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and restore human dignity and self-sufficiency. At the same time, they serve alongside our men and women in uniform wherever they are deployed, relaying urgent family messages and providing a precious link with home. And through its Holocaust and War Victims Tracing and Information Center, the Red Cross has helped thousands of families in their search for information about the fate of loved ones from whom they were separated during the Holocaust.

Few of us have remained untouched by the work of the Red Cross. The Red Cross collects, tests, and distributes six million units of donated blood each year, nearly half the Nation's supply. More than 1,300 Red Cross chapters in communities across America teach health and safety courses to 12 million people each year, providing them with knowledge regarding CPR, first aid, water safety, and HIV/AIDS that can—and does—saves lives.

The Red Cross has become a simple yet powerful symbol that transcends language and conveys a universally understood message of hope. This symbol draws its strength from the dedication of the more than 1.3 million volunteers who help disaster victims, assist at blood drives, teach health classes, and respond to urgent community needs. I commend the generous spirit of all those who carry out the important work of the American Red Cross, and I encourage all Americans to support their efforts—whether by giving blood, donating funds to help disaster victims, or becoming Red Cross volunteers themselves. In doing so, we will ensure that the American Red Cross will continue its tradition of compassionate service in the 21st century and beyond.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America and Honorary Chairman of the American Red Cross, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 1998 as American Red Cross Month. I urge all the people of the United States to support Red Cross chapters nationwide, and I challenge each of you to become active participants in advancing the noble mission of the Red Cross.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-seventh day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:34 a.m., March 2, 1998]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on March 3.

Proclamation 7070—Irish-American Heritage Month, 1998

February 27, 1998

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As it has been for many immigrants, America has always been a beacon of hope for the Irish people, a land of promise beckoning on the far shore of the Atlantic where they could build a better life for themselves and their children. Those who traveled here in the 17th and 18th centuries came primarily to escape religious, social, and political discrimination in their homeland. But millions of Irish immigrants who came to the United States in the 19th century were fleeing not only persecution, but also the specter of starvation and disease brought on by the Great Hunger, the devastating potato famine that began in the 1840s. Many of them did not survive the journey; many of those who did arrive at America's ports were hungry, ill, and crushingly poor.

But the Irish did not come to America empty-handed. They brought with them strong arms and an even stronger spirit that would help to build our Nation's great canals, bridges, and railroads. They would wrest coal from the mines of Pennsylvania and raise the skyscrapers of New York. They brought with them a love of words that enriched American journalism and literature and produced writers such as John Boyle O'Reilly, Ring Lardner, Eugene O'Neill, and Mary McCarthy. They brought as well a great reverence for education and created schools, colleges, and

universities across the country renowned for their scholarship and social conscience.

Perhaps their greatest gifts to America have been a abiding love of liberty, and an patriotic spirit. Irish Americans have served with distinction in every American conflict, from the Revolutionary War to the Persian Gulf, and their keen sense of social justice made them among the first and most effective voices for labor reform. From Mary Kenney O'Sullivan to George Meany, they have been in the vanguard of efforts to improve working conditions and wages for all Americans. Generations of Irish Americans entered public service to reach out to those in need—to feed the poor, find jobs for the unemployed, fight for racial equality, and champion social reform. From the Kennedys of Massachusetts to the Daleys of Chicago, from Governor Al Smith to Ambassador Mike Mansfield, Americans of Irish descent have made important and enduring contributions to the public life of our Nation.

The United States continues to draw strength and vision from our multicultural, multiracial society. This month, when citizens across the country celebrate Saint Patrick's Day, we remember with special gratitude the gifts of Irish Americans: faith in God, love of family and community, and an unswerving commitment to freedom and justice that continues to enrich our Nation and fulfill the promise envisioned by the first Irish immigrants who turned their eyes and hearts toward America so many years ago.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 1998 as Irish-American Heritage Month. I call upon all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-seventh day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:34 a.m., March 2, 1998]

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Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

February 21

In the afternoon, the President met with his foreign policy team to discuss the situation in Iraq. In the evening, he and Hillary Clinton attended an NBA basketball game at the MCI Center.

February 23

The President announced that Federal disaster aid was made available to the victims of tornadoes in central Florida. In addition, Federal aid was made available for families and businesses in 11 central Florida counties struck by earlier storms.

February 24

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael J. Copps to be Assistant Secretary for Trade Development at the Department of Commerce.

The President announced his intention to nominate Deidre A. Lee to serve as Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy at the Office of Management and Budget.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ruth Y. Goldway to serve as Commissioner on the Postal Rate Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate William C. Apgar to be Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research at the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The President announced his intention to nominate Sue Bailey to be Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs at the Department of Defense.