

Twas the Night before Closing (an Era)
By Jim Frank

Twas the night before closing in an office of The House,
No equipment remained. Not even a computer mouse;
A congressional snapshot that once hung on the wall,
Joined dozens of other pictures in boxes in the hall.

The staff was finishing its work for the feds,
As visions of new jobs danced in their heads;
For we in the district, and the crew in D.C.,
Were witnesses to an era that was ending...sadly.

It began in the 70's, and caused such a clatter,
"A newcomer as Congressman?" ...No small matter;
But away to Washington he flew like a flash,
This farmer from Everett, he'd make a big splash.

He knew where to focus...specifically, roads,
But soon was an expert in Transportation – all modes;
And rose to be Chairman, in the 90's he'd shine,
Getting funding for projects like I-99.

But this now aging member would retire in '01,
Who knew his successor would be his own son?;
He hit the road running with big shoes to fill.
The 9th District transition...from a "Bud" to a "Bill"

His style was different from his quieter Dad,
For there was no mistaking when this guy was mad;
More rapid than eagles his staff members came,
And he often would shout and call them by name.

"Now Jeff, Now Steve...Now Jim, Brent & Jenny!
On Eric, On Jamie...Kelley, Casey and Denny!
To Nancy in the East...and Bekah out West!
C'mon Ron, your desk is kind of a mess!"

He dressed like his father, from his head to his toes,
Blue suit and red tie, the typical clothes;
And he had no earmarks like his father to give,
As Congress leaked powers to the President, like a sieve.

But this young Bill got it. Congress wasn't the same,
The hammer now useless, it became a finesse game;
And before five terms in the House were through,
The son – like his father – had become Chairman too.

He was chummy, yet tough. A bi-partisan "R",
Who built his consensus like selling a car;
He was friendly, and his skills were uncanny & keen,
As he passed legislation for Route 219.

He passed bill after bill...for land, sea & air.
And cemented the legacy the Shusters now share;
Like his father he had an incredible run,
And as his Chairmanship ended, he also was done.

They leave their district with a solid foundation,
Their service was noble to a grateful nation;
And you'll hear them exclaim: "What an honor it's been.
But 46 years is enough...the Doctor's now in."

Jim Frank has served as the District Director for retiring Congressman Bill Shuster (PA-09) since 2004. He's also a former News Director at WTAJ-TV in Altoona, PA. As a result of redistricting in Pennsylvania, much of Shuster's current district is now included as part of the new PA-13 district, which will be represented in the 116th Congress by Representative-elect Dr. John Joyce.