

until the building of the present school in 1969. Due to increased enrollment, a second floor addition was built in 1988. St. John the Evangelist has a current enrollment of 351 students.

The Saint John community began commemorating the 150th anniversary of St. John the Evangelist School on Friday, April 18, 1997, with an all-day celebration, entitled "150 Years of Quality Catholic Education." The day's events, which took place in the school gymnasium, included a prayer service, a giant birthday cake, and a program put together by the St. John the Evangelist students. The student program depicted the theme "Eras of Education" with costumed, musical presentations of past decades. Eighth-graders in turn-of-the century garb portrayed the construction of the Panama Canal, a malaria outbreak, and such inventions as the airplane, toaster, and Model T. Ford. Each class within the school researched an assigned era and similarly presented their interpretations. School Principal, Sister Angela Mellady, commented that the students learned a great deal about American history, as well as the heritage of their school, while planning the event.

Some celebration activities which will take place throughout the year, include the wearing of St. John the Evangelist birthday celebration shirts each Friday in place of the student uniform, and an appreciation luncheon for local businessmen who have supported the school throughout the years. The anniversary celebration will close with a 150th birthday reunion this coming Saturday, July 12, 1997. Approximately 1,000 St. John the Evangelist alumni have been invited to the reunion, where past experiences and memories will be shared.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to once again extend my most heartfelt congratulations to St. John the Evangelist School on achieving its sesquicentennial anniversary. Everyone involved in the school's growth and success over the years should be commended, as the values and quality instruction provided to students have undoubtedly served as a cornerstone of education in the Saint John, IN community.

TRIBUTE TO MR. VIRGIL KOECHNER

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 1997

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to a distinguished gentleman from the Fourth Congressional District of Missouri, Virgil Koechner. He recently retired after more than 44 years of dedicated service for the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company.

Mr. Koechner, from California, MO, served for 5 years in the United States Navy before beginning work for Southwestern Bell in 1952. He was not only an employee of Southwestern Bell, but was also elected local president of the Communications Workers of America for 32 consecutive years. In retirement, Mr. Koechner plans to stay active in the labor movement.

Mr. Koechner and his wife Mary Jane have been long time friends of mine. It is dedicated people like Virgil Koechner who are the heart and soul of what makes this country great. I

know that other Members of this body join me in congratulating Virgil Koechner on his retirement and wish him the very best in the days ahead.

FARMERS CELEBRATE NEW FREEDOM

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 1997

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, last year Congress passed a farm bill which provided farmers with the freedom they need to respond to market forces and more effectively compete in the global marketplace. This legislation represents a very fundamental departure from previous farm policy and allows much greater flexibility in planting decisions. Farmers have responded favorably to this new independence which places the decisions where they belong—with the farmers, not the Federal Government. This Member would like to commend to his colleagues the following editorial from the July 4, 1997, edition of the Lincoln Journal-Star, which highlights the positive changes brought about by the 1996 farm bill.

By the way, this editorial viewpoint represents a turnaround in views by this Lincoln newspaper—apparently based upon the results obtained.

[From the Lincoln Journal Star, July 4, 1997]

FARMERS GET MORE FREEDOM, WHICH WILL BENEFIT EVERYONE

This Fourth of July, many farmers are celebrating their newfound independence.

In a front-page story in the Journal Star this week, Associated Press writer Robyn Tysver drew this telling image:

"Free at last. Free at last," Minden farmer LaMoine Smith warbled one morning from the field on his cellular phone."

The celebration is because this year, for the first time in decades, farmers are free to plant what they want, thanks to the Freedom to Farm Act. No more government restrictions. No more trips to the Farm Service Agency in town to submit a farm plan. No more certification of acres.

The Journal Star joins in the celebration. Putting decision-making in the hands of the farmers will, in the long run, benefit them and the taxpayers who have been subsidizing them. The change puts incentives before farmers to become better business managers. There are rewards to stay on the cutting edge.

The picture of farmer Smith in the field cheering on his cellular phone is an accurate one, for city folk who have lost contact with agriculture. Farming ain't like the reruns of "Green Acres." Farming today is cellular phones, commodity prices by computer modem, fertilization by Global Position System and more.

The farmers who learn to use those hi-tech tools most efficiently will be the ones reaping the greatest rewards under the new system. Under the new system, there are real decisions to be made. The best decision-makers are the ones who will prosper.

In the initial year of the Freedom to Farm Act, there have been some changes in planting patterns, but farmers generally were cautious.

Because land no longer must remain idle under government regulation, farmers put more into production. For example, the num-

ber of acres planted in corn went up by 600,000 in comparison with last year.

Other responses were more directly market-driven. This spring, soybeans were at \$8.50 a bushel, prompting Nebraska farmers to plant 650,000 acres more than last year.

There was also a little experimentation. Farmers in Kansas planted 12,000 acres of cotton. Farmers in Mississippi planted 550,000 acres of corn.

It's easy to celebrate this year, we acknowledge, because for now farmers have the best of both worlds. They have both freedom and a safety net, because the farm payments still exist. The payments will be reduced gradually over a seven-year period. This year, farmers still have a fallback if they made the wrong decisions last spring.

By 2002, when price-support guarantees are scheduled to end, there will no longer be a safety net. Freedom has its price.

Even now, support for the Freedom to Farm Act is far from universal. A majority of farmers favor it, but there is a minority who were happy with old regulations and the comfort they brought.

Their ranks could grow if the weather puts bumper crops of soybeans and corn on the markets this fall, which would depress prices.

Farmers might have more freedom this Fourth of July, but not from worrying about the weather. Some things never change.

PETER M. WEBER—A DISTINGUISHED RECORD OF SERVICE TO THE CITY AND PEOPLE OF ROLLING HILLS ESTATES

HON. JANE HARMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 1997

Ms. HARMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Councilman Peter M. Weber for 23 distinguished years of service to the city of Rolling Hills Estates and to the citizens of the 36th Congressional District.

No Councilmember in the history of Rolling Hills Estates has served the City Council for more years than Peter Weber. He has served six 4-year terms as councilman, including 5 1-year terms as mayor. Marked by his affection for and dedication to preserving the city's unique character, he stood behind the critical decisions that have preserved its rural atmosphere and fostered its financial strength. To provide for the city quality recreation, Councilman Weber lobbied in favor of bringing the city stables under Rolling Hills Estates management. Also during his tenure, the annual Tracy Austin Tournament was brought under the auspices of the city's Park and Recreation Commission. Further improving the scenic qualities of the city, both Ernie Howlett and Highridge Parks were developed. In addition to parks, Peter Weber successfully prioritized the establishment of nature preserves. During his tenure, George F. Canyon and the Chandler Preserve were acquired and dedicated as open space in perpetuity, and the George F. Canyon Nature Center was conceptualized and subsequently opened to the public. These assets of Rolling Hills Estates remind us of the dedication and vision Councilman Weber had for the community, and they should be sources of great pride for Peter Weber.

Councilman Weber was instrumental in the creation of the Peninsula Emergency Response Team [PERT], an information-gather-

ing network to assist the Sheriff's department in times of civil unrest or natural disaster. As mayor, Peter Weber helped to establish the city's Economic Development Commission to enhance the city's commercial area. These agencies will help to ensure the future safety, success, and stability of Rolling Hills Estates.

Peter Weber will always hold a place in the hearts of the citizens of Rolling Hills Estates. I am proud to join them in extending sincere admiration and appreciation to Peter and his family.

"INVENTORS OF THE YEAR"

HON. JOHN EDWARD PORTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 1997

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, our Nation's efforts against AIDS have taken a major step forward with the development of a new class of antiretroviral drugs known as protease inhibitors. One of the corporate leaders in this field is Abbott Laboratories, which is headquartered in my district.

Recently, some of the scientists at Abbott responsible for this pharmacological breakthrough were named "Inventors of the Year" by the Intellectual Property Law Association, and the National Intellectual Property Owners Association. They are Dale J. Kempf, Ph.D., Daniel W. Norbeck, Ph.D., Hing L. Sham, Ph.D., and Chen Zhao, Ph.D. I join with these organizations in strongly commending their efforts.

The Abbott protease inhibitor, NORVIR, was approved by the Food and Drug Administration in March 1996 in one of the fastest pharmaceutical approvals ever issued by that agency. This drug, like other protease inhibitors, prevents the human immunodeficiency virus [HIV] protease enzyme from carrying out its essential tasks during viral maturation and reproduction. For this reason, protease inhibitors have been found to provide significant anti-viral activity when used with other anti-HIV drugs in combinations known as cocktails.

Since their introduction, numerous studies have demonstrated that protease inhibitors, in combination with other drugs, were able to reduce the level of circulating HIV to less than currently detectable concentrations in some patients. There is also hope that the emergence of drug resistant HIV strains will be more hindered with protease inhibitor treatment as compared to the level of inhibition known to occur with older drugs. Both the scientific and popular press have hailed the development of protease inhibitors as one of the most important scientific breakthroughs of the decade.

Mr. Speaker, it is in this context that I rise to recognize these national heroes for their very significant contributions to our Nation's war against the disease known as AIDS.

PATHFINDER

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 1997

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member highly commends to his colleagues the following editorial supporting the Pathfinder mission which appeared in the Lincoln Journal Star on July 7, 1997.

[From the Lincoln Journal Star, July 7, 1997]

PATHFINDER MISSION EXAMPLE OF FEDERAL FUNDS WELL SPENT

The Web site operated by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration is logging as many as 40 million hits a day as the six-wheeled Sojourner rover explores the surface of Mars.

There's a bit of irony in the statistic.

Many of the cybersurfers hitting the site are using computers with more brains than the rover itself. Sojourner has a mere 8,500 transistors in its brain, compared with millions in the Pentium models. The vehicle's designers were on a tight budget.

Spending for the U.S. interplanetary space program in the 1990s contrasts sharply with the Viking missions of the 1970s. Those missions cost \$3 billion in today's dollars. The Mars Pathfinder mission's cost is pegged at \$266 million.

It's money well spent.

Humanity has an inherent need to push into the unknown. It's biologically wired into our makeup. Evidence abounds, from the migration of humans across the Bering land bridge into North America to the curiosity of children exploring a new campground.

Humans have been fascinated with Mars since Cro-Magnon tribes watched the movement of the night sky's only red object. When the medieval invention of telescopes revealed lines on the planet's surface, theories sprang that they were a system of canals.

Today, the fascination with extraterrestrial matters borders on the obsessive. The popular television show "File" is based on a premise that aliens are among us; last summer's megahit movie "Independence Day" was about an alien invasion. Roswell, N.M., has turned into a tourist destination because of rumors that aliens landed there 50 years ago.

The question is not whether humans will spend money because of their fascination with space. They already are plunking down dollars for books, movies and travel about the subject.

Spending tax dollars in pursuit of facts on the subject is a far better use of society's resources. The imagination of authors and filmmakers are diverting entertainment. At a deeper level, however, people want scientific fact, not unsubstantiated storytelling.

When man landed on the moon in 1969, the popularity of the space program and NASA was at an all-time high. From that high point, public support declined. NASA's rep-

utation plummeted because of the Challenger explosion. Pressure built to reduce the program's bloated expenses.

The low-budget, unpiloted Pathfinder mission is the result. When Daniel S. Goldstein was appointed NASA director in 1992, he approved a low-cost plan developed by Donna L. Shirley, who now heads the Mars exploration program at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif.

Shirley has been a proponent of finding low-cost ways to explore Mars since the 1980s, when she headed a panel that said if the dream of exploration were to become a reality, ways had to be found to do it on the cheap.

Now her dreams are being realized. They are dreams shared universally by people across the globe. Finally, there may be answers to questions that have existed since prehistoric humans watched the red planet dance across the night sky.

Funding the Pathfinder mission to Mars is a worthwhile use of tax dollars.

TRIBUTE TO HEADQUARTERS AND HEADQUARTERS COMPANY, 926TH ENGINEER GROUP, USAR

HON. TERRY EVERETT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 1997

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to bring to the attention of the House, the accomplishments of a fine group of dedicated citizens that serve in both a military and civilian capacity in this great Nation. I am pleased to inform you that the Headquarters and Headquarters Company 926th Engineer Group, U.S. Army Reserve [USAR], Montgomery, AL, received the company size unit award for the training year, 1996. The group was presented the award at the ROA National Convention in Kansas City on June 21, 1997.

The Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 926th Engineer Group was selected from hundreds of Army Reserve companies across America, based on stringent criteria of readiness, training, drill attendance, and personnel strength. The 926th Engineer Group has conducted, in a superior manner, a meaningful and effective training program throughout the training year. They have demonstrated to the highest degree, the ability to accomplish their wartime mission.

As a member of the Committee on National Security, promoting strong national defense, I wish to congratulate Cap. Joseph K. Roberts, company commander, and all the members of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 926th Engineer Group from my congressional district for their achievements and adherence to the highest standards.