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Bylaws/Parliamentarian: Kerri Tonkin  
Caring for America: Renie Frank, Anita Diamond  
Fundraising: Keri Tonkin  
Hospitality: Barb Koeplinger  
Legislative: Lori Fayhee  
Membership: Peg Love  
Newsletter: Mary Snyder  
Programs: Pat Baldwin  
Publicity: Gail Langner  
Reservations: Wren Morefield/Mary Ann Hansen  
Social Media: Mary Snyder  
Non-Committee Positions  
Chaplain: Terri Lee  
Photographer: John Fernandez



Gary L. Peppers  
Lieutenant Colonel, USAF (Ret.)

Iceland, and Japan, and he spent six years as an F-15 instructor pilot at Tyndall AFB, FL. Between those tours he also served as a Forward Air Controller in Germany and California, flying the OV-10 Bronco, in which he was both an instructor pilot and a flight examiner.

Col. Peppers spent his final assignment at his UPT alma mater, Columbus AFB, instructing students in the T-38 fighter trainer. He retired from the Air Force in January 2000 with 26 years of active duty and, despite his age of 48, was hired by United Air Lines to fly Boeing 727s and 737s as a first officer.

Following the World Trade Center attacks in 2001, the airline industry collapsed, and he retired. In 2009, the Secretary of the Air Force ordered Col Peppers back to active duty for one more tour. Ten years after he thought he had retired, he reported for duty at Creech AFB, Nevada to begin training to fly the MQ-1B Predator combat drone. Assigned to the 15th Attack Squadron, Col. Peppers flew Predator missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, the Persian Gulf, and other hot spots in the Middle East. He also spent long shifts serving as an operations supervisor for his unit's around the clock combat employment. In July 2011, he deployed to Naval Air Station Sigonella, Sicily where he assumed command of the 324th Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron, tasked with providing the Predator surveillance and attack missions flown into Libya during Operation Unified Protector, the NATO campaign to oust Muammar Qaddafi. Col Peppers reverted to retired status—finally and for good—in May of 2013. Gary and Carol have three sons, the youngest of whom is also a fighter pilot, flying the F-35B as a major in the Marine Corps.

# THE MAHOUT

## The Keeper and Driver of the Elephant

### October 2017

*Strong Women for a  
Strong America*

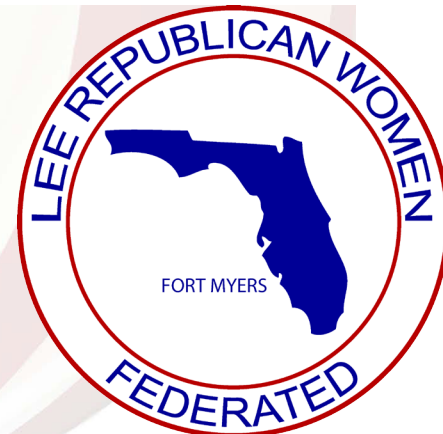
### GARY PEPPERS

Lt. Col. Peppers began his military career in the Army in 1971, where he served first as an enlisted helicopter aircrew and later as an Army aviator flying UH-1 and OH-58 helicopters with the Air Cavalry. He left the Army as a Chief Warrant Officer in 1976 to become a commercial pilot with Petroleum Helicopters, flying offshore oilfield support in the Gulf of Mexico. He also earned his FAA certificate as a flight instructor in airplanes and taught flying lessons on days off.

At the same time, Col. Peppers was pursuing his MBA at the University of Southwest Louisiana in Lafayette. The school's Air Force ROTC detachment recruited him and urged him to apply for Air Force pilot Training, just what he'd always dreamed of doing. After one year of ROTC academics, and with several waivers from the Air Force in hand, Col. Peppers was commissioned a second lieutenant in December 1978 and sent to Undergraduate Pilot Training at Columbus AFB, Mississippi.

Lt. Peppers reported to pilot training with nearly 3,000 flying hours in his logbooks, including 700 hours as flight instructor. He already held FAA certificates as a commercial and instrument pilot for both airplanes and helicopters. And he owned his own airplane, which he used to provide remedial practice in instruments and navigation to some of his UPT classmates who were struggling.

Lt. Peppers' favorite maxim, "In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king," was well-founded. He graduated with top honors and earned his dream assignment to fly the F-15 Eagle. Over the next 20 years, Colonel Peppers was assigned to F-15 squadrons in Arizona, New Mexico,



### QUOTE OF THE MONTH

*"I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States, and parts of States, are, and henceforward shall be free." Abraham Lincoln*

### LRWF MONTHLY MEETING

Join us on Monday, October 9th at Pincher's Restaurant, The Marina at Edison Ford, 2360 W. 1st St., Fort Myers. Gary Peppers, Lt. Col. USAF (Ret.) will be speaking.

There are three menu choices:

1. Chicken Marsala, garlic mashed potatoes, oven roasted zucchini, Greek salad and rolls
2. Coconut Shrimp, garlic mashed potatoes, oven roasted zucchini, Greek salad and rolls
3. Plain Caesar salad with topping on the side  
Carrot cake will be served for dessert.

- \$25 Inclusive
- 5:15 PM Social Time /Dinner and Program following
- Reservation deadline: noon, Thursday, 10/5

For reservations call Wren Morefield at 270-210-1284 or email at [wrenspet@hotmail.com](mailto:wrenspet@hotmail.com).

To make a reservation online go to <http://www.leerepublicanwomen.com/store>

**Remember, a reservation made  
is a reservation paid!**

**Everyone MUST check in at the  
Reservation Desk.**

**NEXT  
MONTH**



**LRWF**  
Presents the...

**Glamour-us  
On  
Parade**

**Fashion Show**

**NEWSLETTER OF LEE REPUBLICAN WOMEN FEDERATED**

Associated with the Florida Federation of Republican Women and the National Federation of Republican Women.

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Doris Cortese  
LRWF President

My letter this month is in defense of the American flag and the National Anthem. My husband is a veteran of WWII and the Korean war. It digusts me to see NFL players who have made their fortune and the future of their families secure because of the opportunity this great country has given them.

November 12th is Veteran's Day. I am asking all of you to boycott the NFL games on that weekend. This is a nationwide event, and I pray that our readers will join with millions of other patriotic Americans and not attend or watch NFL football on that weekend.

Football is a game. The flag and the Anthem are what represents the heart and guts of our country. Many good people have sacrificed their life and/or limbs so that we can be free. The next time a player takes a knee in front of the flag, let him do it in front of a veteran who has lost a limb or his eyesight or a widow or mother who has lost their husband or son. Maybe then they would understand what this country stands for.

I STAND FOR THE FLAG AND KNEEL FOR THE CROSS

REMEMBER THE WEEKEND OF November 12th...no NFL.

May God Bless the America we love and the freedom we cherish

Sincerely,  
Doris Cortese, President, LRWF  
Vice President, LCREC

## *Reflecting on Hurricane Irma*

I appreciate the opportunity to write a few words for the Lee Republican Women Federated. We have had a challenging few weeks in SW Florida and what I was planning to write changed drastically with the landfall of Hurricane Irma. Response to Irma can be divided into three categories; preparation, assessment of impact, and recovery.

Taking the warnings about a category four or five hurricane seriously means the difference between life and death. As Irma moved towards Southwest Florida our office focused on providing the most up-to-date information on evacuating, emergency preparedness, shelter locations, and storm trajectory. We shared information from federal, state, county, and local agencies and coordinated with the Trump Administration and Governor Scott to ensure that disaster declarations were made quickly to expedite the prepositioning of supplies. At all levels, the flow of information, efficiency of evacuations, and overall storm preparation went well.

Emergency response began immediately after the winds and rains subsided, as volunteers joined first responders to begin the clean-up. The Emergency Operation Centers worked well in all areas, from Cape Coral to Lee and Collier County and Marco Island, to focus and organize responses. Our area law enforcement personnel, first responders, EOC staff, and volunteers performed outstanding work under these very trying circumstances. Their tireless efforts in the immediate aftermath of Irma no doubt saved many lives.

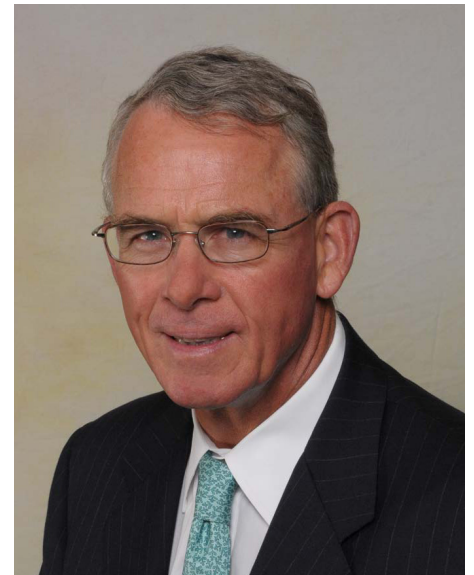
Our local District 19 team, supported by some of our Washington staff, executed on these initiatives, distributing food and water, coordinating with FPL to get power restored to critical assets, such as the neighborhood health clinic in Naples, holding "FEMA fairs" with a multitude of state and federal agencies to expedite assistance, and touring the hardest hit areas of our community with President Trump, Vice President Pence, and Governor Scott, so they would understand the immediacy of our needs and would work quickly to honor any requests for assistance. Additionally, neighbors assisted friends and strangers alike with, food, water, shelter, fuel for generators, and assistance with moving heavy debris. This spirit of giving, which makes Southwest Florida such a great place to call home, was on full display.

We now begin the recovery phase, where we rebuild and replant. We need to know every individual's problems or ideas so we can work on solutions.

I have seen extraordinary acts of generosity and kindness in our community these past few weeks. Our fellow citizens have risen to support their neighbors in an unprecedented manner. Despite our hardships, we are grateful for the community in which we are so fortunate to live.

Sincerely,

Francis Rooney  
US House of Representatives



Francis Rooney  
US House of Representatives



*Lee Republican Women Federated  
wish to extend their sympathy  
to all the victims and the families  
of the Las Vegas shooting.*

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

New members, watch for your invitation in the mail to attend the Orientation Social Gathering on Thursday, October 19 at 5:30 p.m. in the Republican Headquarters Office.

Come hungry and thirsty – our committee looks forward to meeting you and sharing the LRFW experience with everyone. If you are a member, but have never attended an Orientation, we'd love to have you join us.

Please RSVP to Peg Love at either 941-740-0228 or [peglove810@gmail.com](mailto:peglove810@gmail.com)

Committee: Pat Baldwin, Germaine Hyatt, Barbara Koeplinger, Marilyn Kostik, Peg Love, Kerri Tonkin

Peg Love  
[peglove810@gmail.com](mailto:peglove810@gmail.com)  
941-740-0228



*Museum News  
by Pat Baldwin*

## KUDOS

The August grand opening of The Republican Museum of Southwest Florida was attended by 125 legislators and visitors who toured the facility.

The light refreshments which included gingerbread cake, cherry crumble, and chocolate chip cookies were made and donated by Sharon Gibson, Peg Love, Cindy Crawford, and Donna Lomba. Serving were Marilyn Kostik, Germaine Hyatt, and Beth Craft.

Office volunteers who gave their time were docent Conan Leary and server Diane Jaekel who, along with her husband, helped decorate the dessert area.

Many thanks to the above who worked behind the scenes to make the affair a success.

## WE NEED DOCENTS

If interested in volunteering to be a docent at The Republican Museum of Southwest Florida, please call Pat Baldwin at 908-581-7617.

If you are planning on touring the facility over the coming holidays, please call the same number to set up a date.

There is room for three more volunteers for the two-hour training on Saturday. Coffee will be served.



*Doris Cortese and Pat Baldwin hold the ribbon while Lizbeth Benacquisto cuts the ribbon for the grand opening of the Republican Museum and Headquarters. Our elected officials stand in the background cheering us on!*



*Left to right are Mindy Moran, Doris Cortese, Pat Baldwin, Germaine Hyatt, Marilyn Kostik, Mary Snyder (a.k.a. Mary Todd Lincoln), Beth Craft, and Kerri Tonkin. You might note that Trump showed up too! He's behind Mary Todd Lincoln! I heard they were going to go to the theater later that night!*



*My Opinion  
By Mary Snyder*

**Many Lights at the End of the Tunnel**

I have written a number of articles that describe my anger with one thing or another. This editorial will be a little different. After the people of Florida experienced Hurricane Irma, we, in Florida and elsewhere, have experienced a kindness and pulling together that can only be seen in the midst of trouble. Some say that we can never appreciate the mountain top until we have gone through the valleys. Texas has already experienced much of what we are experiencing right now.

Multitudes of people have come together to help our Florida residents. I know from personal experience that my church, along with countless others, has stepped up to the plate to help with finances, clean up, re-construction, etc. Our church has provided food for volunteer hurricane workers, provided food and ice to a nursing home with no electric, provided financial help to people and have helped in many other ways. The number of churches and organizations doing the same things are too many to mention.

What really excites me though, is how our elected officials have stepped up. First of all, we must totally commend President Trump and Vice President Pence. They immediately declared Florida to be in a state of emergency before the hurricane even hit, so that help could be on it's way immediately. They made sure that all obstacles were eliminated in getting help to people and then came and visited some of the devastated areas and stood in lines to feed the people in the shelters. They made their re-assuring warm presence known to the hurting people of Florida. Our governor stood with them as did Marco Rubio, Secretary Perry and many of our representatives.

One thing that really impressed me is to see how Francis Rooney and his staff stepped up. Congressman Francis Rooney's staff made themselves available to assist individuals affected by Hurricane Irma by setting up five different locations for people to come to make applications for individual disaster assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

One night, while we were waiting for the hurricane to come, we turned on our television to listen to the Governor speak to us. While listening to the Governor, I noticed that standing beside him were our County Commissioners, State Representatives and Senators. They could have been home with their families, but they weren't. They were standing there for us! I am so proud of our elected officials!

The scriptures say, "...let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." I saw a lot of good deeds through the many shining lights during our time of darkness, and I thank God for all of them!



*Our very own Kerri Tonkin, volunteered to serve food after the hurricane. It was her birthday and guess who showed up! President Trump, Melania and the Vice President Pence with his wife. In case you were wondering, Kerri is in the pink! What a day!*



*Vice President Pence, Marco Rubio, President Trump and First Lady Melania Trump all showed up along with the Governor who is not pictured.*



## DOLLY MADISON COMES TO TOWN

The LRWF members and guests will host Dolley Madison, the fourth First Lady of the United States, at its holiday dinner on December 11, 2017.

Mrs. Madison, through local thespian, Annie M. Mrozinski, will transport her audience to her 19th century Christmas open house at Montpielier, her Orange County mansion in Virginia.

The former Dorethea Todd led a remarkably full life. This would include the fact that she lived long enough to have her photo, which accompanies this article to the right, taken in 1848 when she was 80.

Mrs. Mrozinski has been doing her one-woman show for a number of years. She is a member of the Lee Republican Women's Club and lives with her husband, Ken, in Fort Myers. Previously the couple lived in Manhattan, Kansas.

The holiday dinner will be held on Monday, December 11, at Pincher's Restaurant, First Street, Ft. Myers. Email Wren Morefield to make reservations at [wrenspet@hotmail.com](mailto:wrenspet@hotmail.com)



## CARING FOR AMERICA 2017 PROJECT

Our new Caring for America project in 2017 is Junior Achievement of Southwest Florida.



## BOOK CHAT

Summer is over!!! We will resume Book Chat on October 4, at Mel's Diner from 1:00-3:00. Our selection for October will be Sheriff David Clarke's book, Cop Under Fire. This book is not a dry recitation of what has gone wrong in America with regard to race. With racial tension and animosity toward law enforcement officials, America is in need of healing and Sheriff Clarke knows where to begin. Helping us rise above our divisions, he encourages us to stop blaming others. We need to face our problems head-on and take ownership of our family, community, nation and turn to God. He feels we can rise above our current troubles to be a truly great people in pursuit of liberty and justice for all.

For November 1, we will also be meeting at Mel's Diner from 1:00-3:00. We will be reading George Orwell's book, Nineteen Eighty-Four. This book was published in 1949. It was chosen by Time magazine as one of the 100 best English-novel language novels from 1923 to 2005. As a literary political fiction and dystopian science-fiction, this is a classic novel in content, plot and style. Many of its terms and concepts, such as Big Brother, double-think, thoughtcrime and Newspeak have entered into common use since its publication. The popularised adjective, Orwellian, which describes official deception, secret surveillance and manipulation of recorded history by a totalitarian or authoritarian state.

Read two good books, and we will meet again at Mel's Diner in October.

Please call or email me to let me know if you will attend before October's meeting so we are able to plan accordingly.

Cheryl Harris  
239-225-7390  
[timcherylharris@aol.com](mailto:timcherylharris@aol.com)

## DO YOU WANT TO GET TAX REFORM?

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716 Senate Hart Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
Phone: 202-224-5274  
or email at

<https://www.billnelson.senate.gov/contact-bill>

### MARCO RUBIO

284 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
Phone: 202-224-3041  
or email at

<https://marcorubio.com/contact/>

### FRANCIS ROONEY

120 Cannon HOB  
Washington, DC 20515  
Phone: (202) 225-2536  
or email at

<https://francisrooney.house.gov/contact/>



Laura Lane Welch Bush  
November 4, 1946  
Wife of President George W. Bush

# AMERICANISM

## American First Ladies

By Pat Baldwin

Thirty-one year old Laura Welch went to a Texas barbeque in July of 1977 and met George W. Bush. Four months later, the couple were married.

She wore a two-toned tan dress for the ceremony held at the Glass Memorial Chapel, First United Methodist Church, Midland, Texas. He, an Episcopalian who switched to his wife's church, has said it was the best decision of his life. She was equally pleased stating that she has been blessed with wonderful in-laws.

Four years later, the couple had twin girls: Jenna, the oldest, and Barbara named after their maternal and paternal grandmothers respectively.

Laura had been employed as a school librarian but left her employment to campaign for her husband in his run for Congress following their wedding.

She then worked for her father's-in-law 1980 campaign.

In 1986, according to her husband, Laura was instrumental in his giving up alcohol. She shared with him that her father had been an alcoholic and she did not want to live that life and felt that he did not want that either. He agreed and stopped drinking.

In 1995 he successfully ran for governor of Texas followed five years later, for a successful run for the White House.

Laura was 54 years old when she became First Lady of the United States. Early in their marriage, she had volunteered to help children with congenital AIDS, she was active in children's literacy and health programs while the Texas First Lady culminating in a successful campaign which raised money for the purchase of books for the Texas library system. She continued these interests while in the White House.

She was interested in the plight of Afghanistan women, pushed for higher teacher salaries, and more training for pre school providers. Her Book Festival in Washington sparked the interest of the Russian First Lady, Ludmilla Putin, to host a similar one in Moscow in 2003 which the FLOTUS attended.

Mrs. Bush, during the White House years, did not believe that Roe vs. Wade should be overturned, that gay marriage was a matter of public decision, and did not, like her husband, promote stem cell research.

Laura, born November 4, 1946, was the only child of Harold Welch who died in 1995 and Jenna Hawkins Welch who is approaching her 100th year.

She was graduated from Robert E. Lee High School in 1964. The previous year, shortly after she turned 17, Laura ran a stop sign slamming into another car killing the driver. The victim was a schoolmate and former boyfriend. Neither Laura nor the friends in her car were injured. No charges were filed. The families had been friends. Later, in her book, Spoken from the Heart, Laura states that the accident caused her to lose her faith for many years.

She went on to receive a bachelor's degree in teaching from Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, followed, in 1972, with a master's degree in library science from the University of Texas in Austin.

Today, the couple live in the Preston Hollow neighborhood of Dallas. Barbara Pierce Bush, the older twin, is single presently dating a graffiti artist. Jenna Welch Bush Hager, 36, has been married to Henry Chase Hager for nine years. She is the mother of Margaret Laura "Mila" Hager, the Bush's only grandchild. Jenna is a teacher and has co-authored a number of children's books with her mother.

*(Information for this article was obtained from The First Ladies Biographies and other sources.)*



**LRWF**

Presents the...

**Glamour-us  
On  
Parade  
Fashion Show**

### SAVE THE DATE:

November 15, 2017 at the beautiful Forest Golf County Club.  
LRWF largest fund raiser,  
Glamour-us On Parade Fashion Show  
is just around the corner.

The committee continues to meet and this should be a fun event. Items we are lacking and could use for donations are gently used designer hand bags and jewelry. We can also use any gift certificates for pedicures or manicures. New items needed for a donations would be scarves, fine soaps, or anything fun you would like to find in a bag that you bid on.

Call Kerri Tonkin at 907-321-0419 for information  
or donation drop off.

*Thank you in advance for your support.*

# Legislative

## UPDATE

By Lori Fayhee

### OUR COUNTRY'S RESPONSE TO HARVEY, IRMA, AND MARIA

Throughout the devastation of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, we saw our Country, State, Counties, and communities come together without hesitation. On September 4th, Governor Rick Scott declared a state of emergency for all of Florida's 67 counties as the rapidly growing Hurricane Irma was expected to make landfall later that week. Scott said that the state would "prepare for the worst and hope for the best." On September 7th, all five living former U.S. presidents united in a call for donations to relief efforts for Hurricane Harvey and the looming Hurricane Irma. The online campaign, called the "One America Appeal," brought together former Presidents Barack Obama, George W. Bush, Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush and Jimmy

Carter in a singular plea for donations to ongoing recovery efforts in Texas and likely future recovery needs in Florida and U.S. territories in the Caribbean in the wake of Irma. President Donald Trump tweeted, in support of the call to action, saying, "We will confront ANY challenge, no matter how strong the winds or high the water," he wrote. "I'm proud to stand with Presidents for #OneAmericaAppeal."

On September 8th, President Trump signed a \$15 billion disaster relief package into law, just hours after it passed the House with a broad bipartisan majority. The relief package boosted dwindling funding for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), provides disaster relief and federal aid for Hurricane Harvey and other 2017 disasters, suspends the debt limit and extends the National Flood Insurance Program and government funding into December. Congress acted quickly, taking only three days to move the measure through both legislative bodies. The updated version of the bill includes \$7.4 billion for direct assistance for victims of Hurricane Harvey; \$450 million for the Small Business Administration to help small businesses get back on their feet; and an additional \$7.4 billion in community development block grants for all disasters this year. The package has been criticized as being the result of a deal Trump struck with House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., against the wishes of his own party leaders, who pushed for a longer-term increase of the debt limit.

Initially, House Speaker Paul Ryan said that lumping multiple bills together on a short-term basis was "ridiculous." Later, at a news conference, Ryan said, "We all thought we had more time obviously, to deal with the debt-limit issue, and that's before the hurricanes hit," "When these hurricanes hit, and we saw the new numbers coming in from FEMA, that changed the entire calculation. And so the president made a game call yesterday that he thought it was — is in our country's interest to have a bipartisan support in a bipartisan package to deal with these ongoing hurricane disasters."

H.R. 601, the "Continuing Appropriations Act, 2018 and Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Requirements Act, 2017, passed 316-90, with 133 Republican votes. Three of the five Florida Republicans who remained in Washington for the vote, Reps. Brian Mast, Thomas J. Rooney, and Francis Rooney voted for the bill. The Senate passed the bill 80-17, with 33 Republican votes.

U.S. Senator Marco Rubio spoke in support after the Senate approved the \$15.25 billion disaster relief bill. Rubio stated that "Given these circumstances and the fact that my vote would not have determined the outcome of the measures before the Senate, I felt the prudent course of action was to remain in South Florida, take appropriate actions to protect my family and help coordinate efforts between federal, state and local officials. If I had been able to participate in today's Senate vote in Washington, I would have voted to approve the supplemental package before the Senate. But my vote would come despite significant reservations about some of the other items attached to this legislation."

Congressman, Francis Rooney, who resides in Southwest Florida with his wife, Kathleen, has been working tirelessly to support SWFL in the aftermath of hurricane Irma. In person, through editorials, and on social media, Congressman Rooney, and his team, have been getting the word out to provide essential information on where to get help and his office has set up locations to assist people to apply for FEMA. On his website, he states, "In the aftermath of Hurricane Irma, it is important for our communities to take action to start rebuilding." "We have a long road to recovery ahead. I look forward to working with anyone who seeks assistance. My offices can be reached at the following: Cape Coral (239-599-6033), Naples (239-252-6225), and Washington, DC (1-202-225-2536)."

With the assistance of workers and linemen around the country, churches, nonprofits, volunteers, friends, and neighbors, many of us are beginning to resume a normal life. Many have been less fortunate and have lost their homes and/or their belongings. Our financially strapped district schools, our community civic centers, Germain Arena, and the Florida Gulf Coast University were successfully used as shelters for many of our local families displaced by Irma. It was reported that flood waters reached as high as 10 feet in Everglade City and Chokoloskee.

On September, 20th, Puerto Rico experienced massive destruction, a wiped-out electrical grid, and limited communications. The United States commonwealth already faced a fragile economy prior to Maria's storm's eye slicing through the island. According to 2010 U.S. Census estimates, Lee County is currently home to 24,503 Puerto Rican natives, and due to devastating living conditions, lack of fresh water, food, and fuel, that number will likely rise, according to an article in the Newspress, 'the unknown number of newcomers to SW Florida will increase the need for space in classrooms, jobs and affordable housing.'

On September 10, President Trump declared that a major disaster existed in Puerto Rico and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the areas affected by Hurricane Irma beginning on September 5, 2017, and continuing. Trump made additional disaster assistance available to Puerto Rico, on September 26, as a result of Hurricane Maria, and authorized increased cost sharing to 100 percent Federal funding for debris removal and emergency protective measures, beginning on September 17, including direct Federal assistance, for 180 days from the date of the declaration. President Trump recently ordered the 1920 Jones Act, a maritime law requiring shipments of goods between two U.S. ports to be made with American-flagged vessels and manned by American crews, to be waived for shipments to hurricane-ravaged Puerto Rico immediately at the request of Governor Ricardo Rossello. The waiver will be in effect for ten days and cover all products being shipped to Puerto Rico. "It is intended to ensure we have enough fuel and commodities to support lifesaving efforts, respond to the storm, and restore critical services and critical infrastructure operations in the wake of these devastating storms," acting Homeland Security Secretary Elaine Duke said in a statement. Republican senators John McCain and Mike Lee have since introduced a bill to permanently waive shipping restrictions on Puerto Rico, saying a temporary waiver is "insufficient" to help the island rebuild from Hurricane Maria. Opponents of the Jones Act, which bars foreign vessels from shipping goods between U.S. coasts, say it hurts consumers on U.S. islands, including Puerto Rico and Hawaii, by adding shipping costs to imports of basic goods like food and fuel.

Please continue to pray for those in need and the wisdom of our leadership.

## STOP BLAMING THE DRYER

By Francis Rooney

A while back I saw an ad for a gym that read “stop blaming the dryer,” and it reminded me of the debt ceiling debate in Congress. Fighting the debt ceiling is like working out while consistently consuming a high-calorie, fat-filled, dessert-laden diet. As someone who spent most of their life in business, I know that an effective solution to a problem requires addressing the root causes as well as the effects.

The real issue Congress must face, and seems to be incapable of addressing, is its spending. For starters, look at the hue and cry over the President’s “skinny budget.” From the bipartisan clamor it precipitated, one would have thought our country had returned to the spending and government size of Calvin Coolidge.

One needs to look no further than the House of Representatives votes this week on appropriations bill amendments to see the lack of consensus about how much and what to spend. While each person has their own individual priorities, which is certainly appropriate, one would think that at least a few of these reductions would have been approved.

Further, the agony generated by the draft House 2018 budget, which directs committees to cut \$200 billion in mandatory spending, shows the magnitude of the challenge of seeking to reduce the size and cost of the federal government.

Trends over the past few decades show how reckless federal spending has been. The debt ceiling has been raised over twenty times since 1993 by lawmakers in both parties who have failed to address the underlying cause of these increases, the out of control spending. Congress must seriously debate the cause behind these debt ceiling increases in order to actually end the debt crisis. Perhaps we should pass a balanced budget amendment in Congress. One almost passed when Newt Gingrich was speaker.

The current fiscal situation is a result of a federal government that has grown beyond its originally construed Constitutional scope. It is now a government that reaches into every aspect of our lives, doing too much “for” us and too much “to” us. As President Gerald Ford said, “a government big enough to give you everything you want is a government big enough to take from you everything you have.”

This is analogous to the spending of the United Kingdom and other Western European countries from the 1880’s up to the breakout of World War One. These nations spent profusely to support global colonial empires while pacifying the populace as the industrial revolution changed the course of business by upending traditional job conditions and the employer-employee relationship. These nations failed to keep up with a recently united Germany which, relatively free of colonies and prepared to invest heavily to create its first real navy, was becoming the world’s new economic powerhouse.

If we are serious about leading the free world and providing economic growth and opportunity to our people, and assuring the full faith and credit the dollar, which makes it the world’s currency and brings financial leadership and stability to the international community, we need to address the cause, not the effect, of continually increasing spending. Congress must debate our spending habits, not debt ceiling increases, which, like any other lagging indicator, reflects past decisions rather than future opportunity. This is the same decision a person concerned with their own physical fitness should make, addressing their diet instead of “blaming the dryer” for their poorly fitting clothes.

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