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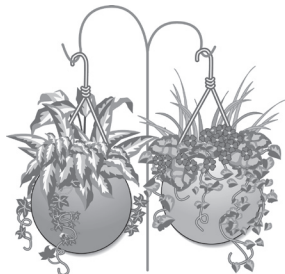
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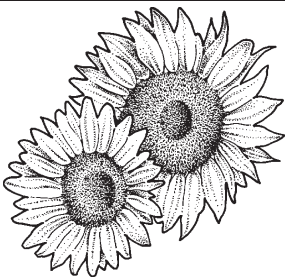
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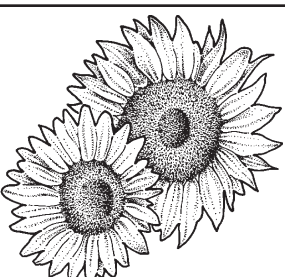
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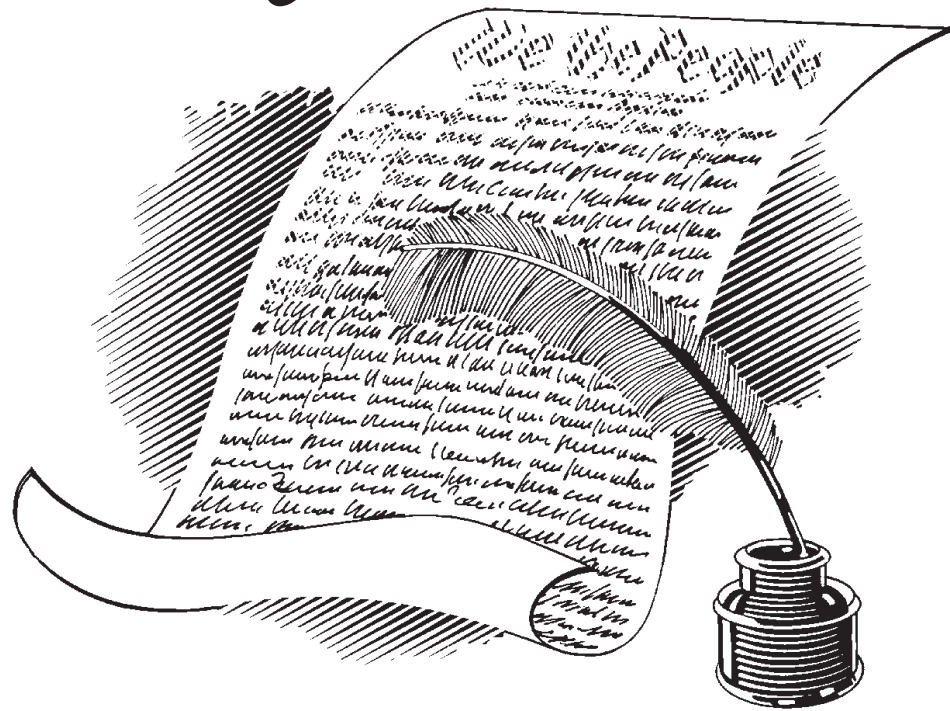


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Elks Americanism

essay winners



The Goodland Elks Lodge had 90 essays competing in its annual Americanism Essay Contest. The top three winners advance to the district level which were judged in January. Division I is the fifth and sixth grade and Division II is the seventh and eighth.

First place winners in both divisions got a \$50 savings bond. Second place winners will get a \$25 gift certificate and third place got a \$10 gift certificate.

The judges were retired teachers Jan Wilson and Virginia Palmgren.

McKayla Taylor, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gary Taylor of St. Francis and a student at St. Francis Community Junior High, was first in Division II.

Why I am Proud to be an American by McKayla Taylor

If there is anything I'm to be proud about, it's to be an American. I love my life as a proud American!

People say Americans live in the most prosperous land. They're definitely right about that, but what makes America so great? Is it that we always fight for our right to be free? Yes, that may be one reason. Another marvelous reason is how people in America stand by each other through better or worse. Nothing is greater than the love and generosity of our country.

The men and women of America in Afghanistan, who are fighting for our freedom we have today, are most definitely the people we should be most thankful to. Without those wonderful people of the past, present and future, we wouldn't be where we stand today.

If you think back to the Revolutionary War, you never would have thought that farmers or even village people had the skill to take down the British Army. The British had an astonishing Navy force and no one thought that these people, who barely knew what they were doing, could take down a professional army. You know how they did it? It's because of how much they loved their country. Without their love and devotion, we wouldn't be where we are today.

I think that if it wasn't for the men and women of the past, we wouldn't have the amazing future of today. What do you think?

Stephanie DeLaRosa, daughter of Tammy and Harvey DeLaRosa of Goodland and student at Grant Junior High, had the second place essay.

Why I am Proud to be an American by Stephanie DeLaRosa

What an honor to live in America! Everyone has certain opportunities that no other country has. We have certain rights that are like no other. Some reasons to be an American are having freedom, having the right of education and being treated equally.

Being an American allows me to have freedom of religion. We the people are able to have any type of religion. Any American can choose how to worship God in any way. Isn't that amazing how America can change

our lives? Another liberty is having the right to be educated. Parents can let their children attend public, private or home school. After a certain age students can also decide whether or not they want to have the education. It is a privilege to have that right.

The most important reason to me is we all get treated equally. All special needs people or the disabled people have the same advantages as everyone else. Every American in this country has equal rights and equal punishments. This is one of the main reasons why America is so loved by everyone.

Have the right of freedom, education and being treated equally is the main motivation of living in America. People of America should be proud to have all the rights we do. This is why I'm proud to be an American and I'm proud to be able to help out this country.

Abigail Fernandez, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Enrique Fernandez of St. Francis and a student at St. Francis Community Junior High, was the third place winner.

Why I am Proud to be an American by Abigail Fernandez

If there is one thing to be proud of, it would be being an American. People sometimes criticize me for being an American and Mexican at the same time. I have been living in the U.S. for 11 years. I have found out other people's opinions don't always count and that no matter what, I should always be myself.

I love being an American because that's one of the major things that makes me feel so special. I am truly proud to be an American because I am convinced I am free. When I am an American, I know I have the freedom to do things other nations can't. I have way more opportunities to succeed in life.

I have lived in the U.S. for about 11 years and the time that I have been here has been awesome. When I came back from a trip to Mexico, I can assure you it was the happiest day of my life. I realized there is no other better place than the U.S.A.

I am sure most people in American are glad to be citizens and others have had their wish come true when they became citizens of the U.S. Even people that are from foreign countries are happy to say that there is no better place than the U.S. Why are you proud to be an American?

Greg Kuykendall, son of Mike and Diane Kuykendall of Weskan and student at Weskan Elementary, was the first place winner in Division I.

Why I am Proud to be an American by Greg Kuykendall

I am proud to be an American because we have freedom of speech. Freedom of



DeLaRosa



Taylor



Fernandez

speech gives American's the right to say what's on their mind and not get punished. We also have freedom of religion. I am glad we have freedom of religion because it lets people believe in their own religion. We also have the freedom to bear arms. This freedom gives us the ability to own firearms in our house.

I am glad we have equal rights because it gives blacks and other minorities equal opportunities. I am thankful we are able to have a good education. A lot of countries aren't able to have a good education because they are so poor. I am happy we are able to vote for our president every four years. Lots of countries have kings and queens who are in office until they die. Why I am most proud to be an American is because we have heroes like policemen, firemen and soldiers who are willing to die for our freedom.

Janelle Frasier, daughter of Debbie Frasier and student at Weskan Elementary, was second.

Why I am Proud to be an American by Janelle Frasier

I am proud to be an American and I am not ashamed to tell the world. I am proud to be an American because we are free to do what we please, we can believe what want and live freely as we like. I am also proud to be an American because it's not only me but also others that are proud of America too.

I am proud to be an American because people who live and work in America can vote for their own rights. Being allowed to vote makes our nation's laws helpful to everyone.

Our education in America helps people learn about our country and how we live. In schools children also learn our Pledge of Allegiance and our National Anthem too. Learning about the history of America makes me proud to be an American because we have a very brave and heroic past.

In American it doesn't matter what color your skin is, what your religion is or how you live, everyone is treated the same. No matter what, you are given the same privileges as any other American.

We are Americans. We are one nation and we work together. I am proud to be an American and every other American should be too.

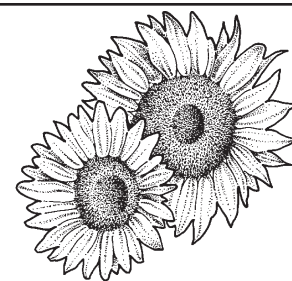
Alivia McKinney, daughter of Trudi McKinney and student at Weskan Elementary School, was third.

I am Proud to be an American by Alivia McKinney

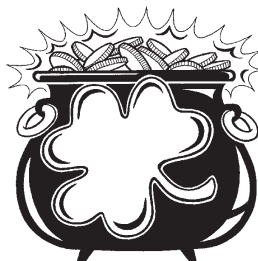
I am proud to live and be in America because everyone is equal. Since everyone has equal right they can fight for what they believe in. I am also very proud that we have freedom to do what we believe in. Other countries don't have the freedom that we have. We need to be grateful for what we have and not take anything that God has given us for granted. I am glad that there will be peace amongst the people of America. I am also prideful that we have a nation that has reasonable laws. I think that if these laws are followed through than people will become more respectful to everyone around them. I am grateful to live in a nation that people can live freely and live in peace!



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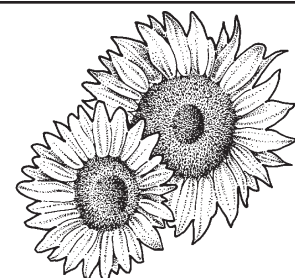
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