

50 YEARS OF SPACE EXPLORATION

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing and honoring the California Institute of Technology's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, JPL, in Pasadena, CA, for 50 years of space exploration. Since the launch of *Explorer I*, America's first spacecraft, on January 31, 1958, JPL has made momentous and historic contributions to our scientific understanding of our vast universe.

For the past five decades, the Jet Propulsion Laboratory has been a respected leader in furthering scientific knowledge around the world. *Explorer 1* was built in less than 3 months, and was the first spacecraft ever launched into space that actually revolved around Earth and provided scientific findings from space. The immense success of *Explorer I* led to the passage of the Space Act in 1958, which established the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

Since the inception of NASA, JPL has been on the forefront of science and technology through its research and exploration of every known planet in our solar system. Subsequent to the success of *Explorer I*, JPL has continued to have a central role in accomplished space missions, such as exploring our vast solar system with *Voyager 1* and *2* and the Mars Exploration Rovers. JPL has also been instrumental in understanding our planet.

I congratulate the California Institute of Technology's Jet Propulsion Laboratory on 50 years of successful and insightful space exploration, and thank the original members of the *Explorer I* team for their contribution to American history. ●

BEST COMMUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

• Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, each year, the America's Promise Alliance names the 100 Best Communities for Young People in the Nation. Today, I am proud to honor five Minnesota towns that have achieved this tremendous designation—Landfall, Mankato, Northfield, Saint Louis Park, and Saint Paul, MN.

The 100 Best Communities for Young People is an annual competition that recognizes outstanding community-wide efforts that improve the well-being of youth and inspire other localities to take action.

There is apparently much to find inspiration from, as two previous award winners have now become five—a strong showing from the great State of Minnesota.

Each of these five Minnesota communities demonstrated a commitment to community support of children through resources including effective education, safe gathering places, and a wide range of programming. Their commitment generates real outcomes in the form of high graduation rates and educational achievement, healthy

behaviors, and civic engagement by their young population.

Landfall, MN, is a small town with big plans for its young people. A town of just 700, they place a premium on expanding the horizons of young people. They provide students with "Extra Innings," a tutoring and mentoring program that gives elementary through high school students one-on-one help with math, reading, and English as a second language.

Mankato, MN, a three-time winner of this honor, prides itself on embracing young people to help them reach their fullest potential. Among their initiatives is the LinkCrew, which pairs high school freshmen with junior and senior year mentors to help them make a successful transition to high school. And, as the town that raised six Bessler boys, including my husband John, I know firsthand of the high-caliber young people Mankato produces.

Northfield, MN, used to be a farm town, centered between corn and wheat fields. Now, anchored by two of our Nation's preeminent colleges, Carleton College and Saint Olaf College, Northfield has become an enriching place for young people. The Mayor's Youth Council allows students ages 15 to 18 to advise the mayor and city council on issues related to the young population.

Saint Louis Park, MN, is also a three-time winner. They welcome youth into their process of government, inviting them to participate in decisionmaking on special neighborhood and community issues. Among other attractions, it is home to 51 parks thanks to the city's initiative to reserve a percentage of all city land for public parks. And in a special nod to its young population, the city's Web site lists the best sledding hills in its community.

Saint Paul, MN, is our State's capital city and a shining example of how to engage children after school hours. Through the Second Shift and After School Initiatives, they provide positive places for children to spend their afternoons, develop new skills, and obtain academic assistance.

From his theatre in downtown Saint Paul, Minnesota's native son, Garrison Keillor, refers to his fictional Minnesota town of Lake Wobegon as a place where "all the women are strong, all the men are good-looking, and all the children are above average." These five towns have certainly proven Keillor's words are more truth than fiction.

I am proud to represent five of America's Best Communities for Young People and to congratulate them before the U.S. Senate. ●

RECOGNIZING SAINT CLOUD, MINNESOTA

• Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize a great achievement by the City of Saint Cloud, MN.

St. Cloud, MN, is located on the banks of the Mississippi River, 60 miles northwest of the Twin Cities. When it was founded more than 150 years ago, it was known as the Granite City. But now it also bears the title of the Most Livable Community in the World.

The LivCom Awards are the world's only competition for local communities that focuses on environmental management and the creation of livable communities. This year, they have named Saint Cloud the "Most Livable Community in the World."

This award is a deserved honor and recognition of the outstanding efforts being undertaken by the City of Saint Cloud to create a livable and sustainable community.

The awards encourage best practice, innovation, and leadership in providing vibrant, environmentally sustainable communities that improve the quality of life for their residents and people worldwide.

Among the goals of the award is to model innovative community planning and living for other communities. I hope that Saint Cloud will inspire other communities to tackle challenging environmental and energy issues facing our nation.

Saint Cloud topped entrants from more than 50 countries. The residents of Saint Cloud, the Most Livable City in the World, have much to be proud of.

I ask that you join me in congratulating the world's most livable community, Saint Cloud, MN. ●

IN HONOR OF 2ND LIEUTENANT SETH C. PIERCE

• Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, today I wish to honor 2LT Seth Pierce of Lincoln, NE.

Lieutenant Pierce was a proud member of the U.S. Marine Corps, whose friends remember him as a dedicated and passionate person who "wore his heart on his sleeve." While attending Lincoln Southeast High School, he ran the first leg on his relay team and won the State championship in 2001. His coach described his team as "the most overachieving boys I've ever coached. They won because they were connected to each other."

A 2002 graduate of Lincoln Southeast High School and a 2006 graduate of Arizona State University, Lieutenant Pierce was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps in December 2006. Lieutenant Pierce passed away due to a car accident on October 21, 2007, in Quantico, VA, where he was stationed.

Lieutenant Pierce is survived by his parents, Larry and Linda Pierce of Surprise, AZ; his brother and sister-in-law, Aaron and Crystal Pierce, of Omaha; and his grandparents, Edwin and Ruth Steffens and Luther and Esther Pierce, all of Lincoln. I offer my most sincere condolences to the family and friends of Lieutenant Pierce. His noble service to the United States of America is to be respected and appreciated. The loss

of this remarkable marine is felt by all Nebraskans, and his courage to follow his dreams will remain as an inspiration. ●

RECOGNIZING HODGDON YACHTS

● Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, today I commend a Maine business that last month unveiled a remarkably sturdy vessel for use by our Nation's Navy SEALs, a project for which I was honored to secure funding for. Hodgdon Yachts of East Boothbay, a family-owned company for five generations, has been a source of pride for Maine's boatbuilding industry for nearly 200 years, and its recent accomplishment is without a doubt one of its most impressive.

Hodgdon Yachts began building boats in 1816, when the company launched the 42-foot schooner *Superb*. Since then, Hodgdon Yachts has developed a reputation as one of New England's premier shipbuilders, persevering through difficult times and continually reevaluating its company's methods to be consistently on the cutting edge of the latest technologies. Of particular note for the State of Maine is Hodgdon's 1921 schooner *Bowdoin*, named for the Brunswick alma mater of Arctic explorer Donald MacMillan. The boat proved itself an invaluable tool in Arctic research and sailed more than 300,000 miles over 26 icy voyages in its career. Prior to the *Bowdoin*, the company turned its attention to building submarine chasers for the military in World War I, and continued its defense work by gaining minesweeper and troop transport contracts during both World War II and the Korean war.

By the late 1950s, Hodgdon Yachts returned to building more traditional wooden yachts for a variety of customers. By the mid-1980s, the company began to modernize its shipbuilding, providing clients with yachts of superb quality and strength while employing innovative technology in the creation of its boats. Hodgdon Yachts recently began using carbon Kevlar deposits to construct its yachts to make the boats as strong and secure as possible.

Hodgdon's proficiency in using Kevlar proved useful when, in May 2005, the company won a contract from the U.S. Navy's Office of Naval Research to build the prototype for a new special operations craft using these composites. The ship has a foam core surrounded by multiple layers of carbon, and its durability is reinforced by an outer layer of Kevlar. On January 11, 2008, the company launched this prototype, the 82-foot Mako V.1, named for a shark that frequents the Gulf of Maine's waters. It is the first Navy vessel constructed with carbon-fiber technology and was designed to protect Navy SEALs from injuries caused by the harsh conditions of the seas. Hodgdon teamed up with Maine Marine Manufacturing and the University of Maine in completing the Mako V.1, and I am so proud of the role that each

played in supporting our nation's armed forces. I look forward to successful trials by the Navy and the continued role Hodgdon Yachts will play in the production of this fine vessel.

Throughout its history, Hodgdon Yachts has produced over 400 yachts and ships, perhaps none more vital than its latest. The company's work to keep shipbuilding alive and well in Maine is well documented, including President Tim Hodgdon's involvement in the formation of Maine Built Boats, an alliance whose goal is to present Maine's boatbuilding industry to a wider global audience. I firmly believe that, given our seafaring history and established work ethic, Mainers build the best ships, and Hodgdon Yachts only further exemplifies this tradition. I commend everyone at Hodgdon Yachts for their remarkable accomplishment in the Mako V.1, and wish them well in their future boatbuilding endeavors. ●

TRIBUTE TO JOHN ROCK

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the life of John Rock, who passed away in November of 2007. John was an invaluable member of the Black Hills community, and he will be truly missed by all who knew him.

John will be remembered for his dedication to service in the Black Hills region. He made many invaluable contributions to the region through his extensive knowledge and life experiences. This dedication was evident through John's support of the Mammoth Site museum in Hot Springs, SD. He worked with the finance/personnel and governance committees and the board of directors of the Mammoth Site of Hot Springs, SD, Inc., from 2001 to 2007.

In addition to his being recognized by the Mammoth Site board, two theater seats will be dedicated to John and his wife Bonnie. A plaque in John's honor will also be placed on the Memorial Wall at the Mammoth Site.

John Rock's absence will be deeply felt in the Black Hills community. He was a truly dedicated individual who will be remembered for his lifetime of service to others. ●

TRIBUTE TO VIOREL G. "VI" STOIA

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Viorel G. "Vi" Stoia, a great South Dakotan who passed away on January 28, 2008.

Vi Stoia was born on February 13, 1924 in Aberdeen, SD, and began his lifetime of service and leadership at Aberdeen Central High School where he served as senior class president. Vi continued this leadership and service while he served in the U.S. Navy and attended the University of Minnesota. In 1949, Vi graduated with a degree in business administration and married his lifelong companion, Donna Marie Maurseth.

Vi's thirst for knowledge along with his extraordinary leadership abilities

served him well during his lifetime. His long and illustrious professional career included countless distinguished appointments, awards, and honors.

Vi will be remembered by the Aberdeen community because of his exuberant service and dedication to constant improvement of the city, county, and State. Vi was a member of numerous community organizations, including the Aberdeen Jaycees and the Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce. Additionally, Vi's dedication and leadership were instrumental in rallying support for dozens of community projects.

The profound wisdom and deep commitment that Vi possessed is reflected through his role in the businesses, health organizations, educational affiliations, and political organizations for which he so diligently served throughout his life. Vi also received many awards recognizing his excellent work and service including: Distinguished Alumni Award—NSU, 1976; the George Award, 1979 and 1994; South Dakota Community Volunteer of the Year, 1991; Distinguished Service Award, Excellence in Economic Development, 2000; and South Dakota Medal of Distinguished Excellence, 2008.

Vi will be lovingly remembered by his wife Donna as well as his children and grandchildren as a loving husband, father, and a great man. He will forever remain in our hearts for his contributions to the Aberdeen area and the entire State of South Dakota. Few men will ever give as much of themselves or make as much of a difference in the lives of others as Vi Stoia. Today we celebrate the life and accomplishments of this great man. Although he does not stand among us, his legacy will live on for a time without end. For all that has been accomplished and achieved, for all of the lives that have been touched and enhanced, thank you, and God bless Viorel G. Stoia. ●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and a treaty which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

REPORT ON THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY THAT WAS DECLARED WITH RESPECT TO THE GOVERNMENT OF CUBA'S DESTRUCTION OF TWO UNARMED U.S.-REGISTERED CIVILIAN AIRCRAFT—PM 36

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message