

HONORING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS  
WEEK**HON. CHRISTOPHER JOHN**

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 20, 2004*

Mr. JOHN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to join with my colleagues today in honoring national Catholic Schools Week. As a product of a strong Catholic education in Crowley, Louisiana, it is my privilege to commemorate the great resource that Catholic Schools provide for families and children across the country.

Since 1974, we have celebrated this week in an effort to highlight the hard work of the teachers, parents, administration and students who have built and continue to grow our Catholic Schools. A quality education is the foundation of a child's future, and this week recognizes one of the many types of educational choices available our country's young minds.

The State of Louisiana has the highest percentage of private schools in the country, and most of them are Catholic. With over 90,000 students attending over 200 Catholic schools in Louisiana the tradition of a Catholic education remains strong.

For nearly 300 years, Catholic schools in Louisiana have endured and flourished. Capuchin Father Raphael de Luxembourg, pastor of St. Louis parish who founded the St. Ann Street School in New Orleans in 1725, believed "there is nothing upon which the establishment of a colony more essentially depends than upon the education of the young."

This year's theme for Catholic Schools Week is "A Faith-Filled Future," and I truly believe that more than at any other time in our history that strong faith is a vital foundation. Our children today are faced with situations that none of us could have imagined in our youth. Faith is the stronghold that many of us rely on each day, and Catholic schools across the country build upon the foundation of faith to daily emphasize discipline and values to all they instruct.

It is my pleasure to stand with my colleagues today in extending my best wishes and extreme gratitude to all of those who serve by providing a Catholic education not only based in academia but also in faith.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO FRED  
VELASQUEZ**HON. SCOTT MCINNIS**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 20, 2004*

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker it is my honor to rise and pay tribute to a remarkable man from my district. The Colorado Association of Conservation Districts recently recognized Fred Velasquez from La Jara, Colorado as Colorado's Ranch Conservationist of the Year. Not only is Fred a tremendous steward of the land, but he has also contributed a great deal to the La Jara community. I am proud to call the attention of this body of Congress and our nation to Fred's many accomplishments.

Fred was born and raised in Antonito and graduated from Antonito High School in 1949.

Following graduation, Fred answered his country's call to duty and served in Korea and Japan as a member of the United States Army Medical Corps between 1951 and 1954. Upon returning from duty, Fred became the Deputy County Assessor for Conejos County. From 1968 through 1972, Fred served on the La Jara City Council. In 1972, the people of La Jara elected Fred to serve as their Mayor. As Mayor, Fred contributed a great deal during his four-year term. From 1959 to 1987, Fred owned a branch of the Farm Bureau Insurance Agency and, in 1991, continued his duty to Conejos when he became the County's Weed Supervisor.

In addition to his duties for the City of La Jara, Fred is also a well-respected rancher in the region. Fred's recognition as Ranch Conservationist of the Year stemmed from his leadership in the implementation of soil and water conservation practices. Fred recently restored the land surrounding the Conejos River, which runs through his 500-acre ranch. This has improved the water quality in the river and provided habitat for the many species of wildlife that make their home on the ranch.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise and pay tribute to Fred Velasquez. Fred's many conservation accomplishments, coupled with his tireless service to our nation and his community, are certainly worthy of recognition. Thank you for your service Fred, and congratulations on a well-deserved award.

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO THE ORGA-  
NIZATION OF CHINESE AMERI-  
CANS**HON. MELISSA A. HART**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 20, 2004*

Ms. HART. Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish the membership of the Organization of Chinese Americans a healthy and happy New Year for the year 4702, the year of the Monkey.

The New Year is a time for reflection and thanksgiving for the joys of life and loved ones and I am thankful for the richness that this organization brings to my region. Chinese Americans have made great contributions to Western Pennsylvania and to our nation as a whole and I am very honored for this opportunity to wish them the best year yet in 4702.

I encourage my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join with me in wishing the members of the organization of Chinese Americans a very happy and prosperous New Year.

## IN HONOR OF ANDREW URAM

**HON. SAM FARR**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 20, 2004*

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I would like to rise today in honor of Andrew Uram's 81st birthday. A World War II veteran, loving father and grandfather, and upstanding citizen, Andrew Uram embodies the 20th century American Dream.

Born December 18, 1922 to an immigrant father and a first-generation Swedish Danish

American, Andrew was one of eight children of Andy Sr. and Minnie Uram, who met while Mr. Uram was a soldier during the First World War. Andrew continued this tradition, enlisting in the Navy on March 20, 1941—seven months before the United States entered WWII. His initial training was as an aviation machinist in Alaska, however he quickly rose to the rank of Seaman 1st class by the outbreak of the war. Following his service in Alaska, Andrew arrived three days after the invasion of Tawara, located in the South Pacific. There, he saw some of the most intense fighting he ever saw during the war, as his group was bombed throughout the night by Japanese forces. The sound and vibration from the bombs made his whole body ring like a bell, and he lost his hearing in one ear. However, he continued to serve throughout the night and next day with honor; indeed, his Navy career continued for years to come—thirteen in all.

After retiring from the military, Andrew moved with his wife and daughter to Burlington, Washington, and later to California. He continued his work in mechanics, this time with automobiles, retiring as the Senior Auto Mechanic at the garage he worked in. He and his wife retired back to Washington, but have since moved to Soquel, California, to be with their daughter and granddaughter. He continues to be active, and is well known to the birds of the Monterey Bay coastline, where he goes to feed them often.

Andrew Uram has led a long and honorable life, serving his country and raising a wonderful family. Mr. Speaker, I wish to take this moment to extend my congratulations as he and his family celebrate his birthday this year.

## PAYING TRIBUTE TO STEVE ORTIZ

**HON. SCOTT MCINNIS**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 20, 2004*

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise before you to recognize a tremendous public servant from my district. Trooper Steve Ortiz from Pueblo, Colorado was recently named Outstanding Drug Interdiction Officer of the Year for his tireless dedication to protecting Coloradans from the dangers of illicit drugs. Steve has done a great deal for the betterment of Colorado, and I am proud to call his many contributions to the attention of this body of Congress and our nation here today.

Steve has been a Trooper with the Colorado State Patrol for 13 years. In that time, he has become a leading force in the state's battle against illegal drugs. In 2003, Steve was responsible for the seizure of nearly two million dollars in cash, ninety-five pounds of cocaine and over two hundred and seventy pounds of marijuana. Steve is truly an outstanding officer and his success stems from his perceptiveness, intelligence and dedication to his work. Colorado is truly a safer place as the result of Steve's service.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise and pay tribute to Steve Ortiz. Steve has dedicated his life to the people of Colorado and his acts are the embodiment of heroism. I am proud of Steve and his many accomplishments. Congratulations on a well deserved award, Steve. Thank you for your service.