

# EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING JENNA SOENDKER

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 25, 2003*

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Jenna Soendker, a very special young woman who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Girl Scouts of America, Troop 1815, and in earning the most prestigious honor of the Gold Award.

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest achievement attainable in Girl Scouting. To earn the Gold Award, a Scout must complete five requirements, all of which promote community service, personal and spiritual growth, positive values, and leadership skills. The requirements include: (1) Earning four interest project patches, each of which requires seven activities that center on skill building, technology, service projects, and career exploration; (2) earning the career exploration pin, which involves researching careers, writing resumes, and planning a career fair or trip; (3) earning the senior Girl Scout Leadership Award, which requires a minimum of 30 hours of work using leadership skills; (4) designing a self-development plan that requires assessment of ability to interact with others and prioritize values, participation for a minimum of 15 hours in a community service project, and development of a plan to promote Girl Scouting, and (5) spending a minimum of 50 hours planning and implementing a Girl Scout Gold Award project that has a positive lasting impact on the community.

For her Gold Award project, Jenna created a family reading night to promote reading.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Jenna Soendker for her accomplishments with the Girl Scouts of America and for her efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of the Gold Award.

BETTER SCRUTINY OF NATIONAL SPACE PROGRAM

**HON. GEORGE MILLER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 25, 2003*

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, everyone in the nation was deeply touched by the terrible tragedy involving the recent loss of seven astronauts aboard the *Columbia* Space Shuttle. As in the case of the *Challenger* Shuttle explosion 17 years ago, Congress must become deeply involved in reviewing the causes of this accident. That review, as our former colleague and highly respected expert on the space program, Tim Roemer reminds us, must be an independent study. Far too much—in money, in effort and in lives—is invested in the manned space program for us to fail to undertake a thorough

and fully credible review, including whether or not congressional funding decisions might have affected the adequacy of the resources devoted to shuttle safety.

Congressman Roemer offered sound advice to the Gehman Commission that is charged with investigating the *Columbia* tragedy in a recent column published in Roll Call, which I am submitting to the RECORD.

The article follows:

NASA PANEL NEEDS TO FIND REAL SOLUTIONS

(By Tim Roemer)

After the Challenger space shuttle exploded on takeoff in 1986, the prominent physicist Richard Feynman dramatically conducted an experiment visually linking the cause and effect for all to understand. He carefully dipped the rubber O-rings into a glass of ice water to replicate what had happened when they hardened, cracked and, consequently, malfunctioned. An independent panel, known as the Rogers Commission, generally concluded that NASA officials and contractors were largely at fault. The report went on to list poor communications with management, sacrificing standards to remain within the budget, and not paying enough attention to hazards and warnings.

Now, 17 years later, the *Columbia* has disintegrated upon re-entry. We cannot merely round up the usual cast of suspects, appoint the same names to an investigation board and point the finger at the predictable target. It is too important to understand how this happened, with decisions led us there and how to fix it.

Whatever the final conclusion, the newly appointed Gehman Commission tasked with discovering the cause should be loaded with independent and aggressive individuals willing to challenge Congressional budgeting decisions and oversight performance. Everything should be on the table.

The commission should have begun its investigation 10 years before last month's takeoff of *Columbia*. On June 23, 1993, Congress voted 216-215 to authorize \$13 billion for space station costs over the next decade. While Members of Congress, the administration and especially NASA recognize that the space station was experiencing significant design glitches, cost overruns and scheduling delays, they also knew that more money would eventually be needed in the overall NASA budget. But the overall NASA budget level would decline in real dollars over the next 10 years. The space station overruns multiplied.

Something had to give. The overall NASA budget went from \$14.36 billion in 1993 to \$14.9 billion in 2002. However, this declining budget in real dollars included an increase in 2002 for securing the NASA facilities from terrorist threats after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. What happened during this same period to the space shuttle budget? In 1994, the budget for the shuttle was \$3.8 billion. It was cut each year for eight years by more than \$500 million. In 1997, \$200 million was moved from the "shuttle account" to the "space station account" by NASA with Congress' approval. Meanwhile, the space station budget grew to \$2.4 billion and then went down to \$2.1 billion. Due to NASA's many alternations in accounting during this 10-year period, it is extremely difficult to calculate

precise figures for many of these programs. The commission should get a detailed and thorough explanation on how much was spent and where the money went.

By 1996, a single prime contractor took over the shuttle operations. The "USA" on the astronauts' uniforms now stood for "United Space Alliance," a collaboration of private-sector companies. Did Congress object? Approve? Ring the alarm bells? I was a member of one of the responsible committees, and we didn't do enough.

The Gehman Commission should analyze the role of Congress in many of these important decisions. In the end, Congress may or may not be part of the problem. But it can be part of the solution.

The House and Senate space oversight committees have a historic opportunity to conduct 18 months of comprehensive oversight hearings over the remaining 108th Congress. They should produce a comprehensive and long-range report detailing general options for a pared down space station, a plan for robotic space exploration even beyond Mars, a robust replacement shuttle, a bigger and better Hubble telescope, and a vision for human space travel using nuclear propulsion technology. And they must propose an affordable and sustainable budget without sacrificing the viability of one program for the benefit of another.

This would be like the phoenix rising from earth, a testimony and living memorial to the seven *Columbia* astronauts. Together, their spirits and earthly remains would break "the surly bonds of earth."

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CEDAR CREEK AND BELLE GROVE NATIONAL PARK

**HON. FRANK R. WOLF**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 25, 2003*

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, on January 31, 2003, America opened its 388th park in the National Park Service: Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park. The establishment of this park represents years of hard work by many dedicated individuals and institutions. I am inserting into the RECORD an editorial by Adrian O'Connor, "History at Belle Grove" which appeared in the *Winchester Star* on February 1, 2003. This piece outlines the unique partnership which helped create this park and the plans for its future. Following this editorial is a list of those who played a seminal role in bringing this park into existence.

HISTORY AT BELLE GROVE—NOW THERE ARE 388 NATIONAL PARKS

History was made—or, should we say, further history was made—on a chilly, muscletightening morning near the front steps of Belle Grove Plantation.

With a gentle snow falling, cattle contentedly lowing in a distant pasture, and a late fog rolling across the surrounding fields—the latter a historical symmetry not lost on Virginia's senior senator, Republican John W. Warner—Cedar Creek Battlefield and Belle Grove Plantation because the 388th star in the National Park Service constellation.

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