

It took hard work and dedication to achieve this honor, and I congratulate the students, teachers, and others who make it happen. Valley High School enrolls over 2,200 students, and fully 600 students, nearly a third of the student body, participates in one or more music programs. On February 4, 1999 the GRAMMY Signature School designated Valley High School the best music program among 250 public schools from around the country. They were judged by a panel of top musical educators and professionals and were selected based on their high level of commitment to music education.

In light of this announcement, U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley, said, "At a time when creativity and communication skills are at a premium, schools like those being recognized at this program are using arts for their rich potential to captivate and engage students in the process of learning. The arts help children learn to solve problems, think creatively, and develop mental discipline, which are valuable skills for any academic endeavor."

Mr. President, year after year underfunded public schools continue to slash funding for all forms of arts and humanities education, thereby weakening the strong cultural heritage the United States has always enjoyed. We should therefore commend the students and teachers of the Valley High School music program for their commitment to a quality music education, and the benefits their efforts reap upon the cultural landscape of the state of Iowa. It is a true honor to serve as their Senator, and I believe they are examples of what all Americans should strive to be.●

GIRL SCOUTS FROM KETCHIKAN

● Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the work of three Girl Scouts from Ketchikan, Alaska. Angela Pfeifer, Chelsea Pfeifer and Tennille Walker are each working towards the Girl Scout Gold Award. As a part of their service, they are attempting to enhance the visibility, respect and care of the American flag in Ketchikan.

The following is an excerpt from a letter in which Chelsea explains the pride and respect she has for our nation's flag.

This Spring Break I went down to Florida to visit my grandparents. My Grandfather served in World War II. At 87, he still put up the U.S. flag every morning, and takes it down every night. It makes my think of the number of people who died serving this country, so that we could have the freedoms that we enjoy today. The flag serves as a symbol of the respect and honor that should be given to those who fought. I observed that many of the retired people display the Flag proudly on a daily basis outside their homes. It would be my goal to see that my generation carry out this tradition and be proud to be an American.

In their efforts to instill this same sense of pride and respect, Chelsea, Angela and Tennille have conducted school assemblies at Ketchikan area elementary schools, have placed flags in every classroom at Ketchikan High School and have spoken to local governments officials about erecting a new flag pole in Ketchikan City Park.

Currently, there is no flag flying in Ketchikan City Park. Angela, Chelsea and Tennille have addressed this with Ketchikan—Gateway Borough Mayor Jack Shay. As a result, the Mayor and Borough Assembly agreed to install a flag pole in City Park.

It is my honor to present these three outstanding Alaskans with an American flag flown over the United States Capitol. The flag will be presented to the City of Ketchikan on June 14, 1999, Flag Day, and will be the first flag to fly in City Park.

I commend the work of Angela, Chelsea and Tennille and the Girl Scouts of Ketchikan. They have shown their ability to make a difference and have made a lasting impression on their community.●

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VERMONT STATE PARK SYSTEM

● Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the 75th anniversary of the Vermont State Park System.

In 1924 Frances Humphreys donated the peak of Mt. Philo and surrounding lands to the State of Vermont as the first State Park. Mt. Philo was the perfect location for the first park; looking east from the summit one views Lake Champlain, North America's most beautiful lake stretching as far as the eye can see to the north and south; looking west one views the Green Mountain range rolling across Vermont to the Connecticut River. There are limitless recreational opportunities within and surrounding our first park.

After 75 years, Vermont now has 50 State Parks, from Alburg Dunes on Lake Champlain, to Wilgus on the Connecticut River; from Mount Mansfield, Vermont's highest peak to Quechee, our deepest gorge.

Vermont's State Parks are rich in history. Many of the nation's first ski trails were carved out in Vermont State Parks by the Civilian Conservation Corps, creating the New England ski industry. Under the direction Perry Merrill, who oversaw the State Parks for 37 years, more than 40,000 "CCC Boys" created a parks infrastructure that is intact, and unparalleled even today.

Recognition should also go to the many Vermonters who, over the years, have followed the example of Frances Humphreys in donating land to become state parks, including one of our newest parks, Sentinel Rock, which was recently donated by Windsor and Florence Wright.

Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that I recognize 75 years of visionary conservation and recreation development by the State of Vermont, and by those who have conceived and built the State Park System.●

TRIBUTE TO THE TOWN OF PLAISTOW, NEW HAMPSHIRE

● Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the town of Plaistow, New Hampshire on its two hundred and fiftieth anniversary. The town's residents will celebrate this historic occasion on June 27, 1999 with a number of festivities including a grand reception. I was proud to be invited to participate in this meaningful event.

Plaistow's history first dates back to the year 1642 when families first settled in the Plaistow area. It was then that the Plaistow area was purchased. In 1749, Plaistow was incorporated. At that time, it was separated from Haverhill, Massachusetts. Then Governor Benning Wentworth, along with King George II signed the town's first charter.

The town has had a rich and fruitful history. The First Baptist Church was built in 1837, and subsequently remodeled in 1906. The first Catholic Church, Holy Angels, was built in 1893, then redone in 1964. The first high school was built in 1966. Prior to that, the students traveled outside the town for schooling.

Plaistow has steadily grown throughout the years. In 1854, there were 800 people. In 1949, the town had grown to 1800 people. Today, over 7000 people are residents of Plaistow.

Through the years, Plaistow residents have courageously served their country. They have served in the Colonial War, Revolutionary War, Civil War, World War I, World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War.

The most well known benefactor of the town was Arthur Pollard. Pollard donated the bell for the First Baptist Church, the land for Pollard School and the town hall, and the Civil War statue and cannons on the town green.

I congratulate the town of Plaistow, and all of the dedicated and patriotic citizens there. I am proud to be their Senator.●

HONORING THE LIVINGSTONS ON THEIR 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

● Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, families are the cornerstone of America. Individuals from strong families contribute to the society. In an era when nearly half of all couples married today will see their union dissolve into divorce, I believe it is both instructive and important to honor those who have taken the commitment of "till death us do part" seriously, demonstrating