

name in Philadelphia and a champion for the voiceless in our city. It is fitting that she has been selected to lead this year's St. Patrick's Day parade, and I rise to commend her on her lifetime of devoted service.

ANNIVERSARY OF BLOODY SUNDAY

(Ms. JAYAPAL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, today is the 53rd anniversary of Bloody Sunday. This is the day that our incredible colleague, Congressman JOHN LEWIS, and Dr. Martin Luther King led 600 marchers from Selma to Montgomery. They didn't get very far. At the Edmund Pettus Bridge, they were viciously attacked by Alabama State Troopers wielding clubs and were beaten and left bloodied.

Last weekend, I had the incredible honor of joining Congressman JOHN LEWIS and a bipartisan group of Members in a pilgrimage to Montgomery, Birmingham, Selma, and Memphis. I had many epiphanies on that trip, but perhaps two were most profound. First, that determined and disciplined non-violent resistance works. Back then, 53 years ago, it led to the passage of the Voting Rights Act. And, second, that we in this body have a critical responsibility to ensure that we move forward and not backward on voting rights.

Our trip was amazing. One of the best experiences of my life, actually. I hope that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join next year. We heard incredible stories of abiding love, even for adversaries that had left people without much dignity. Newer activists of all ages are reimagining these same nonviolent methods for the world that we are in today.

Today, as we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the assassination of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King on April 4, let us recommit ourselves to restoring and strengthening the Voting Rights Act and making sure that we continue to protect these critical rights in our country.

RECOGNIZING ROME ELKS LODGE #96

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. TENNEY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Rome Elks.

Hailing from Rome Elks Lodge #96 on Liberty Street, our hometown Elks truly embody the mission the Elks National Foundation has been committed to for over 140 years. For generations, Elks around the Nation have dedicated themselves to building strong communities and lending a helping hand to their fellow neighbors.

Today I would like to recognize an outstanding group of hometown Elks who have made the journey from Oneida County to visit us here in Washington: Donna Townsend; Whitney Cook; Mary Bielby; and retired captain of the Rome Police Department, John Bielby.

Our Elks in Rome and around the country help our youth develop lifelong skills, assist students who are attending college, support charitable work in their communities, and care for our local veterans.

However, Rome Elks are unique to all other Elks in the country. In addition to the honorable work of the Elks, Rome Elks also carry out the longstanding tradition of caring for the gravesite of a historic Rome native, Sir Francis Bellamy. Some of you may not know it, but Sir Francis Bellamy is the author of our uniquely American tradition, the Pledge of Allegiance.

Francis Bellamy was born in Mount Morris, New York, attended our Rome public schools, and graduated from Rome Free Academy, affectionately known as RFA, in 1872.

Every day throughout our country, in public and parochial schools; at Boy Scout and Girl Scout meetings; at American Legions and all fraternal and patriotic organizations; in government, including here in our Nation's Capitol, millions of Americans recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Pledge of Allegiance reminds our citizenry of the notion of what it means to be American. We pledge allegiance to this great experiment; to our constitutional Republic, a nation that reveres freedoms, individual rights, and liberty. We pledge allegiance to our country's historic Judeo-Christian values.

Bellamy wrote the Pledge of Allegiance in 1892 at the age of 37. During his time working as a writer for a magazine called "The Youth's Companion," a family magazine that, at the time, had 500,000 subscribers, Bellamy was tasked with creating a patriotic school program to honor the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' arrival to America. Through this assignment, the Pledge of Allegiance, as we know it today, took shape.

At a trying time in our Nation's history, Francis Bellamy captured so elegantly and simply America's unity and loyalty. With only a sentence, Bellamy ultimately symbolized America's ability to surpass all internal differences. It is the manifestation of our patriotic conscience and it is recognized throughout our Nation.

Francis Bellamy's spirit pervades in Rome to this day, especially during patriotic holidays, like Flag Day. On Flag Day, the Rome Elks replace the two American flags that fly over Sir Francis Bellamy's gravesite. These annual ceremonies are a dedication to the patriotic principles that our flag has stood for since it was first adopted in 1777. In 2008, the Rome Elks started a significant renovation project on Bel-

lamy's gravesite, and completed it 1 year later, just in time to rededicate it for Flag Day.

In addition to their work in honoring Sir Francis Bellamy and the American flag, the Rome Elks are also well known for their commitment to helping our local veterans.

Recently, the Rome Elks held a fundraiser to raise money for therapy dogs for veterans through a local organization called Clear Path for Vets. As part of the fundraiser, the Rome Elks took flags that had flown over Sir Francis Bellamy's gravesite and removed the stars and stripes. They then individually separated and added a slip of paper with the words "This little star is proud to say I flew over Bellamy's grave." The Rome Elks call this project "Stars Over Bellamy."

They started with 300 of these little packets, but quickly added 200 more when they realized how popular this project was. To date, the Rome Elks have raised over \$1,000 for this fundraising effort. One of the most touching aspects is that every veteran that a Rome Elks member comes across receives one of these stars for free as a thank-you for their years of service.

I was lucky enough to be able to purchase a star for myself and a few others for my son, who is currently serving in the Marine Corps. It is a constant reminder for me of the legacy Francis Bellamy left for our country, as well as the patriotic principles I as a member of the Ilion Elks Lodge #1444—a nearby Elks Lodge down the street—have come to live by.

These are just a few examples of the hard work and devotion that the Rome Elks show for their community. The Rome Elks bring so much more to the community than just a building. Although it is a beautiful, historic building on Liberty Street—aptly named—in Rome, New York, they invest in programs that help children grow up healthy and drug-free, meet the needs of today's veterans, and improve the quality of life for our area.

As I mentioned, as a member of the nearby Ilion Elks Lodge #1444, I am proud to know and work with so many outstanding Elks and members throughout our region. I also am excited to participate in our benevolent Elks Lodge, which has a motorcycle ride each year, where we travel to each of the Elks Lodges and raise money for charities that help many of our veterans in need.

So I just want to say, if you happen to be visiting our region, take the time to stop by one of our wonderful Elks Lodges. They have weekly events. Particularly in the Rome Elks Lodge, they have Tuesday Wing Night, Wednesday Night Spaghetti Supper, Fish Fry Friday, or one of our special events on the weekends or holidays. It is really a beautiful and wonderful time to meet and have fellowship with a community that is so patriotic and so devoted to our Nation.

Today I urge all my colleagues and anyone watching at home to thank