

We in North Dakota have a lot to look forward to from the NDSU women's program in the future. All but the two seniors will be returning, and this team knows what it feels like to win. For now, though, we can just savor the feeling of having national champions in our midst.

WAS CONGRESS IRRESPONSIBLE? THE VOTERS HAVE SAID YES

Mr. HELMS. Madam President, the skyrocketing Federal debt—which long ago soared into the stratosphere—is in a category somewhat like the weather—everybody talks about it but almost nobody had undertaken the responsibility of trying to do anything about it until immediately following the elections last November.

When the 104th Congress convened in January, the U.S. House of Representatives approved a balanced budget amendment. In the Senate only one of the Senate's 54 Republicans opposed the balanced budget amendment; only 13 Democrats supported it. Thus, the balanced budget amendment failed by just one vote. There will be another vote later this year or next year.

As of the close of business yesterday, Monday, May 8, the Federal debt stood—down to the penny—at exactly \$4,856,502,980,514.90 or \$18,435.37 for every man, woman, and child on a per capita basis.

YOUNG AMERICA

Mr. COHEN. Madam President, I rise today to pay tribute to the captain and crew of *Young America*, which as many of my colleagues know, is the yacht that came very close to winning the Defenders' series of the America's Cup competition on April 26.

Young America, owned by the Maine-based PACT '95 syndicate and originating out of my hometown of Bangor, was very strong in the competition but was beaten in the finals by America's Cup veterans and past victor, Dennis Conner and his boat, *Stars & Stripes*.

While *Young America's* captain, Kevin Mahaney, did not have Dennis Conner's experience, he sailed boldly and impressively and displayed the kind of leadership and perseverance for which Mainers are renowned. Kevin had captured the silver medal in sailing at the 1992 Olympics, but it was his first America's Cup competition. He and his crew sailed with excellence throughout the competition.

Last summer, before Kevin even had a boat to compete in, he started to assemble a crew with John Marshall, head of the PACT '95 syndicate. Marshall was an experienced sailor and former crew mate of Dennis Conner in past America's Cup bids. Even so, many people on the sailing circuit did not assign much credibility to their efforts and saw little threat from their entry. However, Mahaney and Marshall and the crew they assembled soon

made yachting enthusiasts begin to take notice of the boat from Bangor.

This is not to say that *Young America* encountered smooth waters during its ascent to the top ranks of yachting. Mahaney had to rely heavily on the tenacious crew that he assembled to overcome obstacles and make it as far as they did.

Young America's bid for the cup was threatened last January when a tornado ripped through the compound where it was stored, causing extensive damage to the boat. In March, bad luck struck again when *Young America* suffered significant structural damage while being towed through heavy waves. This damage was particularly ill-timed, and the crew had to rush to make repairs in the final days before the Defender semifinals. John Marshall saw the silver lining in these clouds and commented that the times of hardship were when the crew really came together as a team.

Ironically, the crew that worked so hard to bring *Young America* to the forefront of the yachting world had the bittersweet experience of now seeing their boat compete against New Zealand in the America's Cup finals without them aboard. Shortly after his victory, Dennis Conner, full of admiration for Mahaney's triumphs, asked John Marshall if he and his crew could sail *Young America* in the final competition. Diplomatic to the last, Marshall honored his request. He said that both the crews from *Stars & Stripes* and *Young America* will emerge as victors if the Americans beat New Zealand.

The quiet but determined efforts of Kevin Mahaney and his crew justifiably make Mainers proud. While they are not manning the boat that is competing against the New Zealand vessel this week, everyone's mind will be on the come-from-behind boat known as *Young America*.

RECOGNIZING BILLINGS, MT, POSTAL SERVICE

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, today I would like to recognize the outstanding achievement of the Postal Service in Billings, MT. As is the case most of the time, we know how to do it right in Montana.

Billings' delivery of overnight first-class mail is first in the Nation, No. 1. The lucky residents of Billings received their mail 94 percent on time, the country's highest performance level this year. The score also ties for the highest mark achieved by any city since the measurement began. In an era when public and private mail volume continues to increase, I am proud of the ability of the Billings Postal Service to rise above the rest and top the Nation.

I would like to congratulate and thank everyone involved in the mail process in Billings for serving Montana and our Nation with such capability.

PROTECTING MEDICARE

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, yesterday before the Senate Finance Committee I spoke about the importance of the Medicare Program to Montanans. I would like to take this opportunity to share those comments with the entire Senate.

There being no objection, the comments were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Mr. Chairman, here in Washington, people often lose the forest for the trees. I'm afraid we may be doing just that on Medicare. So I hope we can begin by remembering what life was like for older Americans before Medicare.

The fact is, before we created Medicare, our senior citizens lived in fear.

Everyone over sixty knew that private insurance was shaky and expensive at best, and would cost them more every year.

And a serious illness—or even a common ailment that required treatment but did not threaten life—was not only a health problem, but something that could reduce a whole family to poverty.

Today, Medicare has removed that fear from our lives. Those of us with short memories have forgotten it ever existed. But let me tell you about some people who don't.

Two weeks ago I spent some time at the Seniors Center in Great Falls, Montana. The people at the center know exactly what Medicare and Social Security mean to their lives.

It means a little financial security. Some faith that illnesses will be treated and that families won't be wiped out by the cost. A hundred and twenty-five thousand Montanans are eligible for Medicare, and each one of them knows exactly what Medicare means.

Listen to Margaret and Frank Jackson of Billings, who wrote me last week:

"Social Security and Medicare are not only necessary, they are absolutely essential to our survival in Montana. Higher costs such as higher property tax, increase in school levies, fuel in a cold climate, and medicine take a toll. There is just too much month at the end of our money. Needless to say, additional cuts would put a burden on us."

Or Joyce Hert, also from Billings:

"I am 58 years old and for the past 18 years have had chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma, emphysema, Renaud's Disease, degenerative arthritis and a disease of the connective tissue. . . . My medication costs approximately \$677 a month* * *. Please don't turn your back on those of us who need Social Security and Medicare."

The leadership now proposes something like \$250 billion in Medicare cuts. It is staggering. It is a reduction of nearly a quarter in Medicare services by the year 2002. And to add insult to injury, the House would do it in part to pay for tax cuts for Americans who are already very wealthy. Some in the Senate want to do the same.

What would it mean if this happens?

Montana Medicare beneficiaries would pay up to \$800 more a year out of their own savings. These are people who live on fixed incomes, and eight hundred bucks is an awfully big bite.

We would see thousands of operations and hospital stays put off.

Thousands of people would decide to go without home health care.

And, as the federal government cut reimbursement, more rural hospitals would be pushed to the edge, forced to choose between serving their patients and remaining solvent. Some Montana hospitals get 60% of their