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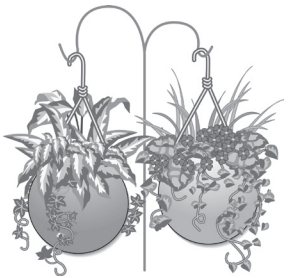
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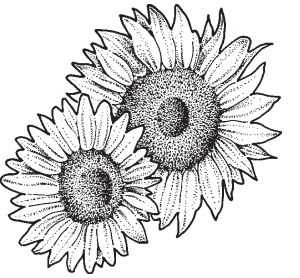
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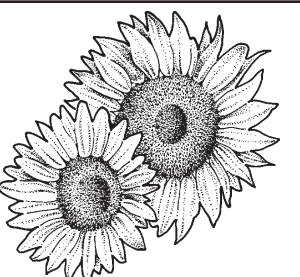
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Students write essays on Pledge of Allegiance

The Goodland Elks Lodge received 47 essays this year from Goodland, St. Francis and Weskan for its annual Americanism Essay Contest. The essays were written on "Why I am Proud to Pledge Allegiance to our Flag." The winners have moved on to the district level.

First place winners receive a \$50 saving bond. Second place winners get a \$20 money order and third place a \$10 money order. Every one that enter received Americanism Certificates. The judges were retired teachers Jan Wilson and Virginia Palmgren.

In Division I, which is fifth and sixth graders, Ella Ihrig, daughter of Justin and Amity Ihrig) and fifth grader at Central Elementary School in Goodland was first. Second place winner was Hannah Cress, daughter of Tim and Elizabeth Cress and sixth grader in Weskan Elementary School. In third place was Ryan Lalicker, son of Dewayne and Lori Lalicker and fifth grader at Central Elementary School in Goodland.

In Division II, which is seventh and eighth graders, Journey Lee, child of Brandon Lee and eighth grader at St. Francis Junior High in St. Francis. Second place winner was Sydney Sundstrom, child of Garrett Sundstrom and eighth grader at St. Francis Junior High in St. Francis. In third place was Savannah Brighton, daughter of Ralph and Joanie Brighton and seventh grader at Grant Junior High in Goodland.

Division I First Place by Ella Ihrig

I am proud to say the Pledge of Allegiance because it shows I'm an American, and so I can honor those who died to keep me safe. I can sleep every night and know I'm safe because other Americans are out on the front lines.

I like to say the Pledge to thank those people who had the idea to start a new nation, to build an army from mountain men and farmers and beat the British, knowing if they lost they would die, but the thought of freedom was too great to pass up.

People have always tried to beat us and people will always try to take something from us, but the American Spirit, the call to freedom, calls us all. When we band together no person or country or anything can beat us. We have fought within our country but we are still one. We started united and we have banded together. Kings would pick and choose who would stay and who would go but we said, "Give us your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free. The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me. I lift my lamp beside the golden door!" as quoted by Lady Liberty, a symbol seen by most immigrants as a sign they had made it to American, the land of innovation and home of the flag. U.S.A., the home of the free, but most importantly, the home of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Second Place By Hannah Cress

I love this country's flag. That is why I am proud to pledge allegiance to our flag, because I'm proud to be an American. I know I'm free here. I will not forget the men who died and gave me that right. I'd proudly stand up against anyone to defend our flag today. I do not doubt myself when I say that there isn't any question that I love this land and her flag. From New York to New Jersey, Maine to Missouri and Texas to Tennessee

or where ever life takes me, I will always be proud to pledge allegiance to our flag.

Its red, white and blue stars and stripes inspire me and probably everyone who looks at the. I, for instance, think of soldiers and veterans when I look at the flag. I do not know what you think of, but the next time you look at the U.S. Flag with its beautiful star and stripes, think of what you see. Also, think of the people who died, are dying right now and are going to die for your rights and freedom. Think about it and remember. Think about it and know how I love this land and proud I feel to pledge allegiance to our U.S. Flag. God bless the U.S.A.!



Third Place By Ryan Lalicker

I am proud to say the Pledge of Allegiance because it reminds me of all the men and women that have fought for our freedom. When I say the words "liberty and justice for all" it makes me think of the first American soldiers with George Washington at Valley Forge who fought for our liberty. I also think of the Union soldiers who fought for the slaves' freedom. I think of soldiers from World War II who fought to free European and Asian countries like my great uncles, one who fought at the Battle of the Bulge and another at Iwo Jima. What I think of most is my brother who fought in Afghanistan. That is what I think of when I pledge.

Division II First Place By Journey Lee

What does it mean to be an American? It means you can pledge your allegiance to the flag which stands for our great nation, the U.S. This is without being judged because of your race or what color you are. It means you can wake up every morning knowing you are free. American stands for so much and I am proud I can pledge my allegiance and be apart of that awesome feeling.

For instance, I can wake up every morning and know I have the power to come to school and get a great education, or when I turn 18 I can go our and vote for the next president. I can even chose my own career when I grow up and make that dream happen.

In America, it does not matter what race you are or what language you speak; you will still be treated equally. Just one person can make a difference in America. In America even if someone is not your favor-

ite person, The American way is to still help he or she out in their time of need. I know not many other country's people have the freedom or the power to choose what they want like the American people do.

These are the reasons I am proud to pledge my allegiance to the greatest country in the world, The United States of America. Are you proud to pledge allegiance to the flag?

Second Place

By Sydney Sundstrom

The Pledge of Allegiance was a wonderful gift given to us. I am proud of The Pledge of Allegiance because without it, I'm not sure how I would say thanks to all our flag has done for us. Our pledge makes me proud of my town, state and team colors. I am even proud of the beautiful colors of red, white and blue which fly in our sky.

Our flag has flown in wars since 1776. Our American Flag is a banner we use to represent the U.S. In the War of 1812, Francis Scott Key was captured as a prisoner by the British. When he looked out the window and saw all the fire plus the burning down of the sorrowful place he wrote a poem call "The Star Spangled Banner." Later on this poem was turned into today's nation anthem.

The Pledge of Allegiance was written in August of 1892 by a gentleman named Francis Bellamy. The Pledge of Allegiance I feel should be said and represent a lot more. Our Pledge of Allegiance, "Star Spangles Banner," and the red, white and blue all are magnificent characteristics of our flag. This is what our nation "Under God" looks like. I think we should say the Pledge of Allegiance more often at school because we rarely ever say it.

The Pledge of Allegiance tells me that God is watching over me and I have liberty and justice. The Pledge of Allegiance makes me know who I am. It makes me feel strong. Without the Pledge of Allegiance, how do you think you would represent the flag?

Third Place

By Savannah Brighton

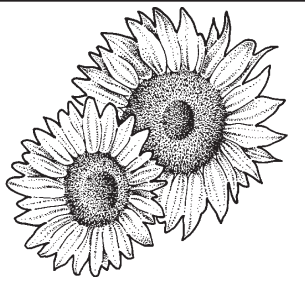
What I think when I say the Pledge of Allegiance is really not much, just wondering if I have a test or if I have forgotten to do my homework the night before. But I realized that the Pledge of Allegiance is much more than just a thing you say while you look at the flag. The Pledge of Allegiance is part of American history and shows respect to our country.

Many children wonder why we say the Pledge of Allegiance. Well, it shows respect to our soldiers and our country. James Bryce once said, "Patriotism consists not in waving the flag, but in striving that our country shall be righteous as well as strong." We, as Americans, keep this country strong. We say the pledge to remind us and honor those who serve to make it possible.

Francis Bellamy first wrote the Pledge of Allegiance in August 1892. It has been changed four times since it was first written. I think America's patriotism has changed a lot since the 1800s. It has changed so much that children mess around during the anthem. I now realize that our country is so much more than most people think. We the people should show respect to our country by saying the Pledge of Allegiance.



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