

fires in recent years, which is why the fire prevention message is so important. Forest fires burn millions of acres, destroy homes and businesses, and, worse yet, take the lives of wildland firefighters. As we remember all too well, 2000 was the worst fire year on record since 1957, and subsequent years have not been much better.

Last year's devastating fires prompted us to finally agree to the passage of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act. I have a feeling Smokey Bear would be proud of that accomplishment, and know that his wildfire program had never been more important. While we now work to improve our forests with this new law, Smokey's message must still resound. This message of forest fire prevention has undoubtedly helped to reduce the number of forest acres lost annually to wildfire. By what measure, I can never know. However, to suggest that he has not made a significant difference would be amiss.

The injured cub discovered in 1950, our Smokey Bear, eventually arrived at the National Zoo in Washington, DC, where he would become the living symbol for fire prevention. He resided in the National Zoo for 26 years until he passed on November 9, 1976. Most appropriately he was returned to his old roaming grounds and to his home town to be laid to rest.

Capitan is a small town in Lincoln County, nestled between those Capitan and Sacramento Mountains of central New Mexico. This beautiful place is full of wonderful people who love the land and refer to Smokey Bear as "Capitan's favorite son." Each year Capitan residents celebrate his memory with the Fourth of July Smokey Bear Stampede, but this year is a special tribute. The village is hosting a special 60th birthday celebration May 7-9. Much of the 3-day festivity will take place at the historical park named in Smokey Bear's honor and along what is now aptly named Smokey Bear Boulevard.

I pay tribute to the people of Capitan in this RECORD—they have gone to great lengths to preserve the story and meaning of Smokey Bear. I also salute the USDA, the Forest Service, the National Association of State Foresters, and the Ad Council for supporting this program all these years. May the initiative's success only be a prelude to future forest preservation and wildfire prevention, and may Smokey Bear and all he represents forever remain.●

AMADOR VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL'S INVOLVEMENT IN WE THE PEOPLE

● Ms. BOXER. Mr. President, I would like to recognize a remarkable group of young people who will be traveling to Washington, DC next week, May 1-3, to participate in the national finals of "We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution." This program consists of competitions in which students field questions that test their knowledge of the U.S. Constitution.

I am pleased to announce that students from Amador Valley High School in Pleasanton, CA will be representing the State of California in this competition. With the help of their civics teacher, Matthew Campbell, these students have studied for months to prepare for their role as experts testifying on constitutional issues in a simulated congressional hearing.

These students have all worked very hard through first the congressional, then state, and now national competitions. The members of this year's civics team are Nichole Barlow, Anna Currin, Tony D'Albora, Logan Daniels, Shelley DeFord, Michael Gondkoff, Gabe Ivey, Nate Koppikar, Kristin MacDonnell, Sonia Markovic, Jennifer Martin, Lacie McFarland, Shawna McGrath, Nicole Melton, Barry Ripley, Elisabeth Schulze, Sunaina Selam, Kent Stander, and Jae Yoo. I congratulate each of them for coming this far and send them my best wishes for next week's competition.

It is very encouraging to see young people take such a profound interest in studying those ideas and principles which are at the heart of our democracy and of our country. I am certain that this type of involvement will only lead to a deeper interest and that it will build strong citizens and strong leaders for our country's future.●

HONORING AN ARMY LEGEND

● Mr. MILLER. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the Commanding General, United States Army Forces Command, General Larry R. Ellis. General Ellis has served as the Commanding General of U.S. Army Forces Command from November 19, 2001, to May 7, 2004.

General Ellis, an outstanding American Soldier from the great State of Maryland, will soon complete over 35 years of selfless service to this great Nation in the United States Army. General Ellis' dedication to our Soldiers, commitment to excellence, and performance of duty has been extraordinary throughout his career, a lifetime of service culminating in an assignment as the Commanding General of the largest major command in the United States Army. He will retire on July 1, 2004.

During more than 35 years in uniform, General Ellis served in a succession of command and staff positions worldwide. As a junior officer, he served in combat in the Republic of Vietnam, and subsequently with troop units in positions of increasing responsibility throughout the continental United States, Europe, and the Republic of Korea.

While the Deputy Director for Strategic Planning and Policy at U.S. Pacific Command, and as the Assistant Chief of Staff, J3, for United States Forces Korea, General Ellis supervised the training and performance of American military forces throughout the Far East.

He commanded units at every echelon of the Army, including the First

Armored Division in Germany and when deployed as the Multinational Division (North), in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a combined task force that included units from 13 nations. In this capacity General Ellis coordinated European military and civil efforts to implement an extensive array of operations and programs to provide stability and restore favorable economic and political conditions in that war-torn region.

As the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, General Ellis oversaw multi-year, multi-billion dollar programs supporting United States Army budget strategic objectives, and executed annual operating budgets of more than \$15 billion across 16 major subordinate organizations. He directed the development of comprehensive strategic plans supporting the Army's continued success across the next three decades by resourcing plans through decisive application of deliberate management systems, strategic planning processes, environmental assessments, and periodic situational appraisals to ensure full integration and compliance with strictly defined performance objectives. He spearheaded the Army's effort to translate the senior leadership's Strategic Vision into an executable Transformation Campaign Plan.

Soon after the United States went to war in 2001, General Ellis assumed command of U.S. Army Forces Command, the Army's largest major command. He aggressively orchestrated the training, mobilization, and deployment of more than 500,000 Soldiers and more than a million tons of equipment to locations worldwide which represents the largest mobilization since the Korean War. In addition to providing resources and directing long-range planning to move Army forces, he maintained close operational control of ongoing events to ensure his subordinate units could respond to emerging trends and circumstances. The strategic communications plan he instigated to engage disparate and complex audiences to include academia, Congress, local public officials, industry, and members of the Department of Defense, ensured that his commands' operations were understood and supported.

General Ellis holds degrees from Morgan State University, B.S., 1969, and Indiana University, M.S., 1975. His honors include the NAACP National Service Award, 1999; Honorary Doctor of Law, Morgan State University, 2000; Honorary Master of Strategic Studies, U.S. Army War College, 2001; Distinguished Alumni Service Award, Indiana University, 2003. His military awards include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, the Army Distinguished Service Medal, and the Combat Infantryman Badge.

His three and a half decades of service earned for General Ellis a reputation as one of the Department of Defense's most forward thinking and insightful leaders. General Ellis represents the epitome of what Army leaders, Soldiers, and the country expect

from our officers. He is a sterling example for young Soldiers to emulate . . . well known as a "Soldiers' General." His service to the Nation has been exceptional, and General Ellis is more than deserving of this recognition.

General Ellis will be sorely missed by those who have had the opportunity to serve with him over these many years. I join with his friends and family as he celebrates this richly deserved upcoming retirement and wish him my best as he enjoys everyday of this new journey.●

TOUR DE GEORGIA IS A TOUR DE FORCE

● Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, this week Georgians will line the roads to witness the top-ranked bicycle stage race in North America.

The Dodge Tour de Georgia promotes tourism, stimulates local industry, and is proud to benefit the Georgia Cancer Coalition. The race serves as a rolling festival to entertain and educate spectators across the Peach State about cycling, fitness, and most importantly about the possibility for a cure for and the prevention of cancer. This second annual event, April 20 to 25, 2004, takes pro cyclists and multitudes of visitors on a scenic 653-mile journey through the great State of Georgia.

Athletes from over 23 countries will compete for \$100,000 in cash and prizes. With a mix of road races, an individual time trial, and challenging terrain, the 2004 Dodge Tour de Georgia will be an exciting event for both racers and spectators.

A great deal of attention will be on cycling this year, since many elite athletes vie to represent their countries in the Olympic games in road, time trial or track disciplines of cycling in August. And, five-time Tour de France champion Lance Armstrong seeks his record sixth consecutive win on the Champs-Elysees in July. Part of the reason for a significant increase in media and spectator interest in the Dodge Tour de Georgia this year is because Armstrong will compete in the event with his United States Postal Service Pro Cycling Team. It will be the only stage race Armstrong is expected to enter in North America, and the only event in the U.S. for him prior to his record attempt in France.

Officials with the Dodge Tour de Georgia project a \$20 to \$30 million boost to the Georgia economy. The promotional and media value provided to its charitable beneficiary, the Georgia Cancer Coalition, is expected to surpass \$2.5 million, doubling the number from 2003. The 2004 Dodge Tour de Georgia, the country's premier, professional cycling stage race, will visit 60 of Georgia's 159 counties in 6 days, from Tuesday, April 20 to Sunday, April 25.

As a world-class sporting event, the Dodge Tour de Georgia is defined in part by the 120 elite, professional cy-

clists who will compete in seven stage races, traversing 653 miles across Georgia. As a vehicle to promote tourism and stimulate economic growth, the race is defined by the thousands of visitors and volunteers who plan to visit from across Georgia, the U.S. and abroad. Over 750,000 spectators are expected for the week.

From just the impact of media, officials, teams, and support personnel, not including spectators, local communities will see an immediate impact from 3,000 room nights and over 7,000 meals.

I commend the sponsors, organizers, and staff of the Dodge Tour de Georgia, for bringing a world-class event of this magnitude to the people of the United States. I also commend the Union Cycliste Internationale, for sanctioning this event.

I would like this body to recognize the host communities, Alpharetta, Athens, Carrollton, Columbus, Dalton, Dahlonega, Dawsonville, Hiwassee/Young Harris, Macon, Rome, and Thomaston; as well as their local organizing committees for their contribution to this worthy cause.

Cancer is a brutal killer that strikes without regard to age, race, sex, or station in life. I am grateful that there are organizations such as the Georgia Cancer Coalition, which are dedicated to its eradication, and there is support from organizations such as Dodge; GE Energy; The Georgia Department of Industry, Trade, and Tourism; Georgia Power; Southern LINC; and the many others who have bonded together to organize and promote Georgia's Race to Cure Cancer.

This event is not only about the 11 communities hosting this event, it is not only about Georgia. It is about bringing the finest cyclists in the world to compete in our Nation. It is about raising awareness to fight a terrible killer so that all of the world may benefit. I am proud that this event will be held in my home State of Georgia and ask that this body commend the Dodge Tour de Georgia for its fine work.●

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 which were referred to the appropriate committees.

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

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:08 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by

Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 4181. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the marriage penalty relief provided under the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001.

H.R. 3170. An act to amend the Investment Company Act of 1940 to provide incentives for small business investment, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolutions, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 376. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby.

H. Con. Res. 388. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the National Peace Officers' Memorial Service.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 3170. An act to amend the Investment Company Act of 1940 to provide incentives for small business investment, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

The following concurrent resolution was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H. Con. Res. 388. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the National Peace Officers' Memorial Service; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bills were read the first time:

H.R. 4181. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the increased standard deduction, and the 15-percent individual income tax rate bracket expansion, for married taxpayers filing joint returns.

S. 2370. A bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide for an increase in the Federal minimum wage.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-7260. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Medicare Program; Elimination of Statement of Intent Procedures for Filing Medicare Claims" (RIN0938-AK79) received on April 27, 2004; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-7261. A communication from the White House Liaison, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a vacancy, designation of acting officer, and nomination for the position of Under Secretary for Domestic Finance, Department of