

Which brings me to today. All of the aforementioned guidance that has previously been given to us in vast bundles, will soon shrink. Not because of lack of concern or interest, but rather an increase in physical distance. We, the alumni to be, of Orange Park High School, will soon be out on our own. We will blaze our own trails, straying from the beaten path, and make our own decisions. For the first time in our young lives, we will be completely responsible for ourselves. We will have to deal with large decisions, such as what to do after graduation, and small, seemingly unimportant ones, like what to eat for dinner.

Each decision that we make, will shape our futures, no matter how small the matter seems. Our slates are clean, and the books of our lives are waiting to be written, by us, alone. We need to take our precious gift of life, and run with it. We need to live our lives for ourselves, and nobody else. We need to remember that the decisions we make, can never be changed, and must be thought out, for ourselves alone.

But, most importantly, we need not look back on our pasts and ask what if, but rather, look only at the present, and to the future. If we wonder about, and dwell upon the past, our lives will pass us by. Pondering over the past brings nothing but pain, regrets, and the deepest of sorrows. So, we, the senior class of 2001, must walk the fine line of remembering the past, but not dwelling on it.

Finally, I leave you, my fellow classmates with this. We, for the first time in our lives, have nothing hanging over our heads, and the world at our feet. We must not waste this opportunity, for we will never have one like it, ever again.

For, it is not until we have lost everything, that we are truly free to do anything.

HONORING "SHOULDER-TO-SHOULDER" AWARD WINNER, MR. HOMER LUTHER

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 7, 2001

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment and thank Mr. Homer Luther for his service to the National Park Service. For over a quarter of a century, Homer has dedicated his life to protecting our national parks. For that Mr. Speaker, he deserves the thanks of Congress.

Homer is the Director of the Yellowstone, Grand Teton, and Mesa Verde National Parks Foundation. On May 16, 2001, he was presented the "Shoulder-to-Shoulder" award in recognition of his personal service, commitment and dedication to national park units within the Intermountain Region.

Homer started working with the National Park Service during President Nixon's second administration. One of the big issues facing newly appointed Parks Director Ron Walker was the use of snowmobiles in national parks. Ron recruited Homer to join him on a five-day personal research snowmobiling outfit. In the 70's, Homer served his first term.

Following two terms on the National Park Foundation Board, Homer decided to form the

National Park Foundation Alumni Council, where he still serves as the Chair. He decided to form this council because it was critical not to lose the talents and energies of those whose terms were expiring.

A few years ago, the staff at Mesa Verde National Park became aware that a critical parcel of land was going to be sold. Homer was concerned that it would be developed in a way that would harm the areas natural values. "He challenged other Foundation board members to join him in raising sufficient funds to purchase the tract of land to preserve the gateway experience to the park. Thanks to Mr. Luther's leadership, this land is now protected," said Regional Director Karen Wade.

Mr. Speaker, for the last 30 years, Homer Luther has helped to keep America's National Parks beautiful and well maintained. His expertise and leadership on this issue has been a real benefit to the Park Service and to everybody who uses the National Parks. I would like to thank him on behalf of Congress for all his hard work and dedication.

GREAT SOFTBALL IN THE 6TH DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA

HON. HOWARD COBLE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 7, 2001

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, on June 3, the Sixth District of North Carolina became the home of the 2-A state championship softball team—Southwestern Randolph High School in Asheboro. The Cougars completed their title run with a season record of 24-3. After making it to the state championship series the past three years, the team finally brought the title home when they beat East Bend Forbush 2-1.

Jennifer Hurley, senior pitcher for Southwestern Randolph, allowed just one hit for the duration of two games on Saturday. On Sunday, during the title game, she yielded one run on three hits, but slammed the door on any further scoring by Forbush. Lee Harris's home run during the title game was all the offensive firepower the Cougars would need when in the first inning she went deep. This two-run homer, the first in Harris's career at Southwestern Randolph, set the Cougars on their way to the title. For her efforts, Harris was named the tournament MVP.

Southwestern completed an inspirational season thanks, in no small part, to a compelling figure who never played a single inning—Jennifer Hurley's younger brother Drew. For the 14 years of his life, Drew has battled a condition similar to cerebral palsy. He is unable to speak, can hear in only one ear, and his limbs move in sudden jerks. Despite this constant struggle, Drew is at every game. The Cougars drew inspiration from Drew. After every victory, Drew would put on a batting helmet, and Jennifer would push him around the base paths in his wheelchair until he crossed home plate. It became a team ritual that brought the Cougars together and inspired them to victory. I read Drew's story in the Greensboro News & Record, and that prompted my attendance at one of the early Cougars' playoff games.

Congratulations are in order for Head Coach Steve Taylor along with his assistants Lee McCaskill and Harry Daniel. Supporting the team efforts were Managers Stacey McCaskill, C.J. Taylor, Heather Taylor, and Kurtis Taylor along with Statistician Luanne Deaton.

Members of the championship team included Megan Moody, Natalie King, Abby Auman, Kari McLeod, Crystal McPherson, Jennifer Hurley, Krystal Parker, Ashley Vereyken, Wendy Heath, Jodi Johnson, Beth Auman, Emily Ivey, Lesley Greene, Wendy Seawell, Lee Ann Chandler, Erica Tackett, Cristina Tedder, Mary Beth Sillmon, Crystal Hudson, and Lee Harris.

Everyone at Southwestern Randolph High School can be proud of the Cougars. On behalf of the citizens of the Sixth District, we congratulate Athletic Director Trent Taylor, Principal Dr. W. Thrift and everyone at Southwestern Randolph for winning the state 2-A softball championship.

THE TRUTH BEHIND THE CARIBOU UPROAR

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 7, 2001

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member commends a May 25, 2001, editorial from the Omaha World Herald, regarding the firing of the U.S. Geological Survey contract cartographer who posted an Alaskan caribou map on the Internet, causing an uproar in the environmental community. There was more to this story than originally reported. The information in the map was outdated and inaccurate, and the cartographer had no expertise or responsibility for caribou studies. The cartographer since has become a martyr for environmentalists opposed to drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), albeit under false pretenses.

THE PURGE THAT WASN'T

[From the Omaha World-Herald, May 25, 2001]

Members of Congress have railed about it. More than 80 environmental and other groups sent Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton an angry letter in response to it. Foreign newspapers featured breathless coverage of it. An article in a British newspaper concluded that, because of it, the Bush administration "actually appears to be bear a grudge against the natural world."

The hubbub is over Ian Thomas, a cartographer for the U.S. Geological Survey who was fired in March after he posted a map of caribou migrations in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, a portion of which the Bush administration has proposed for oil drilling. The geological survey also had the map removed from the Web.

In their letter to Norton, the 88 environmental and other groups claimed that the firing of Thomas indicated a disturbing politicizing of government research and sent "a chilling message to all government scientists."

The day after he was fired, Thomas accepted a job with the World Wildlife Fund and is now hailed as a martyr to the environmental cause.

It seems a straightforward story, a tale of nefarious Republican misdeeds and shameless toadying to oil interests. Certainly that