

JOSIAH VIGIL

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 13, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Josiah Vigil for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Josiah Vigil is a student at Arvada K-8 School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Josiah Vigil is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Josiah Vigil for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

ADDRESSING DIGITAL CURRENCY

HON. ROGER WILLIAMS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 13, 2017

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address digital currency. This new financial platform is recreating the structures of international finance, and in part offers many exciting opportunities for our future.

However, our nation must ensure that the rise of digital currency, and its use within our borders, does not help aid the actions of terrorists, criminals, and others who want to hurt us.

In recent weeks, the Subcommittee on Terrorism and Illicit Finance of the House Financial Services Committee, led by its chairman, Congressman Steve Pearce, held a critical hearing entitled "Virtual Currency: Financial Innovation and National Security Implications."

Mr. Speaker, at this hearing, the serious national security implications of digital currency, and its use by terrorists was examined. Unless we in Congress develop rational and balanced policies, we may be enabling the very terrorists who wish to destroy us.

Of particular concern is that many of the leading digital currencies are not compliant with the "Anti-Money Laundering" and "Know Your Customer" requirements that we demand of our other financial institutions. This lack of compliance provides a widely opened door for forces of evil to finance their terrible endeavors.

The question, Mr. Speaker, is how we are able to balance our desire to protect our nation and innocents around the world from terror, while not losing our freedoms or economic opportunities.

At this time, virtually all the world's digital currencies are not compliant with the critical AML/KYC standards we expect of our other institutions. Some in the digital currency world argue that digital finance requires a relaxation of these standards. This is absolutely incorrect.

I encourage Congress to continue its efforts to study digital finance, and I am hopeful that, in the coming weeks, our focus will attend to the issue of AML/KYC compliance, highlighting those currencies that refuse to provide this safeguard, and examining and encouraging those who do.

RECOGNIZING CAPE CORAL SWIM TEAM

HON. FRANCIS ROONEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 13, 2017

Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the nine swimmers from the Cape Coral swim team who qualified for the Florida Age Group Championships this weekend.

Swimmers Brent Baker, Evan Baker, Maddie Lehman, Jacob Bilancione, Hayden Tedhams, Skylar Gusler, Natalie Handzlik, Anne Kokosinski and Melana Greene have displayed tremendous skill and determination to qualify for this competition. All under fourteen years of age, these swimmers have shown commendable character as they have practiced tirelessly for this opportunity.

I would also like to honor veteran coach Ed Collins for his dedication to the swim team and the City of Cape Coral. His hard work has brought a record of nine swimmers from the team to this elite competition this year and his three decades of service have inspired many children in our community.

I am honored to have the Cape Coral swim team and Coach Collins represent our district at the championships in Sarasota this weekend.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DARIN LAHOOD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 13, 2017

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted: YEA on Rollcall No. 349.

BELOVED: CHILDREN OF THE HOLOCAUST

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 13, 2017

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on June 18, 2017, The State newspaper of Columbia, South Carolina, published a remarkable article by John Monk entitled, "In S.C. artist's portraits, Holocaust children live."

The following portions of the article reveal how the memories of these children are kept alive through an extraordinary heartfelt achievement:

"I draw their eyes first," said Mary Burkett, "and I reach a moment where I just make some little subtle shading, and all of a sudden, I see the little person, and I just sort of say, 'Hey, darling.'"

"It is so wonderful that they are there. They seem to me as though they are hiding in the paper, and I just reveal them. I just find them.

Since January, Burkett, 64, of West Columbia, has created 19 pastel portraits of children. Using old grainy black and white photos she printed from the Internet, she has spent hours, dabbing on minute amounts of pastel with a Q-tip or a rolled paper stump called a tortillon, creating the pictures on light brown paper.

She works at home, surrounded by high windows, or on the third floor of the Richland County's main library—both places with natural or bright overhead light. It takes her 25 or 30 hours over a week to draw just one image.

They aren't just any children. They are Jewish children who died in the Holocaust. Their faces exude happiness, though, for the photos that Burkett worked from were taken when the children were with their families, before being sent to the horror of the death camps created by Nazi Germany.

To those who have seen them, Burkett's portraits radiate life, love and loss, intertwined in a way digital or photographic images can't convey.

Many viewer tear up. They might have come across photos before of Jewish children killed in Hitler's concentration camps during World War II. But none like Burkett's, they said.

"I've never seen anything like it, personally," said Barry Abels, executive director of the Columbia Jewish Federation. "Something gets yanked right out of me when I look at these pictures."

Abels heard about Burkett's portraits. After showing them to some friends, he invited her to Holocaust Remembrance Day at Columbia's Tree of Life Synagogue in April. She set up a table, and people dropped by to see her sketches, still in her sketch book.

"Everybody was amazed," Abels said. "The images jump out of the paper. She had captured the essence of the children. 'Remarkable' was a word I heard more than once . . ."

Because of the positive reactions from others, Burkett has made her goal with the pictures to share them with others in a way that lets others learn their stories . . .

Burkett showed her first portrait, of Hersch Goldberg, to her husband of 40 years, Ronny. He liked what she had done, encouraged her to continue, and advised her that if she felt she had to do the portraits, she should continue.

"I started looking for pictures of children from the Holocaust, wanting their pictures to be from the 1930s, before the Holocaust happened. The reason for that is, they were children. They laughed, and they cried, and they fussed, and they giggled, and they ran, all the things that kids do."

Back then, Burkett said, cameras were a novelty and children didn't make faces when you took their picture. "Whatever emotion they were feeling, is actually on their little faces . . ."

Belinda Gergel, a Burkett friend and retired history professor at Columbia College who now lives in Charleston, said, "Quite frankly, these drawings are about as powerful as they could be."

"Mary has a gift, and it's a gift that transcends time, and it brings the past right back into the present," Gergel said. "When you look at these drawings, you are confronting the central question about human experience: How could we have lost these very special children?"

Gergel, Hamm, Abels and Filler all hope Burkett can find a way to share what she's done with wider audiences.

Whatever happens, Burkett doesn't want herself to be the focus of attention.