

and a host of political and civic leaders have been privileged to speak to students in Kathy's government classes. She was a true believer in exposing her students to firsthand experiences in government. She encouraged student involvement and referred her students to my office for internships.

I have never met a more experienced, committed or enthusiastic teacher. Kathy is a model for all educators to follow. I commend her on her 40 years of outstanding service. Kathy has left an indelible mark on her students and the community of Fremont and her contributions will be long remembered and felt with utmost respect.

#### CREATION OF THE FHA

### HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 24, 2004*

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, 70 years ago this month, Congress approved the National Housing Act that created the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and President Roosevelt signed into law on June 28, 1934.

The value of FHA can not be overstated. For decades it has insured mortgage loans to help over 33 million families own their own home. The FHA has continuously been a critical resource in helping make home ownership available and more affordable. In fact most recent data shows, the nation's homeownership rate soared to an all time high of 68.1 percent. I have long been a supporter of the FHA program and believe that it is critical for unlocking the door to homeownership for so many Americans.

Mr. Speaker, my Congressional district has the unique distinction of being home to the first FHA Insured Mortgage approved for a house in the United States.

Let me take you back to the 1930's. Our country was in the midst of the Great Depression. It is estimated that in 1933 there were 1,000 foreclosures per week! In my home state of New Jersey homeownership rates were declining. In fact, between 1930 and 1940 they fell 9 percent. A loaf of bread cost about nine cents and a dozen eggs went for 27 cents. In Morris County, the average rental paid \$55 a month for a large house.

Mr. Speaker, It was during this economic climate that President Roosevelt signed the National Housing Act into law with the intention of broadening home ownership, protecting lending institutions and stimulating the economy.

James A. Moffett was appointed the first FHA Administrator and it is under his leadership that on December 18, 1934, the Newkirk family received the first FHA Mortgage for the completion of construction of their house at 30 Hopper Avenue in Pompton Plains, Morris County, New Jersey.

Pompton Plains is located in the Eastern part of Morris County and is part of Pequannock Township. At that time, Pequannock was 7 square miles of land, had 2,104 residents and was comprised mostly of farmland and apple orchards. Today Pequannock Township is home to approximately 14,000 residents.

Mr. Newkirk purchased the land at 30 Hopper Avenue and built a home for his wife, son

and himself. It is estimated that the land and house cost just under \$10,000. The FHA loan, at \$4,800 covered approximately 50 percent of the cost of the house.

Since the house was built, it has changed hands three times and is now owned by Trevor and Catherine Smallwood who purchased it on July 3, 2003 for \$470,000.

Today this house still stands at 30 Hopper Avenue. While 70 years have passed the house looks much the same, a structure rich in history, standing for the dream of homeownership, a dream that we continue to work to ensure every American can achieve.

Mr. Chairman, I ask you to join me in recognizing and celebrating this truly historic house and all that it stands for.

#### FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL PLANNING SAVED 100,000 LIVES IN CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE

### HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 24, 2004*

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I have already asked my colleagues today to recognize the bravery of firefighters who saved 40,000 homes in last year's devastating wildfires. But I would now like to also pay tribute to an unprecedented effort at planning and organization by federal, state and local officials that allowed the evacuation of 100,000 people threatened by fire—without a single injury or a major hitch!

Many of the heroes of this planning effort were on the front lines fighting the Old Fire, which eventually burned 91,000 acres and destroyed nearly 1,000 homes in October 2003. But their work to avoid a devastating loss of life began more 18 months earlier with the formation of the Mountain Area Safety Task Force, known throughout the San Bernardino Mountains as the MAST.

San Bernardino National Forest Supervisor Gene Zimmerman initiated the formation of the MAST to deal with an on-going crisis: the death of more than 5 million trees because of drought and attacks by pine bark beetles. The forest, which is largely in my 41st Congressional District, is one of the most urbanized and heavily used in the nation, with nearly 100,000 residents and visitors living amongst the trees. The chance for a devastating fire is overwhelming, and it will take many years and hundreds of millions of dollars to eliminate the danger.

It became clear that the task of restoring the forest—and avoiding the loss of thousands of lives in a fire—would require the coordinated efforts of the Forest Service, the state Department of Forestry and Fire, San Bernardino County Fire Department, and dozens of local fire departments, community groups and businesses. Such a coordination effort had never been undertaken on such a comprehensive scale, and the organizational hurdles alone were daunting.

But the mountain communities, while divided into dozens of small pockets by geography, are populated by people who look out for each other, and who are united in their devotion to the forest. Hundreds of residents turned out for every informational meeting, and officials from agencies at all levels made the coordination of effort their top priority.

With the substantial help of the geographic information systems company ESRI, the MAST established elaborate plans on how to evacuate residents along the few main highways that snake through the forest. Dozens of community meetings were held, and residents had access to an Internet Web site created free-of-charge by ESRI that provided even more detailed information.

When the Old Fire struck in October 2003, our worst fears seemed about to be realized. The fire appeared to be unstoppable before it reached the stands of dead trees. Within a day, the order went out to evacuate, even as the firefighters made valiant stands to stop the fire along the evacuation routes. The success of the planning process was soon clear: No one was injured in the evacuation. Although six deaths were attributed to the fire, none of our residents were caught in their homes like those who suffered tragic deaths in San Diego County.

Mr. Speaker, the MAST continues to meet and plan for the restoration of the forest and the upcoming fire season. While some progress has been made in reducing the number of dead trees, the fire danger remains high. Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of this group, I am confident that we will be prepared to meet that danger.

The members of the MAST—represented by Supervisor Zimmerman and San Bernardino National Forest Staff Director Doug Pumphrey—will be honored this Friday with a U.S. Department of Agriculture Honor Award. This award is without question highly deserved, and I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating and thanking those who took part in this life-saving effort.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE GERIATRIC AND CHRONIC CARE MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2004

### HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 24, 2004*

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Geriatric and Chronic Care Management Act, an important piece of legislation that would authorize Medicare coverage of geriatric assessment and care management for eligible Medicare beneficiaries.

Americans are living longer than ever, with the average life expectancy rising to 80 years-old for women and 74 years-old for men. While this is a positive development, there are costs associated with the aging of America. As seniors live longer, they face greater risks of disease and disabilities, such as Alzheimer's, diabetes, cancer, stroke and heart disease.

Geriatricians are physicians who are uniquely trained to help care for the aging and elderly. By promoting a comprehensive approach to health care, including wellness and preventive care, geriatricians can help seniors live longer and healthier lives.

It is critical that our nation have a sufficient number of geriatricians to help manage the aging of the baby-boom generation. Unfortunately, there are currently only 9,000 certified geriatricians, and that number is expected to decline dramatically in the coming years. Of the approximately 98,000 medical residency and fellowship positions supported by Medicare in 1998, only 324 were in geriatric medicine and geriatric psychiatry. The Alliance for