

Arkansas Blues and Heritage Festival, a beloved, time-honored tradition in my hometown of Helena, AR.

The Arkansas Blues and Heritage Festival, formerly known as the King Biscuit Blues Festival, is one of the Nation's foremost showcases of blues music. Held for 3 days annually in October, tens of thousands of blues enthusiasts converge on historic downtown Helena. This year's festival features legendary blues musician B.B. King, along with nearly 50 other blues performances. The event will be held October 7 to 9, with projected attendance figures of nearly 80,000.

I have often joined my fellow Helena residents to celebrate and enjoy this annual tradition, and I am proud of the community's efforts to keep alive the history and heritage of blues music.

Founded in 1986, the first festival was a 1-day event, with a small gathering of local residents and a flatbed truck as a stage. Since then, the festival has grown to a 3-day event, with three stages and several activities, such as the Kenneth Freemyer 5K Run, the Blues in Schools program, and the Tour da' Delta bicycle tour.

I congratulate the organizers and leadership of the Arkansas Blues and Heritage Festival, along with all my fellow Helena residents. I wish them all the best as they celebrate 25 years of the Arkansas Blues and Heritage Festival.●

RECOGNIZING DIRK LEACH RUSTIC ARTS

● Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, as lobster bakes and vacations along the picturesque northeastern coast fade with the summer months, today I honor a craftsman and small business owner in my home State of Maine who keeps the feeling of the season alive by marrying function, comfort, beauty, tradition, and love of the outdoors—quintessentially Maine characteristics—with the iconic Adirondack chair.

Located along the Saco River in the town of Buxton, Dirk Leach Rustic Arts is a one-of-a-kind business devoted to one man's dream of creating the perfect Adirondack chair. The company's owner, Dirk Leach, maintains the tradition of "rustic artistry" by walking through Maine's woodlands in late fall and winter to gather materials for one of his Shaker creations. An artist and an innovator, Mr. Leach describes himself as "obsessed with the Adirondack chair form," and draws inspiration from the simple, functional forms of Shaker design. Mr. Leach's sketches help him translate his varying ideas into unique prototypes and, finally, innovative seating pieces with wide seat planks, thick arm rests, and clean lines.

Since the mid 1990s, Dirk Leach has fashioned Adirondack chairs and settees from a variety of trees native to Maine, such as red oak, white ash, yellow birch, and sugar maple. Perhaps most creatively, Mr. Leach transforms

pin cherry and gray birch into hand-hewn candlesticks and a number of accessories. Mr. Leach lovingly builds, paints, signs, and dates his exceptional and unique creations, which are all beautifully handcrafted and guaranteed for life. While his most popular designs include the traditional Weekender chairs to the more eclectic Nor'easter chairs, Mr. Leach has pledged to design 100 variations of the outdoor classic by alternating back height, seat angles, hardware, and color. Moreover, chairs can be built to withstand even the coldest of Maine's winters, as they are constructed of weather tight white oak and finished in the finest exterior house paint on the market.

And although Mainers have come to anticipate traditional white Adirondack chairs assembled along campfires and lazily arranged in the backyard, Dirk Leach is renowned for applying layers of paint in colors inspired by nature itself, from colors such as iris, prairie grass, and warm earth, to vivid shades of crocus, coral, and pistachio.

Touted as the "Best Maine Adirondack Chair" by Down East Magazine in July 2010, Dirk Leach Rustic Arts has been working to keep up with demand since the Maine publication hit newsstands. And when he wasn't drawing up his newest designs, Mr. Leach has spent time traveling to Wisconsin, New York, and throughout Maine—from July to September—demonstrating his rustic woodworking craftsmanship and techniques.

While small businesses are most notably touted as drivers of our national economy, and rightly so, they can sometimes be overlooked for their often more subtle contributions to design, quality, and innovative vision. Whether his customers utilize these chairs to gaze out at the ocean or sit around a campfire, Dirk Leach's designs are functional works of art meant to last for generations. I commend Dirk Leach on the passion he lends to his craft, and I wish him nothing but success in the years to come.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:38 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by

Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 2923. An act to enhance the ability to combat methamphetamine.

H.R. 3470. An act to authorize funding for the creation and implementation of infant mortality pilot programs in standard metropolitan statistical areas with high rates of infant mortality, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4195. An act to authorize the Peace Corps Commemorative Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4347. An act to amend the Indian Self-Determination Act and Education Assistance Act to provide further self-governance by Indian tribes, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5152. An act to adjust the boundary of the Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park to include the Wallis House and Harriston Hill, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5194. An act to designate Mt. Andrea Lawrence, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5494. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to transfer certain properties to the District of Columbia.

H.R. 5809. An act to amend the Controlled Substances Act to provide for take-back disposal of controlled substances in certain instances, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5811. An act to amend the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo and Alabama and Coushatta Indian Tribes of Texas Restoration Act to allow the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Tribe to determine blood quantum requirement for membership in that tribe.

H.R. 6130. An act to amend title XI of the Social Security Act to expand the permissive exclusion from participation in Federal health care programs to individuals and entities affiliated with sanctioned entities.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 294. Concurrent resolution commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

The message further announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 2781. An act to change references in Federal law to mental retardation to references to an intellectual disability, and change references to a mentally retarded individual to references to an individual with an intellectual disability.

The message also announced that the House agrees to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1454) to provide for the issuance of a Multinational Species Conservation Funds Semipostal Stamp.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 11:33 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

H.R. 4505. An act to enable State homes to furnish nursing home care to parents any of whose children died while serving in the Armed Forces

H.R. 6102. An act to amend the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 to extend the authority of the Secretary of the Navy to enter into multiyear contracts for F/A-18E, F/A-18F, and EA-18G aircraft.

The enrolled bills were subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).