

Kepler has run out of fuel, and will be retired in its current safe orbit, away from Earth.

"As NASA's first planet-hunting mission, Kepler has wildly exceeded all our expectations and paved the way for our exploration and search for life in the solar system and beyond," said Thomas Zurbuchen, Associate Administrator of NASA's Science Mission Directorate in Washington. "Not only did it show us how many planets could be out there, it sparked an entirely new and robust field of research that has taken the science community by storm. Its discoveries have shed a new light on our place in the universe, and illuminated the tantalizing mysteries and possibilities among the stars."

Kepler showed us the diversity of planets in our galaxy, and concluded that 20 to 50 percent of the stars visible in the night sky are likely to have small, possibly rocky planets similar in size to Earth. Many of these could possibly sustain life.

"When we started conceiving this mission 35 years ago we didn't know of a single planet outside our solar system," said the Kepler mission's founding principal investigator, William Borucki, now retired from NASA's Ames Research Center and the recipient of the 2013 United States National Academy of Sciences' Henry Draper Medal for his work with Kepler and the 2015 recipient of the Shaw Prize in Astronomy.

"Now that we know planets are everywhere, Kepler has set us on a new course that's full of promise for future generations to explore our galaxy."

Kepler's retirement doesn't mean the end of its contributions to our scientific knowledge. Future missions will build on its results and scientists will mine the data Kepler collected for years to come.

NASA's Ames Research Center in California's Silicon Valley manages the Kepler and K2 missions for NASA's Science Mission Directorate.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to represent NASA Ames and its extraordinary programs that advance our knowledge of our planet and beyond. I ask the entire House of Representatives to honor Kepler and each person and organization who contributed to its extraordinary success.

HONORING MR. JEFF STRACK WITH THE 2018 DISTINGUISHED CITIZEN AWARD

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 2, 2018

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect and admiration that I take this time to recognize the recipient of the 2018 Distinguished Citizen Award, presented annually by the Boy Scouts of America Calumet Council. To commemorate this special occasion, the organization will host a celebratory event on Wednesday, November 7, 2018, at the Center for Visual and Performing Arts in Munster, Indiana.

For 26 years, the Boy Scouts of America Calumet Council has presented the Distinguished Citizen Award to individuals whose selfless efforts have tremendously impacted their communities in Northwest Indiana and across the state. This year, the Boy Scouts of America Calumet Council will honor Mr. Jeff Strack.

In May of 2016, Jeff Strack was appointed President and Chief Executive Officer of Indiana Grocery Group/Strack & Van Til. As a third-generation head of the company, Jeff's legacy began with his fondest memories of

shadowing his father as he worked tirelessly to keep Strack & Van Til successful. After eighth grade, Jeff was officially hired into the company, eventually working his way through every department within the store before leaving for college. After obtaining his master's degree, Jeff embarked on a journey with Strack & Van Til that helped him learn every aspect of the business, rightfully earning his way to leading the company.

Almost a year after Jeff's appointment as President and Chief Executive Officer, he was faced with challenges that to many would have seemed insurmountable. In 2017, after its parent company, Central Grocers, filed for bankruptcy, Strack & Van Til was forced to shut down numerous stores. However, Jeff was determined to save the family business that has served as an economic driver in Northwest Indiana for almost six decades. After he and a group of investors formed Indiana Grocery Group and successfully purchased back Strack & Van Til, Mr. Strack vowed to keep it a family-owned business. Jeff fought for the business and for the jobs of many individuals by securing twenty locations in communities throughout Northwest Indiana. In addition, Mr. Strack's many contributions to the community have supported local schools, military, first responders, and families in need.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in commending the steadfast leadership and dedication of Mr. Jeff Strack. Mr. Strack's family business continues to serve as a cornerstone of Northwest Indiana, and their continued charitable efforts and service in our local communities are to be admired. Jeff is undeniably deserving of the 2018 Distinguished Citizen Award. His exceptional leadership and commitment to Northwest Indiana will have a positive impact on generations to come.

RECOGNIZING SARAH CARPENTER OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT

HON. PETER WELCH

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 2, 2018

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Sarah Carpenter of Burlington, Vermont for her distinguished career in affordable housing and her tireless dedication to improving the lives of Vermonters.

At the end of 2018, Sarah will retire as Executive Director of the Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA) after 20 years of leading that organization. Sarah's extraordinary career has created opportunities for thousands of Vermonters to achieve their dream of owning a home. Since its inception in 1974, VHFA's main goal has been to finance low-cost and flexible mortgages to individuals seeking affordable housing. VHFA has helped over 29,000 Vermonters and their families to purchase primary residences. Sarah leads a team of 38 employees that provides diverse and innovative services. They finance mortgages, coordinate rental housing programs, analyze housing market data, and inform state housing policy. During Sarah's tenure, the volume of VHFA mortgages provided to Vermonters grew by \$1.3 billion.

Sarah and VHFA's leadership has influence far beyond Vermont's borders. In 2000, VHFA successfully campaigned for Congress to increase the caps on the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program and private activity bonds. Additionally, she advocated for state tax credit programs that supplement the federal funds due to Vermont's dire need for a greater supply of affordable rental housing.

Sarah's contributions to the housing community began long before her time at VHFA.

From 1983 to 1998, she served as the Executive Director of Cathedral Square Corporation, an organization that has become a national model in providing service-enriched housing for older adults and people with special needs.

Sarah has also served in leadership roles on numerous boards including Leading Age, the National Council of State Housing Agencies, the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston, and Fletcher Allen Healthcare (now the University of Vermont Medical Center).

It comes as no surprise that Sarah has been the recipient of a number of awards including the Government Service Award from NeighborWorks America and the Vermont YWCA Susan B. Anthony Award for Woman of the Year.

Sarah is a native of Burlington, Vermont, and a graduate of University of Vermont and Harvard University.

We are in the midst of a housing crisis across this country. Chronic homelessness is alarmingly high, people are paying an ever-increasing portion of their paychecks on housing, and homeownership is out of reach for many. Despite the challenges, Sarah Carpenter and her colleagues throughout the state of Vermont have continued to make progress through innovative approaches and deep collaboration. Sarah has left her mark on the housing community in Vermont and the lives of many who have benefited from her good work.

Mr. Speaker, Sarah's exceptional work on behalf of Vermont communities will surely be missed, and I wish her well in her retirement.

CELEBRATING THE CAREER OF MELVIN COOPER

HON. DOUG COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 2, 2018

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Melvin Cooper, Director of Gainesville Parks and Recreation, who is retiring after 47 years of service with the city and 30 years as its Parks Director.

In a letter to Gainesville's Parks and Recreation Board, Mr. Cooper said, "From the time I was 12 years old I knew what I wanted to do and began to set my goals for what I have done for the last 47 years. I wanted to lead change, I wanted to be change, I wanted to work with people and make a difference."

Melvin Cooper was born in Moultrie and spent most of his childhood in Commerce, Georgia. In 1970, while he was a student at the University of Georgia, he completed an internship for the Parks and Recreation Department. Mr. Cooper was first hired as a Program Coordinator and later held the role of Assistant Director for 16 years. During his tenure as Director, the Gainesville Civic Center was renovated, Lake Lanier hosted the 1996 Summer Olympics, and the Frances Meadows Aquatic Center—along with many other facilities—opened to the public.

After leading the Parks and Recreation Department for three decades, Mr. Cooper announced his retirement at a recent Board of Directors meeting. The search for a replacement will begin November 1, and Mr. Cooper will continue to serve as Director until May 31, 2019.

During his career, which has spanned almost half a century, Mr. Cooper helped improve the quality of life in our community and his contributions will benefit generations to come. I wish Mr. Cooper joyful years ahead in his retirement.

TRIBUTE TO LLOYDINE AND LEO
CASH

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 2, 2018

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Lloydine and Leo Cash of Council Bluffs, Iowa on the very special occasion of their 70th wedding anniversary. They celebrated their anniversary on October 9, 2018.

Lloydine and Leo's lifelong commitment to each other and their family truly embodies Iowa values. As they reflect on their 70th anniversary, I hope it is filled with happy memories. May their commitment grow even stronger, as they continue to love, cherish, and honor one another for many years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this great couple on their 70th year together and I wish them many more. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

HONORING THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF
JEFFERSON COUNTY,
MISSOURI

HON. JASON SMITH

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 2, 2018

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Jefferson County, Missouri, created on December 8, 1818 by an "Act of the Territory," uniting portions of St. Louis and Ste. Genevieve Counties. It was named for our nation's third president, Thomas Jefferson, the father of the Louisiana Purchase which included the land that became Missouri. Jefferson County's earliest settlers were French and they settled along the area's many waterways that include the Mississippi River, the Meramec River and the Big River.

Jefferson County is home to sites where archeologists say mastodons roamed 12,000 years ago. Lead shot made in the county was used in the War of 1812 and there are 10 sites in Jefferson County on the National Register of Historic Places. Historical societies in local cities are dedicated to preserving their history with a county museum established in Festus as part of the 200th birthday celebration.

With its rich history and promise of progress, Jefferson County is a treasure that continues to be a vital part of Missouri's economy and future growth. I am proud to congratulate Jefferson County on its bicentennial today before the United States House of Representatives.

HONORING ELTA BARBER WITH
CALIFORNIA'S THIRD DISTRICT
WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 2, 2018

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Elta Barber as a woman of the year. She is committed to serving those in need both in her community and around the world. When she realized that her community lacked constructive activities for young people, she took the initiative to organize the "Youth Explosion" event. In coordination with other community leaders and faith-based organizations,

she put on this quarterly program which gives youth in her community an opportunity to showcase their talents. Thanks to her dedication to this project, over 100 young people participate in this program each quarter.

Ms. Barber's advocacy for young people extends beyond her community into the rest of the world. She is a founding member of a program providing outreach and support to an orphanage in Africa. Each year she works with other community leaders to host "To Tanzania with Love," a fundraiser which helps provide crucial educational supplies and other essentials to children living in an orphanage in Tanzania. She has provided devoted support to this organization as a member of the Board of Trustees for over 26 years. Ms. Barber is a skilled and passionate advocate who is an inspiration to volunteers and leaders throughout her community.

RECOGNIZING JACKIE RIPPERT

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 2, 2018

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an educator in Bucks County, Pennsylvania who recently became a finalist in a national education grant contest.

Jackie Rippert, a teacher at Neshaminy High School in Langhorne, becomes one step closer to the \$100,000 education grant that is sponsored to fund meaningful projects in local schools and communities.

If selected, Jackie plans on creating a "living classroom" that enables students to grow plants and cultivate produce. This is particularly beneficial for food pantries, who will benefit from the vegetables grown. It will also serve as a hands-on learning experience for students with special needs to gain valuable life skills.

I applaud Jackie for her dedication to her students and our community. I wish her all the best in her quest for this important grant.

TRIBUTE TO BIG BROTHERS BIG
SISTERS

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 2, 2018

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Iowa which is celebrating 50 years of service to Des Moines and central Iowa area. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Iowa was established in 1968 and continues to have an important impact on the lives of children and families.

The Big Brothers movement started in New York City in 1904. The Ladies of Charity, which befriended girls, formed around the same time. Both groups worked independently until 1977 when they joined forces to create Big Brothers Big Sisters. Big Brothers Big Sisters operates under the belief that inherent in every child is the ability to succeed and thrive in life. The Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Iowa have been helping children reach their potential and realize new opportunities for their future. The overwhelming community support from volunteers, donors, and advocates is a true testament of their success.

Mr. Speaker, I commend and congratulate Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Iowa for their many years of dedicated and devoted service to children of Des Moines and Central Iowa. The Big Brothers Big Sisters staff and volunteers make a real difference by helping

and serving others. It is with great honor that I recognize them today. I know that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in applauding their accomplishments and I wish them and staff continued success in the future.

CELEBRATING HALL COUNTY'S
BICENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

HON. DOUG COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 2, 2018

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 200th anniversary of my home, Hall County, Georgia.

Hall County is Northeast Georgia's center for banking, industry, and health care. It was established on December 15, 1818 by the state legislature and was named in honor of Lyman Hall. Hall was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and served as a physician and Georgia governor.

In its two-century history, Hall County has become home to many great attractions, including Lake Lanier, which has brought millions of visitors to the area. Any discussion of Hall County begins with chicken, as Gainesville is the poultry capital of the world. Jesse Jewell, a Gainesville native, pioneered the vertically integrated poultry farming method that revolutionized the industry. Flowery Branch is home to the training complex of the Atlanta Falcons. Lula, the hometown of my wife, Lisa, is a heritage-minded community that welcomes the annual Railroad Days each spring.

From north to south, east to west, those who call Hall County home know just how special it is from the beautiful lake to the foothills of Hall County area, where I was raised and still call home. I celebrate Hall County's two centuries of rich history and wish the citizens generations of success that last long into the future.

TRUE HERO: SPECIALIST FIFTH
CLASS CLARENCE E. SASSER

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 2, 2018

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to honor the heroism of Specialist Fifth Class Clarence E. Sasser of the United States Army. Specialist Fifth Class Clarence E. Sasser was a private in the 3rd Battalion, 60th Infantry Regiment, 9th Infantry Division when he earned the U.S. military's highest decoration, the Medal of Honor, for his selfless and courageous acts on January 10, 1968, during the Vietnam War. As a combat medic in Vietnam, Specialist Sasser served our country above and beyond the call of duty. He is a hero among us.

Clarence Eugene Sasser was born in 1947 in Chenango, Texas. Sasser was studying chemistry as a part-time student at the University of Houston when he was drafted in 1967. Sasser completed a ten week course at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio to be a medical aid man. The 20 year old went to Vietnam in September 1967, assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 60th Infantry Regiment, 9th Infantry Division. The division was sent to the Mekong Delta, in southwestern Vietnam.

As the medic for 1st Platoon, Company A, Sasser would accompany the unit when it left base camp to go on patrols, missions or nighttime ambushes. On January 10, 1968, what Sasser considers "the longest day of his life",