

Local

VFW holds annual Patriots Pen, Voice of Democracy contests in Baker County

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Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) had their annual nation-wide Patriots Pen and Voice of Democracy contests for scholarship awards and announced the six winners of the contests.

The contests are sponsored by the VFW every year and each city that has a VFW post is able to participate in the contests. Nationally, both contests have been held since 1947 and Baker has participated in them for over 20 years.

The Patriots Pen is a single-page essay, with a character limit, that is typically written by sixth to eighth graders. In a pamphlet from the VFW National Committee out of Washington D.C., it explains; "A Patriots Pen is conducted nationwide. It's a VFW sponsored essay competition that gives students an opportunity to write essays expressing their views on an annual patriotic theme.

This year's theme was entitled, 'The America I Believe In.' The national winners will receive at least \$500 toward scholarships.

The first place national award is currently \$5,000, plus an all-expense paid trip to Washington D.C for the winner and a parent or guardian."

"They pick a topic for the Patriot's Pen," explained Robert Henshaw, Post Commander of VFW Post 3048. "And, just based off the title, they let the kids write whatever it is that means to them and then it goes up to a board of judges here locally, they pick three winners to send to districts, and from districts to regionals, and then from regionals to nationals."

The Voice of Democracy is a two to five minute speech turned in to the VFW on a CD. The speech is typically given by freshman to senior high school students. Each year almost 40,000 high school students compete for more than \$2 million in scholarships and incentives. This year's theme was entitled "My Responsibility to America."

Students from The Baker High School and Harvest Christian Academy submitted their Voice of Democracy speeches.

"For us based off the Patriots Pen, we also donate money towards their scholarship," said Henshaw. "So the Patriots Pen first place was \$100, second place was \$75, and third place \$50. The Voice of Democracy first place was \$200, second place \$150, and third place \$100. We do our own little scholarship incentive to the kids as well.

The three winners for the Patriots Pen are all from the Baker Middle School. In first place is Sydney Keller, second place is Jocelynn Hellberg, and third place is Phoebe Wise.

The three winners for the Voice of Democracy are all from Harvest

Christian Academy. In first place is Savannah Potter, in second place is Autumn Ingalls, and in third place is Elijah Banister.

For the process of selecting the winners of the contest, Henshaw explained, "It's set off a basic guideline of rules. We bring a panel of three judges, most of them are high school teachers and I submit everything to them without the names. I number them all and the judges only get to read and they make sure it meets the general criteria first as far as using enough characters or too many.

They make sure it's of the right length and the right topic and they just base it off of grammar and the general understanding of the topic.

The judges that we pick, they're patriotic in their own sense, so they pick which one means the most to them personally to send on to districts and then districts does the same thing."

Henshaw has not yet heard from Districts who of the winners will be going to Regionals.

Savannah Potter's speech is below:

My Responsibility to America By Savannah Potter

In May of 1787 thirteen states met to form a federal government for our fledgling country.

As they wrote the United States Constitution that summer, our forefathers knew they were formulating the foundation for every freedom that all Americans would enjoy and profit from in the centuries to come.

They also knew that great freedom carries great responsibility; they expected all American citizens to take responsibility for their country no matter their age, race, sex, or political point of view.

Of all our responsibilities none is greater than who we elect to represent us.

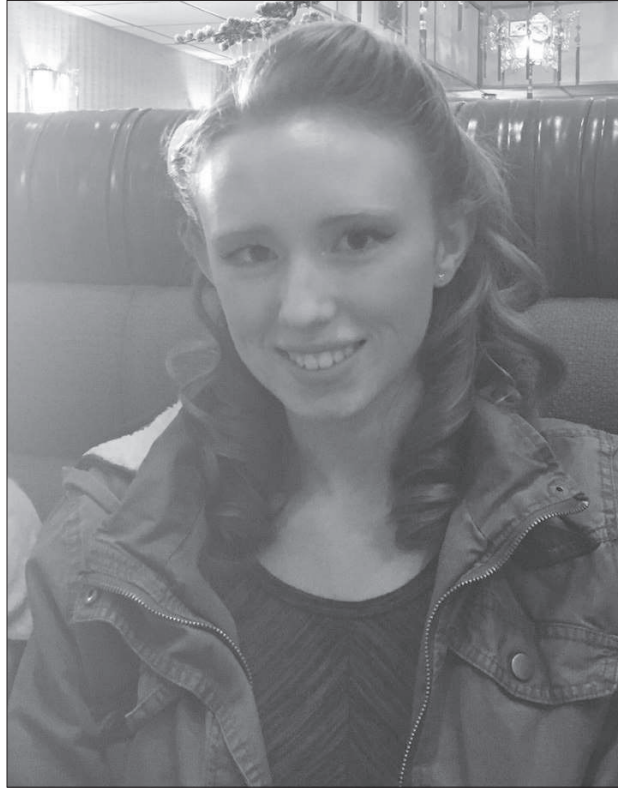
President Garfield summarized this accurately and powerfully when he said, "Now more than ever before, the people are responsible for the character of their Congress. If that body be ignorant, reckless and corrupt, it is because the people tolerate ignorance, recklessness and corruption. If it be intelligent, brave and pure, it is because the people demand these high qualities to represent them in the national legislature."

These words are no less true today than they were in 1877.

Our country is only as great as the character of the people who lead it, and we the people are the ones who are responsible for choosing these leaders.

It is our responsibility as citizens of the United States to discern between ignorance and intelligence, recklessness and bravery, corruption and honor.

Consequently, it is also our responsibility to be people who are capable of making that judgment because we ourselves hold



Submitted Photo.

Savannah Potter of Harvest Christian academy placed first in the Voice of Democracy competition.



Submitted Photo.

Autumn Ingalls and her father at the awards ceremony at the VFW.



Submitted Photo.

Savannah Potter accepts her award.

to high standards of morality and embrace what is honorable.

If we are to be satisfied with the people that we elect, we must individually be people of integrity.

I am underage and ineligible to vote; therefore, my greatest responsibility to America is to become a person of principle and high moral character.

Integrity is formed by being certain of what I believe and developing myself to consistently live out those beliefs in my life choices.

My family plays a major role in developing my character; their influence, beliefs, and support have shaped who I am today and will continue to do so.

Right now, a big part of my life is school, where I challenge myself to achieve high goals, make good grades, and be a critical thinker.

Home and school are the training grounds that prepare me to be a well-informed adult who will stand confidently for what I believe.

Another extremely important responsibility I have is to know my country's history. As a nation, our collective understanding of history shapes our present.

If we are ignorant of history than we become susceptible to biased opinions instead of documented

facts.

The outcome of ignorance is that our country's freedoms and rights are jeopardized because if we do not know and understand them, we will easily lose them.

My responsibility to America is to be a person of character and integrity. If I, joined by others, stay true to this and hold high expectations for the people that we elect to represent us, than the same qualities will be evident in our government.

Being people who are intelligent, brave, and pure will ensure that America remains a free and good country.

Tasty Bake

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

DiFonzo said that Taylor informed him that electrical power to the building had been shut off for about a month prior to Taylor's resignation, and Taylor said that the loss of power to the freezers and to the coolers would cause substantial loss of the product stored within both.

According to DiFonzo, Taylor had also informed him that most vendors of Tasty Bake were not paid by either Cereal Holding Company, or Tasty Bake, and this included any insurance premium for the property, and DiFonzo said that he has had no indication that the property was insured at the time.

In Peter's Declaration, he said he had also spoken with Taylor, and Taylor had informed him of the condition of the property, and of other details. "Based upon information provided to me by Mr. Taylor and other parties familiar with the situation, it is my understanding that Tasty Bake is no longer operating in the business in which it was formerly engaged ... I have received phone calls from a number of vendors of Tasty Bake, seeking information regarding the operations of the business, as they are not being paid for their services, and are receiving no response (or) communication from ... Defendant Tasty Bake, Inc., or Defendant Cereal Holding Company ..."

Peter said in his Declaration that, because of the difficulties which arose shortly after the sale of his stock in Tasty Bake, to Cereal Holding Company, he had conducted extensive research into Cereal Holding Company President Alicia Campos, and Samarah, who was also listed as Cereal Holding Company Vice President.

Peter discovered several negative items, among them, a National Association of Securities Dealers (NASD) fine of \$50,000, against Samarah and Company, and Samarah, in March 1991, and expulsion of Samarah and Company, from membership in the NASD, for failing to maintain minimum set capital, and for inaccurate books and records. The NASD, said Peter, found that Samarah and Company, and Samarah effected securities transactions with customers at prices that were unfair, and unreasonable.

Peter also discovered that Samarah and Campos, as principals of Oxy Dry Food Blends, and CPC Laboratories, were sued in Cook County Circuit Court (Illinois), by B&D Industrial Chemicals, for failing to pay for products delivered by B&D.

In 2003 or 2004, Peter said, Samarah and Samarah Holding Company were sued by Phoenix Container, Inc., for claims that Samarah, as former CEO/President of Samarah Holding Company, and former CEO of Phoenix, drew on Phoenix's master bank account, in order to fund his own interests, in the amount of \$437,250. The jury found Samarah liable, and Phoenix was awarded that sum in compensatory damages, and \$450,000 in punitive damages. After its related bankruptcy claim was dismissed, Peter said that Samarah Holding Company was also found liable for damages relating to an unjust enrichment claim.

BLM revises drilling filing

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) took a significant step today in its multi-year effort to improve the efficiency and transparency of the permitting process for oil and gas drilling. With the final revision to Onshore Order 1, the agency is making online filing the default method of filing Applications for Permit to Drill (APDs) and Notices of Staking, moving away from paper applications.

Since the BLM began developing the new online permitting system, almost 500 operators representing 70 different companies have provided valuable feedback and taken part in training. To date, about 200 permits have been reviewed and approved in the system, and another 1,300 are currently being processed.

"Today's rule concludes another key element of our oil and gas modernization program by moving BLM away from the hardcopy application process," said BLM Director Neil Kornze. "This Administration has updated a number of business processes in the oil and gas program that will result in a better and more efficient experience for both industry and the BLM."

The shift toward e-filing is part of an ongoing effort by the BLM to increase efficiency and transparency of the drilling permit review and approval process. This regulatory effort complements the BLM's recent upgrades to its permit processing system. That new system automates aspects of the process, allows operators to receive real-time feedback on their permits, makes the process more transparent, and enhances the BLM's ability to manage workflows. This new system, which was rolled out earlier this year is expected to reduce APD processing times by as much as 50 percent.

The current average processing time for permits is 220 days; the BLM estimates that with the new rule, 90 percent of permits will be processed within 115 days. In addition, the new system increases transparency by allowing operators to see where their application is in the approval process. By making e-filing the default means of submittal, as opposed to hard copy submittals, the new rule maximizes the opportunities presented by the new permit processing system. Recognizing that e-filing may not always be possible, the rule allows operators to request a waiver from the e-filing requirement in certain circumstances.

This new e-filing system is part of the BLM's upgraded Automated Fluid Mineral's Support System (AFMSS II). Ultimately that system will track and organize information regarding oil and gas operations on federal lands. When completely built out, AFMSS II will contain all of the relevant documents about a well.