

"MY VOICE IN OUR DEMOCRACY"

A voice can easily be compared to a rock that is thrown into the most tranquil pond. The size of the rock is irrelevant because the slightest touch can change the water's surface forever. The ripples that emerge cannot be stopped until they reach the edge of the pond.

22 years ago when my parents immigrated to the United States of America, their dream of having a voice in Democracy began as a tiny pebble. They had abandoned the only home they had ever known, to blend into a nation they had yet to understand. They were only 2 foreign people, yet it was the promise of freedom that fueled their desire to leave a war-torn country. The legacy began with my parents' arrival: a stone of hope had been tossed into the pond.

To be the daughter of immigrants is unique. I am a ripple: a continuation of my parents' voice. Their pebble has carried me only so far and now, I am getting ready to throw in my own rock to continue the cycle. My voice in Democracy speaks with the hope that, someday, there will exist a world where everyone can decide how his or her life will progress.

Democracy allows me, as an individual, to express concerns and beliefs without persecution. Many people do not understand that they have a gift. Their voices are heard in their actions as well as their speech. The worst crime an American can commit against his or her country is to be mute. Voices come in all shapes and sizes just like the stones that are thrown into the pond. A voice in Democracy need not be huge and bellowing to be noticed. Americans forget that ripples start out small and grow.

Democracy is not for spectators; it is an active sport that requires flexibility and at times, even arguments with referees. It is a game for and by the people, and its rules can change to help everyone be a winner. Democracy has the word "demo" in it, meaning I must be an example. I must demonstrate what it means to be an active voice. The responsibility I have is not only to myself but also to my neighbor who can gain inspiration from what some may call my courage.

I speak out on behalf of Democracy daily; my simple message is broadcast through my actions as a student, class vice president, and young adult.

My voice as a student interacts with many people of many nationalities and personalities. We share our aspirations and I have respect for the ideas of fellow classmates. Together, we are the future voices of Democracy. The greatest challenge I face is to learn more about the USA in order to effectively use my creativity to become more involved.

The responsibility of leadership can be a burden, as well as a reward. As class vice president, it is essential for me to realize the consequences of my actions beforehand. Democracy must benefit the majority in order to be successful. My voice in Democracy is not only a representation of myself, but also the needs of many. Remember, a voice should never be used selfishly.

As a young adult, my knowledge of the world is limited. However, I am preparing myself to face my country with a conscious effort to change the things that I can. After all, change starts with me. I cannot account for anyone but myself and have much enthusiasm for the power of my own voice in our Democracy. As I grow older, I hope that cynicism and doubt will not diminish the faith I have in my voice.

In his inaugural speech, John F. Kennedy once said: "Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country." What exactly does each one of us

owe to America? Everyone's task is different but it is evident that people are neglecting their duty to simply voice their opinion. America doesn't exist as a Camelot; nor should we pretend that it does. But an active voice in Democracy can open doors that were once locked. It is only through the participation of all that Democracy can be maintained. It is vital for every American to realize that we have the potential to be the rock that begins the ripple.

RECOGNIZING THE TIRELESS EFFORTS OF THE KIDS FOR CORAL ORGANIZATION

HON. ROBERT A. UNDERWOOD

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 3, 1998

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I proudly rise to recognize an organization from the island of Guam which has demonstrated its ability to raise community awareness of the importance of our oceans. It is befitting to bring such recognition to this organization, at this time, since the United Nations has dedicated this year to the Oceans of the world.

The Kids for Coral organization, will celebrate its tenth year anniversary in the coming year. The organization's initial membership included only a handful of seventh grade students. Oddly enough, what began as a simple class project blossomed quickly to include all other middle and high school grade levels. The prompt response from other students demonstrates a new generation's willingness to weigh in on issues that lay by the wayside on the agenda of policy makers.

The continued existence of the organization confirms its commitment to raise interest in caring for the coral reefs which surround our tropical island. I am sure that some can argue that that which is closest is sometimes forgotten. This may be the case with Guam's reefs. However, despite the maturation of Kids for Coral's original members, its organization continues to grow and pursue its goals of awareness and preservation. This growth assures that coming generations will work towards preserving Guam's reefs and oceans.

Guam is especially dependent on the ocean for its survival. Surrounded by the Pacific Ocean, anything arriving or leaving the island must do so by air or by sea. The majority of our goods and products, are transported in and out of Guam by sea. Though Guam's trade deficit is a reflection of its location, our evolving exports of; fish and crustaceans, mineral fuels, oils, waxes, agricultural products, tobacco, and beverages rely on world oceans.

Historically, our way of life as well as other island nations, states, territories, and possessions are heavily dependant on a clean and healthy ocean environment. More than four thousand years ago, when the ancestors of the people of Guam inhabited the island, their prime source of nourishment, recreation, and education revolved around the existence of the ocean. This still hold true today, and the role of the ever-changing oceans has expanded.

The people of Guam rely on the oceans not only for their own pleasures but for others as well. Guam boasts a tourism industry totaling 1.4 million visitors annually. The come not only for the sun and fun, but for the surf and

sand. It is in our best interest to take positive steps to recognize the value the oceans have to offer. It is to this end that we must continue to bring consciousness to preserving this natural resource.

The means by which Kids for Coral has tried to reach this goal is nearly endless. Ideas, wholly generated by the students, have included design and sale of bumper stickers and t-shirts, beach clean-ups, an annual Save the Reef Week, an art show, and presentations to other students. Kids for Coral has also sponsored a Coral Reef Awareness Conference, where more than 350 middle school students gathered to discuss the preservation of Guam's reefs.

Kids for Coral's local achievements and activities brought them quick attention to island residents. In 1993, their popularity was bolstered by placing first runner-up in the Region IX Presidential Environmental Youth Awards Competition. The following year, their hard work again paid off. International recognition of Kids for Coral, and the Island of Guam, culminated in the bestowment of the United Nations Environmental Program Award, one of only six given to children's groups worldwide. This award recognized their dedication to heighten community awareness of the reefs and the oceans that surround the Island of Guam.

We should all be as diligent in our work to recall the importance of the oceans of the world. The majority of our livelihoods are in some way connected to the water. Transportation, recreation, and sustenance of the world population is an ever connecting bond that begins with our very existence. Once again, during this Year of the oceans, I am proud to recognize the hard work of Kids for Coral.

Lauren Ahillen, Joan Baluyut, Owen Bollinger, James Brenner, Chris Butler, Shirley Chu, Joyleen Co, Cody Cousineau, Barbara Cushing, Christina Del Rosario, Jessica Georgelas, Diwang Gomowad, Tara Gonzalo, Chantal Guedon, Yoo San Ha, Thomas Ham, Tera Hannah, Ronson Ho, Eva Huang, Dana Ione, Jean Jastillan and Seena Kallingal.

Sung Yul Kim, Un Kyun Kim, Priya Kodiyanplakkal, Richard Lee, Alex Leon Guerero, Chalani Leon Guerrero, Adeoye Mabogunje, Maria Manibusan, Mia McCully, Jaya Medabalmi, Maria Perez, Amanda Peterson, Peter Querubin, Lola Rosario, Pika Rosario, Aman Sobti, Margaret Suda, Saori Tembata, Emi Yen, Quinn Yeomans, Whitney Yuen, Deborah Zee and Advisor: Janette Deagle.

KENNY DESAI, PRESIDENT OF TAK CONSTRUCTION, INC., NOMINATED FOR MINORITY CONSTRUCTION FIRM OF THE YEAR

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 3, 1998

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Kirti (Kenny) Desai, President of TAK Construction, Inc., of Clark, NJ, has been nominated by the Newark Minority Business Development Center of the Interracial Council for Business Opportunity, Minority Business Development Agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce, for Minority Construction Firm of the year

1998. It is for me a great honor to pay tribute to TAK Construction, and to its President, Mr. Desai, a resident of Livingston, NJ.

Last December, TAK Construction, Inc., celebrated its 10th anniversary. Mr. Desai is the driving force behind the company's success. He is a graduate of the M.S. University of Baroda, India, where he received a Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering. More recently, he earned his Masters Degree in Civil Engineering from Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, NJ. Prior to founding TAK in 1987, Mr. Desai was a project manager with a large construction company through which he achieved a broad background in various phases of the construction industry. During the past ten and one-half years, TAK has completed more than 150 projects valued at more than \$100 million. The company has demonstrated steady annual growth, taking great pride in its commitment to using new materials, practices and innovation, and working to stay on-time and on-budget.

Kenny Desai clearly takes very seriously the company's slogan of "Building for the 21st Century." Despite his significant investment of time in his business, Mr. Desai still manages to find time for a wide range of professional and community affiliations. He is a partner in the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey's Regional Alliance, and a Member of the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce, as well as local Chambers. He serves as Secretary of the Rotary Club International and is an Honorary Special Deputy Sheriff of Hudson County, NJ. Deeply devoted to his Indian heritage, Mr. Desai is Director and a founding member of the Indo-American Cultural Society of North America, a Trustee of "VRAJ" Religion Institute and Gandhi Mandir, and founding member of Kapol Samaj of North America and Vice President of Vegetarian Vision Inc.

Kenny Desai is a true American success story. As a minority business owner, he has had to overcome significant obstacles on his path to success. In so doing, he stands out as a fine role model for our young people. I wish him and the employees of TAK Construction continued success, and congratulate Mr. Desai on this richly deserved honor.

"DECLINE OF THE ASPEN"

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 3, 1998

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, if chaos befalls the Forest Service, and politicians don't care to hear, should Westerners persist in making noise? With apologies to Bishop Berkeley, the answer is a resounding "yes!" That is, at least according to Colorado's Club 20. Celebrating its 45th anniversary, Club 20 is an organization of counties, communities, businesses, conservationists, individuals, and associations cast throughout Colorado's 20 western counties. The group was created by Wester Slope business leaders to speak out on issues affecting rural economies and life in Colorado's mountain regions.

The U.S. Forest Service's performance is the subject of a just-released special report, produced by Club 20's Research Foundation. The missive is a must-read for anyone seri-

ously concerned about maintaining a vibrant forest system and healthy environment in the Rocky Mountain West.

The report should also serve as a bright wake-up call to forestry professionals and lawmakers, but most of all to Forest Service high-ups in Washington, DC.

Entitled "Decline of the Aspen," the report documents the jeopardy Colorado's forests face due to years of mismanagement by the U.S. Forest Service. Citing the serious shortage of accurate scientific data on issues that affect the West, the foundation points out how the Forest Service has strayed from managing for multiple use and sustained yield.

One casualty of poor management is Colorado's aspen inventory. Aspen stands have declined at an alarming rate, causing researchers to predict most of Colorado's aspen trees will disappear within the next 40 to 50 years.

Maintaining and restoring aspen is of paramount importance to Colorado. Not only do the trees help entice \$6 billion worth of tourists each year, but aspen communities sustain tremendously high biodiversity covering thousands of acres across the Wester Slope.

The aspen, however, are just one indication of the harmful effect of poor planning and misdirected leadership within the Forest Service. In turning away from its "land-of-many-uses" philosophy, the Forest Service has engaged a policy of declining resources uses. Such a policy threatens the health of our public lands and the vitality of our western communities.

There has been an unprecedented increase in the annual net growth of national forests since the turn of the century. According to the report, without responsible harvesting, thinning or prescribed burns, timber inventory accumulates to the point where healthy growth is impeded, and stands become susceptible to wildfires, beetle infestations and disease.

The Club 20 report concludes that the Forest Service has suffered from a lack of direction, if not a lack of a clear mission. Political pressure, rather than science-based objectives for healthy, diverse forests, often motivates management decisions or at best favors poor ones by default.

Congress would do well to consider the findings of Club 20. Recent hearings by the House Resources Committee have focused on the appalling performance and financial audits of the Forest Service by the General Accounting Office (GAO). Club 20 clearly spells out how the GAO-exposed Forest Service deficiencies at the national level are directly threatening life in the West for communities and ecosystems.

Though long on criticism of federal agents, Club 20's report is replete with constructive proposals and thoughtful solutions. The work thoroughly documents the need for an open budget process, private timber management strategies, sound fire policies, professional staffing, and aggressive state leadership in getting federal forest management back on track.

Moreover, Club 20 correctly asserts the federal government's moral obligation as steward to vast public landscapes. "Federal ownership should imply federal responsibility to proper management."

Indeed, with 75 percent of Western Colorado under federal ownership, mismanagement is intolerable to the people of the region whose livelihood and quality of life depend

upon these public resources. From a forest health perspective, the environment and the economy are inextricably linked.

Club 20 should be commended for its balanced analysis, and for extending its hand of leadership and partnership in restoring the health of Western forests. In fact, the very future of the Forest Service may well be defined by its ability to accept the offer and thereby resume its historic mission of managing the forests for the benefit of forests, and for us all.

HONORING AUBREY AND SYLVIA FARB ON THEIR 50TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. KEN BENTSEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 3, 1998

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Aubrey and Sylvia Farb of Houston, Texas, as they celebrate their 50th anniversary on May 26, 1998. Throughout their lives, Aubrey and Sylvia have provided tremendous examples of public service, contributing unselfishly to numerous causes while raising a fine family.

Originally from Galveston, Aubrey Farb moved to Houston to attend The Rice Institute, known today as Rice University. Because of his academic record, he was selected during the war to attend Japanese language school and become a Japanese interrogation officer. When he returned, he obtained his Master's degree from Columbia University.

Sylvia Farb attended The University of Texas at Austin and graduated shortly before moving back to Houston. In July 1947, Aubrey and Sylvia were invited by mutual friends to play bridge, a hobby they both enjoy. In Aubrey's words, "they have been playing bridge ever since." In fact, they play weekly and have become Grandmasters.

In May 1948, Aubrey and Sylvia were married in Houston, where they have lived during their entire 50 years of marriage. Aubrey worked as a CPA and Sylvia was a stay-at-home mother; both also volunteered their time to help others. The Farbs have been active in politics, the arts, and with the homeless. Their contributions to the community are many. Additionally, they started the Aubrey and Sylvia Community Service Fund at Congregation Emanu El to help with the synagogue's charitable projects.

Over the years, Aubrey and Sylvia have instilled their values and generosity in their children and grandchildren. The Farbs have four daughters, Helene, Roberta, Susan, and Loretta and three "sons by choice", Robert Scolnick, Douglas Colton, and David Morris, and six grandchildren—Leslie Scolnick and her husband Marc, Jonathan Scolnick, Evan and Julia Colton, and Hannah and Shara Morris.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize Aubrey and Sylvia Farb on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary and commend them on a lifetime of achievement. Their commitment not only to one another, but to others as well, is an example for all of us. May the coming years bring good health, happiness, and time to enjoy their children and grandchildren. On this joyous occasion, I am pleased to join their family, friends, and community in saying congratulations and thank you.