

Michigan's Copper Country to attract today's travelers.

Nestled in the heart of the Keweenaw Peninsula's copper country in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and built for Thomas H. Hoatson, Jr., owner of the Calumet and Arizona Mining Company, this mansion started off as a 13,000-square-foot home for the Hoatson family. It remains the largest mansion in the western portion of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The extravagance of the structure was by far its best known feature. From the embossed elephant leather on the walls, to the grand staircase which spans three floors, to the hand-painted wall mural, stained glass windows, and giant Corinthian columns, the Hoatson mansion was the epitome of opulence. Mr. Hoatson, Jr., a Houghton County native of Scottish descent, made his fortune in the copper mining and banking industries. He spent \$50,000 building the mansion at a time when miners were making 25 cents an hour.

Undaunted by the prospect of restoring this enormous and ornate structure, Dave and Julie Sprenger bought the mansion in September of 1989, opened it as a bed and breakfast, listed it as the Laurium Manor Inn on the National Register of Historic Places, and established it as a heritage site within the Keweenaw National Historical Park. This has been no easy task. In addition to the constant renovations and repairs, the remote location of the village of Laurium, the harsh winters of the Upper Peninsula, and the changeable nature of tourism have all challenged the Sprenger's small business. However, throughout all of this, the Sprengers have persevered and continue to provide quality service to the local community and visitors from around the world.

As a senior member of the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee, I recognize the important role small businesses play in creating jobs and growing the economy, and this bed and breakfast is no exception. I am delighted to congratulate Dave and Julie Sprenger on the 25th anniversary of their flourishing small business, which contributes to the local economy and enriches historical experiences for tourists and residents alike. I wish them many more decades of success.●

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEEP SUBMERGENCE VEHICLE ALVIN

• Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I want to congratulate the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, WHOI, on the 50th anniversary of the commissioning of the deep-sea, human-occupied submersible Alvin.

Alvin was commissioned on June 5, 1964, at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, in Woods Hole, MA. It is owned by the U.S. Navy and operated by WHOI. In one of its first missions, it responded to a national emergency in 1966, locating and helping to recover a hydrogen bomb that had accidentally dropped into the Mediterranean Sea.

In 1974, Alvin brought scientists for the first time to the mid-ocean ridge during Project FAMOUS, the French-American Mid-Ocean Undersea Study, and revealed a seafloor that scientists had not imagined. Project FAMOUS proved that submersibles could effectively explore the deep seafloor and marked the beginning a new era of exploration.

Alvin discovered and explored previously unknown and unexpected communities of deep-sea organisms that thrive in the absence of sunlight, sustained not by photosynthesis but by chemosynthesis. This discovery was one of the most profound of the 20th century, because it completely transformed our conceptions of where and how life can exist on this planet; reconfigured our search today for life on other planetary bodies; and opened entirely new lines of microbiological and biogeochemical research, including those that have led to commercial and pharmaceutical applications.

Over the following decades, Alvin discovered several previously unknown seafloor environments harboring a diversity of chemosynthetic communities, including high-temperature black-smoker chimneys that spew like undersea geysers in the Pacific, 1979; cold-seep habitats sustained by hydrogen sulfide, methane, and other hydrocarbon-rich fluids seeping from the seafloor Guaymas Basin, Gulf of California, 1982, and in the Gulf of Mexico, 1983; and "Lost City" environments, where seawater reacts with mantle rock, peridotite, to produce methane and hydrogen in the Atlantic, 2000.

Alvin has also explored another type of seafloor habitat—seamounts, or ancient undersea volcanoes—with their diverse communities of deep-sea corals, fish, and other organisms, in the Gulf of Alaska, the Pacific, and the Atlantic. Scientists aboard Alvin have discovered many hundreds of previously unknown marine species.

Alvin has contributed to other events of historical significance, exploring and bringing back images of the wreck of the Titanic in 1986 and responding to the Deepwater Horizon disaster, by investigating impacts to deep-sea habitats in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010.

Alvin inspired scientists and engineers to develop new generations of deep-submergence technology; including remotely operated vehicles, ROVs, tethered by fiber-optic cables and free-swimming autonomous underwater vehicles, AUVs. These vehicles are now routinely used for naval activities and national security, oil exploration, maritime, and other industries, environmental and fisheries monitoring, and disaster response, and are now being developed for use under ice in polar regions and to explore other planetary bodies.

Alvin resumed operations in 2014 after a major upgrade, funded by the National Science Foundation, Office of Naval Research, and WHOI, which dramatically enhanced its capabilities. An

anticipated second phase of this Alvin upgrade will increase the submersible's diving capacity from 4,500 to 6,500 meters, 14,000 to 21,000 feet, allowing it to reach 98 percent of the seafloor.

Alvin has been a workhorse for U.S. scientists, safely taking nearly 2,600 individual researchers on more than 4,700 dives to the ocean depths and is the only deep-sea human-occupied vehicle in the National Deep Submergence Facility for the U.S. oceanographic community. Alvin has thrilled and inspired generations of schoolchildren around the world with its adventures and discoveries and become an icon for exploration and a symbol of American ingenuity.

The accomplishments and discoveries achieved by this single submersible and the scientists, engineers and ship's crew who built, use, and operate it during its first 50 years demonstrate the importance of continued support for the development of deep-submergence technology and exploration of the largest portion of Earth's surface and its last frontier the ocean.

Alvin is a national scientific treasure and we are proud that it calls Massachusetts and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution home.●

RECOGNIZING SEEKINS PRECISION

• Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, America depends on the ingenuity of small business owners to propel the country forward in innovation. Seekins Precision demonstrates this originality by continuously improving their products for a unique industry. I rise today to honor Seekins Precision of Lewiston, ID, a small business whose commitment to manufacturing products for those who enjoy exercising their second-amendment rights honors both Idaho and the Nation.

Founded in 2004, Seekins Precision builds innovative products for precision shooters. As the result of an unsuccessful deer hunt, founder Glen Seekins identified a need for hunting equipment able to endure the natural elements of the Idaho mountains products that were durable, yet lightweight. The combination of Mr. Seekins' background in mechanical design and his entrepreneurial spirit sparked the design for Seekins Precision's flagship scope rings. After training himself on a computer numerical control machine to build scope rings, Mr. Seekins and his wife, Katie, set up shop in their garage. In November 2005, their scope rings became so popular in the local shooting community that the business developed into a full-time operation.

Over the past 10 years, Seekins Precision has achieved an outstanding reputation for quality, as well as that of a unique Idaho gem. Since its inception, Seekins Precision has expanded from only making scope rings with just a handful of employees, to developing over ten major upper-end rifle lines and creating more than 25 new jobs in

the local Idaho community. Today, the business has expanded to manufacture a full line of automatic rifle products, including rifles, complete uppers, and other parts and accessories. All of Seekins Precision's products are proudly invented, sourced, and made in the USA in their new 25,000 square foot facility, a \$4 million investment back into the community.

At the beginning of this year, Seekins Precision participated in the Shooting Hunting Outdoor Trade, SHOT, Show and Conference in Las Vegas, NV, the largest annual trade show for recreational technology professionals, and the world's premier exposition of combined firearms. Participation in the SHOT Show exposed Seekins Precision to buyers from all 50 States and more than 100 countries, expanding the business' exposure to international markets. Located in the Port of Lewiston since 2010, Idaho's only seaport and the farthest inland port east of the west coast, Seekins Precision relocated to a 25,000 square foot facility in order to accommodate further product demand this past May. The small business received support from Idaho's own Governor, Butch Otter, who attended the grand-opening ribbon-cutting ceremony. Seekins Precision's astonishing success emulates that of the American Dream, reaching beyond the local community and loyal customers.

I congratulate everyone at Seekins Precision on their success, continued growth and exemplary reputation for quality. Seekins Precision represents the best aspects of American craftsmanship and is a credit to both Idaho and the Nation.●

GEAR UP HAWAII

• Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, September 22nd marks the beginning of National Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, GEAR UP, Week and I would like to take a moment to recognize the invaluable work of GEAR UP in Hawaii.

For more than a decade, GEAR UP has provided low-income students all over the country with the support and resources they need to go to college. GEAR UP helps these students, many of which are the first in their family to go to college, to overcome the challenges they face in their communities.

GEAR UP Hawaii serves over 16,000 students each year from low-income and underserved communities throughout the State in grades 7 through 12 and in their first year in college. The program provides a number of services to these students including: supporting academic preparation in high school; providing opportunities for early college options; increasing college access and financial aid information to students and families; and supporting students in their first year in college. GEAR UP Hawaii has gained national recognition for its success in closing

the achievement gap and helping low-income students prepare for college.

Through its collaborative partnerships between Hawaii's State Department of Education, K-12 schools, the University of Hawaii, businesses, and community organizations, GEAR UP Hawaii inspires students to see post-secondary education as something they can achieve. It also gives students the tools they need to succeed in college and their careers.

The program's results demonstrate that GEAR UP Hawaii is making significant strides towards increasing the number of low-income students who are prepared for and enroll in college. The first class of Step Up Scholars, a GEAR UP Hawaii program, graduated from high school in June 2013 and earned the college-ready Board of Education Recognition Diploma, BOERD, at nearly twice the rate of the statewide average and three times the rate of non-Step Up Scholars. In addition, across GEAR UP Hawaii schools this past year, there was a 14 percent increase in the number of students participating in dual enrollment programs who graduated high school with six or more college credits. Thanks to these programs, Hawaii's students graduate from high school better prepared for college and for their futures.

A college education is a path to opportunity for our students. GEAR UP Hawaii plays a vital role in fulfilling our responsibility to ensure that every student has access to that path.●

TRIBUTE TO WENDY LEWIS

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize LT Wendy Lewis of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Officer Corps on her upcoming promotion to lieutenant commander.

Lieutenant Lewis is currently serving as a Congressional Fellow on the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. A ship driver by training, Lieutenant Lewis, has ably lent herself to the committee's work. I would like to thank her for the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and other members of the committee.

This well-deserved promotion recognizes her leadership and dedication to serving others.●

ADOPTING CHILDREN FROM NEPAL

• Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I comment today on an issue of tremendous concern to a number of Pennsylvania families who in recent years adopted children from Nepal.

In August of 2010, the State Department suspended the authorization for American families to adopt children from that nation with the exception of those families, some from Pennsylvania, who were already in the process of adopting Nepali orphans. The State Department and U.S. Citizenship and

Immigration Services told these "pipeline" families that their cases would be processed to completion, but that they should anticipate significant delays and possibly negative outcomes, since their cases were suspected of being heavily tainted by fraud, corruption, and illegal or unethical practices. In response to U.S. government requests for additional evidence substantiating the legality and morality of these adoptions, these families had to undertake extensive investigations on their own to provide such evidence.

Since these families were already completely bonded with their adoptive children, each of them eagerly undertook its investigation, at great financial and emotional expense. Meanwhile, most of the children were forced to languish for an additional 6 months in orphanages. While due diligence is appropriate for all adoptions, I am deeply troubled that in this case not a single instance of fraud or corruption was ever found. In fact, the State Department and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services ultimately allowed all these American pipeline families bring their children home to the United States. Despite this ultimately successful outcome, the State Department continues to suspend adoption of desperate Nepali children by American families. I ask that the Department re-evaluate its policy with the recent experience of the pipeline families as a major consideration.

With an eye towards the future of the children who were adopted by the pipeline families, I am concerned that the public record on these adoptions from Nepal is still replete with references to fraud and trafficking. We need to set the record straight and to make it clear that each of the Nepali pipeline adoption cases in progress at the time of the suspension was ultimately approved and was devoid of any findings of malfeasance. Every child deserves a family and no child deserves to be needlessly haunted by clouds of doubt about his or her origin. These American families deserve to have a positive public record created showing that their adoptions were completely legal and ethical. I wish to personally begin that record today.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, 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 messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)