

years. President Obama promised a tax cut for most Americans, but he raises energy taxes on 100 percent of Americans. The Democrats' budget will put a new tax on charitable giving that could cost American charities as much as \$16 billion a year. This will harm numerous organizations at a time when many of these groups are now struggling with the economic downturn.

This is the wrong direction, Mr. Speaker. We need to stop this spending, taxing, and borrowing.

CONGRATULATING THE ARKANSAS EDUCATION TELEVISION NETWORK

(Mr. BOOZMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Arkansas Educational Television Network.

This important resource for Arkansans was recently recognized for its commitment to education by the Corporation For Public Broadcasting, awarding AETN with a My Source Community Impact Award for Education for its Spring Break Family Day that was designed to encourage children to learn and be physically active through PBS characters, educational games, crafts, and contests.

I am proud to support this fine organization and its mission. AETN offers lifelong learning opportunities to our community and provides programming and services that enrich the lives of Arkansans. For its innovative efforts and committed response to the diverse educational needs of our community, it is clear AETN is deserving of this honor.

With the help of organizations like this, our community is building a brighter future for our children. I am glad to see that this station, which plays such an important role in our State, has been recognized on the national level. I commend the employees for their good work and wish them continued success for the 2009 Spring Break Family Day.

WE SHOULD PRAISE, NOT INSULT, LAW ENFORCEMENT

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Wall Street Journal recently reported that Speaker PELOSI called work site arrests and deportation of illegal workers "un-American."

That's quite a powerful word: "un-American." And it's quite a spectacle to have the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives call the actions of our law enforcement men and women "un-American."

We should praise them, not insult them, for enforcing our immigration laws.

Twelve million Americans are out of work. Seven million illegal workers

hold jobs that should go to citizens and legal immigrant workers.

Let's let the American people decide what is "un-American." We should not criticize law enforcement personnel. Instead, we should be grateful for the job they do.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 6 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1600

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. JACKSON of Illinois) at 4 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken after 6:30 p.m. today.

JOHN SCOTT CHALLIS, JR. POST OFFICE

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 987) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 601 8th Street in Freedom, Pennsylvania, as the "John Scott Challis, Jr. Post Office".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 987

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. JOHN SCOTT CHALLIS, JR. POST OFFICE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 601 8th Street in Freedom, Pennsylvania, shall be known and designated as the "John Scott Challis, Jr. Post Office".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "John Scott Challis, Jr. Post Office".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may

have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

Mr. LYNCH. I now yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support for the consideration of H.R. 987, a bill to designate the United States postal facility located at 601 8th Street in Freedom, Pennsylvania, as the John Scott Challis, Jr. Post Office.

Introduced by Representative JASON ALTMIRE on February 11, 2009, and reported out of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee on March 10, 2009, by a voice vote, H.R. 987 enjoys the support of the entire Pennsylvania House delegation.

As recently noted in the Ellwood City Ledger, John Scott Challis, Jr., "came into this world fighting." Only 2 days after his birth on December 16, 1989, John was helicoptered from The Medical Center in Beaver County to Children's Hospital in Pittsburgh, where he spent 16 days in hospital care and received lifesaving surgery.

As his beloved family and friends in Beaver County, and as many of us across the Nation well know, John never stopped fighting throughout his young life, even after being diagnosed with hepatocellular carcinoma, an adult form of liver cancer, at the age of 16. John's response to his initial diagnosis was indicative of his eternal determination and resolve, as well as a reflection of his own personal motto of "courage and believe equals life."

In April of 2008, John learned that his cancer had spread and that, most likely, he had only a few months to live. Nevertheless, John never ceased to live his life to the fullest and do what he loved most, which was spending time with his family and friends and playing and following the game of baseball.

On April 14, 2008, John first received national attention when he was able to pinch-hit for his beloved Freedom High School baseball team in a game against Aliquippa High. John cracked the first-pitch fastball into the outfield for an RBI single, and upon making it to first base proudly exclaimed to everyone, "I did it, I did it."

The following month, John graduated with his senior class. And in June of last year, John was able to take a family vacation with his devoted parents, Scott and Gina, and his younger sister, Lexie. He also visited the Pittsburgh Pirates Clubhouse and reminded the players to cherish the game of baseball and, of course, to cherish life.

Regrettably, John lost his battle with cancer in August of 2008. However, his memory and inspirational message will never be forgotten. In John's honor, the John Challis Courage For Life Foundation was established in 2008. The organization is dedicated to providing sports opportunities to student athletes with life-threatening illnesses.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that we can further serve to honor John's life through the passage of this legislation before us. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 987.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of designating the facility of the United States Postal Service at 601 8th Street in Freedom, Pennsylvania, the John Scott Challis, Jr., Post Office.

And I particularly agree with the gentleman from Massachusetts and share his belief that courage plus believe equals life. This simple but profound equation is more than an inspirational quote. It's a testament to the character and the life of its creator, John Challis. Born in Beaver County, Pennsylvania, John's life was too short, but not without meaning.

Mr. Speaker, often we name post offices after individuals who have lived a long and significant life, sometimes former Members of Congress, Presidents and the like. Today we are naming after someone whose life was cut off altogether too soon. In fact, after only 18 years, it is unusual that we would name a post office after somebody, but John went that extra mile to inspire America, reaching national prominence because, in fact, he would not quit, defying the odds by standing on a baseball field when most would be too weak to get out of bed and making the decision that he was going to live his every dream as best he could.

John did that, and his life will be an inspiration for as long as that plaque shall be at the post office. Today we honor that.

Mr. Speaker, I have been up here for many, many postal namings, and once in a while I get comments from back home saying "why do you spend so much time naming post offices?" And I guess the short answer is, Mr. Speaker, because we can.

But also, the longer answer is because we have so many examples of people like John Challis who, in fact, exemplify all that is good in America. All that gives us hope for the future, all that, in fact, allows us every day to know that through these troubled times, these economic problems, the recession that's before America today, that there are people who get up every morning, no matter how hard it is, and they do the best they can with the time that God gives them and with the power that they have.

John was, in every sense, a survivor, and he is survived by his parents and a younger sister who live on in his memory and who, in fact, will, for the time that this post office is in their town, realize that inspirations are important to America, particularly in difficult times.

So I join with the majority today asking that this unusual naming of a post office be passed because John's life was so special to America, and because, at a time like this, inspiration is important to all.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, before closing, I would like to mention that the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ALTMIRE) who is the chief sponsor, the lead sponsor of the bill under consideration, has informed me that he is en route. He has informed us that he regrets not being able to be here for this afternoon's discussion but has asked that his support for the bill and the Challis family be known.

In closing, I urge my colleagues to join myself, Representative ALTMIRE and the gentleman from California in supporting H.R. 987.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill to rename the Freedom Post Office honor of John Scott Challis, Jr.

John Challis inspired all of us with his determination to live every single day to the fullest. On June 23, 2006, John was diagnosed with liver cancer. He was only 16 and had just completed sophomore year at Freedom High School.

John and his family had a lot of questions after the cancer diagnosis: questions for the doctors about the disease, his treatment, and how it would impact his life. But, in these most difficult of circumstances, John found answers.

In a Pittsburgh Post-Gazette article from May 2008, John's father, Scott Challis, recalls this time: "He's always been one who had to try and find an answer for everything. He wants to figure things out." The article continues, "Through his own thoughts and through his deep Catholic beliefs, John believes he has 'figured it out.'" When asked where he gained his wisdom, he answered, "Through cancer."

Despite his illness, John made the most of every day he had. Although he was too ill to play sports, Freedom baseball coach Steve Wetzel invited John to join the team and became one of John's closest friends.

In battling cancer, John had come up with a message: "Courage Plus Believe Equals Life." It was a message that along with his name, he inscribed on the inside of his baseball cap. His teammates followed suit.

Then came the moment John had been waiting for, his opportunity to play. Coach Wetzel asked John to pinch-hit in a game against Aliquippa. John wasted no time. On the first pitch, John hit a single to right field that scored a run.

After the game, John's story and message garnered national attention. He was featured on ESPN, invited to speak at a Pirates game, and watched the Penguins in their Stanley Cup playoff run.

Unfortunately, John lost this battle to cancer on August 19, 2008. But he left us with an important legacy. In his last few months, John was quoted as saying, "Life ain't about how many breaths you take. It's what you do with those breaths."

John was an inspiration to me, to his local community, and to the lives he touched. He will always be remembered.

However, even after his death, his inspiration and work continue. Last summer, John helped to start a foundation, the Courage for Life Foundation, to help other student athletes with life-threatening illnesses be involved in sporting events.

I have a few articles about John's life and his impact on those he touched. I ask unanimous consent to enter them into the RECORD.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and Chairman TOWNS, for the opportunity to honor John Challis.

[From the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, May 4, 2008]

TEEN IS RUNNING OUT OF INNINGS, BUT THE GAME STILL ISN'T OVER

(By Mike White)

The 18-year-old kid dying of cancer gets his wish, a chance to swing a bat maybe one last time in a real baseball game.

He hasn't played in a few years, but he's called on to pinch-hit. His eyes light up at the first pitch and he puts all of his 5-foot-5, 93-pound frame into one mighty swing, making contact and sending a line drive into right field for a single—if he can reach first base. The cancer he's been battling for almost two years has spread to his pelvis, making running nearly impossible.

The kid worries about falling as he hustles down the first-base line. When he gets to the base, he lets out with a yell. "I did it! I did it!"

Safe at first with a hit and an RBI, the kid is hugged by a crying first-base coach. The opposing pitcher takes off his glove, starts applauding and his teammates follow suit. The kid's teammates run onto the field to celebrate.

It sounds like the climax to a heart-tugger movie. But there was no producer or film crew at the game between Freedom and Aliquippa high schools two weeks ago. The scene was as real as the tumors in John Challis' liver and lungs.

John is a kid with cancer, a senior at Freedom in Beaver County who was told a few weeks ago by doctors that cancer was winning and it was close to the end. The disease that started in his liver was now taking over his lungs.

"They said it could be only two months," he said, fighting back tears.

He paused before his seemingly never-ending optimism came through again.

"I told my mom I still think I can get two more years."

But his story isn't about dying. It's about inspiring.

His story, words, actions, beliefs and courage have become known around Freedom and surrounding areas in Beaver County, bringing people together from other communities and other schools.

Three weeks ago, Freedom baseball coach Steve Wetzel organized "Walk For A Champion" on Freedom High's school grounds. The purpose of the walk-a-thon was to raise money for one of John's wishes—a last vacation with his mom, dad and 14-year-old sister, Alexis.

More than 500 people took part, including baseball teams from eight Beaver County high schools and members of Center High School's football team. John also used to play football at Freedom.

Mr. Wetzel, who calls the teen his hero, hoped to raise \$6,000. That total was easily surpassed "and people are still calling with donations," he said.

The family has booked a cruise for June.

THE CHALLIS EFFECT

A Beaver County church had planned a fundraiser, but John and his family asked the church instead to conduct the event and give the money to a fifth-grade boy in Beaver County who has a brain tumor.

"His family can use it more than we can," John said. "That's just common sense. Someone does something good for you, then you help someone else."

Actions and statements like those are what has inspired so many others. All of Aliquippa's baseball players wear John's jersey number "11" on their hats. At the walk-

athon, Aliquippa star athlete Jonathan Baldwin, a Pitt football recruit, presented him with a ball signed by Pitt players.

After the walk, John addressed the crowd. "He spoke from his heart," Mr. Wetzel, the coach, said. "He said, 'I've got two options. I know I'm going to die, so I can either sit at home and feel sorry, or I could spread my message to everybody to live life to the fullest and help those in need.' After hearing that, I don't know if there were many people not crying."

Last Thursday, Beaver pitcher Manny Cutlip tossed a three-hitter against Freedom as John watched in street clothes. After the game, every Beaver player came up to him and shook his hand. Some hugged him and some said they were praying for him. Manny Cutlip asked Mr. Wetzel if he could go to lunch some time with John. It happened the next day.

"I don't know what to say. I just wanted to get to know him better and see if I could learn anything from him to help me in my life," said the young pitcher, an imposing 6-foot-3, 225-pound standout athlete who will play football at IUP.

At lunch, he gave John a new football with a handwritten personal message on it. Part of the message read, "You have touched my heart and I will always look up to you as my role model."

Talk to John and you'll laugh at his sense of humor when he says things such as, "You can't let girls know that you know how to text message because they won't leave you alone."

But listen to his mature views on life and his philosophies . . . and you might cry.

"I used to be afraid, but I'm not afraid of dying now, if that's what you want to know," he said. "Because life ain't about how many breaths you take. It's what you do with those breaths."

FIGURING IT OUT

It's been almost two years since John found out about his cancer. He knows the date like a birthday. June 23, 2006.

He discovered only recently that doctors didn't expect him to last through that first summer. "To me, that's already an accomplishment," he said.

In the first few months after the cancer discovery, John's father, Scott, would get up in the middle of the night, peek into his son's bedroom and see him wide awake, staring at the ceiling.

"He would just be thinking," the elder Challis said. "He's always been one who had to try and find an answer for everything. He wants to figure things out."

Through his own thoughts and through his deep Catholic beliefs, John believes he has "figured it out." He answers questions with maturity, courage and dignity, traits that have become his trademarks.

John requested that his mother, Regina, not be interviewed for this story because it will be too hard for her. He talks to his father about what to do after he dies.

"I sit up with him at night until 1 or 2 in the morning," Scott Challis said. "He'll tell me, 'Dad, when I'm gone, you have to do this or that. You have to watch your weight.' He's worried about my weight. He tells me I have to take care of mom."

"When the doctors told him a few weeks ago about how the cancer was winning, he had a lot of questions about what it was going to be like and about being comfortable. Later on, he broke down with me and you know what he did? He apologized. He was upset because he felt like he was letting everyone down who had been praying for him."

Scott Challis has found talking about his son makes the situation easier to deal with.

But many people like to talk about John. Shawn Lehoccky is a senior and one of Freedom's top athletes. For every football and baseball game, he wears a red wrist band with John's No. 11 on it.

"It seems like everyone in this community knows who he is now and he really has brought so many people together," Shawn said. "He's always on my mind. To see him and what he's going through, I don't know if I could act like that. He said some pretty strong words at that walk-a-thon that you don't hear 17- or 18-year-olds say every day."

John fought back tears a few times during last week's interview.

"Sometimes I cry, but people cry for all different kinds of reasons," he said. "Sometimes I just want to know why, but I think I figured that out. God wanted me to get sick because he knew I was strong enough to handle it. I'm spreading His word and my message. By doing that, I'm doing what God put me here to do."

"It took me about a half year to figure all that out. Now, when I'm able to truly believe it, it makes it easier on me. And when you know other people support what you're thinking, it makes it easier."

When asked where he gained his wisdom, he answered, "Through cancer."

"They say it takes a special person to realize this kind of stuff," he said. "I don't know if I'm special, but it wasn't hard for me. It's just my mind-set. A situation is what you make of it. Not what it makes of you."

He regularly wears his Freedom baseball hat. Under the bill of the cap is his name, plus this line: "COURAGE + BELIEVE = LIFE."

"I guess I can see why people see me as an inspiration," he said. "But why do people think it's so hard to see things the way I do? All I'm doing is making the best of a situation."

John then raises his voice.

"Why can't people just see the best in things? It gets you so much further in life. It's always negative this and negative that. That's all you see and hear."

John tries to keep complaining to a minimum, but he acknowledges his moments of crying.

"If I'm mad at anything in this, it's that I'm not going to be able to have a son, I'm not going to be able to get married and have my own house," he said, fighting back tears again. "Those are the things I'm mad about. But not dying."

THE ROLE OF SPORTS

John loves sports. He is an avid hunter—"got three buck and two doe in the last year," he said.

He played baseball through Pony League and always loved football, despite his small stature. As a sophomore, he started on Freedom's junior varsity team as a slotback and cornerback.

"I was 108 pounds. I had to be the smallest player in the WPIAL," he said with a laugh.

The cancer forced him to stop playing football as a junior.

"But I will never forget," his father said, "when he first got sick he told me, 'Dad, I have to dress for a football game one more time.'"

He got his wish in the final game of his senior season, against Hickory. Coaches let him kick off once. He was supposed to kick and immediately run off the field to avoid danger. Instead, he stayed on the field and got a little excited when the kick returner started heading his way before being tackled.

Later in the game, the coaches put him in for two plays at receiver. Mr. Wetzel and others who saw the game proudly tell how, on one play, John tried to block a defender, fell down, but got up and pushed another defender.

Mr. Wetzel said seeing John play in that last football game, doesn't compare to seeing his hit against Aliquippa in that April 14 baseball game. John vividly remembers the details leading up to the hit. When he walked into the batter's box, he saw Aliquippa's catcher wearing a protective mask with the initials "J.C." and the number "11."

"I just looked at him and said, 'Nice mask.'"

He then noticed an Aliquippa coach saying something to the pitcher.

"I'm thinking, 'If they're going to walk me or throw easy to me, I don't want it handed to me,'" he said. "But sure enough, he threw me a fastball. That's what made it so good. . . . There were only about 20 people there watching, but everyone was cheering."

Mr. Wetzel said: "We made it to the state [PIAA] playoffs two years ago and I thought that was the best feeling. I got to play in WPIAL championships at Blackhawk as a player. But that day, that hit, that moment . . . That was the best feeling I've ever had in sports."

Six days later, Freedom played a game at PNC Park. John attended the game, but had an IV line in his arm for a treatment he was getting. He took out the IV line and asked Mr. Wetzel if he could pinch-hit again.

"Unbelievable. He told me the doctor said he could take it out for up to seven hours," Mr. Wetzel said. "He told me he just wanted to be a normal kid one more time."

So Mr. Wetzel let him pinch-hit. This time he struck out.

They have a unique coach-player relationship. Mr. Wetzel invited John to be part of the team a year ago and John calls the coach one of his best friends. They talk every day, at least on a cell phone, and go to lunch together once a week.

"The kid has changed my life," Mr. Wetzel said. "I cry for him just about every day. I'm 32 and I'm getting married in September. You know what he told me the other day? He told me to save him a seat in the front row of the church, because even if he's not there, he'll be there in spirit."

"He just keeps doing things and saying things that are just unbelievable. I know our team will never forget this season because of Johnny."

The two want to start a foundation in John's name for young cancer patients.

"Even if [the foundation] is something that can help only one kid or one family, to see people in a different way like I have, it will be worth it," John said. "Maybe it will help younger people who haven't gotten to see the finer things in life that I got to see."

John plans to attend Freedom's prom May 9 and plans to graduate in June. As John ended this interview, he said he wondered how his story will come out in the newspaper.

"When you write this, don't overthink things," he said. "I've learned that. There are a lot of unanswered questions in this world and the reason they're unanswered is because if you think about them too much, you're always going to come up with different answers. So don't confuse yourself and think about this too much."

CHALLIS FOUNDATION AIMS TO HELP OTHER SICK KIDS

(By Elizabeth Merrill)

The idea came over lobster bites and potato soup. It was a good day for John Challis, because he cleaned his plate and didn't become violently ill. Challis has defied grim cancer prognoses for two years, because, he says, he has so much to look forward to.

"God still has a mission for John," says Steve Wetzel, his baseball coach at Freedom (Pa.) High School. "I truly believe that. John Challis isn't going anywhere. He still has work to do on earth."

Later this month, Challis and Wetzel will officially start the John Challis Courage for Life Foundation to assist seriously ill children. The foundation will arrange sports trips for sick children to meet their favorite athletes. Eventually, Challis wants to set up a message board for kids to converse with each other about treatments and their struggles with being sick.

Challis has hobnobbed with the A-list of professional sports lately, mingling with everyone from Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger to former Penguins hockey great Mario Lemieux to Cleveland Indians skipper Eric Wedge. They know about his inspirational story, and how he got his first varsity baseball hit in April despite being sapped by cancer treatments and weighing just 93 pounds.

Challis says life has been a mix of good and bad days, and he hit a very rough patch a few weeks ago. Wracked with pain from a radiation treatment, he developed severe swelling around his waist and legs. One night, he called Wetzel and said, "Coach, this has been the worst couple of days. I feel terrible. But I'm not going to stop fighting."

A week later, Challis graduated from high school. He hopes to go to college this fall, and is putting together a scrapbook of his summer with Wetzel. They drove to Cleveland for an Indians game recently, and Challis napped on the way home. Normally, Wetzel says,

Challis gets sick during a long, 13-hour day. But on this day, he stayed strong.

"Before the game, he said, 'It's amazing to see two teams I haven't seen before. That's going to be great, Coach. But the best thing is that it's just going to be me and you.'"

"We saved our ticket stubs," Wetzel says. "That meant the world to me. That makes my life all worthwhile."

[From the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, June 26, 2008]

AILING FREEDOM YOUNGSTER URGES PIRATES: 'HAVE FUN'

(By Dejan Kovacevic)

John Challis shakes hands last night with one of his baseball heroes, Yankees shortstop Derek Jeter.

John Challis, the Freedom youngster who has gained national attention for his battle with cancer, wrote a message on the eraser board of the Pirates' clubhouse yesterday afternoon.

"Have fun," it said. "The reason why we play ball is fun."

He signed his name underneath.

Challis, 18, also delivered a brief speech in the closed clubhouse to all players and staff, after which everyone in the room stood and applauded. From there, he spent extra time with first baseman Adam LaRoche to "talk about hunting and stuff," then sat in manager John Russell's office—his chair, actually—during Russell's afternoon news conference.

Asked to compare his battle to those faced daily by Major League Baseball players, Challis laughed and replied: "Baseball's not that complicated. You swing the bat, and you hit the ball. You don't worry about your stats. You just play the game."

Of his fate, he said: "God thinks I'm strong enough to handle it. He's just using me to spread His message."

Before Challis took his seats for the game, he also met with "the player I really want to meet" when he spoke with New York Yankees shortstop Derek Jeter during batting practice.

"If we can all show the courage and faith that John has, or even half of it, we'd all be better off," Russell said. "The unselfishness that's a part of his life should be a lesson to all of us."

Challis announced the creation of his Courage For Life Foundation to benefit high

school students with terminal illnesses. The Web site is www.courageforlifefoundation.com.

[From the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Aug. 20, 2008]

OBITUARY: JOHN SCOTT CHALLIS: TEEN DELIVERED MESSAGE OF HOPE WITH CANCER FIGHT (By Mike White)

Over the past few months, John Challis watched a Penguins playoff game with Mario Lemieux, was featured on ESPN television, addressed the Pirates before a game and spent an afternoon with Alex Rodriguez at the New York Yankee's penthouse in Manhattan.

Although he rubbed elbows with the rich and famous, John likely will be remembered for the many people he touched—and for his inspiring actions and words.

John's two-year battle with liver and lung cancer ended yesterday afternoon, when he died at his home in Freedom, Beaver County. He was 18.

On a warm June afternoon, John did one of his final interviews. Lying on a couch in his living room, he spoke about his young life. He struggled to keep his eyes open, but talked about how, all of a sudden in the past few months, he had become something of a national celebrity.

Not long ago, John was simply a teenager battling a terminal illness. Then a base hit in a Freedom High School baseball game led to a May story in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, which led to national attention, on television and radio and in other newspapers.

The attention is what John wanted. He had decided that through his fight with cancer, he could spread a message and help others.

"Everybody is scared. It's not normal to not be scared," John said of his plight. "But I'm not scared as much now. I have letters and other things from people, telling me how I've helped so many people in numerous ways. That makes me feel good."

In the corner of the family living room were two boxes of letters and cards from well-wishers and people who wrote to let him know they were inspired by his story. His family also has two binders filled with hundreds of e-mails from people who said John had impacted their lives.

Near the couch in the Challis home, a folded American flag sat on a chair. A Navy pilot flew the flag over Iraq with John's name on it and sent it to the family.

"I just want to say thanks to the people for keeping me going," John said. "All them little cards and stuff I got, keeps me going day by day. To know I'm going downhill a little bit, it doesn't bother me because I've helped so many people. Since I've helped so many people, this is easier to handle."

Courage + believe = life.

Life ain't about how many breaths you take. It's what you do with those breaths.

What teenager comes up with such sayings? John Challis did, and they became his personal trademarks. A baseball glove company sent John a black glove with "Courage + believe = life" embossed in the leather along with John's name.

"We would get things almost every day from people all over the country," said Scott Challis, John's father.

When John attended a Yankees game in late June, he had a news conference, surrounded by more than 20 reporters and photographers.

"People would sometimes call, too, just wanting to talk to him," his father said. "Some wanted to come meet him. It was amazing. I guess he touched so many people."

John was never more than an average athlete, at best. Because of the cancer, he couldn't play sports as a junior or senior at Freedom, except for a few plays in the final

football game of Freedom's 2007 season. Then in April came "the hit." John hadn't played baseball in a few years but he wanted to be on Freedom's team. He wanted a chance to hit one time, and Freedom coach Steve Wetzel granted the wish, pinch-hitting John in a game against Aliquippa.

In a storybook moment, John lined a run-scoring single to right field on the first pitch. Although he had trouble running, John made it to first base, yelling "I did it. I did it."

In May, John and Mr. Wetzel were guests on Dan Patrick's national radio show. ESPN sportscaster Scott Van Pelt devoted a segment of his national radio show to John's story.

How did a teenager with a heavy Pittsburgh accent from a small Western Pennsylvania town become a national story? How did he tug at so many people's emotions from so far away?

"There is just so much these days with the Internet, and Web sites, and blogs, but this was a story about a kid who was just so real that it grabs you," Mr. Van Pelt said. "Then, you had sports involved in it."

"I know Pittsburgh is probably all concerned about what the Steelers are going to be like this fall and how maybe the Penguins could've done things differently in the Stanley Cup, but this kid's story was just so different. It's a tremendous story. Actually, it's a bad story because it has a horrible ending."

"The story that [the Post-Gazette] did started the fire for this kid. If maybe I threw another log on to help get it going more, then great, because it deserved to be a bonfire."

John lived long enough to reach some personal goals. He graduated with his senior class. One of his last requests was to take a cruise with his father, his mother, Gina, and sister, Lexie, and they did that in June.

The Pirates brought him to a game later in June, gave him a uniform and let him address the team in the clubhouse. He told the players not to worry so much about their statistics and have fun. John told the Pirates to cherish the game—and life.

Mr. Wetzel recalled John's words: "You never know what life might bring you. You might have a few sniffles and think it's not a big thing. Then you go to the doctor the next day and they tell you that you have a 10-pound tumor in your stomach."

"Some of the Pirates got emotional," Mr. Wetzel said.

First baseman Adam LaRoche stayed in touch with John after his visit.

"It makes you realize how short life is and how unfair it can be," Mr. LaRoche said yesterday from the clubhouse in St. Louis, before the Pirates played the Cardinals. "I think what's cool is that, even with what he had, he chose to make the best of it and touch a lot of lives that he wouldn't have if this hadn't happened to him. He got the bad end of the deal, but he touched a lot of people. For sure, he touched the 25 people in here."

John also spent some time with the Tampa Bay Rays when the team was in town to play the Pirates.

"Their manager, Joe Maddon, called and said he saw the story on John on ESPN and he was just in his hotel room in tears," Mr. Wetzel said. "He said he just wanted to meet John. Coach Maddon has really become touched by John and his message."

Mr. Wetzel and Mr. Maddon now talk a few times a week. Mr. Wetzel said Mr. Maddon now puts "C + B = L" on every lineup card that he hands to umpires before games.

John's favorite moment in the past few months was the trip to New York for a Yankees game.

"Just because it was with my dad," John said. "It was a good time because we both got to experience it, and it felt like something not just for me, but something he enjoyed as well."

The afternoon at Mr. Rodriguez's penthouse was memorable.

"No Madonna," John said with a laugh.

John was never shy about expressing his feelings on a subject and was always known to ask questions. His father laughs at a couple questions John asked as Mr. Rodriguez was showing them around his home.

"Now John had no idea about these Madonna and A-Rod rumors [about an affair], and John goes, 'So, where's your wife?' I couldn't believe it. But A-Rod just said she was in Florida at their other home with their kids.

"Then John asked him if his wife worked. John wasn't trying to be smart. He was just curious. He told John that she didn't work, but that she had a psychology degree."

John faced his death with courage, dignity, a never-quit attitude and an awareness that was hard to fathom.

John's mother told of a nurse who started coming to the family home in June. "The first time she was here, John said, 'I know why you're here. You're here to make me comfortable in my last weeks. But it could be more than a few weeks, right?'"

"The kid was just unbelievable," Mr. Wetzel said. "His attitude and messages I think changed how some people looked at their lives. He changed how I went about life.

"I feel like a piece of my heart is gone now. The thing I'll miss most is his smile. He had a smile that could light up a room."

John said his Catholic faith and belief in God got stronger through his illness.

One of the things that made John happy in recent months was the start of a foundation that will raise money to help other sick teenagers enjoy a sports experience. The foundation was the idea of John and Mr. Wetzel.

"If I can help someone else going through this, then that would make me feel good," John said.

The foundation has a Web site—www.courageforlifefoundation.org—where donations can be made.

When asked a few weeks ago how he would like to be remembered, John said, "I could see people having some beers and hopefully remembering how I always tried my best, no matter what I was doing. That's my message—just for people to always do their best, no matter what they're doing or how stupid it might seem. And no matter what, there will always be a reward, no matter how small it is."

In addition to his parents, John is survived by his younger sister, Lexie.

Visitation will be tomorrow and Friday from 2 to 4 and 6 to 8 p.m. at Noll Funeral Home, 333 Third St., Beaver. A Mass will be celebrated at 11 a.m. Saturday in SS. Peter & Paul Church, Beaver. Burial will follow at Beaver Cemetery.

The family asks memorial contributions be made to John Challis Courage For Life Foundation, P.O. Box 123, Monaca, PA 15061.

Also, there will be a golf outing to benefit John's foundation Monday at Chartiers Country Club. For more information, go to www.courageforlifefoundation.org.

Mr. LYNCH. I yield back the balance of our time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 987.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

SPECIALIST PETER J. NAVARRO POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1217) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 15455 Manchester Road in Ballwin, Missouri, as the "Specialist Peter J. Navarro Post Office Building".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1217

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SPECIALIST PETER J. NAVARRO POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 15455 Manchester Road in Ballwin, Missouri, shall be known and designated as the "Specialist Peter J. Navarro Post Office Building".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Specialist Peter J. Navarro Post Office Building".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I now yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to present for consideration H.R. 1217, which designates the United States postal facility located at 15455 Manchester Road in Ballwin, Missouri, as the Specialist Peter J. Navarro Post Office Building.

Introduced by Representative W. TODD AKIN on February 26, 2009, and reported out of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee on March 10, 2009, by a voice vote, H.R. 1217 enjoys the support, the unanimous support of the entire Missouri House delegation.

A resident of Wildwood, Missouri, Specialist Peter Joseph Navarro bravely served with the United States Army's 2nd Battalion, 70th Armor, 3rd Brigade Combat Team out of Fort Riley, Kansas.

On December 13, 2005, Specialist Navarro and three fellow members of his unit were killed in Taji, Iraq, when an improvised explosive device detonated near their Humvee while the soldiers were conducting combat operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Specialist Navarro, a member of the United States Air Force Junior ROTC Program, graduated from Lafayette High School in 2003. He subsequently decided to forego his acceptance at Truman State University in order to join the United States Army.

As noted by his father, Jose, a retired chief petty officer for the United States Navy, Specialist Navarro was a strong-willed young man and a dedicated soldier who cared for the soldiers that he worked with and would do anything for his friends. Mr. Navarro also recounts that his son wanted to try and make a difference, and that being a soldier was what making a difference is in this time of our lives.

Specialist Navarro's dedication to his unit and his country was evidenced in July of 2005 when he returned home to Wildwood to attend the funeral of his younger brother, Daniel, who had been killed in a car accident. Specialist Navarro's mother, Rowena, begged her son not to return to Iraq in the summer. As Mrs. Navarro recalls her son telling her, "Mom, they would be a man short. Somebody's taking my place, and that's not fair. They'd do the same thing for me."

Mr. Speaker, Specialist Peter J. Navarro's life stands as a testament to the bravery and dedication of the heroic men and women who have served and continue to serve our Nation at home and abroad. It is my hope that we can further honor his service through the passage of this legislation.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 1217 and dedicate the Manchester Road Post Office in Ballwin, Missouri, after this outstanding American soldier.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of designating the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 15455 Manchester Road in Ballwin, Missouri, as the Specialist Peter J. Navarro Post Office Building. As you may know, in the previous Congress, we had voted to name this post office and, unfortunately, the term ended before we were able to pass this.

But the failure of the Senate to act should not diminish what happened in the summer of 2005 when Specialist Peter J. Navarro returned home from duty in Iraq to join his family at their home in Wildwood, Missouri, not for a joyful reunion, but to bury his younger brother, who had died in a car accident.

After Daniel's funeral, Peter's mother, distraught over the loss of her middle son, begged him not to return to Iraq. This young man's response to his grieving mother is nothing short of heroic. He had to go back. He said,