

I hope that the longstanding friendship between our two democracies continues to blossom and strengthen in the years ahead. Congratulations to the people of Taiwan and President Chen.

TRIBUTE TO PEGGY FOUKE WORTZ
ATHENA OF THE INLAND VAL-
LEYS AWARD

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2003

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an individual whose dedication and contributions to the community of Riverside, California are exceptional. Riverside has been fortunate to have dynamic and dedicated community leaders who willingly and unselfishly give their time and talent and make their communities a better place to live and work. Peggy Fouke Wortz is one of these individuals. On Wednesday, May 21, 2003 Peggy will be awarded the ATHENA of the Inland Valleys at a lunch in her honor.

Peggy learned from a very early age the value of community service and volunteerism. She was born in Michigan and is the granddaughter of Mr. R.E. Olds, the inventor and founder of Oldsmobile cars. Throughout her childhood, her grandparents and parents demonstrated the same openhearted generosity that she would embrace in her adult life.

In 1940, Peggy married Mr. Philip B. Fouke and six years later they moved to Riverside, California where they raised three children. After the death of Mr. Fouke, Peggy married Mr. James M. Wortz in 1975 and dedicated herself to her family and community. Her involvement in the community includes service on various boards and committees as well as personal financial donations.

A few of the organizations that Peggy has been active in include: Charter Member, California Baptist University; Board of Governors, California Community Foundation; Past President, The Junior League; Founder/President The Living Desert Reserve; Board of Directors, The Mission Inn Foundation; President, Riverside Community Film; Board of Directors, Riverside Community Hospital Foundation; Founder and Board of Trustees, UCR Foundation; Founder, The Volunteer Center; Board Member, Riverside YMCA; and Founder, The Frank Millen Club.

Peggy's tireless passion for community service has contributed immensely to the betterment of the community of Riverside, California. Peggy has been the heart and soul of many community organizations and events and I am proud to call her a fellow community member, American and friend. I know that many community members are grateful for her service and salute her as she receives the ATHENA of the Inland Valleys Award.

THE NEED FOR UNITED STATES
BANKRUPTCY COURT PRO-
CEEDINGS TO OCCUR ON A
DAILY BASIS IN BAKERSFIELD,
CALIFORNIA

HON. WILLIAM M. THOMAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2003

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation that would authorize the creation of an additional bankruptcy court for the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California. The legislation would also express that it is the sense of Congress that bankruptcy proceedings should be conducted in Bakersfield in Kern County, California on a daily basis.

Very simply, I am introducing this legislation because my constituents have informed me that neither they, nor justice, is well-served by the status quo, under which Bakersfield is designated as a location where court is conducted once a month, with other matters disposed of through the use of video/teleconferencing.

According to constituent attorneys familiar with both the creditor and petitioner perspectives, one particularly significant problem is the distance that parties must travel in order to personally appear in the Fresno Division of the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of California. Kern County encompasses a vast area, and those persons involved in contested proceedings who wish to be heard in Fresno must travel 110 miles from Bakersfield. Moreover, 429,310 of Kern County's 676,367 residents live in outlying communities and areas, and must travel much further to be heard in Fresno.

For example, those persons living in the communities of Boron, Frazier Park, or Rosamond with business before the Bankruptcy Court have to travel 172, 143, and 160 miles respectively to appear in Fresno. If those persons could appear in Bakersfield, they would only have to travel less than half as far—80, 37, and 57 miles respectively—and would be relieved of some of the hardships and costs inherent in traveling such distances. This travel is especially difficult for those parties who are sick, elderly, or have small children.

While a video/teleconferencing system is in place, I am told the system works well only approximately 70 percent of the time and that on occasion the video goes out, leaving only teleconferencing. My constituent attorneys firmly believe that appearances through the use of the video/teleconferencing system, not only decrease the decorum of the proceedings, but also decrease the parties' ability to effectively communicate, resulting in proceedings that are less efficient and fair than proceedings conducted in person before a live court and witnesses. In addition, Kern County attorneys inform me that because practitioners cannot file documents in Bakersfield, Kern County parties incur increased costs in the form of overnight or courier charges and face de facto shortened deadlines. Finally, the status quo also results in the almost automatic conduct of short proceedings via video/teleconferencing as well as the conduct of proceedings through a mixture of live and video/teleconferencing appearances, a practice which Kern County practitioners advise me

places the parties they represent at a distinct disadvantage.

A strong case exists for the daily conduct of bankruptcy proceedings in Bakersfield when one considers the number of filings submitted by Kern County parties and general demographic data. In 2002, Kern County parties made 4,168 total bankruptcy filings, and through March 31, 2003, have made 1,042 total filings. During those time periods, total filings in the entire four-county Modesto Division were 5,045 and 1,324 respectively. Moreover, Kern County's 4,168 total filings in 2002 were greater than the 3,696 total filings in Fresno County and constituted over one-third of the 11,912 total filings in the entire eight-county Fresno Division. Finally, nationwide there are approximately 700,000 people per bankruptcy court, and Kern County, one of the fastest growing areas in the nation, has a population in excess of 676,000. By comparison, Stanislaus County, where the Modesto Division is located, has a population of 468,566.

I trust that my colleagues and the appropriate United States Judicial Conference officials will recognize the need to have bankruptcy proceedings conducted in Bakersfield on a daily basis and will work with me to ensure that our legal system is structured in a manner that allows for the effective and fair administration of our bankruptcy laws.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH BIRTH-
DAY OF MARY LOUISE AKERS

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2003

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I honor a very great lady today upon reaching her 100th birthday. Mary Louis Akers, a resident of Santa Fe, New Mexico, is commemorating, with a host of family and friends, a century of life upon this earth. I salute and applaud her on this remarkable event.

Mrs. Akers was born on May 20, 1903, in Sherman, Texas, to Margaret Crumley Melton and James Henderson Melton. Growing up during the first part of the 20th century was quite different than it is today. Mary Louise Melton's father delivered mail on horseback, and the family traveled by horse and buggy most everywhere they went, not owning a car until Mary Louise was a teenager. The train was used for long trips. The family always had an "icebox," the forerunner of the refrigerator, and ice was delivered to their home every few days. Laundry was always done by hand.

Entertainment was very different when Mary Louise was young. Her primary entertainment was reading. The family did not own a radio until Mary Louise was a teenager, and the first "silent" movie she saw was a series that only ran on Saturday afternoons. Many years later, in the 1950's and after she was married, a television was purchased.

Mary Louise suffered infantile paralysis, now known as polio, when she was nine months old. The disease paralyzed her left side. Remarkably, however, she recovered from the disease and, fortunately, was left with little residual, and unnoticed, effects.

Mary Louise attended Kidd Key College in Sherman, where she studied voice. Her first

job was as a teacher in Rockfort, Texas, eighteen miles from Sherman, where she taught the first four grades. It was during those years that she met her future husband, Homer Akers, who was training to be a Presbyterian minister. They married on June 19, 1930, at the First Baptist Church in Sherman, and their first home was the Presbyterian manse in Natalia, Texas.

Homer and Mary Louise Akers spent the next 47 joyous years together until his death in 1977. During their marriage, Rev. Akers served as a minister in seven Texas communities, each about four years each, and in Portales, New Mexico, from 1947 until 1968, a location that will always be considered home. A daughter, Margaret Louise, was born in 1931, but only lived a few days past her third birthday. A second daughter, Kathryn Ann, was born in 1936, and Mary Louise currently lives with her in Santa Fe.

In her 100 years upon this earth, Mary Louise Akers is known and deeply loved and admired by hundreds, if not thousands, of those whose lives she has touched during her extraordinary 100-year journey. She loved serving as the primary greeter in all the churches her husband served and was the voice most heard when hymns were sung. She has always been a famous "jokester," constantly teasing her family and friends with her delightful, bubbly personality and infectious laughter. Having a perfect memory, Mary Louise can readily recall wonderful, enduring and entertaining stories about all those whom she has known.

Mary Louise Akers has abundantly enjoyed her 100 years. She has always been extremely active and enjoys attending community events and traveling with her daughter. A few of her passions are having tea parties with family and friends, attending an Aker family reunion every July, receiving cards and letters and writing many herself, going to the beauty shop every Friday, and eating lots of strawberry jam every morning and drinking a Coke every afternoon, which she considers her "tickets" to a long life. Her very favorite "supper" food is a chocolate sundae with "lots" of syrup!

Mary Louis Akers is a very grand lady, and the world has been, and continues to be, a better place because of her presence in it. Driving a car up until her 80's, Mary Louise's CB "handle" was "Sunshine Mary", I can think of no more accurate way to describe this delightful lady. I invite all my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representative to join me in wishing Mary Louise Akers a very happy and healthy 100th birthday, may she enjoy many more to come!

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL
LEROY BARNIDGE, JR.

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2003

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, today I wish to pay tribute to an exceptional officer in the United States Air Force, an individual that a great many of us have come to know personally over the past few years—Major General Leroy Barnidge, Jr. General Barnidge, who currently serves as Director of the Air Force

Office of Legislative Liaison, will retire after 32 years of honorable active duty Air Force service. During his time in Washington, and especially with regard to his work here on Capitol Hill, General Barnidge personified the Air Force core values of integrity, selfless service and excellence in the many missions the Air Force performs in support of our national security. Many Members and staff have enjoyed the opportunity to meet with him on a variety of Air Force issues and came to deeply appreciate his character and many talents. Today it is my privilege to recognize some of General Barnidge's many accomplishments, and to commend his superb service he provided the Air Force, the Congress and our Nation.

General Barnidge was commissioned through the ROTC program in 1971. His career has spanned a variety of operations and maintenance assignments, including major command and Joint Staff billets. He is experienced in aircrew operations, flight line maintenance and combat support activities. The General has also performed major command staff and executive support functions, as well as duties as a force planner and division chief in the Joint Staff. He has commanded a combat crew training squadron, a logistics group, an operations group, a B-1B bomb wing and the B-2 wing at Whiteman Air Force Base, MO. General Barnidge also completed the Program for Senior Officials in National Security at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, and Seminar XXI, Foreign Political and International Relations, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He received special recognition in 1999 as the winner of the Air Combat Command Moller Trophy, recognizing him as the best Wing Commander among 28 other commanders. General Barnidge has amassed over 2,900 hours in the T-37, T-38, OV-10, B-52G, B-1B, and B-2 aircraft.

Throughout his distinguished career, General Barnidge exceptional leadership skills were always evident to both superiors and subordinates as he repeatedly proved himself in numerous select command positions.

In his years of working with the Congress, General Barnidge provided a clear and credible voice for the Air Force while representing its many programs on the Hill, consistently providing accurate, concise and timely information. His integrity, professionalism, and expertise enabled him to develop and maintain an exceptional rapport between the Air Force and the Congress. The key to his success, I believe, was his deep understanding of Congressional processes and priorities and his unflinching advocacy of the programs essential to the Air Force and to our nation. I am greatly appreciative of General Barnidge's 32-year service to his nation and offer my sincere wishes for a happy and prosperous retirement. On behalf of the Congress and the country, I thank General Barnidge, his wife Sandy, and his entire family for the commitment and sacrifices that they have made throughout his honorable military career. These family sacrifices demonstrate their commitment to our nation and their contributions do not go unnoticed. I know I speak for all of my colleagues in expressing my heartfelt appreciation to General Barnidge for a job well done. He is a credit to both the Air Force and the United States. We wish our friend God-speed in his retirement.

REGULATORY CERTAINTY IN
TELECOM MARKETPLACE IS A
MUST

HON. DARRELL E. ISSA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2003

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to talk about an FCC decision that will have dire consequences for the telecommunications industry.

In February, I submitted an op-ed to Roll Call for their annual Telecommunications and Technology issue prior to the FCC vote on the Section 251 Unbundling Obligations of Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers. In the article, I reserved hope that the FCC would render a decision that could provide regulatory certainty to a sector that is in desperate need of stability. If not, I stated that Congress should step in and remedy this issue.

The FCC did not provide regulatory certainty when they voted, and three months later, they have yet to publish their decision. This decision, whatever it looks like in final form, will lead to litigation, assuring this issue will not be resolved for many years . . . unless Congress acts swiftly. Without regulatory certainty, the telecom industry, CLECs and ILECs alike, will continue to experience employee layoffs, cuts in capital expenditures, and little investment and growth.

The FCC had an opportunity to ensure regulatory certainty in the telecom marketplace, but failed. Congress must provide this much needed certainty, and it must do it soon.

USPS STAMP ADVISORY COMMITTEE SHOULD ISSUE A STAMP TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT PLIGHT OF MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN

HON. SHERWOOD BOEHLERT

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2003

Mr. BOEHLERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, along with Representative NICK LAMPSON, Chairman of the Congressional Missing and Exploited Children's Caucus, to announce the introduction of a resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States Postal Service (USPS) Stamp Advisory Committee should issue a stamp to raise awareness about the plight of missing and exploited children. It is only fitting that such an action should occur today, on National Missing Children's day.

My local community was shocked one afternoon in August 1993 when 12-year-old Sara Anne Wood was abducted near her home in Sauquoit, NY. Far too many parents have had to suffer with the agony of not knowing if their child was safe—we need to be more vigilant in protecting our nation's children.

The idea for this stamp should be credited to the Missing Children's Stamp Committee, a grass roots organization of concerned citizens from my district whose goal is to convince the USPS Stamp Advisory Committee to issue a commemorative stamp to raise awareness about the plight of all missing and exploited children nationwide.