

# The best in the West

## 13-year-old writer pens winning essay on Americanism

By Angel Carpenter  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Thirteen-year-old Amelia Hall of John Day was all smiles Wednesday afternoon when Sherry Feiger, with the American Legion Auxiliary, let her know she won first place in the Western division for the Americanism essay contest.

Feiger, who is the Americanism essay co-chair with Jessie Lewis, waited to share the news with Hall until she could present a certificate of award in person with her parents Dr. Dave Hall and Alicia Hall present.

Amelia earned first place in Division III for grades 7-8 last spring in the local auxiliary's Ellis Tracy Unit 77, and her essay went on to win first in the statewide contest for her division before moving on to the regional win.

This year's essay question was "What can I personally do to promote Americanism in my school and community?"

Hall, who will be an eighth-grader at Grant Union Junior-Senior High School, said one area of inspiration for writing the essay was thinking of veterans in her family, including a grandfa-



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

**Americanism essay contest chairman Sherry Feiger, left, presents Amelia Hall with a certificate of award Wednesday, Aug. 8, for winning first place in the Western division contest. Hall, 13, of John Day also won first place locally and first at state for her division, which includes grades 7-8.**

ther and two uncles, as well as great-grandfathers and great-uncles.

She said for last year's essay she wrote about her uncle who is on active duty and whose family moves frequently.

"They were stationed in Italy for three years," she said. "They sacrifice so much of their time and their home and family."

In her essay, Hall notes some of the small things she and her family do to show pa-

triotism, including honoring the flag, being involved in the community and picking up litter.

She wrote, "Americanism is showing gratitude for the faithful labor of all those who have fought to keep this

nation free."

Her idea behind the essay, she said, was to show how little things can make a difference.

"I thought, it's hard to do big things for the country, but you can start with small acts, then they grow into a snowball effect," she said.

Feiger, who is a retired first-grade Humbolt Elementary teacher, said her first-graders weren't old enough to participate in the contest, but in February she had a unit on patriotism.

"(Teachers') curriculum has broadened so much that sometimes you have to leave things out," she said. "This contest gives our teachers an opportunity to reflect on our country's history and what it means for us today."

Hall said she enjoyed receiving the assignment in her English teacher Angela Smith's class last school year.

"I did a lot of research, and I thought it was really interesting to learn about America's history," Hall said. "It also made me feel a lot more loyal and proud of our country while I was writing it."



Samantha Floyd

## Grant Union student wins first in state Americanism essay contest

By Angel Carpenter  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Samantha Floyd, 16, of Canyon City won first place in the state Americanism essay state contest for Division IV, which includes grades 9-10.

She won the local contest, sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary Ellis Tracy Unit 77, last spring.

Floyd will be a junior at Grant Union when school starts later this month.

Sherry Feiger, who is the local essay co-chairman with Jessie Lewis, presented Floyd with a certificate of award on Aug. 8, with Samantha's parents Greg and Joeline Floyd present.

This year's essay contest included 227 entries from Grant School District 3 students in grades 3-12, Feiger said, noting there were just 89 entries last year.

In Samantha's essay, she wrote about the importance of each American doing their part.

"We, as citizens, must be what we want our country to be," she wrote. "America has been built on many foundation beliefs, something that I would consider as 'Americanism.' These beliefs include: integrity, hard work, motivation and the ability to want to better oneself."

Floyd wrote her essay while in English teacher Kristi Moore's class.

"I think a lot of times students don't take the time to appreciate the country because they're focusing on their own lives and not what our country has done to give them the lives that they have," Floyd said. "I think it's important to be a positive example of Americanism because in this day and age a lot of people focus on the negative aspects of politics when it comes to our country — there is so much more than that."

## WHAT IS AMERICANISM?

By Amelia Hall  
What is Americanism? Americanism to me is showing loyalty to our beautiful, free country, America, through our words, beliefs, and actions. Americanism is showing our gratitude for the faithful labor of all those who have fought

to keep this nation free. It is remembering those who have sacrificed so much with their selfless service and repaying them by honoring and celebrating the wonderful country we have today. The dictionary describes Americanism as an attachment or allegiance to the traditions, institu-

tions, and ideals of the United States. Americanism is a wonderful, patriotic attribute that everyone needs to have in their hearts.

Society today is forgetting Americanism. Sadly, some people refuse to say the Pledge of Allegiance. This dishonors our country and is very disrespectful; they are disregarding all the hard work and sacrifices that came from building our nation up to what it is now. They are disgracing our country and insulting and ignoring all

those veterans, citizens, and other people who have devoted and sacrificed their lives, time, families, and so much more to making America a safe haven. I stand proud and tall every day with my hand firmly over my heart and repeat the Pledge of Allegiance with gratitude and respect. Some schools have disallowed the privilege of reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. I am proud to say that my elementary, middle, and high schools all recite the Pledge every day. I am proud of my 9-year-

old brother. Inspired by what he had learned in Cub Scouts, he began diligently putting up the flag every morning in front of our house and taking it down every night—no matter if he is going to be late for the bus or if he is tired.

In addition to reciting the pledge and displaying the flag, there are many other things I can do to promote Americanism, such as getting involved with my community and public services. Even things as small as picking up litter is important because it shows pride in the community, which translates into pride for the country. Raising the flag every day, reciting the Pledge, picking up trash, and encouraging others to show the same respect are just a few small, but great, things I can do to promote Americanism in my home, school, and community. I can honestly say that I am proud to be an American.

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FRI-SUN 7:00 9:30

MON-THURS (4:00) 7:00 9:30

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