

a great opportunity for us to have interchange. There's all kinds of ways for the United States and Chinese people to get to know each other, and I look forward to encouraging those kind of avenues of dialog. Presidents can talk, but sometimes the best way to have lasting friendship is for there to be a lot of people-to-people exchanges.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:16 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Yao Ming, center, National Basketball Association's Houston Rockets. President Hu and two reporters spoke in Chinese, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at a Luncheon Honoring President Hu Jintao of China

April 20, 2006

Mr. President, Madam Liu, Laura and I are honored to welcome you to the—and your delegation to the White House. It's a pleasure to have you here, along with our other distinguished guests.

China is home to an ancient civilization, and it is helping to shape the modern world. In a single generation, China's economy has moved from isolation and stagnation to engagement and expansion. As China has grown, our two peoples have come to know one another better.

Thirty-five years ago this month, the Chinese Government welcomed the United States ping-pong team to Beijing. *[Laughter]* It's an event that marked the beginning of renewal—renewed cultural exchanges between our two nations. Today, Chinese athletes compete professionally in the United States, and Americans appreciate the opportunity to see them play.

In 2008, China will welcome athletes from all over the world as your great nation hosts the summer Olympics. Beijing will showcase China's transformation and demonstrate China's commitment to the international institutions that make fair and peaceful competition possible for all nations.

Mr. President, I thank you for the constructive and candid conversations we had this morning. I appreciate the opportunity to expand the dialog between our two great na-

tions. And, Mr. President, I'm pleased to offer a toast to you and to your gracious wife and to the people of China.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:20 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Liu Yongqing, wife of President Hu. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Hu.

Remarks at the President's Environmental Youth Awards Ceremony

April 20, 2006

The President. Thank you. Please be seated. Thanks for coming. Welcome. Glad you're here. Sorry I'm a little late. I just finished having a lunch with President Hu Jintao of China, a very important lunch. I hope you forgive me for running a little late. But thanks for letting us come by to say hello. I'm proud to join Steve Johnson in honoring young Americans who have given time and energy to help make this country a better place. We're really glad you're here.

You're serving as young stewards of the environment, which means you're setting a good example for what it means to be a citizen. It's, like, what we call citizenship in action. And you're helping make America a wonderful place. And so we're really glad you're here. I'm glad to be a part of the award ceremony.

I want to thank all the Administrators from the EPA who are here, but I particularly want to thank Steve and Debbie for joining us as well. We're here to honor, Steve, in case you don't know it yet—*[laughter]*—49 young Americans who are helping to protect the natural heritage of our country. I appreciate the fact that you're setting good examples too, by the way, and doing what you're doing, you're showing people how to lead and how to be a responsible citizen.

I appreciate the rain gardens that were built in places like Massachusetts and Michigan to catch runoff and prevent it from polluting local rivers and streams. That's a smart idea; thanks for doing it. In New York, folks here have organized volunteers to stencil warnings near neighborhood sewers. That's

a good way to help protect the environment, isn't it?

In Pennsylvania, folks here built an environmental demonstration house to showcase environmental products and technologies. It makes a lot of sense to showcase new technologies. After all, technologies are going to help change the world in a positive way so that we can be good stewards of the environment.

As a matter of fact, one of the technologies that are—a part of the technological revolution that we're pushing hard here is to change the way we drive our automobiles. One of these days, we're going to have what they call hybrid plug-in batteries. You'll be able to drive your car for the first 40 miles on electricity. That seems to make sense. It does a couple of things. One, it helps to improve the environment, but it also makes us less dependent on oil. And one of my hopes is that one of these days, the cars you drive won't be using any oil but will be using hydrogen, as a way to protect the environment. So those of you who are working on new technologies, thanks. It's a smart thing to do. That's exactly what this Government needs to be doing more of as well, and will be doing more of.

I'm proud to welcome folks from Georgia, and your club called "The Creek Freaks." [Laughter] When I first heard the name, I thought it might be like a band or something, you know? [Laughter] I welcome the folks from Arkansas, who are clearing trash. By the way, the Creek Freaks are helping to protect wetlands. I don't know if you know this, but we've increased the wetlands by a half-a-million acres over 2 years. That's a really important initiative. And for those of you who are helping do that, I want to thank you very much.

In Arkansas you've cleared trash and developed projects to stabilize the banks of a local stream. Thanks for coming, welcome. If you happen to get close to Texas, tell them hello.

In Missouri, you restored a portion of a park—adjacent to a school—to a native prairie. I don't know if you know this or not, but Laura and I are fortunate to own some property in central Texas, near a town called Crawford. You've heard of it, Richard.

[Laughter] One of our projects is to restore as much of our land as possible to native grasses and wildflowers. We've got buffalo grasses, bluestem—little bluestem grass. And interestingly enough, we've converted about 50 to 60 acres of our land to—so we can provide seed for people so they can then plant little bluestem. And it's a neat project, and I would encourage ranchers and farmers to be able to find ways to help plant native grasses, just like the kids from Missouri have done here.

In Alaska, you built a grated wall that provides access to a local creek. That makes sense, you know. People ought to be allowed to have access to nature, but you want to do it in a way that protects the environment. It's one of the reasons why I proposed that we spend \$5 billion on making sure that the maintenance issues in our national parks are improved, and we're on the way to making sure that happens. I believe in national parks, and I believe people ought to have access to national parks. After all, it's the people's parks; it's not a handful of people's parks. It's everybody's park. And the Federal Government has a role to maintain those parks, and we're doing a good job of that.

In California, 8-year-olds here launched a composting and recycling effort called, "The Wonderful Weird World of Worms." [Laughter] That's kind of hard for me to say. [Laughter]

Got some folks from Utah that built a hybrid land speed racer which he drives to school and races at the nearby salt flats to raise awareness about alternative fuel vehicles. I just talked to you about the hybrid plug-in battery and hydrogen. There's another alternative fuel that we need to use in our vehicles, and that's ethanol. I don't know if you study that in your schools, but it's possible to make fuel for automobiles from corn. As a matter of fact, we're doing quite a bit of that in the Midwest—or sugar. Sugarcane is pretty good for making fuel—ethanol.

But we're close to some breakthroughs, some technological breakthroughs that will enable us to make ethanol from wood chips and compost. And when we hit that, all of a sudden, you're going to see ethanol all across the country. It makes sense to drive

our cars from agricultural products, doesn't it, as opposed to oil?

And so thank you for setting such a good example. We're really glad you're here. You know, good environmental policy requires Federal effort, but it also requires State effort and local effort and volunteer effort. All of us need to pitch in to make—to conserve the land and make this country as beautiful as can be. And by being here today, you're showing a strong commitment for the future of our country. And we're blessed that we've got people like you that are willing to do what you did.

So I want to welcome you. I want to welcome you all; I want to welcome your teachers. Thank you for being here. Thanks for teaching. I want to welcome your parents. I really appreciate you raising such good folks. And I want to welcome the EPA Administrator to announce the awards. God bless, thanks for coming.

[At this point, Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency Stephen L. Johnson introduced the award recipients from each region, and the President congratulated them.]

The President. Thanks for coming. Congratulations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:59 p.m. in Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Debbie Johnson, wife of EPA Administrator Johnson; and Richard E. Greene, Environmental Protection Agency Region VI Administrator.

Proclamation 8003—National Physical Fitness and Sports Month, 2006

April 20, 2006

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

For 50 years, the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports has helped individuals, schools, communities, businesses, and organizations promote healthy lifestyles. During this year's National Physical Fitness and Sports Month, we celebrate the Coun-

cil's 50th anniversary and underscore our Nation's strong commitment to health, physical activity, and fitness.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower founded the President's Council on Youth Fitness in 1956 to encourage America's youth to make fitness a priority. He wrote that year, "Our young people must be physically as well as mentally and spiritually prepared for American citizenship." The Council later became the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, including people of all ages and abilities and promoting fitness through sports and games.

Today, the Council continues to play an important role in promoting fitness and healthy living in America. My HealthierUS Initiative provides simple steps to help citizens live longer and better lives, and millions of young people and adults have participated in the President's Challenge awards program. The Council's website, fitness.gov, has information about these programs and other ways Americans can improve their health through physical activity. By exercising regularly and maintaining healthy eating habits, individuals can feel better and reduce their risk of chronic health conditions like obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. An active lifestyle also creates opportunities for friends and family to spend time together and enjoy various forms of exercise, such as biking, hiking, and team sports. The medical benefits, increased self-confidence, and stress reduction that can come from athletic activity help contribute to a healthier, more productive Nation.

I urge children, teens, and all Americans to make time every day for exercise and to encourage family, friends, and neighbors to live healthier lives by participating in physical fitness activities. As President Kennedy said at the 1961 Youth Fitness Conference, "We do not want in the United States a nation of spectators. We want a nation of participants in the vigorous life."

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 2006 as National Physical Fitness and Sports Month. I call upon the people of the United States to