

When the University of Colorado Buffaloes men's basketball team played in creaky, sweat-spiced Balch Fieldhouse, raucous silver-and-gold partisans routinely turned out, and longtime coach Walseth's scrappy squads seldom disappointed.

Under Walseth from 1956 to 1976, the CU men's squads captured three conference titles—including their last, in 1969—and three NCAA invitations in an era when they were much harder to come by.

And from 1980-83, he coached the CU women, winning two conference championships and orchestrating an astounding 43-game home-court winning streak.

But what's most impressive was that he did it all with plenty of home-grown talent. Few players under his tutelage failed to improve.

Personally, he was beloved by many who knew him from as far back as his playing days for the Buffs in the 1940s. He was blunt, friendly and colorful, and his friends have literally hundreds of tales to tell about him. Sox Walseth died Wednesday of cancer at home in Boulder. He was 77.

## NASA'S MARS ROVER AND SPACE EXPLORATION

### HON. LAMAR S. SMITH

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 11, 2004*

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, few scientists write as well as Seth Shostak, senior astronomer at the SETI Institute in Mountain View, California. This column he wrote about the Mars rover for the San Jose Mercury News offers compelling arguments for pursuing scientific discoveries and exploring space.

[From the San Jose Mercury News, Jan. 7, 2004]

#### GEOLOGIST ON WHEELS TAKES HUMAN CURIOSITY TO MARS

OUR DRIVE TO EXPLORE LEADS TO BETTER LIVES  
(By Seth Shostak)

One hundred million miles away, the mechanical innards of NASA's Spirit rover have begun to hum in the brittle cold of the Martian air. The rover is a synthetic geologist on wheels, small enough to fit in your kitchen, and the space agency is reveling in the fact that Spirit has managed to elude the silent death that has claimed so many of humankind's envoys to the Red Planet.

The boost to NASA's confidence, badly eroded by the loss of the shuttle Columbia, is surely a good thing. If Spirit and its sister rover, Opportunity, perform well, the Bush administration may support a major new space initiative, perhaps a return to the moon or a human expedition to Mars.

Those would also be good things, but such judgments, coming, from a scientist, may seem obvious and self-serving. American taxpayers will rightfully ask why it's important to shell out \$800 million to send a pair of cybernetic skateboards to another world.

#### MARTIAN CHARISMA

One answer is the interest and value of the science. For two centuries, Mars has beguiled us with its Earth-like appearance. Venus is closer, but Mars is charismatic; it is sufficiently similar to our own planet to warrant the hope that it once spawned life. And the possibility of discovering life beyond Earth is a siren song to anyone with curiosity, even if, as is surely the case for Mars, that life is no more sophisticated than bread yeast.

NASA's approach to learning whether microbes ever populated the Red Planet is to look for signs of ancient lakes, rivers or oceans. Spirit will explore a flat-bottomed crater that may once have held a body of water half the size of Lake Erie. Its mission is to find evidence for this erstwhile lake by examining the rocks littering the crater floor.

#### SIGNS OF LIFE?

If Spirit discovers that water once ebbed and flowed on Mars, the next questions are: For how long? Long enough to germinate life? NASA will send a string of robot explorers to address this question, and to ultimately seek out microscopic Martians. The carrot that hangs before us is deliciously seductive: If another world—the next world out from the sun—is proved to have supported life, that would imply that the cosmos is drenched with living things. We could conclude that planets with life are as common as phone poles.

That's the science, and it's exciting. But science is no more than curiosity imbued with logic. Surely, in a world awash in political upheaval, epidemics and poverty, curiosity is a dispensable luxury.

It's not. Curiosity is hard-wired into our behavior because it has survival value. For 300 millenniums, it has driven us to exploration and understanding. The former has encouraged the discovery of new resources, and the latter allows us a comfortable life in a pitiless world.

Curiosity is the silent motor of progress, without which we are condemned to a steadily worsening existence as we burn through our resources.

#### ANSWERING QUESTIONS

Humans display many behaviors that separate us from the beasts. Art, music, poetry . . . the list is easily formulated. Curiosity, neither incidental nor trivial, is on that list. In simpler times, it drove our ancestors to wander across the mountains and, on occasion, to find a valley that was better than where they started. Today, scientific curiosity turns up answers to questions that previous generations could barely ask.

The Spirit rover is a small actor in a long play with a large cast. It is aptly named, for it represents not only the best of our enterprises, but also an essential quality of our being. Spirit is mechanical in construction only. It is quintessentially human.

## A PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING MARGARET AND STAN PLANTON

### HON. ROBERT W. NEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 11, 2004*

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker:

Whereas, Margaret and Stan Planton have provided years of dedication to improving their community, including Margaret's service as the Mayor of Chillicothe; and

Whereas, Margaret and Stan Planton, along with members of their community, arranged a letter-writing campaign to help convince United States Enrichment Corporation (USEC) to build its uranium centrifuge plant in Piketon, Ohio; and

Whereas, Stan Planton worked tirelessly to gather information about USEC's plans and convey the information to Members of Congress and other legislators; and

Whereas, on January 12th, 2004, Piketon, Ohio, was selected as the site for USEC's

centrifuge plant, bringing an estimated 500 permanent high-paying jobs into the area; and Whereas, Margaret and Stan Planton were an integral part in Southern Ohio being chosen as the site for USEC's plant;

Therefore, I join with Members of Congress and the entire Eighteenth Congressional District of Ohio in thanking Margaret and Stan Planton for their dedication to this project and their continued efforts to improve their community.

## ACKNOWLEDGING THE SERVICE OF SHARON VIGIL

### HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 11, 2004*

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge an important leader in the business community of Colorado. Ms. Sharon Vigil, president and chief operating officer of the Denver Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, will be leaving her post after 14 years of service.

Established in 1978, the Denver Hispanic Chamber of Commerce has proven to be an outstanding member of the Colorado business community. Whether through influencing legislation, providing technical assistance to Hispanic businesses and professional associations, or strengthening the network of Colorado businesses as a whole, the Denver Hispanic Chamber of Commerce has been an exceptionally effective organization.

Sharon Vigil was born in Walsenburg and raised in Pueblo, later attending school in Boulder at the University of Colorado. As an active member of the civil rights movement during the 1970s, she developed an early reputation as a leading voice in support of equal opportunity for minorities and women in business. She has a long history of exceptional and diversified management skills and is well-regarded for her experience in the fields of marketing and public relations. But above all, she is a motivated woman who uses both her mind and heart in working for the Hispanic community.

In the early 1990s Ms. Vigil brought her considerable skills to the Denver Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, becoming President and Chief Operating Officer in 1995. Under her guidance, membership grew to more than 1,300, elevating the Chamber's success and positioning the organization as the largest and most influential minority chamber in the state.

I met Ms. Vigil early in my career as a legislator and was immediately impressed by the enthusiasm she brought to the job of promoting economic opportunities in the Hispanic community. One of my fondest recollections of her is the pride and joy she had in showing me the Hispanic Chamber's facility in Denver. She walked me through several floors of offices and made sure I met and spoke to all the vendors and officers.

As a dedicated leader, Ms. Vigil has diligently worked to assist countless Hispanic business owners throughout Colorado and the Denver Metropolitan area. It is that admirable and distinguished service that motivates me to acknowledge this remarkable community leader.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Ms. Sharon Vigil and in wishing