

of parishioners, the Catholic Archdiocese announced the closing of Lady of Mount Carmel and several other area churches. The parish's final date for services will be July 12, 1998, the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

The church's diamond anniversary celebration was moved to May of 1998, to give the congregation time to properly celebrate the history and life of their beloved parish community. Although the coming months may present a great many challenges as decisions are made concerning the future of this congregation, please join me in celebrating the 60 wonderful years of this devoted and faithful parish.

May the Lord bless them on whatever paths their futures hold.

TRIBUTE TO QUINN CHAPEL AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

**HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 13, 1998*

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Quinn Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church of Sumter, South Carolina. This Church has provided a means of worship to the Sumter community for one hundred and fifty years, an anniversary which underscores the important role the Church plays in the Sumter community. It was my great honor to worship with the congregation March 15th as they celebrated this momentous occasion.

The precise date of the Church's construction is unknown. The building was originally erected in the first half of the nineteenth century, but Quinn Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church was burned to the ground a few years ago later when the adjacent school building caught fire. In the absence of a physical church building, members used a "bush shed" for worship. Rebuilt in 1864, the Church stood for the next 98 years until 1962.

A new sanctuary was erected in 1964 under the leadership of the Reverend B.J. Johnson, and in 1993, the Memorial Hall was added under Reverend H.H. Felix. Family and friends of the Church provided leadership and funds for the initial building phase, and the Hall was dedicated in September of 1993. In January 1996, renovation of the sanctuary and bathroom facilities was completed under Reverend F.J. Gadson, whose vision of an enlarged sanctuary and new educational building was realized in October of 1996.

Throughout the physical changes, Quinn Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church has held true to its mission to be an outreach ministry that provides support and relief to the disheartened, disadvantaged, and disenfranchised. The Church continues to serve the Sumter community by being a loving ambassador for Christ.

I ask that Congress join me in showing true appreciation for Quinn Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church as it continues to play such an important role in South Carolina, guiding Christian men, women, and children in their daily lives. The Sumter community is indebted to the Church, as the gift of love is difficult to repay. I congratulate the Quinn Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church as it reaches a landmark One Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary.

IN DEFENSE OF ORGANIC STANDARDS

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 13, 1998*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the USDA on its decision to revise the proposed rule on national organic standards.

On December 16, 1997, the USDA published a proposed rule for national organic standards that would have undermined some of the basic tenets of organic farming. USDA wisely requested comment from the public on its proposal. The organic industry instantly mobilized and circled its wagons around the widely accepted, although uncodified, standards that the industry has been following for decades. Organic farmers and consumers wanted to protect the standards behind the label they trust.

The USDA received 200,000 comments on its proposed rule, largely because of the efforts of organic farmers, consumer advocates, and industry groups which publicized the holes in the rule and urged people to voice their concerns. I applaud the efforts of those who have worked to protect the integrity of the organic label. I would like to thank Rep. DEFAZIO for organizing a letter to Secretary Glickman urging him to work with the organic industry to bring the rule more into line with current standards and consumer preferences. And I commend the thirty-five of my colleagues who signed the letter.

Finally, I congratulate Secretary Glickman on his decision to revise the proposed rule. In a press release dated May 8, Secretary Glickman noted that "If organic farmers and consumers reject our national standards, we have failed." I couldn't agree more. Consumer expectations and preferences have driven the organic market to where it is today, earning over \$3 billion in sales. Strict organic standards that reinforce current practices and promote consumer preferences will help the market grow even more.

I look forward to reviewing the revised proposal from USDA and to working with my colleagues and the organic industry to ensure that our national organic standards are meaningful and conform to consumer expectations.

MARISA ERDMAN, VOICE OF DEMOCRACY CONTEST WINNER

**HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE**

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 13, 1998*

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to call the attention of the House to the work of Marisa Erdman of Millsboro, DE. Marisa is Delaware's State winner of the Veterans of Foreign War's Voice of Democracy script writing contest and has been named a national winner and recipient of a \$1,000 scholarship award from the VFW. I congratulate Marisa, her family, and VFW Post 7422 in Millsboro, DE for sponsoring this excellent program.

As my colleagues know, the VFW has sponsored the Voice of Democracy Competition for 51 years to promote patriotic and civic respon-

sibility among our young people and to help them attend college through the scholarship awards. The competition requires students to write and record a 3 to 5 minute essay on a patriotic theme. This year, over 93,000 secondary school students participated in the contest on the theme: "My Voice in our Democracy." I am very proud to share with the House, Marisa's excellent essay on the need for young people to be involved in their community, to gain knowledge, and to use their experience as a voice in our democracy.

Again, congratulations to Marisa, the Erdman family, and the members of the VFW Post 7422 for their fine work.

"MY VOICE IN OUR DEMOCRACY"—1997-1998 VFW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION

(By Marisa Erdman)

The Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, California, which was once the world's largest bridge, attracts hundreds of thousands of West Coast tourists annually. Each day, millions of travelers cross the Kanmon Bridge between the Japanese islands of Honshu and Kyushu. With a length of 4,626 feet, the Humber Bridge in eastern England is the longest single span bridge in the world. What do these three famous bridges have in common? They are all suspension bridges in which towers holding long steel cables support the roadway. And although the towers serve as the main structures, it is the bridge's many individual cables that provide the strength needed to sustain the weight crossing the bridge.

A democracy, such as that of our United States, because of its design is much like a suspension bridge. Democracy serves at the backbone of our nation's strength supporting the weight of natural disaster, economic recession, war, and change. Our forefathers crossed from the shore of oppression and tyranny into the promise land of choice and freedom. The principles and spirit of democracy are the towers serving as the basis for all other ideas that branch from our government. The individuals who comprise and fuel our government with their voices and insights serve as the cables that lift our great nation. Without several of its cables, a bridge will stand and function, however it will not prove as sturdy and may eventually collapse. Just as a democracy without the contribution of all its voices will still run, it will not be a true representation of the wants and needs of the people.

But how can I make my one individual voice heard? Because of my young age, I often feel that I am unable to play an important role in our democracy. But like many people, I keep the spirit of democracy alive by being active in my community. Millions of teenagers like myself volunteer in programs such as Big Brothers and Big Sisters and participate in food drives, benefit walks, and charity fundraisers in an effort to help those in need. By being involved in organizations such as the Student Government Association and by furthering my education, I can familiarize myself with the workings, ideas, and functions of our government. Through actions such as this, I have begun to keep the spirit of our democracy alive and thriving by dedicating my time, energy, and ideas.

In the future, I can make my individual voice heard by supporting the principles of our democracy in louder ways. I can support the plans and ideas of politicians by casting my vote for the candidate I feel will best satisfy my needs. Above and beyond that, I have the opportunity to represent my fellow citizens by serving on community councils or by holding political office. Like the millions of