

Academic Team meet those achievements and dreams.●

50th ANNIVERSARY OF WORLD MEDICAL RELIEF, INC.

● Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I would like to congratulate World Medical Relief, Inc. for 50 years of distinguished service to needy individuals in the United States and around the world. On March 8, 2003, staff members, supporters, and beneficiaries of World Medical Relief, Inc. services will gather in my home state of Michigan for the "Miracles of Mercy Gala 2003." This event will commemorate the commitment and dedication that World Medical Relief, Inc. has provided to the sick and needy.

For 50 years, World Medical Relief, Inc. has been a driving force for medical support both in my home state of Michigan and internationally. It is noteworthy that the success and accomplishments of this program today are in part the direct result of the unwavering devotion of founder Irene M. Auberlin. The hard work and perseverance of Mrs. Auberlin is now reflected by the many individuals and groups that continue to provide assistance to those most in need.

Today, the program serves over 1,500 people in the metropolitan Detroit area and 125 nations worldwide. I would like to congratulate William N. Genematas for receiving this year's Irene M. Auberlin Service Above Self Award for his long-time dedication to World Medical Relief, Inc. I also would like to commend both the Ford Motor Company Fund for its continued support of the Senior Prescription Program and the Christian Association of Medical Mission for their international aid efforts in developing nations. World Medical Relief, Inc. and its members deserve both our respect and gratitude.

I am sure that my colleagues in the Senate will join me in offering our congratulations to World Medical Relief, Inc. and its members as they celebrate 50 years of distinguished service.●

THE HEROIC EFFORTS OF BILL CARR AND JEFF KEEZER

● Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, today it is my great honor to recognize the valiant efforts of two volunteer firefighters from Ainsworth, NE.

Mr. Bill Carr and Mr. Jeff Keezer of the Ainsworth Volunteer Firefighter Department were instrumental in the April 22, 2002 rescue attempt of Timothy Culpepper, a digital communications worker who was stranded more than one thousand one hundred feet in the air when a fifteen hundred foot telecommunications tower he was working on partially collapsed near Bassett, NE.

When a wire snapped disabling and stranding Mr. Culpepper, several agencies, including the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, were called upon for the dangerous rescue

mission. However, upon arriving at the scene, response teams realized they were ill-equipped to perform the high-altitude rescue.

Bill Carr, a carpenter and married father of three, had spent many summers during college painting tall communications towers. Jeff Keezer, a married father of one, works for a steel company that erects hundred-foot grain elevators. Though these experiences could not have adequately prepared them for this dangerous and technically challenging rescue. They quickly volunteered to help.

With no regard for their personal safety, Mr. Carr and Mr. Keezer, armed only with estimations of the exact height of the stranded worker, began to make the physically challenging two-hour ascent to rescue the man who was hanging only by a harness. Carrying bundles of rope and heavy rescue equipment, these brave firefighters, along with a handful on colleagues from the Lincoln Fire Department, scaled the tower amid 30-mph winds and with dwindling daylight. Upon reaching Mr. Culpepper it was discovered that tragically he did not survive the impact of tumbling debris.

Mr. Carr and two other firefighters managed to scale the total distance to Mr. Culpepper in ninety minutes while Mr. Keezer, with heavy rescue equipment on his back, and two other firefighters scaled to the half-way point to manage the recovery effort and descent that lasted more than 3 hours.

Unfortunately these two brave and selfless first-responders were omitted from an award ceremony in Washington, D.C. on February 14. Though the Department of Justice didn't recognize their efforts, Mr. Carr and Mr. Keezer can forever hold their heads high knowing their bravery and the fabric of their character has made all Nebraskans, and especially their neighbors in Ainsworth, proud of their actions.

Mr. President, heroism comes in many forms and the courage displayed by Mr. Carr and Mr. Keezer with danger present is a shining example. Nebraskans like Mr. Carr and Mr. Keezer are selfless, honorable and just and they are what makes living in Nebraska living "the good life."

I am proud to represent Nebraskans like Mr. Carr and Mr. Keezer who are committed public servants. Volunteer services are an essential part of small-town America. Without the brave and selfless efforts of everyday citizens like Mr. Keezer and Mr. Carr, many rural communities would lack vital protection and security. The city of Ainsworth and the state of Nebraska are fortunate to have courageous citizens like Jeff Keezer and Bill Carr. These men are true heroes.●

NEW REVOLVER TOO BIG FOR "DIRTY" HARRY

● Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I want to bring to the attention of my colleagues

an article from the February 14, 2003, Los Angeles Times entitled "New Revolver Too Big For 'Dirty' Harry." The article discusses a new .50 caliber handgun manufactured by the Smith and Wesson Corporation. The 500 model, the biggest handgun currently in production, is 15 inches long, weighs 4.5 pounds, and uses a .50 caliber Magnum Smith and Wesson bullet that packs a muzzle force of 2,600 foot-pounds. The bullet is half an inch wide and is more powerful than comparable ammunition because it is much longer and contains more gun powder.

According to a Violence Policy Center expert cited in the article, the gun's cartridge has about twice the muzzle energy of most rounds for common semiautomatic assault weapons, such as the AR-15, a civilian version of the military's M-16. In fact, the new gun packs a punch powerful enough to stop a charging bear in its tracks.

A Smith and Wesson representative acknowledges that the company hopes the gun will help Smith and Wesson win back market share lost when the company agreed to a number of steps to improve gun safety and keep guns out of the hands of criminals. Smith and Wesson's decision to produce the .50 caliber handgun represents a step backward in the effort to improve gun safety. Not only has the company apparently scrapped its plan to work with the federal government to take sensible steps to make guns safer and keep guns from getting into the wrong hands, but the company seems to be headed in the opposite direction by creating a handgun that is reported to have double the power of most assault rifles.

Last year, I cosponsored the Military Sniper Weapon Regulation Act, a bill which would change the way .50 caliber sniper rifles are regulated by placing them under the requirements of the National Firearms Act. This bill would subject the sniper rifles to the same regimen of registration and background checks as other weapons of war, such as machine guns.

Unfortunately, the new Smith and Wesson .50 caliber handgun would not be affected by this legislation. However, both the .50 caliber handgun and sniper rifle are simply too powerful to be on the streets. Congress must take a long, hard look at these potentially lethal weapons.

[From the L.A. Times, Feb. 14, 2003]

A POWERFUL NEW REVOLVER IS DRAWING FIRE ALREADY

(By Ralph Frammolino and Steve Berry)

Even the most ardent firearm lovers acknowledge that Smith & Wesson's new .50-caliber Magnum revolver is more gun than anyone needs.

It has double the power of most assault rifles in America. Its kick can send a grown man reeling; a single bullet can drop a grizzly. It is so heavy and long that police say no-criminal would dare try to hide it in his waistband. It will cost as much \$989.

And gun buyers across the country can't wait to get their hands on it.

"The initial reaction has been even stronger than we had anticipated, so we're ramping

up production to meet the demand," Bob Scott, Smith & Wesson Corp.'s chairman, said from the 2003 Shooting, Hunting, Outdoor Trade Show in Orlando, Fla.

"Certainly, in our booth it's the product that has created the most buzz."

The Springfield, Mass.-based company, creator of the .44 Magnum of "Dirty Harry" fame, unveiled its new offering Thursday as the world most powerful commercially produced revolver. Executives for the country's second-largest firearms manufacturer said they hoped the gun would help regain lost market share by generating excitement among an important, albeit niche, market of big-game hunters, collectors and recreational target shooters.

But even before the weapon's wide distribution, scheduled for next month, forces on both sides of the firearms debate are taking aim at its social effects.

Gun control groups condemned the Model 500 as an example of the industry's "deadlier-is-better" mentality, predicting that the new model would soon find its way to the streets.

"A hunting weapon? That's a joke," said Luis Tolley, director of state legislation for the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence. "What we have here is a weapon that's designed to appeal to people who just want to make a bigger hole in whatever they're shooting at. And, hopefully, they're not living next door to me."

Said Josh Sugarmann, executive director of the Violence Policy Center: "This gun is not being made for hunters in Africa. It's being made for bored white gun owners in America. Why are they putting so much firepower into people's hands?"

The real question, say some gun experts, is: Why are people demanding it?

Adam Firestone, editor of Cruffler.com, a Web site for gun collectors, said he viewed demand for Smith & Wesson's new product as more of an outgrowth of America's obsession with size and status, rather than an indicator of growing paranoia over crime or homeland security.

"How many people do you know have Lincoln Navigators or Hummer H2s?" he said. "We are phenomenal at buying beyond our needs. And with regard to the firearm industry, if it is bigger, if it is more expensive . . . we will line up around the corner to buy the darned thing, regardless of the fact that there may be six other guns that cost half as much and do the job just as well."

Smith & Wesson executives hope that the new offering, one of nine new models introduced at the Florida gun show Thursday, will put it back in the good graces of a gun-buying constituency that remains sore over the company's decision in 2000 to sign agreements with the federal government that promised to put locks on all firearms it sold.

That backlash served as a double whammy, taking away sales from Smith & Wesson even as the entire industry was in decline.

"We're in the process of winning back market share or business that was lost as a result of negative reaction by consumers to the decisions by the previous ownership," said Scott, the company chairman.

Smith & Wesson has built its reputation by building bigger guns. The .357 Magnum, introduced in 1935, was considered a breakthrough because of its muzzle energy that delivered impact at 535 foot-pounds, said Roy G. Jinks, the company's historian.

The weapon, developed at the behest of hunters, gained favor with police during the mobster era because it could shoot through a car's engine block, he said.

In 1956, Smith & Wesson introduced the even more powerful .44 Magnum, the gun made famous years later by Clint Eastwood in his crime-fighting movies as "Dirty" Harry Callahan, a San Francisco cop.

With Thursday's unveiling the company now leapfrogs ahead of its competitors, which had surpassed the .44 Magnum with more potent weapons.

The Model 500 uses a bigger frame, takes a new .50 caliber Magnum Smith & Wesson bullet and packs a muzzle force of 2,600 foot-pounds.

Though there are single-shot, custom pistols that use larger ammunition, the new gun is the largest production revolver or semiautomatic pistol.

At .50-caliber, the bullet is about half an inch wide but is more powerful than other such ammunition because it is longer and can pack more powder, said Garen Wintemute, a gun expert and director of the Violence Prevention Research Program at UC Davis.

He said the gun's cartridge has about twice the muzzle energy of most rounds for common semiautomatic assault weapons used in America, such as the AR-15, a civilian version of the military's M-16.

Wintemute predicted that it would be a smash with gun enthusiasts who can order one with a barrel as long as 10 inches.

One such enthusiast is Marc Halcon, owner of American Shooting Center in San Diego.

He said the allure of the weapon "has something to do with the artistry of creating a mechanism that will do something that no other will do. It's another step in science and engineering."

On a personal level, Halcon said. "I already own the most powerful handgun on the market, and if they build a more powerful one, then I want to buy it."

Sam Paredes, executive director of the Gun Owners of California feels much the same.

"I can't wait to shoot one of these things," he said.

Paredes acknowledged that the Model 500 could be portrayed as the "boogeyman of all guns."

He said its recoil would pack such a wallop that it would be virtually impossible for criminals to rely on it—a sentiment shared by Lt. Bruce Harris, the firing range master for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

"It's a little tough to have one of those under your shirt," Harris said, adding that he didn't believe it would become the weapon of the street because "gangbangers don't have \$900 to spend on a Smith & Wesson revolver."

Proposed legislation regulating the sale of .50 caliber rifles is scheduled for consideration in the state Assembly and the Los Angeles City Council, said Tolley of the Brady Campaign. But government officials said Thursday that they had no plans to include the new revolver in the restrictions.

Still, Tolley said, his group will work to bring the Model 500 under some kind of control because, despite Smith & Wesson's intentions, the weapon is bound to end up in the wrong hands.

"They're marketing this weapon to people who get off on the idea that they have the biggest, baddest gun on the block," Tolley said.

"Unfortunately a number of them are going to juvenile gang members and people who have an unhealthy fascination with fire arms."•

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, 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.)

NOTICE STATING THAT THE EMERGENCY DECLARED WITH RESPECT TO THE GOVERNMENT OF CUBA ON FEBRUARY 24, 1996, IS TO CONTINUE IN EFFECT BEYOND MARCH 1, 2003—PM 18

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice, stating that the emergency declared with respect to the Government of Cuba's destruction of two unarmed U.S.-registered civilian aircraft in international airspace north of Cuba on February 24, 1996, is to continue in effect beyond March 1, 2003, to the *Federal Register* for publication.

GEORGE W. BUSH.

THE WHITE HOUSE, February 27, 2003.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:39 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hays, 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. 254. An act to authorize the President of the United States to agree to certain amendments to the Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the United Mexican States concerning the establishment of a Border Environment Cooperation Commission and a North American Development Bank, and for other purposes.

H.R. 258. An act to ensure continuity of the design of the 5-cent coin, establish the Citizens Coinage Advisory Committee, and for other purposes.

H.R. 657. An act to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to augment the emergency authority of the Securities and Exchange Commission.

H.R. 672. An act to rename the Guam South Elementary/Middle School of the Department of Defense Domestic Dependents Elementary and Secondary Schools System in honor of Navy Commander William "Willie" McCool, who was the pilot of the Space Shuttle Columbia when it was tragically lost on February 1, 2003.