

and I were privileged to be at a reception for Barrie and Whitney in Burlington and we heard him speak. I asked him if I could have a copy of his notes from that evening, and he shared them with me. The notes offer only a hint of what awaits in the book, which I read with pleasure at our home in Vermont.

I ask unanimous consent that Mr. Barrie Dunsmore's remarks be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

THERE AND BACK

(By Barrie Dunsmore)

Thank you Senator Leahy for being here tonight with your wife Marcelle, and for your kind words. I also thank you for your constant support for my columns and comments over many years. Having you in my camp has been an inspiration.

Thank you to Holly Johnson, the proprietor of Wind Ridge Publishing. If you had not had faith that my writing deserved a wider audience outside Vermont, there would be no book and we would not be here this evening.

Last, but certainly not least, I wish to thank my wife, Whitney Taylor. She is tireless in encouraging me and steadfast in supporting me. She is an excellent editor and my most important audience. She always reads my material before I send it out. And if she doesn't get something I know nobody will—so I make changes accordingly.

There are others who are deserving of my thanks but I promise I won't bore you kind folks who probably aren't interested in my high school Latin teacher who made me such a great writer.

Seriously I make no such claim, but I am a writer. In fact over the last decade—including my columns, radio and television commentaries, book reviews and speeches—I have written about a half a million words. To put that into perspective, Tolstoy's *War and Peace* in Russian runs 460,000 words.

I'm not talking about quality here, but in quantity, my body of work is greater than *War and Peace*. But you'll be happy to know the book contains only a fraction of that.

Let me explain the title of the book, "There and Back."

The first section, called **THERE**, contains columns and commentaries that deal largely with events taking place in foreign lands over **THERE** in this century—but seen through the prism of events I covered in the last century. For example, I wrote about the Arab Spring in Egypt last February, in the context of my long experience in Egypt and particularly my contacts with the late president Anwar Sadat.

The section called **BACK** contains articles addressing the politics, culture and media of America—since I've been in retirement, **BACK** here in the United States.

The items in this section reflect a somewhat detached view of America as a former foreign and diplomatic correspondent might see it. The title of the book, and the concept, were suggested by my principal editor Emily Copeland to whom I am most grateful.

I promise you, this is not going to be a long speech, but I've been asked to reflect a bit on my impressions of how the mainstream media have fared since I retired in the mid-1990s.

When I took early retirement, I vowed I would not fall victim to the affliction that hits many old men and induces them to claim that everything that has happened in their field since they retired is a disaster. I confess in recent years being true to that vow has been a real challenge. Actually, when I did a series of lectures to the journalism classes at Vermont's Saint Michael's College last year, I suggested the students look at me as an archeologist might view a relic from the past that is more or less intact, and might provide some useful information.

During my four decades as an active reporter, there were major technological changes in network television news—going from black and white film to color; shifting from film to videotape; the advent of high-quality hand held cameras. And, finally of course, the coming of the communications satellite. That significantly changed everything. It meant there would be no more waiting for three days for the film from Vietnam or the Middle East to arrive in New York. But much more important, it became possible to have live coverage of news events virtually anywhere in the world.

Yet as great as those changes were, they pale in comparison to how the new information technologies have totally revolutionized the media. The Internet and the almost universal use of the personal computer and the cell phone have had an extraordinarily profound impact on the reporting of news, not to mention redefining what constitutes news—and who or what is a reporter. Many consider this a good thing—a notion I do not entirely share.

I will say this about the new technologies—they are not inherently good or bad. Like all of their revolutionary predecessors, such as the telegraph or moveable type, they are neutral instruments. Whether they serve society—or subvert it—depends on how these new tools are being used, by whom and to what ends.

For me, one of the more troubling consequences of this latest revolution is that by siphoning off huge portions of ad revenues, the Internet and its social networks have threatened the financial viability of the mainstream media—and as a consequence, have undermined the credibility of the news media as one of the key institutions that make democracy work.

Thomas Jefferson repeatedly said it. And the philosophers of ancient Greece apparently believed it: In order to survive, democracy needs to have a relatively well-informed electorate. The people cannot wisely choose their leaders if they don't have at least a basic understanding of the issues and of the consequences of the choices they are making.

What worries me most about the declining role of the mainstream media in today's world, is that in spite of all the various new platforms to provide and dispense information—ironically, maybe because of all these choices—there is evidence that the elec-

torate is less well informed than it was in other times in history. As I see it, these days more people than ever hold passionate, partisan opinions—that are largely free of facts. At another time, those necessary facts would have been available in the major news media, and most people would have accepted them as such. Sad to say, that is something which large and growing numbers of people no longer do.

VETERANS' COMPENSATION COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT ACT OF 2011

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, today, as chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I would like to show my strong support for Senate passage of S. 894, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2011.

Effective December 1, 2011, this measure directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to increase the rates of veterans' compensation to keep pace with a rise in the cost-of-living, should an adjustment be prompted by an increase in the Consumer Price Index, commonly known as the CPI. Referred to as the COLA, this important legislation would make an increase available to veterans at the same level as an increase provided to recipients of Social Security benefits.

All of my colleagues on the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, including Ranking Member BURR and Senators ROCKEFELLER, AKAKA, SANDERS, BROWN of Ohio, WEBB, TESTER, BEGICH, ISAKSON, WICKER, JOHANNIS, BROWN of Massachusetts, MORAN, and BOOZMAN join me in supporting this important legislation. I look forward to our continued work together to improve the lives of our Nation's veterans.

Last year, Congress passed, and the President signed into law, Public Law 111-247, which would have increased veterans' compensation rates had there been an increase in the CPI. While there was no cost-of-living increase in 2011; the 2012 adjustment will be 3.6 percent.

The COLA affects so many important benefits, including veterans' disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses and children. It is projected that over 3.9 million veterans and survivors will receive these benefits in fiscal year 2012.

Mr. President, our Nation's veterans are hurting. The cost of food and fuel continue to rise. Failing to pass a cost-of-living adjustment will have serious effects on the quality of life veterans deserve. We have an obligation to care

for our brave veterans and their families by providing them with the compensation needed to maintain a quality standard of life.

I ask my colleagues to keep our promise to our Nation's veterans by working together to ensure this benefit remains available and is not diminished by the effects of inflation.

TRIBUTE TO JERRY HILDEBRAND

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have a memorial to the extraordinary life and service of Jerry Hildebrand printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

EXCERPTS TAKEN FROM A SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE HEARING TITLED REDUCING OVERPAYMENTS AND INCREASING QUALITY IN THE UNEMPLOYMENT SYSTEM CONDUCTED ON MAY 25, 2010

Senator Baucus: Last week, the Obama Administration announced a proposal to address these issues. The proposal seeks to rein in overpayments by making the unemployment insurance program more efficient. Today, we will walk through that proposal.

Under the administration's proposal, states could use a portion of the money that they recover from overpayments to strengthen their program integrity activities. States would also be required to impose financial penalties on people who defraud the program.

Under the proposal, employers would be required to report the start dates of new employees. That will help to identify beneficiaries who have returned to work in a different state but continue to receive unemployment benefits.

The administration's proposal is just one solution. States and private industry have also devised systems that reduce overpayments. They also have ideas on how to streamline unemployment insurance. I look forward to learning more about these proposals today.

Let's recognize the problem that we have in our Nation's safety-net programs. Let's grab the chance to do our best to correct the overpayments, and let's redouble our efforts to make the government work more efficiently.

I would like to turn to our witnesses. First, we will hear from Jane Oates, Assistant Secretary of Employment and Training at the Department of Labor. Ms. Oates, it is a pleasure to welcome you back. I was saddened not to see Jerry Hildebrand sitting behind you. His passing is a great loss. He provided tremendous advice and information honestly and accurately to all of us who asked; he was a tremendous public servant. We wanted you to know personally, and his family to know that we're thinking of him and very saddened that he is no longer with us.

Mrs. Oates: We cannot thank you enough for that. My career spans from the 1970s. A loss of that magnitude is just hard to get over. The whole career staff is remarkable but Jerry was the high water mark. He is sorely missed every day, particularly by me when we were prepping for this hearing.

Senator Baucus: Well he was a tremendous man.

Mrs. Oates: Thank you so much Senator. And we will make sure his wife and daughter get your—

Senator Baucus: We just want you to know how much he meant to all of us.

Mrs. Oates: Thank you very much.
Senator Baucus: You're very welcome.

EULOGY FOR JERRY HILDEBRAND (Written by Suzanne Simonetta)

I'm speaking this evening on behalf of those of us who had the privilege of working with Jerry Hildebrand in the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program to give you a sense of what he meant to us.

Jerry was a scholar. One of Jerry's most impressive professional gifts was the depth and breadth of his knowledge. I was constantly awed by him—particularly by how much he remembered without even having to check his files. More important than his knowledge, and love of learning in general, was his ability to critically think about the information he knew—What does this mean? Why is it important? What are the implications? He always had the answer. The English major in Jerry made him an excellent writer as well—always pruning a document to reduce it to its essential elements and clarifying its intent.

Jerry was a passionate advocate for the Unemployment Insurance program. He was a worthy heir to the Wisconsin intellectual tradition that led to the creation of the UI program in 1935. Jerry truly believed UI was the most important program in the Employment and Training Administration. He felt strongly about the insurance principles upon which it is based—payments to individuals who lost their jobs through no fault of their own. Jerry believed in the importance of upholding the original intent of the UI program and protecting workers' rights. He dedicated his entire career to achieving these goals.

Jerry was a dedicated public servant. He was a consummate professional. Everyone with whom he worked knew that they could count on Jerry to give them his best effort. Jerry cared very deeply about his work and held himself to the highest standards. Though he might grumble and grouse to us about the fire drill du jour, he always got the job done. During the last two years in particular, with so much attention being paid to unemployment and so much UI legislation being enacted, so much had been demanded from Jerry. And he always delivered. He was one of the hardest working people I know.

Jerry touched the lives of millions of Americans without them ever knowing it. Jerry was a very modest, humble man. Some of you may not be aware that during the last 10 years, Jerry wrote many of the Federal laws relating to unemployment insurance and much of the guidance for states that operate these programs. When you think back on some of the major events in our nation's recent history—the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, Hurricane Katrina, the current recession—Jerry worked to support the people affected. Whether it was the new benefits program for airline workers after 9/11, modifications to the disaster unemployment assistance program after Katrina, the seemingly countless benefit extensions we currently have, or certifying billions of dollars of payments to states that expand eligibility for UI benefits, Jerry's contributions helped make it happen. His efforts lessened the burden that so many individuals and families face because of unemployment.

Jerry was a truly decent human being. Though a reserved man, Jerry's actions spoke volumes about his character. He was honest, fair, reasonable, reliable and dedicated. Jerry was well respected by all who knew him. I couldn't have asked for a better boss.

Jerry was taken from us too soon. We all feel his loss so profoundly—both personally and professionally. The void left behind is unbearable and the daunting task of car-

rying on without him seems insurmountable. However, I am confident that the wisdom Jerry shared and the lessons we learned from him will enable us to achieve what now feels almost impossible. Our greatest tribute to Jerry will be to continue his legacy of excellence.

RECOGNIZING INTERNATIONAL CREDIT UNION DAY

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the importance and many achievements of credit unions worldwide in celebration of the 63rd annual International Credit Union Credit Day.

The difference credit unions make in the United States by providing affordable and safe financial services to many Americans of moderate means has been significant and widely recognized.

However, the contributions credit unions have made on an international scale are equally notable. Since the mid-1800s, credit unions have established themselves in communities around the world struggling with social dislocation, political unrest, and economic depression as a means to promote economic growth and democratic practices at the local level. Today, more than 54,000 credit unions provide financial services to more than 186 million members in 97 nations. Nationally, credit unions provide financial services to more than 93 million Americans.

Credit unions make a difference on a global scale by providing access to affordable financial services for those who otherwise would have been excluded from the financial sector. Such financial services include the provision of small savings and loans, which enable some of the poorest individuals in the world to start their own micro-enterprises, improve household stability and stimulate growth in their communities. Credit unions are the largest source of these microfinance services in countries as diverse as Colombia, Kenya, Russia, Mexico, Thailand, and Rwanda.

Credit unions are also at the forefront of expanding access to finance for people living in rural areas who can't afford the time or money it takes to visit a financial institution. Credit unions are working with the World Council of Credit Unions, WOCCU, to introduce a variety of innovative technology solutions to bank the unbanked in rural areas. In Mexico, credit union officers carry hand-held personal digital assistant, PDA, devices to conduct financial transactions with members in communities located up to 90 minutes from the credit union office. In Kenya, Peru, and Mexico, point-of-sale devices enable credit unions to partner with local merchants in rural areas, allowing members to deposit and withdraw money from their credit union accounts. Finally, mobile banking capabilities in Mexico will enable members to check their balances and transfer funds without leaving their homes.

In addition, credit unions throughout the world are filling the agricultural