

In 1936, the institution was renamed the Public Museum to better reflect its citizen ownership and operation and multidisciplinary, program-focused character. It had a professional staff and had seen a great increase in historical collections and programs as well as permanent installations. In 1938, the museum's board matched a WPA grant with a bequest and built an innovative, modern building that looked and acted more like a department store than a traditional museum. Inspired by the writings of Newark Museum director John Cotton Dana, the museum was populist in philosophy and presentation, marketing itself in 1940 when it opened as being "as convenient as your corner store, and friendly as your neighbor." By 1964, an incredible growth in service-oriented programming had necessitated building additions and the construction of the Roger B. Chaffee Planetarium along with the acquisition of the 143-acre Blandford Nature Center. The Voigt House, an unusually well-preserved, late-19th century residence, was acquired in 1974 with all of its original furnishings and archives. It is a house museum that balances the didactic historical displays developed in the main museum, especially those focused on furniture design, manufacturing and marketing.

In the late 1970s, even as it became the first museum in the Nation to be accredited by the American Association of Museums, 1971, it was evident that expansion was necessary again in order to maintain standards and better serve a growing audience. In 1982, an extraordinary public planning process was begun that resulted in the creation of a master plan for the museum's growth on a new site in the heart of downtown Grand Rapids. This culminated on the museums 140th anniversary in 1994 with the debt free opening of its 155,000-square-foot VanAndel Museum Center. In total, \$42 million was amassed from more than 25,000 public and private donors for its completion, with major support coming from the VanAndel family.

Community-based exhibition development, object conservation and program development were planned, fabricated and implemented simultaneously with the structure, resulting in multiple exhibitions exploring regional urban, social and industrial history, ethnology, regional art, and environmental education. The museum boasts numerous unique features, including a fully operational 1928 amusement park carousel and completely restored 1928 Mighty Wurlitzer theater organ.

With growth came new opportunities. Professional staff was expanded. Citizens formed a private foundation in support of museum programs that now manages assets of more than \$6 million. The city of Grand Rapids renewed its commitment to operations, while facilitating and encouraging the museum to become entrepreneurial. In response, annual institutional attendance climbed to nearly double the city's population simultaneous with the Public Museum's third award of AAM accreditation (1996). The museum staff manages a collection that now includes nearly 1 million objects in more than 350,000 record groups.

A new temporary exhibition program was initiated, which reached new heights of success with the organization of a proprietary exhibition of The Dead Sea Scrolls, organized in collaboration with the Israel Antiquities Authority. Between mid-February and June 1, 2003, the exhibition hosted a record 235,541 visitors,

having an economic impact on the region of \$9 million. It was the second-most-attended temporary antiquities exhibition worldwide in 2003.

As 2004 draws to a close, the museum is again poised to expand both with new programs and exhibitions as well as a new 140,500-square-foot, state-of-the-art Community Archives & Research Center providing excellent preservation of the permanent collection and expanded public access. The center houses not only museum collections, but also the archives of the city of Grand Rapids and the county of Kent, which collaborate in its planning and operation.

Mr. Speaker, I hope you will join me in congratulating the Public Museum of Grand Rapids on the occasion of its 150th anniversary. Its long history of service to the west Michigan community is laudable indeed and we look forward to its continued work in the future.

THE RECOGNITION OF MR. ROBERT BAUMANN

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 7, 2004

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today in recognition of the endless accomplishments of Fire Fighter Robert Baumann who has served the Middletown Township Fire Department for 47 years. Fire Fighter Robert Baumann joined our community in 1957 as a member of the Belford Engine Fire Co. #1 and has continued to volunteer his time, intelligence, and experience to the public ever since. I am honored to acknowledge someone of Mr. Baumann's courage and strength.

During his tenure in our community, Mr. Baumann has been reliable and energetic in all his services. Mr. Baumann is a man who realizes the value of life and would give up his own to save another. Fire Fighter Robert Baumann is a true hero.

The Middletown Community is grateful to have had a man of such character with us for all these years. At the age of 75 Mr. Baumann continues to volunteer his time to the Fire Police Unit by responding to calls from all hours of the night and day, on holidays and weekends. Mr. Baumann has always been there with the unit at fires, assisting the police department when power lines are down, or during any other type of emergency.

Mr. Speaker, I feel privileged to recognize a man of Fire Fighter Robert Baumann's experience who has served our community with such dedication. Once again, I ask that you join me in congratulating Fire Fighter Robert Baumann on a life of public service, and wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors.

A TRIBUTE TO RAMONA WILLIAMS

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 7, 2004

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of Ramona Williams for her dedication to strengthening early education for our children

and volunteer efforts to strengthen our community.

Ramona is a life-long resident of the Bedford Stuyvesant community of Brooklyn and does not plan to move. She attended Public School 297, which her two younger children attend now. She graduated from J.H.S 126 and Eli Whitney High School. She has three beautiful children: Jessica, 14, Vanessa, 9, and Jerome, 5, each of whom have a dream of greatness.

Following her high school graduation, Ramona began work as a substitute teacher at Round Table Child Care Center, eventually becoming a head teacher. She enjoys creating curriculum and cultural activities for her students and assisting parents in helping their children. After 16 years of empowering her students, her personal horizon expanded and she accepted a position as Parent Coordinator for Mark Hopkins Intermediate School 33. Ramona works closely with the principal, P.T.A. and as a liaison between the community and school.

As a single parent raising three children and working full time, Ramona finds it important to further her education and has enrolled at the College of New Rochelle pursuing a Bachelor's of Social Work. She is a member of the Greater Free Gift Baptist Church Inc., where the pastor is the Rev. William Raymond Whitaker, Jr., Th.M, whom she thanks for his spiritual leadership and wisdom.

Ramona's concern for her church and community has led her to focus on fundraising and organizing outreach events for teenagers, which included finding them summer employment. She also sings in the Tabernacle Choir. Forever thankful in all areas of her life, personal and community, she is grateful for those who inspire her as she strives to make this a better place for others. Her unconditional love and thanks goes to her parents and siblings, and the sparkles in her eyes—Jessica, Vanessa, and Jerome ("Jay").

Mr. Speaker, Ramona Williams has been a leader in our community through her consistent efforts to improve the quality of education for all of our children. As such, she is more than worthy of receiving our recognition today, and I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring this truly remarkable person.

HONORING BARBARA COHEN

HON. JIM GERLACH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 7, 2004

Mr. GERLACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Barbara Cohen on the occasion of her retirement from the Phoenixville Chamber of Commerce where she has served as the Executive Director since 1992.

Barbara Cohen has led an extraordinary and exciting life. Born in Philadelphia, she has always displayed energy and determination in all aspects of her life. Her childhood consisted of piano lessons, Hebrew School, Girl Scouts, National Honor Society, and international travel. Barbara was her class valedictorian at Northeast High School in 1959 and, from there, she went on to Temple University where she earned a BS in education and a minor in political science. After graduation, Barbara began teaching 4th grade while attending University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of International Relations.

Barbara was married in 1964 and, shortly after her wedding, Barbara and her husband served their country by moving to Germany for three years where she taught military servicemen and women general education courses they needed to finish their high school educations.

In 1983, ten years after Barbara and her family moved back to Pennsylvania and settled in Valley Forge, Barbara went back to school and earned her Masters degree in interior design from Drexel University. During this time, she was also a full-time mother, driving her children to and from soccer practices, dancing lessons, Hebrew School and many other activities.

In addition to her busy schedule and many accomplishments, Barbara has been actively involved in her community since returning to the States in the 1970's. Barbara serves as a volunteer guide for the Friends of Independence National Historic Park, and as a volunteer guide for the Foundation for Architecture that gives walking tours of historic sites in Philadelphia. Barbara has also served as a board member for the Chester County Tourist Bureau and for the Schuylkill River Greenway Association. Barbara spearheaded an EPA brownfields initiative grant for Phoenixville Borough as Director of the Phoenixville Area Economic Development Corporation and Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce. And she has provided unparalleled leadership and direction for a wide variety of public improvement and revitalization efforts in Phoenixville. Due to Barbara's tireless efforts, almost 4 million dollars has been raised in the revitalization effort and the Borough now stands on the threshold of a magnificent resurgence.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me today in honoring this extraordinary woman for the years of good work she has done at home and abroad and for the many distinguished and remarkable contributions she has made to this community and the people whose lives she has graciously touched.

TRIBUTE TO EPWORTH MANOR

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 7, 2004

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Epworth Manor for its service to the community, and to congratulate all those involved with the facility on its celebration of 85 years in operation.

Throughout this nation's history, taking care of the elderly has never been more critical to our progress than it is now. With so many citizens reaching the age of retirement while having the ability to live longer due to advances in medical science, the services that care centers provide have become vital to a community's subsistence. The legacy of consistent service that the Manor as built throughout the last 85 years has helped to earn people's trust, making them more willing to seek medical help when in need. Facilities like Epworth Manor allow a region to thrive because of the assurance that quality health care is available, and its impact has been invaluable.

Established in 1919 when the Central Pennsylvania Conference of the Methodist Church

purchased the S.S. Blair Mansion, the facility, formerly known as the Methodist Home for the Aged, initially housed fourteen residents. After numerous expansions, extensive remodeling, and investment in new technology, Epworth Manor has expanded into a 144-bed comprehensive health care facility.

Epworth Manor has demonstrated an unyielding enthusiasm and care for the public which it serves, and its employees have worked diligently throughout its tenure, instilling a sense of pride and comfort into the area's citizens. The center has not only enriched the lives of its residents, but of those in the surrounding communities who have undoubtedly benefitted from the outstanding service that they have repeatedly provided.

For its incomparable generosity, service to the community, and unabated commitment to excellence, Epworth Manor deserves the highest recognition. The center continues to grow and maintain a high level of quality, providing an example that all businesses should follow. I congratulate Epworth Manor on its 85th anniversary and eagerly await its future progress.

ALL LEGISLATION SHOULD BE
AVAILABLE ON INTERNET 24
HOURS BEFORE A VOTE

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 7, 2004

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, last month Congress passed the FY2005 Omnibus Appropriations Bill. The version that passed the House included a provision that would allow Appropriations Chairmen access to IRS tax returns. Once this provision was noticed, the Senate passed a resolution to strip it and the House was forced to go back into a pro forma session to adopt the Senate language. Two years ago, outrage followed the passage of an omnibus bill that included indemnification language for vaccine makers against autism lawsuits.

Earlier this year, I introduced H.R. 4971, the Restoring Democracy to the United States Congress Act. This legislation sought to enact a series of reforms that I believe would have prevented this from happening. If the bill was law, among other things, it would have required the legislation to be online in a searchable form for a minimum of 24 hours before we voted on it.

As an opportunity for Members to clearly state that the current manner in which we often consider legislation is not good for the institution, I am introducing legislation that would require all legislation be available to the public on the Internet and in a searchable form for a minimum of 24 hours before a vote could be considered.

INCREASING THE PUBLIC DEBT
LIMIT

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 2004

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to S. 2986, legislation to

raise the debt limit by a total of \$800 billion, to \$8.18 trillion. This marks the third time in three years that Congress has been forced to vote to raise the debt limit and burden our children and grandchildren for decades to come, raising the debt limit by a total of \$2.2 trillion since 2001.

It is completely irresponsible to be voting to raise the debt limit today without taking additional measures to put our fiscal policy back on track and institute the common sense pay-as-you-go rules which were in effect from 1990 through 2002 requiring that both tax cuts and spending increases be paid for.

Five tax cuts in four years, soaring defense spending on the war in Iraq, in addition to our stifled economy have turned the record surpluses inherited by President Bush into a record deficit of \$413 billion in the past fiscal year.

Unfortunately, we are not considering a reform of our current fiscal policies today, allowing our national debt to continue to rise. As a result, the amount of interest on the national debt—the “debt tax”—that each American family will have to pay will climb to \$9,400 by 2014. America's growing debt will ensure that our taxes will go toward paying interest on our debt instead of keeping our nation safe and strong, strengthening Social Security, or improving education for our children.

I will not vote to raise the debt limit by \$800 billion today, and will only support an increase of the debt limit along with the reinstated common sense fiscal policy reforms.

RECOGNIZING THE DEDICATION OF
THE SOLANO COUNTY GOVERNMENT
CENTER COMPLEX

HON. ELLEN O. TAUSCHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 7, 2004

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the December 16, 2004 dedication of the Government Center Complex in Fairfield, California, the county seat of Solano County.

The new Government Center Complex is the most ambitious capital improvement project in the history of the county and I laud the project's energy efficiency measures.

The Government Center Complex contains a six-story County Administration Center that achieves the lowest energy cost per square foot for any government facility in the State of California.

The Government Center Complex also contains a five-level parking structure with over 1,000 parking stalls, 20 electric vehicle slots, and a rooftop photovoltaic solar array that generates 119 kilowatts of clean, emissions free power.

Again, I commend county staff and the county's private partners on the timely and fiscally responsible completion of what is truly a landmark building for the citizens of Solano County.