

capillary waves will cause spontaneous holes in certain polymer thin films. Thomas has been playing the cello since he was four and was a soloist and principal cellist in the Long Island Youth Orchestra. Tom also participates in various math and science clubs, won the gold medal in Science Olympiad and plans on pursuing a career in engineering.

The achievements of Chris, Grace, Clyde and Thomas are due in no small part to the outstanding high school science program at Ward Melville High School that, for the second year in a row, produced the most Westinghouse Science Talent Search finalists in the Nation. In fact, the four were among the 11 contest finalists chosen from Long Island high schools, comprising more than one-quarter of the finalists chosen from all 50 states. The schools in my home area of Eastern Long Island produced fourteen semi-finalists in the Westinghouse Contest, including the four finalists and: Meredith Suzanne Croke of Miller Place, Jonathan Aaron Arbreit, James Joseph Cascione, Adam Brett Gottlieb, Joleen Okun, Alice Takhtajan, and Shellen Wu who are all from Setauket, Christine Anne Champey and Michael Teitelbaum of Smithtown and Robert Nalewajk from Stony Brook. All of these students deserve congratulations for their hard work and achievements.

Mr. Speaker, as America focuses on improving student achievement and preparing them for the high-tech, computer driven future of the 21st Century, the accomplishments of Christopher Michael Gerson, Grace Ann Lau, Clyde Law and Thomas Peterson show us that America's future is in trusted hands. Their classmates can take inspiration from their success and adults have seen what great things our children will achieve when we provide them the skills and support. And so, Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in saluting Chris, Grace, Clyde and Thomas and all of the other talented students across the United States who have been named finalists in the 1998 Westinghouse Science Talent Search Contest.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPETITION

HON. ALLEN BOYD

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 1998

Mr. BOYD. Mr. Speaker, while I was not a Member of Congress when the 1996 Telecommunications Law was passed, it's easy to see that competitive business strategies from long distance companies and FCC's ever-changing interpretation of this legislation are responsible for telephone competition being stymied.

I don't believe Congress anticipated major long distance companies concentrating on the more lucrative business customers while totally ignoring the local residential market. Congress also didn't foresee the FCC taking this law and changing it to the point where no Regional Bell Company has a chance of offering long distance service to their customers in the near future.

On multiple occasions state utility commissions have submitted favorable recommendations to the FCC, stating the 14 point checklist has been met and that Regional Bell Holding

Companies should be allowed into the long distance market. Each time the FCC has rejected the recommendation.

It's time for the issue to get off the regulatory treadmill. We're long overdue for full scale telecommunications competition to begin.

IN MEMORIAM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS

HON. CONSTANCE A. MORELLA

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 1998

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, on February 23, in Annapolis, Maryland, men, women, and children will come together to remember and mourn family, friends, and neighbors who died because of domestic violence during the past year. The memorial service reminds all in attendance of the terrible price Maryland pays when homes become places of fear and terror instead of havens of love and safety.

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, which organizes the service each year, has worked diligently for more than 15 years for better and tougher laws against domestic violence, for increased funding for shelters for battered women and their children, for training judges and law enforcement personnel, and for educating the public about domestic violence and its consequences on our society.

In the last decade, we have made enormous strides on the state, local, and federal levels against domestic violence. Our state and local laws have been improved and strengthened. The Violence Against Women Act, which I sponsored, has not only changed the way we enforce domestic violence laws but also has provided needed funding to help states and local communities make a real difference in the struggle against domestic violence.

Early next month, I will introduce the second Violence Against Women Act. VAWA II, as it has been called, will continue the federal commitment to fund the National Domestic Violence Hotline, shelters and counseling programs, judicial training programs, and other services so important to our local communities. VAWA II will also address child custody, housing, legal assistance, medical training, insurance discrimination, protection for disabled women, and issues critically important to the health and well being of our families.

Mr. Speaker, let us join with the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence to recommend ourselves to ending domestic violence in our homes and in our communities in whatever way we can: as legislators, as advocates, as volunteers, as parents, and as friends. And let us remember that as legislators, the bills we write and the votes we cast will determine to a great extent whether our children and their children will live in a world where domestic violence is no more.

TRIBUTE TO JACK BIRNBERG

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 1998

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce you to Mr. Jack Birnberg. Jack is a remarkable individual who has done much to improve the quality of life for the people of the Eighth Congressional District of New Jersey.

Deeply concerned with the well-being of our senior citizens, Mr. Birnberg has been actively involved with the Daughters of Miriam Center for a number of years. Most recently, he served two terms as President of the Board of Trustees of that organization. Prior to that he was the Vice-President and a member of the finance committee for six years.

Jack is also an active member of the community at large. He is a former trustee of the Barnert Hospital and serves as a trustee at the Barnert Temple. Jack has also served as the Commissioner and President of the Board of the Children's Shelter of Passaic County and as a President of the Northeast Regional Association of Small Business Investment Corporation. He is also a former member of the Executive Council and the Board of Governors of the National Association of Small Businesses Investment Corporation.

Currently, Jack is a corporate banker. He is the Chairman of the Waldorf Group, Incorporated, of Little Falls and the Tappan Zee Capital Corporation. In addition, Jack is the Chairman of the Board of Olo Deerfield Fabrics, Inc. of Cedar Grove.

Although active in the community and the corporate world, Jack is also a dedicated family man. A resident of Wyckoff, Jack is married to the former Louise Rothstein. They are the proud parents of four sons, Michael, Steven, Jeffrey, and John. They have two grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me, our colleagues, Jack Birnberg's family and friends, and the grateful residents of New Jersey as we commend Jack for his years of service to the community.

AUGLAIZE COUNTY SESQUICENTENNIAL

HON. MICHAEL G. OXLEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 1998

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my most sincere congratulations to the people of Auglaize County as they celebrate their county's Sesquicentennial Anniversary.

In reviewing the history of the county, it came to my attention that Dr. George Washington Holbrook was principally responsible for the county's existence. Indeed, when Dr. Holbrook arrived in Wapakoneta, Ohio, from New York in 1834, what we now know as Auglaize County was then located in Allen and Mercer counties. With the belief that the people of Wapakoneta and its neighboring communities deserved further recognition and representation, Dr. Holbrook convinced both local and state leaders of the need for a new county. Dr. Holbrook's efforts and dreams were realized on February 14, 1848, when the Ohio General

Assembly passed legislation creating Ohio's 84th county, Auglaize. For his contributions, Dr. Holbrook is known as "the father of Auglaize County."

To commemorate the tremendous achievements of the people of Auglaize County over the last 150 years, a variety of celebrations are scheduled throughout the year. I am especially looking forward to the Air Show at the Neil Armstrong Airport in New Knoxville and the County Fair.

I congratulate the great people of Auglaize County on this historic achievement and wish them the best of luck over the next 150 years!

TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT OF
1996

HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 1998

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, two years ago this week the President signed into law the Telecommunications Act of 1996 aimed at removing monopoly protections and creating fair, full and open competition in the communications marketplace. One of the primary goals in passing this law was to give consumers the benefits of more choices, lower prices and greater quality in their telephone and cable services.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, it hasn't happened. In lieu of competition, consumers in many areas of the country are seeing mergers of massive proportions, higher cable rates and lawsuits filed by frustrated competitors seeking to enter the long distance market. Having said that, I would point out that Ameritech, the regional communications company that serves my home state and four other Midwestern states, has done a commendable job of fostering competition in our part of the country.

Today there are more than 130 companies certified to compete in the Ameritech region, and the Company has interconnection agreements with 60 of them. Additionally, the Company's competitors are serving more than 500,000 local lines by reselling service under their brand names. Ameritech is also bringing true cable competition to the Midwest. Its cable subsidiary, Ameritech New Media, has 65 franchises with communities in Ohio, Illinois and Michigan, and is now actively competing against incumbent providers in 40 of those communities offering enhanced cable TV service to more than 100,000 homes. In those communities where Ameritech New Media competes, incumbent providers have slashed their prices, offered customers free premium and pay per view channels, added more channels to existing service and guaranteed customers better service. This is precisely what we intended when we passed the Telecommunications Act.

However, Mr. Speaker, in spite of their efforts, neither Ameritech nor any of the former Bell companies has managed to cross the regulatory threshold to enter the long distance market. I think I speak for many of my colleagues when I say that I am extremely disappointed that consumers across the country have yet to enjoy the full benefits of the Telecommunications Act. I continue to believe this is a good law, and I would urge the Federal Communications Commission to make it work.

We now have a new chairman and three new commissioners at the FCC and I am impressed by their recent comments stressing the need to implement the Act. I encourage them in the strongest possible terms to implement the law and give consumers the choices they deserve.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF VARIABLE STAR OBSERVERS

HON. GEORGE E. BROWN, JR.

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 1998

Mr. BROWN of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding contributions that amateur astronomers from around the world have made to our understanding of some of the most profound questions that have confronted mankind—the evolution of the universe. In the very brief period in which humans have had the ability to look up and ponder our place in the universe, we have transcended a time in which religious dictate required a belief that the heavens were unchanging, to one in which we accept change as the status quo.

We now know that stars change. Sometimes the change is dramatic and visible to all such as the supernova explosion in 1987. More often, the changes are subtle to the casual observer. Yet these subtle changes in star brightness due to pulsations and eruptions and eclipses behind intervening objects are crucial in understanding the nature of the universe and its ultimate fate.

Mr. Speaker, in 1911 the American Association of Variable Star Observers (AAVSO) was founded at the Harvard College Observatory. This independent research organization is dedicated to coordinating the observations of variable stars by amateur astronomers in 46 participating countries.

AAVSO receives, digitizes, and archives over 300,000 observations yearly from 300 to 350 observers. Since its founding, AAVSO has catalogued over 8.5 million observations from 4000 observers. AAVSO boasts the largest and longest running computer readable accessible variable star catalogue in existence.

This valuable data base is used to help schedule precious observing time by the large public and privately operated observatories, to carry out collaborative research in analyzing the long term behavior of variable stars, and finally by educators and students.

In 1995, NASA conducted a major study of cataclysmic variable stars by the ASTRO-2 telescope during the Space Shuttle mission STS-67. During the course of this mission, NASA depended on AAVSO for critical guidance in identifying the best variable star targets. This coordinated research program resulted in a superb data base on ten cataclysmic variable stars that has provided a wealth of scientific understanding. Since then, AAVSO has worked with NASA to coordinate observations on the Hubble Space Telescope, the Extreme Ultraviolet Explorer, the X-Ray Timing Explorer, the International Ultraviolet Explorer, and many other international space borne telescopes.

Mr. Speaker, the astronomy community has had a long tradition of active participation by

amateurs since the time of Galileo. The vitality of this discipline is evident in magazine shelves worldwide that carry astronomy related publications. AAVSO itself publishes its own highly respected journal to disseminate latest results and scientific concepts.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend AAVSO for its outstanding work and over eighty years of productive contributions to the field of astronomy.

TRIBUTE TO THE EPICUREAN CLUB OF WASHINGTON, DC, INC. AND CHEF RICHARD FISHER

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 1998

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to honor The Epicurean Club, which was originally an all-male group of Executive Chefs who had apprenticed in Europe or Stewards. The club's membership today is composed of men and women who are chefs, bakers and restaurant owners. I am delighted that The Epicurean Club will celebrate its 60th anniversary with a Dinner Dance on February 22, 1998. During that event Chef Richard Fisher, CEC will be honored for his skillful and untiring service as Chairman of the club's annual Christmas Party.

Twenty-five years ago, when chefs were not very well-paid or recognized, this party was an important social event. The club borrowed a ballroom and solicited donations of food and wine. Spouses who rarely went out because their husbands were always at work put on their finest and the party was always a tremendous success. The party was evolved and today serves over 500 people and has become the only Christmas party for some of the area's neediest children. Last year, the club served 200 children from the DC Department of Human Services and The Orphan Foundation of America. Each child received a gift, a gingerbread house, extra food and a visit with Santa Claus.

For over twenty-five years, Chef Fisher has worked in hotels and restaurants and was a representative for Knorr-Swiss in the Metropolitan area. He has been an active member of the club for over twenty years and is also a member of the National Capital Chefs Association. He has served as a judge at Culinary Salons and is regarded as a true food professional. He lives in Virginia with his wife Trudy and has been Chairman of the club's annual Christmas Party for twenty-five years.

Chef Fisher's work on behalf of children of the District of Columbia reflects the caring spirit of many persons who reside outside our city. His efforts serve as a model and motivation for men and women in the metropolitan region who sincerely want to lessen the impact of poverty and hunger.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that this body join me in congratulating The Epicurean Club of Washington, DC, Inc. on the occasion of their 60th Anniversary and in applauding Chef Fisher for his selfless service.