

humor and love of laughter made him most popular with his six young nieces and nephews. His mother Gale particularly remembers the love Ben had for kids. She said: I always thought he would be a great teacher for younger children.

Even while in Iraq, Ben wanted to keep his family happy. When calling or emailing, he was always more concerned about them than himself. His mother remembers the very words he always said—"Don't worry, I'll be fine."

Those who knew Ben remembered his rich life during his funeral at the First Christian Church. Reverend Jamie Gump said that Ben lived a full life but died too soon for those who loved him. Reverend Gump also read a letter from Ben's mother, in which she wrote: I miss you so much and long to see your face.

At the service, MG David Huntoon presented Ben's parents with their son's Purple Heart and Bronze Star, and said:

Sergeant Laymon was part of the 10th Cavalry, a proud outfit that has seen many heroes. His mission required courage and compassion. It was clear to the United States Army that he was an outstanding leader.

Ben's death has been a loss to his entire community. His friends and neighbors will never forget him. Kathy Blair knew both Ben and his family. "I'm feeling great sadness, unbelievable sadness," she said. Beth Totman also knew Ben. "He was a super-nice guy, so kind and fun to be around," she said. "He always seemed to have a smile on his face."

Ben brought joy and laughter to all who knew him. I would like to conclude with the words of one of Ben's fellow soldiers, a young man named Pete, who was with Ben when the roadside bomb exploded. This is what Pete said:

I'm going to miss him so much. He was a great friend. He could make me laugh at the worst possible times in my life. Even now, I look back on the stuff he did and laugh.

Ben will always be remembered. His compassion and positive attitude were truly rare, and he simply brightened the lives of all who knew him. My wife Fran and I will continue to keep Ben's father and step-mother James and Kathy Laymon his mother and step-father Gale and David Harstine, and his brothers Trevor, Curt, and Andrew in our thoughts and in our prayers.

I yield the floor.

CORPORAL NICHOLAS A. ARVANITIS

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I rise today to pay special tribute to U.S. Army CPL Nicholas A. Arvanitis of Salem, NH. On October 6, 2006, this brave 22-year old paratrooper gave his life for his Nation while engaged in combat operations with enemy forces near Bayji, Iraq. Corporal Arvanitis had been stationed in Iraq since August 2006, serving as a squadron leader assigned to Company C, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, Ft. Bragg, NC.

Nicholas, or "Nick" to family and friends, grew up in Salem, NH, and was

a 2003 graduate of Salem High School. He was a member of the wrestling team and played guitar in the jazz band and sousaphone in the marching band. Friends remember him as a team player, who got along with everyone and was always smiling.

Nick joined the U.S. Army in August 2003 because he wanted to protect his country and his family. Friends and family said he loved his country, wanted to defend it, and sensed a call to duty. He completed Infantry One Station Unit Training at Fort Benning, GA, in December 2003 and the Basic Airborne Course in January 2004. He reported to Fort Bragg, NC, in March 2004 and was assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division in April 2004. Corporal Arvanitis deployed to Afghanistan in the fall of 2004 in support of the Afghan elections and deployed to Iraq in July 2006 as a member of 3rd Brigade Combat Team in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Corporal Arvanitis' awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Combat Infantryman Badge, Parachutist's Badge, and Expert Weapons Qualification Badge.

Patriots from the State of New Hampshire have served our Nation with honor and distinction from Bunker Hill to Bayji—and U.S. Army CPL Nicholas Arvanitis served and fought in that same fine tradition.

My sympathy, condolences, and prayers go out to Nick's maternal grandparents Leonard and Rita, his parents Maureen and Richard, his sister Kimberly, and to his other family members and many friends who have suffered this most grievous loss. All will sorely miss Nicholas Arvanitis, the forgiving young man with a heart of gold, the patriot who always thought of his family and friends, the courageous and outstanding paratrooper who served our Nation with distinction and honor. In the words of Daniel Webster, may his remembrance be as long lasting as the land he honored. God bless Nicholas A. Arvanitis.

LANCE CORPORAL MICHAEL SCHOLL

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President I rise to express my sympathy over the loss of U.S. Marine LCpl Michael Scholl of Nebraska. Lance Corporal Scholl died from wounds suffered in combat operations in Iraq's Al Anbar Province.

Lance Corporal Scholl was from Lincoln, NE. A 2002 graduate of Lincoln High School, he was originally denied enlistment with the Marines. But with persistence, Lance Corporal Scholl received a medical waiver and became a marine in 2003.

While stationed in Hawaii, Lance Corporal Scholl met his future wife Melissa. The couple were married a day before he was deployed to Afghanistan.

He served in Afghanistan from summer 2005 to January 2006. Within a month of his return, he and Melissa were expecting a baby. On October 11, 2006, only a few weeks after Lance Corporal Scholl was deployed to Iraq, Melissa gave birth to Addison Rose Scholl. Although he never met his daughter, Lance Corporal Scholl was a proud father. He received pictures of her while he was in Iraq and also recorded stories for her to hear as she grew. Thousands of brave men and women like Lance Corporal Scholl are serving in Iraq.

In addition to his wife and daughter, Lance Corporal Scholl is survived by his father Steven Scholl of Friend, NE, and his mother Debora Chandler of Lincoln, NE.

I ask my colleagues to join me and all Americans in honoring LCpl Michael Scholl.

HONORING SENIOR MASTER SERGEANT MICHAEL L. LEMKE

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I would like to recognize airman SMSgt Michael L. Lemke, stationed at Francis E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, WY. Senior Master Sergeant Lemke was selected as one of the Air Force's 12 Outstanding Airmen for 2006. The award is based on his superior leadership, job performance, and personal achievements.

The Air Force honors the 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year at the annual Air Force Association's Air and Space Conference and Technology Exposition in September. Over 352,000 Active-Duty airmen were considered for this award. I am pleased they recognized Senior Master Sergeant Lemke with this well deserved honor. I had the pleasure of meeting with Senior Master Sergeant Lemke while he was in Washington to receive his award.

Senior Master Sergeant Lemke has been in the Air Force for 19 years and is the superintendent of the 90th Contracting Squadron at F.E. Warren AFB. He was also selected as the top graduate at the Senior Non-Commissioned Officer Academy out of 2,515 Senior NCOs who graduated in 2005. He recently returned from deployment in Iraq and I thank him for his sacrifice and service. Senior Master Sergeant Lemke is preparing to retire from the Air Force.

I have always said that anyone wanting to live in Wyoming will do so if they can create a job. As chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions and also a member of the Small Business Committee, I am pleased that Senior Master Sergeant Lemke will be entering the private sector as a small business owner in Cheyenne. He and his wife Maria, who is an accountant, will be partners in Front Range Nuclear Medicine. One of the biggest problems in rural America is access to health care facilities. Front Range Nuclear Medicine helps improve access to health care for people in Wyoming by transporting medical scanning technology

to the hospitals. Before I came to the Senate in 1997, I operated a small business with my wife, and I wish the Lemkes the best of luck in this new endeavor.

Again, I congratulate SMSgt. Lemke for his selection as one of the Air Forces' 12 Outstanding Airmen for 2006.

COMMEMORATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF ALPHA PHI ALPHA FRATERNITY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today I rise to salute Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, which celebrated its 100th anniversary on December 4, 2006. Founded at Cornell University in 1906, Alpha Phi Alpha is the Nation's oldest African-American fraternity. In addition to Martin Luther King, Jr., the fraternity also proudly claims notable American leaders such as former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, former Senator Edward Brooke, Congressman CHARLIE RANGEL, Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, and countless others.

From advocating for the rights of African Americans to encouraging young people to attend college, Alpha Phi Alpha has played an important role in our country. Most recently, the fraternity successfully pushed to create a national memorial for Martin Luther King, Jr., on the National Mall in Washington, DC. I send my best wishes upon this important milestone, and I am certain that the fraternity will continue its rich legacy of service and social justice in the next 100 years.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. Each Congress, Senator KENNEDY and I introduce hate crimes legislation that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society. Likewise, each Congress I have come to the floor to highlight a separate hate crime that has occurred in our country.

On October 11, 2006, in New York, NY, Michael Sandy, a gay man, was attacked by four men. During the attack, Sandy was struck by a car while trying to flee. According to police, Sandy went to meet a man that had contacted him through a singles website. They drove to a parking lot where three other men were waiting, the group subsequently attacked and beat Sandy. Police believe that these men have used the Internet to find victims numerous times in the past.

I believe that the Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

PORTLAND—UNWIRED

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize my home State of Oregon and the city of Portland. Thanks to the visionary leadership of Portland city officials and their plan to "Unwire Portland," the forecast in Portland today is "overcast, with free broadband access for everyone." You see, there is a new cloud covering the city—a Wi-Fi broadband cloud.

Residents, businesses, and city officials will be able to access the Internet anywhere under the 134 square mile Wi-Fi cloud, download content as quickly as 1 megabyte per second, and upload at speeds reaching 256 kilobits per second. And they will be able to do it all for free.

The Wi-Fi network will not only offer city residents and businesses a new affordable choice for broadband access, but will also improve the efficiency of city government operations. Public safety and other field-based employees will now be able to wirelessly download and upload reports and data from the field.

The public / private partnership that was struck by the city to realize this accomplishment perfectly illustrates how municipalities, free of State restrictions, can improve access to broadband opportunities for its citizens while improving city services.

The Wi-Fi cloud over Portland also reminds us that the future competitiveness of our country depends upon ubiquitous broadband deployment.

Congress must enact legislation that clearly articulates a national broadband policy and provides affordable broadband access for all Americans. I look forward to working with each of you, my colleagues, toward this endeavor.

TIME FOR A CHANGE

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, crime in our Nation is increasing. Too often guns are involved. In 2005, our country experienced a surge in murder and robbery rates. Unfortunately, that surge has continued in 2006. The Police Executive Research Forum, a think tank that serves many of the Nations' police departments, examined the murder and robbery statistics of 53 U.S. cities for the first 6 months of this year. In their report, "A Gathering Storm: Violent Crime in America," they report that murder has increased in 26 of the 53 cities, and robberies have increased in 43 of the 53 cities.

In Boston, after a 19.6-percent increase in murder in 2005, the first 6 months of 2006 produced another 27.5-percent increase. In Memphis, murder increased 27 percent in 2005 and 43 percent in 2006. Police officials attribute these severe increases to increases in gang activity, violent offenders returning from prison and kids who have easy access to guns.

In September, the Federal Bureau of Investigation reported that in 2005 vio-

lent crime increased 2.3 percent, murder and non-negligent manslaughter increased 3.4 percent, robbery increased 3.9 percent, and aggravated assault increased 1.8 percent from 2004.

What may be even more dramatic is the fact that these statistics are not exclusive to larger cities. Smaller communities that typically had relatively low amounts of crime have also been affected. In the first 6 months of 2006, robbery was up 47 percent in Rochester, NY, 37 percent in suburban Montgomery County, MD, 36.8 percent in Minneapolis, 36 percent in Milwaukee, and 27 percent in Norfolk, VA. This translates into thousands more people being robbed, often at gunpoint.

According to a poll conducted by the Washington Post and ABC News, 61 percent of Americans favor stricter gun laws. This is up from 57 percent in 2002. The 109th Congress's record on gun safety is not one of which to be proud. It has been a "do nothing" Congress. I will continue in the 110th Congress to work to pass sensible gun safety legislation to help make our communities safer.

THANKING UTAH VOLUNTEERS

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to all the men and women in Washington County, UT, whose hard work and diligence have made and are making the Dinosaur Discovery Site at Johnson Farm such a success. These dedicated volunteers are helping to protect and display an asset of great value not only to Utah but to the world.

The history of this discovery is fascinating. A few years ago, retired optometrist Dr. Sheldon Johnson was preparing his farm site for development, and as he turned over the earth, he discovered tracks of early residents of Washington County—very early residents, in fact. Dinosaur tracks dating back to the Jurassic period of history were uncovered. They are being preserved and are bringing economic and historic benefit to St. George, Washington County, UT, and the Nation. To date, visitors from 68 nations and all 50 States have visited the site.

I want to recognize and thank Dr. Sheldon and LaVerna Johnson who discovered the tracks and then donated the land to preserve this heritage. The Johnsons have made it all possible. Linda Sappington, Washington County volunteer coordinator, aided by volunteer supervisors Kae Crabtree and Carole Chadwick, began in February 2000 to bring together individuals who cared about the tracks and who were willing to give of themselves to help preserve the find.

I also want to recognize and thank Mayor Dan McArthur, the city of St. George, Washington County, and the Utah State Legislature for their efforts. Past and present museum staff Theresa Walker, Andrew R.C. Milner, Janice Evans, Bob Kroff, and Anneli Segura have put forth countless hours