

HONORING THE SELECTION OF A.J. BENSEN FOR THE JUNIOR OLYMPIC ARCHERY TEAM

HON. JOHN E. SWEENEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2000

Mr. SWEENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend a young man on an exemplary achievement. Allastair John Bensen, known to his friends and family as A.J., was selected as a member of the 2000 Junior Olympic Team for Archery. This honor comes after many years of practice and dedication.

A.J. began shooting for fun with his father, John, when he was five years old. As his skills improved, they began competing in the Capital Land Bowhunters 3-D Shoots as well as other archery competitions throughout the Capital Region, the Hudson Valley, the Adirondacks and the Catskills. Over the years, A.J. has won a number of trophies, medals and several plaques, including more than fifteen first place finishes. In 1999, A.J. and his father placed second in the father-son category of the DARE shoot, held in Middleburgh, NY. This spring A.J. participated in the Triple Crown, an event where participants compete in three separate shoots. Overall, A.J. placed higher than any other competitor and secured the Triple Crown Trophy. For A.J., placing first at the regions paramount archery event transformed a weekend hobby into an opportunity to compete on the national level.

A.J. was selected to compete in the United States Junior Olympics and National Association of Police Athletic League Youth Festival held in Detroit, Michigan from July 18-24, 2000. The regional team of archers is sponsored by the Albany Police Departments Police Athletic League program. Under the coaching and direction of Officer Jim Teller, the team has prepared rigorously for this nationally acclaimed event. These young people should be commended for their dedication and achievement.

A.J. and his parents, John and Jeanne Bensen, reside in Greenville, New York, within the 22nd Congressional District. In addition to his archery accomplishment, A.J. is a first class Boy Scout, a Black Belt in Budokai (traditional Japanese) Karate and an honor student at Greenville Central Middle School. A.J. is twelve years old and is an energetic and motivated young man whose efforts deserve recognition.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I congratulate A.J. Bensen on his selection to the Junior Olympic Archery Team. I hope my colleagues will join me as I commend this achievement and wish A.J. the very best of luck in all his future endeavors.

LOW-INCOME FAMILIES HURT BY U.S.-CANADA SOFTWOOD LUMBER AGREEMENT

HON. JIM KOLBE

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2000

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Speaker, on February 16, 2000, I introduced, along with my colleague Representative STENY HOYER, H. Con. Res.

252, calling for an end to the U.S./Canada Softwood Lumber Agreement when it expires in 2001. The resolution was introduced with 30 bipartisan original cosponsors. There are now 115 cosponsors from all regions of the country and the number is growing every day. The purpose of the resolution is to: (1) Ensure a competitive North American market for softwood lumber; (2) ensure free trade regarding softwood lumber between the U.S. and Canada; (3) ensure all stakeholders are included in discussions regarding trade of softwood lumber; and, (4) ensure that the Softwood Lumber Agreement is allowed to terminate when it expires in 2001. By taking these steps, the negative impact on U.S. consumers and housing affordability can be eliminated.

The Softwood Lumber Agreement imposes quotas on lumber shipped from Canada to the United States. These quotas have a dramatic impact on the price and volatility of lumber, which jeopardizes affordable housing in America and hurts American consumers. A recent study by Brink Lindsay and Mark Groombridge of the Cato Institute entitled "Nailing the Homeowner: the Economic Impact of Trade Protection of the Softwood Lumber Industry," confirms the detrimental impact this agreement has on the American consumer. The authors calculated that trade restrictions imposed upon the American consumer by the Softwood Lumber Agreement added an estimated \$50 to \$80 per thousand board feet to the price of lumber. The result is an addition of \$800 to \$1,300 to the cost of new home prices, thereby driving some 300,000 American families out of the housing market. Unfortunately, the bulk of these consumers are lower-income families.

The Softwood Lumber Agreement is the worst form of government market intervention, driving up consumer costs and distorting the free market. Fortunately, the agreement is set to expire on April 1, 2001. I hope that the Administration will seriously consider the impact of the Softwood Lumber Agreement on consumers within the United States and allow the agreement to expire with no extension or further quota agreement. If the administration wants to discuss softwood lumber and forestry matters with Canada, the President should include consumers in any discussion. I hope the Administration will notify interested members of the U.S. House of Representatives if such discussions are underway.

GEMS AND AFRICAN NATIONS

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2000

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, today I pass along information about how the diamonds at the heart of several African wars could be transformed from a curse into a blessing for its people.

Representative TONY HALL of Ohio has worked for months on the problems of conflict diamonds, in large part because of what he saw in Sierra Leone last December. Hundreds of thousands of people have been driven from their homes by fighting, tens of thousands have died, and countless numbers have watched as rebels hacked off their loved ones' arms, legs, ears, or noses.

Mr. HALL of Ohio has spoken many times about this, and I urge our colleagues to look at the diamonds that are symbols of love and commitment to Americans a little differently—and look into the role they play in the war machines in several African countries. Not all diamonds are bloody, but the industry collects 30 percent of its profits from the ones that are.

Today, there is reason to hope that the legitimate diamond industry is going to help choke off this terrible trade. I hope they will do more and endorse the proposals Congressman HALL made this week. Those suggestions are described in a thoughtful and interesting article from the Dayton Daily News. Its author, Kay Semion, points out ways that "gems could transform African lives." I urge our colleagues to take a moment to read it and I am submitting it for the RECORD.

[Dayton Daily News, July 19, 2000]

GEMS COULD TRANSFORM AFRICAN LIVES

(By Kay Semion)

Diamonds are not always a girl's best friend, U.S. Rep. Tony Hall says—not when they finance warlords who terrorize the people of Sierra Leone, Angola and other diamond-producing nations. The Dayton Democrat returned Monday to Washington from Antwerp, Belgium, where he had pleaded with the leaders of the World Diamond Congress to cut off these warlords and to help the countries they are devastating.

On one plan, he will likely be successful. The diamond industry is responding to pressures from him and others to trace diamonds so profits do not go into the bloody hands of rebel hoodlums. These outlaws are so greedy that they drug children and train them to be brutal warriors, who can cut off arms and legs without a moment of rue.

On another plea, however, diamond executives were silent. Hall urged them to help repair those nations that diamond warlords have torn apart.

He gave them two options: Contribute 1 percent of their profits to nation-building programs such as UNICEF or Doctors Without Borders. And begin a foundation—The Sparkle Fund—to support a micro-enterprise system for certain African nations.

"You could have heard a pin drop," Hall said of the reaction to his quests for investing in Africa. "There were 500 to 600 in the hall, and it was real quiet."

No wonder. It's easier to say you're sorry and won't do it again than it is to help those who have been harmed—even inadvertently.

But Hall is right. And his proposed Sparkle Fund is most promising, based on the successful micro-enterprise system developed by Muhammad Yunus.

Yunus is a Bangladeshi economist who was educated in the United States and returned to his country to teach about 25 years ago. In walks he took during leisure hours, he noticed that the women in villages were in a poverty cycle—making products but not profits because they were always in debt to the village loan sharks.

His efforts to get banks or governments to help failed, so in 1976 he set up a system that became known as the Grameen Bank. The "bank" began with small loans from his pocket—\$20 or \$30—so the women could buy supplies for making chairs or pottery. Borrowers became bank officers who then approved other loans. The process not only ensured that loans would be repaid but also provided help for those starting small enterprise businesses. Today that bank has 35,000 branches, hundreds of millions in loans and a 96 percent repayment rate.

Hall is asking the World Diamond Congress to borrow this successful economic model.

This "is not a contribution to corrupt officials' pockets," Hall told the diamond executives. "It is an investment directly in the poor who make up the overwhelming number of these countries' citizens."

An investment in the micro-enterprise system, he continued, would demonstrate "the stake you have in peace in Africa."

Here's Hall's idea: Market something like a "Hope" diamond—one of the gems that could easily have come from a diamond-rich country such as Sierra Leone. Use the profits from that sale to start the fund, then contribute, say, \$50 million a year to that seed money for a decade.

Use the marketing skills gained in selling women on "eternity rings," Hall suggested.

Consider what has happened with the Grameen Bank and other micro-enterprise systems. The person who borrows money (usually a woman) not only gets the loan, but she gets supporting partners from the bank's committee. They teach her business rules she may have no other way of learning, and they offer technical assistance. In Bangladesh, the bank even has officers who wander about the country using cell phones to provide help.

Almost always, these systems build up a network of devoted people—the very ones who are approached and supportive when relief agencies seek help to stop the spread of diseases such as AIDS.

Hall simply wants the diamond industry to transform blood diamonds into sparkling gems. That's not too much to ask.

TRIBUTE TO CURTIS J. KNOWLES, RECIPIENT OF THE BOB LING MEMORIAL SERVICE AWARD

HON. NICK SMITH

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2000

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, on July 22, 2000 the Village of Athens will celebrate its heritage and the new millennium during Homecoming 2000 activities. As part of the celebration, the community will honor Curtis J. Knowles with the Bob Ling Memorial Service Award.

Born and raised in Hillsdale County, Michigan, Curt and I attended Addison High School and Pilgrim Fellowship at Somerset Congregational Church together. Curt attended Michigan State University and Hillsdale College, graduating in 1961. While in school, he and his father started the Knowles Excavating Company and did much work throughout southern Michigan. Curt moved with his family to Athens in 1966 where he began teaching and coaching. He served as the head boys' basketball coach until being named athletic director in 1975. In addition to boys' athletics, Curt coached Athens area girls softball from 1979 to 1994. He was elected president of the Athletic Boosters Club in 1978 and held that post until he retired from teaching in 1996.

Curt joined the Athens Improvement Association in 1974 and has worked tirelessly for the betterment of the community through numerous projects, including serving as the annual homecoming parade announcer for the past 23 years. Curt is well known for his upbeat attitude and wonderful sense of humor.

Regardless of the occasion, he always has a funny or interesting story to share. In his retirement, Curt has returned to his roots, rejoining the family excavating business in partnership with his son John.

The strength of communities like Athens lies in the many dedicated citizens who give selflessly of their time and talents to enhance the quality of life for those around them. Curt Knowles has always been one of these exemplary citizens.

I am proud to call Curt a lifelong friend and join with the citizens of Athens in thanking him for his many years of service to the community and congratulating him on this well deserved honor.

CENTRAL NEW JERSEY CELEBRATES THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF SOMERVILLE CARPENTERS' LOCAL UNION #455

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2000

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the Somerville Carpenters' Local Union #455's 100th Anniversary. Over the last century, Carpenters' Local #455 has made significant contributions to our community by supplying skilled Craftsmen that have helped fuel the tremendous growth of Somerset and Hunterdon Counties.

Carpenters Local Union #455 was founded in Somerville on January 24, 1900 by Peter J. McGuire. Serving at the time as the Secretary Treasurer of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, he understood what was necessary to train first-rate, professional carpenters and ensure that they produced a top-notch, reliable product. With this knowledge, the Carpenters' Local #455 was established to provide training to its workers that would allow them to produce the excellent craftsmanship vital to the development of our communities.

In the 100 years since its founding, the Carpenters' Local #455's trade and communities have experienced significant changes. Throughout these transitions, it has grown even stronger. It has remained firm in its commitment to providing the very best Craftsmen to build our communities and in its desire to ensure a fair wage for its hard working members.

I am pleased to say that it has been successful in its goals. Without the expertise and reliability of its Craftsmen, the tremendous growth that Somerset and Hunterdon Counties have achieved in the last century would not have been possible. Be it the homes we live in or the buildings we work in, the importance of excellent craftsmanship cannot be overlooked. Thanks to the efforts of Carpenters' Local #455, the foundation of Central New Jersey's development has been a firm and secure one.

The Somerville Carpenters Local Union #455 is a great asset to both Central New Jersey and our Nation. I urge all my colleagues to join me today in recognizing its dedication to Central New Jersey's development and workers.

OUTSTANDING HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS FIRST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF NEW MEXICO

HON. HEATHER WILSON

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2000

Mrs. WILSON. Mr. Speaker, the following graduating high school students from the First Congressional District of New Mexico have been awarded the Congressional Certificate of Merit. These students have excelled during their academic careers and proven themselves to be exceptional students and leaders with their scholastic achievements, community service, and participation in school and civic activities. It is my pleasure to be able to recognize these outstanding students for their accomplishments. Their parents, their teachers, their classmates, the people of New Mexico and I are proud of them.

CERTIFICATE OF MERIT AWARD WINNERS 2000

Albuquerque High School, Calesia Cole; Bernalillo High School, Sobeida M. Quintana; Del Norte High School, Adam Bill; Eldorado High School, Katrina Petney; Estancia High School, Lorenzo Maes; Evangel Christian Academy, Joy Henderson; Evening High School, Hope Castillo; Freedom High School, Crystal Torres; Hope Christian School, Nicholas Targhetta; La Cueva High School, Danielle Jung; Los Lunas High School, Kristian Shaffer; Menaul High School, Daniel Chapman; Moriarty High School, Stephen Joosten; Mountainair High School, Anna Luna; New Futures High School, Yadira Escalante; Rio Grande High School, Rebecca Pauline Baca; School on Wheels, Ralph J. Alires; Sandia High School, Bonnie Saul; Sandia High School, Francheska Bardacke; Sandia Preparatory School, Michelle Lee Milne; Sierra Alternative High School, Geoff Joslin; St. Pius X High School, Antonio Sandoval; Valley High School, Brenda Bustillos; West Mesa High School, Julia Hartmann; and West Mesa High School, Que Huang Dong.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE RETIREMENT OF REVEREND HOWARD STARK

HON. BOB RILEY

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2000

Mr. RILEY. Mr. Speaker, today I congratulate Reverend Howard Stark on the occasion of his retirement as the Minister of Faith Temple in Alexander City, Alabama. The time of one's retirement is always a significant event as is the change in the ministry of a church. However, this is truly a significant event. Reverend Stark, at the age of 89, is retiring after over 60 years as the Minister of Faith Temple. To put this in perspective, he became the minister of this church before World War II began. It is said that the measure of one's worth is the effect one has had on the lives of others. It is impossible to imagine the number of lives Reverend Stark has touched during his ministry and what his ministry has meant to this church and this community. I want to join Reverend Stark's family and friends and his beloved church as they pay tribute to this most remarkable man and his wife, Wynema.