

The group works toward more cooperative active participation in religious and educational programs and also fosters a closer working relationships between both Belleville and Scott's governmental operations.

The Belle-Scott Committee arose from the need to address community and base relationships in the late 40's and early 50's. Media reports at that time, which indicated that local military personnel were treated as second class citizens, paying higher prices than normal and unable to secure appropriate housing opportunities were reasons that the Belle-Scott Committee came into existence.

Since then, the Belle-Scott Committee has received national recognition. It was featured on the CBS Radio Network's "The People's Act" series in March 1952, and at least 10 nationally circulated magazines have published special features to list their achievements. In addition, newspapers throughout the country have also published articles dealing with the work of the committee. Several other air force bases and their host communities are using "Belle-Scott" as a guide in developing their efforts. The committee's research leads them to believe that they are the oldest military/community cooperation committee in continuous existence at any U.S. military installation.

This year will be the 50th anniversary of the first "G.I. Pal Dinner" now known as the "Belle-Scott Enlisted Dinner." The event brings more than 150 civilians, 50 officers from Scott Air Force Base and more than 100 enlisted guests. While the reasons for the formation of this committee had initially to do with civilian-military cooperation, it is the solving of these problems by persons both from the Base and from the city and the 50 years of continuous good relationships fostered by the Belle-Scott Committee that we now look to with pride.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the service of the Belle-Scott Committee and for the assistance it provides in fostering the support of our civic and military personnel.

MEDICARE BOARD: BAD IDEA NO. 4

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 22, 2000

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, some people are proposing legislation, such as S. 1895, that would turn Medicare over to a 7-person board and noncivil service staff.

Bad idea.

For the last 3 days I've entered in the RECORD portions of Congressional Research Service memos describing the administrative problems such a board could create.

I would like to submit in full the following footnote from the CRS memo that quotes the National Academy of Public Administration's warning about boards:

The National Academy of Public Administration is on record as being opposed to boards of directors for most corporate bodies.

We believe that this arrangement, borrowed from the private corporation model, has more drawbacks than advantages and that in most cases the governing board would be better replaced by an advisory board and the corporation managed by an ad-

ministrative with fully executive powers. A governing board may cut or confuse the normal lines of authority from the President or departmental secretary to the corporation's chief executive officer. With an advisory board, the secretary's authority to give that officer policy instruction is clear, as is the officer's right to report directly to the secretary and to work out any exemptions from or qualifications of administration or departmental policies and practices which the corporation requires.—National Academy of Public Administration, NAPA Report on Government Corporations, vol. 1 (Washington: NAPA, 1981), pp. 31-32.

CASTELLINO HONORED

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 22, 2000

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a close personal friend and devoted public servant, Frank Castellino, upon the occasion of his retirement. Frank will be honored by his friends and colleagues on March 23rd, and I am honored to have been asked to participate in this event. Frank Castellino is an institution in Luzerne County Courthouse, and his daily presence will be missed by everyone who has become so accustomed to his warmth and genuine concern for people.

Frank Castellino began his public service as a clerk in the Luzerne County Recorder of Deeds office in 1940. In 1968 he was elected Recorder of Deeds and proceeded to serve eight consecutive terms. No matter how busy he was, Frank always had time to get personally involved in solving people's problems.

I first came to know Frank Castellino when I was a boy tagging along with father as he visited the Recorder of Deeds office in his law practice. Later I grew to know him as the father of one of my classmates at Dickinson School of Law. Once I began my own practice of law, I frequently took advantage of his considerable expertise and helpfulness.

A lifelong resident of Pittston, Frank also served as Alderman from 1946 to 1966. He is a member and past president of the Pittston Lions Club and the Luzerne County Columbus League, which erected the Columbus memorial in Pittston. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. Under Frank's leadership, the Luzerne County Recorder of Deeds office was the first in the state to computerize its records.

Mr. Speaker, the Luzerne County Board of Commissioners paid a fitting tribute to Frank when they praised him as a "gracious and good-natured gentleman, who carried out his professional and personal responsibilities with a zeal many of us would envy, and whose broad community impact can never be fully measured."

I am pleased and proud to join with the Commissioners in thanking Frank Castellino for his years of dedicated service to Luzerne County and commending him on a "job well done." I send my sincere best wishes for a happy, healthy and productive retirement.

BENIN MAKES PROGRESS IN DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 22, 2000

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I want to call the attention of my colleagues to the West African nation of Benin and its President, Mathieu Kerekou. This country's story is a remarkable one, and an encouraging one. Under President Kerekou's leadership in the 1970s and 1980s, Benin made the difficult transition from authoritarian rule to democracy. President Kerekou won the country's second free election in 1996, an election which our Department of State called "generally free and fair"—strong praise for a country on this continent where democracy has suffered many setbacks in recent years. President Kerekou succeeded the former president in a peaceful transition of power.

The State Department's 1999 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices notes that President Kerekou "continued the civilian, democratic rule begun in the 1990-91 constitutional process." The report also notes that the government has generally respected the human rights of its citizens. The Constitutional Court has shown its independence of the government, and when the court recently ruled provisions of a decentralization law unconstitutional, the legislature and the President accepted this decision.

Benin is a small country and a poor one, but the Kerekou government has taken positive steps to strengthen its economy through privatizing state-owned enterprises and deregulating the economy. Under President Kerekou's leadership, Benin has been peaceful and stable.

Mr. Speaker, Benin has been willing to take courageous foreign policy decisions that run counter to generally accepted practice. The Government of Benin recently announced that it plans to open an embassy in Israel's capital city of Jerusalem. Benin becomes just the third country to establish an embassy in Israel's capital, after Costa Rica and El Salvador. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the time when the United States will join these three countries and move our embassy in Israel to Jerusalem as mandated by the Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join me paying tribute to the nation of Benin and its President, Mathieu Kerekou.

HONORING THE GOOD SHEPHERD REHABILITATION FACILITY VOLUNTEERS

HON. PATRICK J. TOOMEY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 22, 2000

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to a group of my constituents who do volunteer work helping others in my district. Over 300 volunteers at the Good Shepherd rehabilitation facility recently received Raker Memorial Awards for their service. These volunteers contributed over 38,000 hours of service in 1999, helping to improve the lives of thousands of people in the community. From assisting residents with their chores to inspiring