

The Tigers got outstanding performances from several players during the season. True Freshman Justin Vincent was named the most valuable player of the Southeastern Conference Championship game against Georgia, where he rushed for 201 yards and the Sugar Bowl where he ran for 117 yards with 1 touchdown.

LSU's defense led by first team all-American Chad Lavalais ranked number 1 in the Nation this season in scoring defense allowing only an average of 11 points per game and only yielding more than 20 points in 1 game. The defense was the difference in the National Championship game as Defensive End Marcus Spears intercepted a Jason White pass and ran it back for what turned out to be the go ahead touchdown.

But this is not the only title that now resides in Louisiana. The Southern University Jaguars defeated Alabama State University 20–9 to win their 19th Southwestern Athletic Conference title and become the SBN Black College Football National Champions.

Under the guidance of Pete Richardson, this year's Southwestern Conference coach of the year, the Jaguars earned their 5th conference title in Coach Richardson's 11 year tenure and defeated Grambling State University in a 44–41 shootout to win the annual Bayou Classic held in the New Orleans Superdome.

Southern Quarterback Quincy Richard was named the Offensive Player of the year and was named to the SBN Black College All American Team, along with offensive lineman Arnold Sims, Miniya Smith, and defensive back Lenny Williams.

It is an honor to congratulate both these teams on a memorable and historic season that will forever bring great pride to each University and the people to Louisiana.

Mr. BAKER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Without objection, the previous question is ordered.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS FOR AMTRAK

(Mr. BLUMENAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon with some good news and bad news for Amtrak. I congratulate Amtrak for having the highest ridership ever experienced in the Nation's intercity passenger rail service in its 32-year history. In my region of the Pacific Northwest, we have seen ridership increase 520 percent since the inception just 10 years ago of service between Eugene and Seattle and on to Vancouver, BC. It has had massive improvements in its infrastructure; very, very exciting.

The bad news is that, despite all of this progress with Amtrak, we have a proposal from the administration that would break it apart, it would privatize it, it would lease out its assets and

abandon some of its routes, which would jeopardize the very existence of this important transportation mode. It would place heavy financial burdens on the States to fund what is essentially a national system, the only country in the world that has abandoned its commitment to rail passenger service.

I sincerely hope, Mr. Speaker, that this Chamber will once again rise to the support of a strong intercity rail passenger system, support Amtrak, support the new leadership there under President David Gunn, and provide a service that the American public desperately wants.

LIABILITY REFORM MEANS HUGE SAVINGS

(Mr. BURGESS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot of discussion in the past couple of days about the Medicare bill that we passed at daybreak on November 22 of this past year, and a lot of that discussion has centered around the fact of was that prescription drug benefit \$400 billion over 10 years or was it \$500 billion over 10 years.

The fact of the matter remains, whether it is \$40 billion or \$50 billion a year over the next 10 years, Mr. Speaker, there is an equal amount of money that could be saved right now, this year, in the Medicare program if we would simply pass the liability reform that this House took up over a year ago.

Mr. Speaker, in my home State of Texas, we recently passed a constitutional amendment to allow the same type of caps on noneconomic damages in medical liability suits; and we have seen medical liability insurance prices fall in our State. But, more importantly, the cost of defensive medicine is estimated by a study out of Stanford University to be \$50 billion a year. That is the same amount of money that the prescription drug benefit will cost at the higher estimate from Health and Human Services.

Mr. Speaker, if Texas has passed a law we might say, why do we think the Nation needs a law? Just because of that reason: because of the cost to the Medicare system. Mr. Speaker, we could generate that savings tomorrow if we could urge our colleagues in the other body to take up that bill.

GENERAL DAVID H. PETRAEUS JOINS RANKS OF AMERICA'S GREAT MILITARY LEADERS

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, America has a long tradition of producing great generals; and Major General David Petraeus, the Commander of the 101st Airborne Division, has joined

the ranks of America's great military leaders. Like his predecessors, Generals Washington, Patton, and Eisenhower, to name a few, he has spent a career defending our Nation and bringing freedom to people all over the world.

I have been to Iraq and I have seen General Petraeus' leadership firsthand, and the awards and distinctions that he has received in his career are not empty. The true meaning behind each of these commendations is crystal-clear when you meet the men, women, and children who would have lived a lifetime of terror under the old Iraq had the General of the 101st Airborne from Fort Campbell not helped lead Operation Iraqi Freedom. He is an example of why the American military is so great. He is a true leader.

Today, we join the newly-free people of Iraq to thank him for his dedication to our Nation and our belief that no people should be denied freedom.

□ 1700

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). The Chair will recognize Members for Special Order speeches without prejudice to possible further legislative business.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HINCHEY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

WARMING OF THE EARTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Speaker, what I would like to do this evening is give the Members some ideas of a phenomenon that is occurring in the oceans that is clearly observed by the scientific community that is having an effect on the Earth's climate.

Ocean currents that flow throughout the entire world stabilize the heat balance on the planet so that the northern