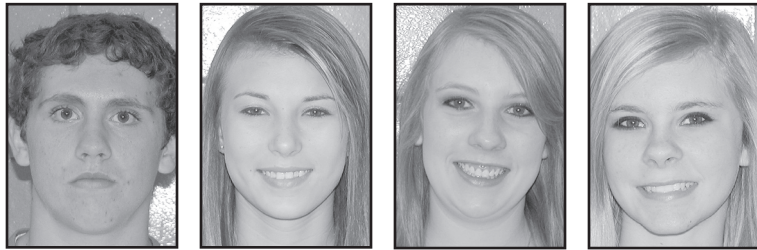


# Students win American spirit essays

The 2010-2011 eighth grade and freshmen class last spring submitted essays to the AMVETS Nation Americanism summer essay. St. Francis freshmen winners were Scott Warren, first place; Shelby Cassaw, second runner up; and Randee Grover, third runner up; eighth grade winner was McKayla Taylor. Their instructor is Lisa Gibson.



Warren Cassaw Grover Taylor

The organization is a patriotic program which offers schools a resource for teaching students about their American heritage.

The theme was "Why is it Important to Vote?" Each essay was limited to 400 words or less in the freshman class and 300 words or less for the eighth grade class.

The essays were judged on originality, adherence to theme and literary composition.

Shawn received an all-expense paid trip to the Freedom Foundation at Valley Forge, Pa., for a long weekend in November of youth oriented activities. The highlights of the trip are dynamic speakers and sightseeing. The other winners will be receiving cash prizes.

Shawn won't be able to attend due to family commitment so Shelby will be attending the conference.

**Why is it important to vote?**  
By Randee Grover

Why should I waste my time? My opinion's not going to matter in the long run. Why bother? These thoughts, and many others, may be racing through your mind, but when it comes down to it, they couldn't be farther from the truth. When it comes to voting, one person could tip the tables.

Over the years, studies have shown that many Americans have been skipping out on voting. By NOT voting, you're not only affecting yourself and your future, rather the future of many American citizens. When you step into the private booth and study the names on the ballot, you have a gigantic responsibility hanging over your head. Your choices could ultimately affect the future of the United States of America.

**Why is it important to vote?**  
By Shelby Cassaw

As a teenager, I will be bluntly honest. I don't watch the news or pay attention to what's going on in the world. After doing this essay, I should start because when I become an adult I don't want to have a small view of the world. I'm living here, so I should know what's going on! Getting involved in the world helps you learn how to think more broadly, look at things from different points of view, and at different sides of situations.

We all contribute to society; it could be in a positive way or a negative way. Voting is playing a role in a positive change. If you don't vote, you don't have a right to complain about the government in my opinion. If people marched for and even died for the right to vote, why wouldn't we take advantage of this opportunity?

One vote can make a difference. It isn't that hard to go and vote. It may take about thirty minutes of your time, but it's worth it. Every time you vote, you are helping this country.

Voting is a great privilege. It gives you recognition to your opinions and choices. The most effective way to communicate with the public and understand choices people have to say on a matter is by voting. It is your way to let the government officials know what your opinion on a particular law or regulation is. Without voting, you are simply accepting the decision of letting others govern your life.

When you vote, it allows you to choose people you want to govern and represent you. Never underestimate any single vote. Make it a point to choose your favorite and most deserving candidate.

It's a right, privilege, and responsibility. If you don't vote, you don't have the right to complain. You could have prevented what you didn't like with that one single vote. Voting is the only true power we have over our country. It has not always been an unquestionable right for all, but is instead a hard-earned privilege. Take advantage of it. Will you?

**Why is it important to vote?**  
By McKayla Taylor

Voting isn't usually the first thing you think of when it comes to politics. When you think of politics, you probably imagine what choices there are for our near future.

There are many important values to voting. For instance, voting is a sign of representation, communication, and the exercising of hard earned rights. Citizens of America should be proud to have the responsibilities and privileges to vote for what they believe is the right choice.

People from all over came to this country for many different rights, including the right to be free. Voting does exactly that. The ability to let the government know your opinion is another great reason to vote.

Of all 27 Amendments of the Constitution, I think women enjoyed the 29th the most. In 1918, women in countries all over the world fought for their right to vote. After months of hard work and protesting, everything really paid off. In 1920, the 19th Amendment was passed. This was a new beginning for women in the United States.

If it wasn't for all of the American citizens of the United States, and the choices they voted for, we wouldn't have some of the greatest men in America running our country. From the past to the future, voting will always be an important part of our life.

Voting shows we're a part of a large group of people sharing our opinions on the choices we need to make. When you're standing in that voting booth, you know you're making a difference. Doesn't that make you want to be a part of voting?

No one can say that they will ALWAYS be able to go to a poll

booth and vote for what they want. Sometime in the future, the privilege of voting may be taken away from us, so why abuse the privileges you have now?

When you vote, you have a guarantee that no one else can see what you vote for. It's entirely between the ballot and you. The only other people that will see it are the people who tally up the votes. It's 100-percent anonymous, so why not take advantage of what you have while you have it?

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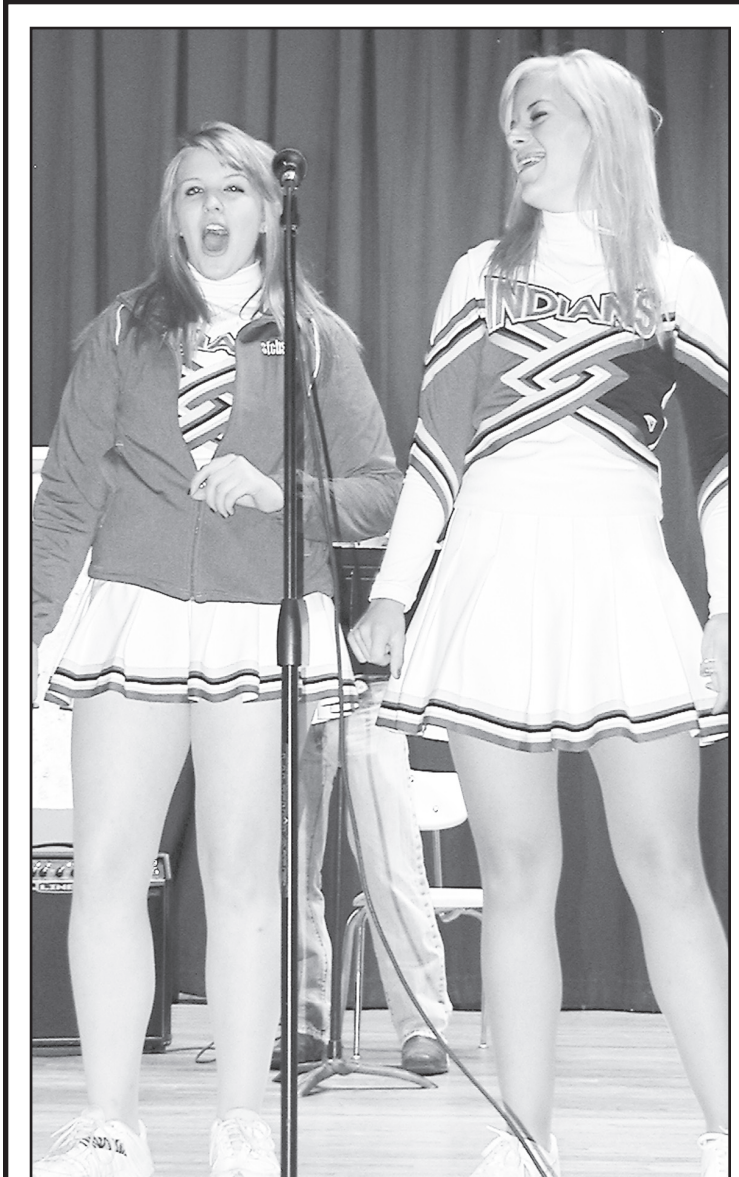
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SENIORS Tilyn Bell and Jacquelyn Ketzner have fun singing on stage during music class. Herald staff photo by Karen Krien

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