental, and neighborhood-friendly fashion.

According to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, bicycles are second only to cars as a preferred mode of transportation, demonstrating their potential for commuter use. Many Americans own one or more bicycles, but limit their use to recreational purposes.

This legislation is an important step in making the Federal Government a better partner for more livable communities.

RECOGNIZING 75 YEARS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE BY THE ST. HELENA ROTARY CLUB

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 28, 2001

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the St. Helena Rotary Club and its members as they celebrate the 75th Anniversary of this honorable organization.

Throughout its 75-year history, the St. Helena Rotary Club has served our community with distinction. Over the last decade, the Club has raised over one million dollars for philanthropic purposes in the Napa Valley.

As a native of St. Helena, I have seen firsthand the positive contributions the Club has made, especially to the youth of our community. Their annual Winter Ball has always been a fabulous event that is indispensable in benefiting local organizations like the St. Helena Boys and Girls Club and the St. Helena Public Schools' Foundation.

Along with 29,000 clubs in 161 countries, the St. Helena Rotary Club and its members have honored the Rotary promise to develop the opportunity for service, maintain high ethical standards, apply stewardship in personal, business and community life, and to advance understanding, goodwill and peace through fellowship and the ideal of service.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize the 75 years of immeasurable contributions the St. Helena Rotary Club has made to our community.

ROY E. DISNEY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

HON. HEATHER WILSON

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 28, 2001

Mrs. WILSON. Mr. Speaker, Disney is a name that promises a special kind of magic—real magic—to the children of every generation and every age around the world. Today,

the Disney Magic is finding a special home in New Mexico . . . the land of enchantment.

"It's not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are," Roy Disney says, and he put his values to work with his decision to provide substantial financial support to the National Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque.

Groundbreaking ceremonies were held last week for the Roy E. Disney Center for the Performing Arts. The center will include a 700-seat proscenium theater, a 300-seat film and video theater, and a 150-seat black box theater. Edward Lujan, chairman of the National Hispanic Cultural Center, said Mr. Disney is being saluted not only for his personal financial support of the facility but for the assistance he gave in raising other funds.

With his generosity, Mr. Disney proves himself a worthy heir to the name made famous by his uncle, Walt Disney, and his father, Roy O. Disney. They would be proud to see their name on the marquee of this facility which celebrates the genius and dreams of Hispanic culture. The mission of the facility is not only to educate all Americans about the unique contributions of Hispanics to the American story, but to nurture the wide ranging talents emerging in the Hispanic community.

I'm proud, too, to stand with Mr. Disney in making this dream come alive. Several months ago, the House approved my request for \$1.5 million in federal funds for the Center.

Mr. Disney began his career working as an assistant film editor on the "Dragnet" TV series, and later was assistant film editor of two classic and Oscar-winning Disney films, "The Living Desert" and "The Vanishing Prairie."

As chairman of Disney's Feature Animation Division, Mr. Disney personally produced a new golden age of Disney features, including *The Little Mermaid* and *Beauty and the Beast*. But it was with *Fantasia 2000* that Mr. Disney fulfilled the long-deferred dream of his Uncle Walt and immortalized his own creative talent.

Mr. Disney's gift to the National Hispanic Cultural Center is truly a gift to the diverse community of New Mexico and a gift to the nation, and we thank him for it.

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO ELIMINATE TAXES ON TIPS UP TO \$10,000

HON. DUNCAN HUNTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 28, 2001

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a bill that will benefit millions of Americans directly, substantially and quickly, including most notably single mothers and students. Furthermore, this legislation will lift some of the heavy burden of government off thousands of small businesses.

My bill is very simple. It calls a tip what it is: a gift. All tips given, not to exceed \$10,000 annually, would be tax free. This puts hundreds of dollars a month back where it belongs, with the individual who earned it.

Those who work in the service sector, who rely principally on tips to supplement their income, work in a system transacted largely in

cash. Accounting for small amounts of cash for income tax purposes is not only unworkable, it is unenforceable, even if a paperwork scheme could somehow be conceived. Small amounts of cash, received through hundreds and hundreds of transactions, and almost never while standing behind a cash register, should not be taxable. Washington bureaucrats lack an understanding as to just how impractical the present system is to all those who labor so hard for their tips. The system simply breaks down.

Tips cannot possibly be reported accurately, and law-abiding citizens who work for tips do not wish to be labeled cheaters by people who don't understand the realities of their work. It is time to change that. My bill caps the tax-free earnings of those who make waiting on tables a career in high-end restaurants and resorts, at \$10,000. But for the 95% of those in the service sector who receive tips, it's time to change the tax law covering income from tips.

Under current law, service employees who typically earn tips are assumed to have made at least 8 percent of their gross sales in tips. This tax is applied regardless of the actual level of the tip. Further, if the service personnel earns more than 8 percent in tips they are expected to report them accordingly. The end result for these employees, many of whose base salaries do not exceed minimum wage, is that they may have to pay taxes on income they didn't receive.

In addition, accounting for tips and gross sales is a burden on every restaurant, bar or other small business whose employees are regularly tipped. They are constantly under threat of an audit, where the IRS will hold their business responsible if the agency determines tip skimming to have occurred.

By putting in place a reasonable annual cap and strictly defining a tip, this tax relief bill is clearly focused on low- to middle-income households. According to the industries involved, most of the employees that will be helped are either students or single mothers. In addition, most of the employees are at the beginning of their careers.

Those in the service sector who rely on tips to supplement their income are a special breed of people. Those who work for tips see a direct relationship between effort and reward like few others. Night after night, day after day, weekend after weekend, the millions of bell hops, valet parking attendants, coat checkers, taxi drivers, hairdressers, bartenders, waiters and waitresses are on the job, working hard and providing vital services to people of every walk of life.

Let us give a break to those who labor so hard for their living. Let's show them for a change that the Federal Government is not so out of touch and understands the special needs of those at the beginning of their career. The time has come for government to get out of the way of our Nation's most prolific entrepreneurs, service personnel and their employers. I hope other Members will join with me in this common sense proposal that will help millions of hard working Americans.