

providers and reining in discretionary spending, the agreement was basically made possible by the sudden discovery of \$225 billion in new revenue from the strong growth of the U.S. economy.

Many taxpayers will benefit from the tax breaks in the budget package. A new individual retirement account, the Roth IRA, was established and regular IRAs were expanded. Most families with children under 17 got a \$400 per child tax cut rising to \$500 in 1999. Eleven new educational tax cuts will become available. Capital gains taxes will be lower and the amount of inheritance exempted from estate taxes will rise for family farms and small businesses to \$1.3 million.

Although the budget package was disappointing in pushing off the whole question of decisive entitlement reform, it did improve the short-term outlook for Medicare—keeping it healthy for the next decade. Medicare beneficiaries will have the option of enrolling in a managed care plan, will receive expanded preventive care benefits, and face somewhat higher premiums for doctor services. In addition, the budget package provides \$24 billion to states to expand their health coverage to low-income uninsured children.

*Other Measures Passed:* The 105th Congress started with an explosion of activity on ethics. Speaker Gingrich was reprimanded and fined—the strongest punishment ever given by the House to its presiding officer. The House simply did not look good in the way it handled the investigation.

The Senate approved a treaty to ban the production and use of chemical weapons, and the House rejected an attempt to punish China by ending its normal trade status. Some of the welfare benefits that were cut to illegal immigrants were restored, and Congress avoided deportation of Central American refugees who fled during civil strife.

Congress passed legislation to overhaul Amtrak, clearing the way for the release of \$2.3 billion in subsidies. It also approved legislation to speed adoption of children in foster care and to speed up Food and Drug Administration approval of new drugs and medical devices. It also passed a ban on “partial-birth” abortions, which the President vetoed. It took on some of the cost burdens of the District of Columbia while reducing local powers, and it approved a new gold-colored dollar coin and 50 new quarters commemorating each state. The President and Congress struck a compromise on the 2000 census, allowing the Administration to experiment with statistical sampling while giving opponents opportunity to challenge it in court. This session Congress did manage to process and negotiate all of its fiscal year 1998 appropriation bills without vetoes or threatened government shutdowns.

*Unfinished Business:* Further action is needed on a bill passed by both houses to loosen federal controls over public housing. The House approved a bill to create an outside management board for the IRS and to strengthen taxpayer protections, but the Senate has not yet taken it up. Congress delayed field testing of President Clinton’s proposal for national math and reading tests while alternatives are considered.

As usual, the first session of Congress left a long list of bills not acted upon. In a stunning defeat to the President, Congress shelved fast-track trade negotiating authority in the face of likely defeat by the House. Neither house passed campaign finance reform or legislation to implement and possibly broaden the proposed deal reforming the tobacco industry. Both houses put off until next year a six-year reauthorization of transportation policy.

Congress did not pay overdue U.S. dues to the United Nations, provide new credit for

the International Monetary Fund, or reorganize the U.S. foreign policy agencies. Other measures awaiting action are Superfund reform, Social Security privatization, tax reform, product liability, clean air, nuclear waste, endangered species, education savings accounts, NATO expansion, and troops in Bosnia.

Conclusion: With the huge to-do list awaiting Congress when it returns in January, any grade after the first session has to be “incomplete.” The actual accomplishments of the session are modest, perhaps even below average. Even the budget agreement does less than proponents claim. The large tax cut was mainly for better-off taxpayers. And to balance the budget, Congress mainly coasted on a very strong economy and postponed many of the specific spending cuts for another day. That’s always the easy way to cut the budget.

The closing weeks of the session saw a return to sharp partisanship, as the extreme elements of each party got fed up with the cooperation that marked the first half of the year. As we begin the second session of the 105th Congress, that partisanship might well continue, making action on the important issues facing Congress all the more difficult.

#### TRIBUTE TO JAMES EDWARD HARPE

#### HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 28, 1998*

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to James Edward Harpe, who will be honored for his service as the 1997 President of the Conejo Valley Association of Realtors.

During his term as President, Ed has worked to ensure that the Conejo Valley Association of Realtors is up-to-date on the latest technological advancements. A strong advocate of technological training for the Association and its staff, Ed has introduced educational seminars, specialized computer training classes, e-mail and faxing capacity to the office. The creation of a web page has made the Association more accessible to the general public.

Ed has also worked with the Equal Opportunity committee to produce a Forum on Fair Housing, which is televised on the local government channel in our community. As a result of this effort, realtors, businesses and members of the Conejo Valley community will be better educated about issues involved with fair housing.

In addition to the work Ed has done as President, he has played an active role in the Association for several years. These activities include: Chairman of the Long Range Planning, Blue Ribbon and Building/Property advisory committees; participation on Professional Standards Panels and others.

I would like to commend Ed for this distinguished list of accomplishments throughout his career. With a clear vision and strong initiative, Ed has implemented programs which will positively impact the Association for years to come. Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, please join me in paying tribute to James Edward Harpe for his leadership efforts and dedication to our community.

#### CONGREGATION BETH SIMCHAT TORAH

#### HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 28, 1998*

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, Congregation Beth Simchat Torah is New York City’s only, and the world’s largest, gay and lesbian synagogue, and on February 7th is celebrating its 25th anniversary.

This remarkable congregation started with barely enough for a minyan (ten people) in a borrowed room at a neighborhood Episcopal Church. The Kiddush cup, some candles and challah used in the ceremony were carried to the services in a shopping bag.

The congregation grew by word of mouth and small ads in the local weekly newspaper. Slowly, at first, the number of congregants grew so that it was large enough to have to move to another church in the neighborhood for the High Holy Days. By 1975 it was clear that they needed still more space so a large loft was rented and the congregation moved into it that year. The following year it got its first Torah on “permanent loan” from a Bronx congregation. In 1977 Congregation Beth Simchat Torah hosted the Second International Conference on Lesbian and Gay Jews and that year a second Torah was acquired.

Talmud and Hebrew classes were expanded and over the next few years the High Holy Day crowds approached a 1,000. By 1992 Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum was hired and more than 2,200 people attended Yom Kippur services.

This dynamic congregation has served its community with distinction. With Rabbi Kleinbaum, it looks forward to greater community involvement, future growth and a continuance of its traditional/creative liturgy.

#### HONORING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF BAYTOWN, TEXAS

#### HON. KEN BENTSEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 28, 1998*

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the citizens of Baytown, Texas, which Saturday celebrated its 50th anniversary. Approximately 400 citizens, including Mayor Pete Alfaro and former Houston Mayor and Baytown native Bob Lanier, celebrated that event in the Baytown Community Center. Also present were current and past mayors and members of the City Council and other distinguished and longtime Baytonians for what was described as a family reunion for the City of Baytown.

There was much to celebrate for, in fifty years, Baytown has steadily grown into one of the most vibrant communities in Texas.

The roots of the town go back more than half a century to three rival communities—Baytown, Pelly, and Goose Creek—huddled on the north shore of Galveston Bay around the Humble Oil refinery, one of the largest refineries in the world. The feud peaked in 1945 when Baytown, then an unincorporated community, was annexed by Pelly, angering some

residents in Goose Creek. But not long after, in 1947, residents of Pelly and Goose Creek held simultaneous elections and voted overwhelmingly to merge. The new community held another election in 1948 to adopt a new charter and the name Baytown.

Since that time, Baytown has become a thriving city of 70,000 with a vibrant economy, strong schools, safe neighborhoods, and active, involved citizens. Baytown has made a tremendous investment in its quality of life through improvements to its roads, parks, and the Bayland Park Marina. The City of Baytown is building a better future and laying the foundation for another fifty years of progress.

One key to Baytown's progress has been transportation improvements for a city once isolated. There is no better symbol of that improvement than the Hartman Bridge, named after the late Baytown Sun Publisher Fred Hartman. A feat of technology and one of the largest suspension bridges in the world, the Hartman Bridge has integrated Baytown and the East Bay into the fabric of Harris County like never before, easing transportation, spurring commerce, and helping make Baytown a driving force in the Texas economy. The bridge has opened doors for local business, allowing companies like Exxon, Bayer, Chevron, and Amoco to transport their goods to the Houston Ship Channel and destinations beyond. The bridge is a symbol of Baytown's progress and a sign of even better times to come.

Baytown also boasts some of the finest schools in the nation, a testament to the dedication of teachers, administrators, community leaders, parents, and students. Goose Creek Independent School District schools are among the state leaders in advanced placement programs, and students' SAT scores in math are among the highest in the nation. Goose Creek schools have been ahead of the curve in preparing young people to maximize their opportunity to succeed. It is also at community colleges like Lee College in Baytown that America's workers are getting a chance to advance their education and their careers.

The success of Baytown's schools underscores what may be its most important attribute of all—the involvement of Baytown's citizens in making this community such a great place to live, work, and raise a family. The citizens of Baytown understand that it is our government, our schools, our parks, our churches and our neighborhoods, and we make them better when we take the time to get involved. The results are projects like the Eddie V. Gray Wetlands Education and Recreation Center, which teams up local schools, industry and civic leaders to protect local marshes and develop environmentally friendly classes on hobbies such as fly fishing, bird watching, and safe hunting skills. Another fine project is the Chamber of Commerce's Partnership in Education program in which local businesses volunteer their time and resources to area schools.

The past fifty years have not all been easy, but through it all—the boom times and the busts—the character of Baytown's citizens has shone through. That character has helped build such a strong city in just fifty years and will lead to even greater success in the next fifty years.

Mr. Speaker, I was honored to join in Baytown's 50th anniversary celebration and look forward to working with all Baytonians to help

make the next fifty years of Baytown history as memorable as the first fifty.

The following song, Baytown is Home to Me, by Kevin Hardin, was written especially for the 50th Anniversary:

BAYTOWN IS HOME TO ME  
(By Kevin Hardin)

Chorus:

Baytown is home to me  
If I stay forever or if one day I leave  
The people and the places have my roots  
down deep

Baytown is home to me

Verse:

Some came from New York, some came from  
Tennessee

Some remember Pelly, some recall Goose  
Creek

From rice farms in the marshes to oil rigs in  
the bay

This boom town is still booming today.

Chorus:

Baytown is home to me  
If I stay forever or if one day I leave  
The people and the places have my roots  
down deep

Baytown is home to me

Verse:

From Sterling and the Rangers to the Gan-  
ders flying high

Churches, schools, and businesses are full of  
Baytown pride

From a boat across the bayou, now a bridge  
across the bay

Baytown is still growing today.

Chorus:

Baytown is home to me  
If I stay forever or if one day I leave  
The people and the places have my roots  
down deep

Baytown is home to me

A GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY FOR A  
GOLDEN COUPLE

**HON. JAMES A. BARCIA**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 28, 1998

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, anything of real value endures, and the longer it endures, the greater its value. If it is possible for something to become even more priceless than priceless, it is the love two people have for each other that results in marriage, the establishment and growth of a family, and a protective nest from all the challenges the world presents to us.

I am pleased to tell our colleagues that on December 20th, two wonderful people, Donald and Dorothy Keinath of Caro, Michigan, celebrated their most special 50th anniversary of marriage. Together with their children Karen and Russell and his wife Mary, their grandchildren Natalie, Anne, Joseph, and Julia, and the great number of friends their years of work and community involvement have brought to them, they were able to celebrate their anniversary in a manner befitting their years of devotion.

Don had two instances of great luck about fifty years ago. First, while he was a private first class in the Marine Corps, he was one of the lucky young men at the time who had the war in the Pacific come to an end before his unit was scheduled to ship out. Then at the Tuscola County Fair he met his future wife, Dorothy Brinkman, who liked looking at the pigs Don had on display. After their wedding on December 20, 1947, they honeymooned in

Washington, DC, marking the first of many trips the couple would make to Washington and elsewhere since that time. They love to travel, having journeyed to places as intriguing as Australia and Morocco.

Their home, however, has been their secure base for their years together. Don has been a farmer the entire time, still operating a 420 acre farm producing dry beans, sugar beets, barley, and wheat. He has served as a member of the Michigan Bean Commission for six years, and has also been a director of important sugar beet grower associations—the Farmers and Manufacturers, and now the Great Lakes Sugar Beet Growers Association—for thirty years. For twenty-nine of those years, he has served as an officer, including his current tenure as President of the Caro Sugar Beet Growers Association. He also received Michigan State University's Distinguished Service to Agriculture award in 1993.

He has been very active with his church, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, including its building committee. Both he and Dorothy have served as Sunday School teachers. Dorothy has also been heavily involved with the Altar Guild at the church, and had also been a teacher before the needs of the family guided her into other activities.

Mr. Speaker, it is truly difficult for me to think of two kinder or more generous people than Don and Dorothy Keinath. Their lives together have been a blessing for each other, and a treat for those of us fortunate enough to know them. I urge you and all of our colleagues to join me in wishing them the happiest of anniversaries, on this their fiftieth, and many more to come.

HONORING RABBI MICHAEL WHIT-  
MAN FOR TEN YEARS OF COM-  
MUNITY SERVICE

**HON. ROSA DeLAURO**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 28, 1998

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, December 14, Rabbi Michael Whitman will be honored for ten years of dedicated service to his community and the Young Israel House. Rabbi Whitman is a unique man marked by his integrity and commitment to his heritage.

Rabbi Whitman's work on behalf of the Jewish community has earned him the respect and admiration of all who know him. A deeply caring and compassionate man, he has devoted himself to making a difference for others—and he has truly left his mark on his community. From his work at the Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen to serving as a board member for the New Haven Homeless Resource Center, Rabbi Whitman has always found the time to devote to worthy causes and organizations. His steadfast determination and perseverance are remarkable, as is his vision for a more unified world and his commitment in working toward that vision.

An educator who has taught with distinction, Rabbi Whitman has extensive knowledge about law and the Jewish culture. He has published several articles and promotes learning as a way of life. Rabbi Whitman engages and motivates his students, encouraging open dialogue about thought-provoking issues. His classrooms give young people the opportunity