

the Consulate of the Slovak Republic and the 50th Anniversary of Slovak Garden in my District. As you may know, Slovakia is a country full of rich history and tradition. It became a free and independent republic in 1993 and opened their new Embassy in Washington, DC in June of 2001.

I am pleased to announce that, Mr. Robert J. Petrik, who is the Honorary Consul of the Slovak Republic to the State of Florida, was appointed by Eduard Kukan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, with the approval by the United States Department of State, established a Consulate of Slovakia in Miami, FL.

Currently there are Consulates of the Slovak Republic in Pittsburgh, Chicago, Cleveland, Minneapolis, Denver, LA and Kansas City. The Honorable Ambassador Martin Butora, PhD, Ambassador Plenipotentiary and Extraordinary of the Slovak Republic to the United States, and his wife Zora Butorova, PhD, will be visiting Florida this week for the purpose of officially opening the Consulate of the Slovak Republic.

There are a number of outstanding events planned to mark this exciting opening and the visit by Ambassador Butora and we are pleased to welcome them to the great State of Florida. Florida continues to experience tremendous growth and advances toward the future, while still recognizing and celebrating its proud history and vibrant culture. The added presence of the Slovak Republic will only serve to enhance Florida's history and culture.

Slovak Garden had its beginnings in 1906, at the 10th National Slovak Society Convention in Connellsville, Pennsylvania, when American Slovaks discussed creating a Slovak retirement community. The seed was sown on November 10, 1939 as the Zivena Beneficial Society Branch 163 celebrated its 25th anniversary. During the program of this celebration, Mr. and Mrs. John Jerga made a substantial financial contribution toward building a retirement community for American Slovaks. Mr. John Jerga, ailing for years, had visited Florida frequently and often remarked how ideal it would be to have this retirement community for Americans of Slovak Heritage in central Florida.

Jergo Road now serves as the dividing line between Slovak Garden and Slovak Village in Winter Park, Florida. It was dedicated in his memory to honor him and his wife Maria for their generous and unselfish donation of \$10,000 to the Slovak retirement community in Florida and for other charitable projects they have founded and supported.

After the death of John Jerga on February 23, 1941, Mrs. Jerga continued to be active in various Slovak affairs in Detroit. In 1946, she married a widower, the Slovak fraternalist and newspaper editor, Karol Belohlavek who was very well known in Slovak circles in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Cleveland, Ohio. The idea of creating a Slovak retirement community took on a new image and began moving again, since Karol Belohlavek was a great promoter for the idea. He published numerous articles in Slovak newspapers and solicited financial help from Slovak fraternal organizations and individuals to finance and promote the Slovak retirement community.

Finally, they succeeded in finding a 40-acre farm with an old fashioned two-bedroom house and then acres of citrus grove, the balance of the land being mostly wooded. The

farm was located on Howell Branch Road near Winter Park, Florida and just 15 miles east of the city of Orlando.

Slovak Garden, as many other Slovak organizations in America, experienced growing pains of failure and successes during the years. The years from 1952 to 1970 were truly pioneering years for the Slovak Garden, but thanks to many devoted individuals, such as Karol Belohlavek, Mr. and Mrs. Zary, Mr. and Mrs. Kacir, Gus and Agnes Hodak, Mr. and Mrs. John Cibula, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Steffel and many others who succeeded to make this concept a reality. The years between 1980 and 1984, Slovak Garden went through tremendously difficult times fighting daily for its survival. In 1984 a new generation became involved, with Andrew F. Hudak, Jr., George Kantor, Mary Ondovcik, Joseph Hoda, Maria Kupcik, Andrew Croftcheck, Martha Volosin, Vincent Kazimir and John Gabor. They and many others helped Slovak Garden resume its progress. In recent years, Slovak Garden with various improvements and additions, continues to serve the American Slovak community and remind us all of a rich heritage.

During the 50 years of Slovak Garden's existence, it has provided comfortable residences to scores of American and Canadian Slovaks, many of whom are now reposing in the national Slovak Cemetery in Slovak Village. Presently, many American Slovaks from various parts of the United States and Canada enjoy gracious living in Slovak Garden. Once a small farm in central Florida, today it is a complete Slovak cultural and retirement community.

We congratulate the Slovak American Community in Florida on these two very special occasions.

HONORING DR. ALBERT ALLEY
AND THE WORLD BLINDNESS
OUTREACH

HON. GEORGE W. GEKAS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2002

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, every once in a while we hear of an individual whose gift of giving is so powerful that it must be recognized. Dr. Albert Alley of Lebanon, Pennsylvania is one of those individuals, and I would like to take this opportunity to honor and commend him and his colleagues for their tremendous generosity and benevolence.

Dr. Alley, through his non-profit organization, World Blindness Outreach, has organized a team of doctors for an annual journey to Nicaragua for the past four years to provide free eye care and eye surgery to those who cannot afford such procedures. Helping him are William Busch, a physician from Pensacola, Florida; Eduardo Miller, a physician from Mexico; Richard Simmons, a physician from Westerville, Ohio; Bill Hoffman, an optometrist from Lebanon, Pennsylvania; Ron Johns, an optician in Dr. Alley's office; and Cheryl Strauss, an operating room technician from the Lebanon Outpatient Surgery Center. Not only do they provide the service, but they provide all the necessary tools and materials required to do that service because the hospital they work out of in Nicaragua cannot afford the equipment.

This past January, these hard-working doctors spent a week working ten-hour days removing 85 cataracts and correcting 12 cases of strabismus. Already, they have plans to continue with this mission of goodwill in March to the Dominican Republic.

Dr. Alley's dedicated passion and ability to spread his amity among his colleagues is a talent which we all endure to achieve. He is indeed a leader whose charitable work and medical help for those who cannot afford it serves as an inspiration to us all.

As a perfect example of how giving is contagious, two women in Nicaragua, inspired by the work of Dr. Alley, collected \$100 to donate to Mayor Rudolph Giuliani after hearing of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. this past September. Though this donation may not seem large by our standards, it was collected from individuals whose average annual income is \$500.

With the utmost respect and admiration, I commend Dr. Alley, Dr. Busch, Dr. Miller, Dr. Simmons, Dr. Hoffman, Dr. Johns, and Ms. Strauss in the noble and altruistic healthcare they provide to the citizens of Nicaragua. We hope his energy and motivation will proliferate among other medical professionals.

STATUS OF THE DOMESTIC STEEL
INDUSTRY

HON. JERRY F. COSTELLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2002

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to comment on the status of the domestic steel industry.

Our domestic steel industry is currently in a crisis situation. The fundamental cause of this crisis is massive foreign overcapacity, which has caused the United States to become the dumping ground for world excess steel products. As a result of this, since 1997, 31 steel companies have filed for bankruptcy, affecting over 62,000 American steel workers.

In my home state of Illinois, four steel companies have filed for bankruptcy, including Laclede Steel, which is in the Congressional District I represent. Approximately 5,000 steel workers have lost their jobs in Illinois alone.

Yesterday, I was honored to speak at a steel rally in my district. Hundreds of people attended, many of whom have lost their jobs as a result of the illegal dumping of foreign steel. We came together to support the American steel industry—an industry that has been essential to the development of this great nation.

This is not just a trade issue—it is a national security issue. Laclede Steel in Alton produced the steel that built the World Trade Center and we must never become dependent on foreign steel to produce our tanks and battleships and protect the men and women of our armed forces. We need the Administration to implement tariffs to prevent foreign steel from entering our country. We need to level the playing field. Tariffs at less than 40 percent are not relief.

Last year, I joined my colleagues on the Congressional Steel Caucus in urging the President to implement a Section 201 investigation by the International Trade Commission to determine if our domestic markets had been