

Clinics will also be offered at the festival to help developing musicians improve their abilities and talents. Jazz students have a unique opportunity to meet with and learn from some of the most talented musicians and educators in the Nation.

Jazz has come a long way since I first listened to the music as a boy on the radio in Searchlight. This distinct musical form has developed from its humble origins in early 20th century New Orleans to touch music fans of all ages and backgrounds today. The personalities of the early days of Jazz continue to influence today's artists across the musical spectrum.

I wish the host and participants of the Reno Jazz Festival continued success in bringing Jazz to all members of the community.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

STAFF SERGEANT KENNETH LOCKER

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, I rise to express my sympathy over the loss of U.S. Army SSG Kenneth Locker of Burwell, NE. Sergeant Locker was killed on April 23 in Diyala province, Iraq. He was 28 years old.

Sergeant Locker graduated from Burwell High School in 1997. He enlisted with the Army while he was still in high school. Bob Lee, his high school math teacher, said that after he enlisted, Sergeant Locker became a much more focused young man whose grades shot up.

After high school, Sergeant Locker spent 3 years in the Army, 2 years with the National Guard, and eventually reenlisted with the Army. He had been in Iraq since August 2006 with the Army's historic 82nd Airborne Division.

Sergeant Locker was previously injured in Iraq by a land mine. He was awarded a Purple Heart and lived with shrapnel in his neck. Thousands of brave men and women like Sergeant Locker are serving in Iraq.

In addition to his life as a soldier, Sergeant Locker was father to three young sons and believed he was making a safer world for his children. He is also survived by his father Ken, two sisters, and a half sister and half brother. We are proud of his service to our country.

I ask my colleagues to join me and all Americans in honoring SSG Kenneth Locker.

FIRST LIEUTENANT KEVIN GASPERS

I rise to express my sympathy over the loss of U.S. Army 1LT Kevin Gaspers of Hastings, NE. Lieutenant Gaspers was killed on April 23 in Diyala province, Iraq. He was 26 years old.

Lieutenant Gaspers was a 2000 graduate of St. Cecilia High School in Hastings, where he wrestled and played football. After graduation, he attended the University of Nebraska at Lincoln and enrolled in the ROTC program. As a senior at UNL, Lieutenant Gaspers was selected to lead the ROTC cadet's battalion. His colleagues remember him as low-key and professional in his leadership style. He earned his Army officer's commission in 2005, along with a degree from UNL in accounting.

Lieutenant Gaspers was a paratrooper with the Army's historic 82nd Airborne Division based at Fort Bragg, N.C. He had been serving in Iraq since August 2006.

Lieutenant Gaspers is survived by his parents, John and Pam, and sisters Katie and Audrey. We are proud of his service to our country.

I ask my colleagues to join me and all Americans in honoring 1LT Kevin Gaspers.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I regret that on April 25, I was unable to vote on certain provisions and passage of S. 761, the America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science Act. I wish to address these votes, so that the people of the great State of Kansas, who elected me to serve them as U.S. Senator, may know my position.

Regarding vote No. 142, on amendment No. 930, I would not have voted in favor of this amendment. My vote would not have altered the final result of this vote.

Regarding vote No. 143, on amendment No. 918, I would not have voted in favor of this amendment. My vote would not have altered the final result of this vote.

Regarding vote No. 144, on amendment No. 921, I would have voted in favor of this amendment. My vote would not have altered the final result of this vote.

Regarding vote No. 145, on amendment No. 922, I would have voted in favor of this amendment. My vote would not have altered the final result of this vote.

Regarding vote No. 146, on passage of S. 761, the America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science Act, I would have voted in favor of passage of this act. My vote would not have altered the final result of this vote.

HOLD ON INTERIOR DEPARTMENT NOMINATION

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I have placed a hold on the nomination of R. Lyle Laverty to be Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks at the U.S. Interior Department. Consistent with my policy of publicly announcing whenever I place a hold on a nomination, I want to notify my colleagues of my objection to allowing Mr. Laverty's nomination to be considered under a unanimous-consent agreement, and to take a few minutes to explain to my colleagues why I am doing so.

The Interior Department has suffered no shortage of scandals in recent years. To name just two of the most egregious: Its former No. 2 official, a Deputy Interior Secretary who previously had been a coal industry lobbyist, pleaded guilty earlier this year to fel-

ony obstruction of justice for lying about his relationship with disgraced lobbyist Jack Abramoff. And we discovered that the Minerals Management Service, an agency within the Interior Department, has known for years about flawed drilling leases that allow companies to pay no royalties on valuable oil and gas they take from Federal land in the Gulf of Mexico, but the MMS did nothing until news reports brought the facts to the public last year. Indeed, the MMS has silenced auditors on its staff who tried to blow the whistle on companies not paying their fair share.

"Simply stated, short of a crime, anything goes at the highest levels of the Interior Department," the Interior Department's inspector general has warned us.

Last year, when Dirk Kempthorne was nominated to be Secretary of the Interior and he appeared before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee for confirmation, I secured from him a pledge. He told me that he would reform that troubled department and introduce a higher ethical standard. The scandals would stop coming.

However, in late March, the inspector general once again released a scathing critical report warning us about bad things happening at the Interior Department. This time the subject was Julie MacDonald, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Mr. Laverty would be the immediate supervisor of the position Ms. MacDonald held.

In detail, the inspector general told us two things about Ms. MacDonald. One, she violated Federal rules by leaking internal Fish and Wildlife Service records to business groups actively challenging the Government's environmental rulemaking process. In the process, she has been undermining her own agency's cases in court. Two, without any formal education in the natural sciences, she has bullied and threatened FWS scientists and forced changes in their reports to suit her own political and personal agendas. FWS attorneys no longer will sign off on reports if they know the reports passed through her hands because they no longer are certain of the accuracy.

This sort of conduct is simply unacceptable. If you agree to work in the Interior Department, your loyalty should be with the Interior Department and protecting this country's natural treasures. Ms. MacDonald's loyalty lay elsewhere.

The inspector general sent his report on Ms. MacDonald to the Interior Department for administrative action more than a month ago. The Interior Department had no public comment. Only after I announced that I would place a hold on Mr. Laverty's nomination did Ms. MacDonald resign. That removes her from the equation, but not the atmosphere that allowed her to operate as she did for so long.

In case I wasn't perfectly clear last year at his confirmation hearing, I want to be sure that Secretary Kempthorne knows that I am serious. The Interior Department has been a source of shame to this government for too long. It is failing in its mission to protect the public land and balance the needs of the American people with wisdom and integrity. It has stumbled from one misstep to another, from one scandal to another, and I have to question who is in charge over there.

I want to hear from Secretary Kempthorne what action he plans to take to be certain that we won't see this sort of problem again. I want to hear from Mr. Laverty what he would do, if he is confirmed to the post of Assistant Secretary, to end the politicization of the Fish and Wildlife Service. We cannot continue to have government scientists whose work is manipulated and conclusions are rewritten by political appointees. We cannot continue to have federal officials working secretly with groups challenging their own agencies.

Until I receive these assurances, I will object to any unanimous consent agreement to allow Mr. Laverty's nomination to come to a vote in the Senate.

IDAHO GUNFIGHTERS HONORED

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, on March 30, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates announced that Mountain Home Air Force Base in my home State of Idaho had earned the coveted 2007 Commander in Chief's Annual Award for Installation Excellence. This Presidential honor is given only to a single installation in each of the military branches for outstanding and innovative efforts by installation personnel. I am honored to be able to publicly herald this tremendous achievement by Colonel Rock and all the men and women of Mountain Home Air Force Base.

This high honor reflects a sustained level of excellence by all the Gunfighters of Mountain Home. Installation of the Year can only be achieved if everyone, from the wing commander to airmen working in all aspects of operations and support, has their priorities straight and expectations for personal duty performance at the highest level. Improving the structures that protect valuable aircraft, creative and responsible financial management with regard to improving facilities, and a commitment to Air Force families are just some of the ways in which Mountain Home Air Force Base demonstrated its excellence this year. The Gunfighters have maintained this strong tradition of superiority and excellence for over half a century. The missions have changed over the years, but Gunfighter commitment and performance has not.

Idahoans can be very proud of their Gunfighters. Mountain Home Air Force Base is as much a part of Idaho history as the magnificent valleys, rivers, and

plateaus that surround the base. The 366th Fighter Wing is a force to be reckoned with when it comes to the national security of the United States. The missions currently headquartered at Mountain Home comprise a vital component of our comprehensive military defensive and offensive force. Idaho is fortunate to be host and home to these defenders of freedom.

Idaho benefits from Mountain Home Air Force Base, not just when the military men and women serving out their assignments there call our State "home" for a time in their military careers but also when some return to call Idaho home permanently in retirement.

I offer my sincere congratulations to the Gunfighters and my heartfelt gratitude for their service to our great country, in defense of my freedom and that of my family.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO BOB HUDSON

• Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I would like to pay tribute to the public service of Bob Hudson, city manager of Farmington, NM.

Bob first came to New Mexico in 1982 to take on the job as director of parks, recreation & cultural affairs in Farmington. Since that time he has served the citizens of Farmington faithfully, eventually becoming city manager in 1999.

Bob's commitment to the community of Farmington did not end with his official duties. He has also served on the boards of several local organizations including the Boys & Girls Club, the Farmington Inter-tribal Indian Organization, and the Chamber of Commerce.

The citizens of Farmington are well aware of Bob's contributions to their community and have honored him with numerous awards, including the New Mexico Distinguished Public Service Award in 1991 and the Elks Citizen of the Year award in 1995. Bob was also inducted into the History Makers Hall of Fame by the Farmington Chamber of Commerce in 2001 and the recipient of the 2005 Public Employee of the Year award.

Bob is retiring in April to devote more time to his family, but I am sure his dedication to the community of Farmington will not end. I wish him the best in retirement and thank him for his long years of service. •

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 3:20 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by one of its clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 1591. An act making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year

ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 1332. An act to improve the access to capital programs of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Ms. MIKULSKI (for herself, Mr. VOINOVICH, and Mr. HARKIN):

S. 1254. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to provide that the reductions in social security benefits which are required in the case of spouses and surviving spouses who are also receiving certain government pensions shall be equal to the amount by which two-thirds of the total amount of the combined monthly benefit (before reduction) and monthly pension exceeds \$1,200, adjusted for inflation; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mr. KYL, Mr. THOMAS, and Mr. DOMENICI):

S. 1255. A bill to protect Indian arts and crafts through the improvement of applicable criminal proceedings, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. KERRY (for himself, Ms. SNOWE, and Mr. LEVIN):

S. 1256. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to reauthorize loan programs under that Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. LIEBERMAN (for himself, Mr. HATCH, and Mr. BENNETT):

S. 1257. A bill to provide the District of Columbia a voting seat and the State of Utah an additional seat in the House of Representatives; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. ALLARD, and Mr. SMITH):

S. 1258. A bill to amend the Reclamation Safety of Dams Act of 1978 to authorize improvements for the security of dams and other facilities; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mrs. CLINTON (for herself and Mr. SMITH):

S. 1259. A bill to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to provide assistance for developing countries to promote quality basic education and to establish the achievement of universal basic education in all developing countries as an objective of United States foreign assistance policy, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. CARPER (for himself and Mr. BENNETT):

S. 1260. A bill to protect information relating to consumers, to require notice of security breaches, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself, Mr. HARKIN, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 1261. A bill to amend title 10 and 38, United States Code, to repeal the 10-year