

blood drive, Monroe County donors have generously given over 4,000 units of blood each year. The chapter offers courses in cardiopulmonary resuscitation, first aid, water safety, baby-sitting and HIV/AIDS education, and remains the primary link between U.S. armed forces personnel and their families in Monroe County.

Mr. President, as I was preparing this statement I was reminded once again of the essential role the American Red Cross plays in our communities. Born from the mythic efforts of Clara Barton during the Civil War, the organization currently has more than 1.3 million volunteers working under its banner, providing disaster relief services for victims of more than 66,000 disasters per year. More importantly, the American Red Cross still holds firm to the principles it was founded upon. The mission remains to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. That is why, when things are at their worst, it continues to be the American Red Cross and its volunteers that are there to make them better.

Mr. President, I applaud the Monroe County Chapter of the American Red Cross on eighty-five years of successful service to the Monroe Community, and I extend a much deserved thank you to the many staff and volunteers whose efforts throughout the years have made this event possible. On behalf of the entire Senate, I wish them continued success in the future.●

#### MICHAEL DOBMEIER

● Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to Michael Dobmeier and to recognize him as a member of a distinguished group of North Dakotans who have demonstrated extraordinary leadership in their military careers and civilian life.

Michael was recently elected National Commander of the million-member Disabled American Veterans, a group with a historic tradition of advocating responsible legislation to assist disabled veterans, their families and survivors. Speaking of the DAV recently Michael said, "I soon discovered the critical role the DAV serves in the lives of disabled veterans and their families in my community and communities nationwide." I wholeheartedly agree with this statement and attest to the fact that Michael has exemplified through his many significant achievements the great importance of the Disabled American Veterans.

Michael Dobmeier is a native of Grand Forks, North Dakota. After graduating from high-school, he enlisted in the navy in 1969. Following boot camp in San Diego, he trained as an engine man in Great Lakes, Illinois, attended Submarine School in New London, Connecticut, and, later Diver's School in San Diego.

While serving off the coast of Washington in April 1972 aboard the U.S.S. *Trigger*, Michael was severely burned when an engine crankcase oil heater

exploded. It sprayed him with flaming oil and caused him 2nd and 3rd degree burns over more than 30% of his body.

Following this accident, Michael received a military discharge and joined the Grand Forks' Disabled American Veterans Chapter 2. Since then, he has held almost every local, state, and national leadership position in the organization and has held all chapter and department leadership positions. At the 1994 DAV National Convention, Michael was chosen to serve on the National Executive and Finance Committee, was elected 4th and 3rd Junior Vice Commander consecutively at the 1995 and 1996 DAV National Conventions, and at the 1997 National Convention was elected 1st Junior Vice Commander. In 1998, Michael was elected Senior Vice Commander at the National Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada. He was also the president of the North Dakota Veterans Home Foundation and was chosen the 1985 DAV Outstanding Member of the Department of North Dakota.

Michael Dobmeier resides in Grand Forks with his wife Sandra Jo and their two children. As owner and President of Dobmeier, Inc., an independent insurance company, Michael has also found success in the business world.

I am proud to honor Michael Dobmeier as a person who has served his country with distinction and accepted the challenges and risks associated with this service. As Michael recently stated, "taking risks means moving forward while others are waiting for better times, while others are waiting for proven results, and while others are waiting for applause for their past performance. The greatest risk of all, however, is to take no risks . . . make no changes." We thank Mr. Dobmeier today for taking those risks. The world is truly a better place because of him.●

#### INTERNATIONAL ASTRONOMY DAY

● Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of International Astronomy Day. This event seeks "to promote the forerunner of all scientific endeavors and to provide information, resources, and encouragement in all facets of astronomy."

Astronomy has played a central role in human history and development. It was somewhere around 4000 B.C. when the first astronomical observations were recorded, and what has followed has been nothing short of amazing. In 240 B.C., Eratosthenes of Cyrene used the stars to calculate the circumference of the earth. Astronomy as we know it today certainly owes Galileo a debt of gratitude for being the first to use a telescope to view the stars, bringing an end to naked-eye astronomy and advancing the science of optics. More recent astronomers include Edwin P. Hubble and Jocelyn Bell. The collective work of the world's astronomers has brought the heavens closer, while offering us great insights into our own life on Earth.

To continue these advances of science, it is vital that we encourage our nation's youth to pursue careers in the fields of astronomy, astrophysics, and mathematics. I look upon the success of the NASA space camps and how they have encouraged our youth to pursue careers in the sciences. Since 1989, NASA has administered the "Space Grant" program to enhance aerospace research and education in the United States. This program is an effective partnership among universities, the aerospace industry, and federal, state, and local government that assists in the recruitment and training of professionals in aerospace science, engineering, and technology.

In my home state, the Minnesota Space Grant Consortium is comprised of 13 academic institutions along with the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Honeywell, Boeing, and three community-based entities: The Bakken, Science Museum of Minnesota, and SciMathMN. The 13 academic institutions are: Augsburg College, Bemidji State University, Bethel College, Carleton College, College of St. Catherine, Fond du Lac Community College, Leech Lake Tribal College, Macalester College, Normandale Community College, Southwest State University, University of Minnesota-Duluth, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, and the University of St. Thomas.

For the last several years, this consortium of local talents has worked effectively to promote aerospace science through fellowships and scholarships, the development of new courses in Physics and Geology, the establishment of a new Space Studies minor among the members, and public lectures relating to space science and engineering.

The scientists, engineers, administrators, and astronauts of NASA have guided this nation to the forefront of aeronautical expertise. I am proud that Minnesotans have been central to NASA's achievements throughout its history. My state has a well-deserved reputation as a high-technology giant, making our job creators a perfect match with NASA, and the space agency has come to depend upon Minnesota ingenuity and expertise. Dozens of Minnesota firms currently work under NASA's space shuttle program; I was honored to witness their accomplishments first-hand in 1997 when I toured NASA's Florida facilities and viewed the launch of the space shuttle Columbia.

None of these achievements would have been possible without modern astronomy, and our astronomers will no doubt be at the center of space research for years to come. In Minnesota, we are fortunate to have many groups that are determined to keep the interest in astronomy high for all generations. I would like to draw your attention to the Minnesota Astronomical Society, whose members are active in the growing movement to generate interest in astronomy. I commend them