

Christmas opening held in St. Francis



TONY RODRIGUEZ tears up the ivory as he plays the piano to entertain visitors to the Quincy Art Gallery on Friday night before the parade. *Herald staff photo by Douglas Sloper*



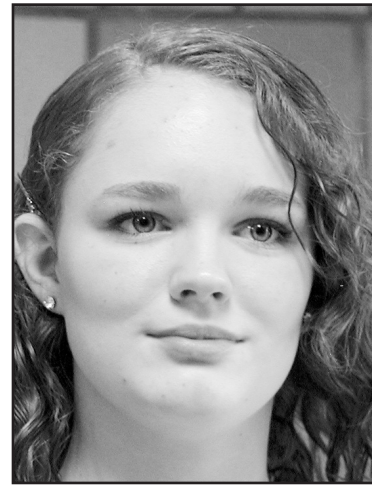
PLAYING HOLIDAY MUSIC as people travel in and out of the Senior Center for the soup supper were musicians Jeffrey Paulsen, Anne Husted, and Jonathan Isernhagen. *Herald staff photo by Karen Krien*



Matthisen Witzel



Emileigh Dinkel



Devin Patton

Students essays win locally

The students of Lisa Holzwarth, language arts teacher, entered the VFW essay contest, Patriot's Pen. The competition gave the students an opportunity to write essays expressing their views on democracy.

Matthisen Witzel, Emileigh Dinkel and Devin Patton won at the local level. Their essays will advance to the regional and possibly on to the state and national levels.

Matthisen won \$50 for first place. Emileigh, at second place, earned \$25 and Devin took third place and \$25.

Following are the essays.

What Patriotism Means to Me

By Matthisen Witzel

Patriotism is more than a word; it is what our lives revolve around. Most daily activities wouldn't be possible if it wasn't for the Patriots in the Revolutionary War. They are who we Americans should give the credit to. They were brave, courageous, and were willing to give up everything for our freedom.

Just like the Patriots in the Revolutionary War, the military we have now is outstanding. The men and women that go overseas leave everything they know and love to fight for our freedom. I have had two grandfathers in the armed forces and I look up to them. They were some of the real heroes of America. The members of the Army have a love for their country I can't even begin to describe.

As Americans, we love our country. There is nothing more exciting to Americans than seeing a red, white, and blue flag waving in the sky. I'm sure we have gotten this love from our Founding Fathers. Ask any U.S. citizen, I'm sure they would say how proud they are to be an American.

It is a thrill to look out my window and see the beautiful land that is before me. I often think what the land looked like when the Patriots were fighting in the Revolutionary War. Would they look out of their windows and see blood? As Americans, we are blessed and thankful for the beautiful land we now get to see; due to, the brave Patriots of so very long ago.

To me, patriotism is more than a word. It is describing Americans' courage, boldness, and strong love for the country we call home. It

also means to give thanks to the heroes protecting my country. What do you think of when you hear the word patriotism?

What Patriotism Means to Me

By Emileigh Dinkel

What does patriotism mean to me? To me, it means I will do anything for my country. I will go to war, fight for what I believe in, and love my country until the end. Take the Revolutionary War for example. The soldiers who fought in that war were people who were inexperienced. They were ready to die for their country and what they believed in was right.

Nathan Hale was a patriotic man who loved his country and was willing to do anything for his country. He fought in the Revolutionary War and spied on the British. They captured him and hung him! His last words before he was hung was "I only regret that I have, but one life to give for my country." He died helping his country. Would you be able to do that?

What if right now someone came and said, "Everyone, you need to change to this religion and follow my rules!" Would you stand up and do something for what you believe in or would you tuck your tail, drop your head, and listen to them? That's what patriotism is all about, right? Standing up for what you believe in, doing anything for your country, and even fighting a war to help your country! That is what patriotism is in my mind. I think it is a special virtue to have. If you aren't loyal to your country, then what is it that you have to fight for? Sure it may not be the wealthiest nation or the prettiest, but you can still be loyal, right?

There are many views of patriotism, but none are right because it is you that determines what patriotism means. What does patriotism mean to you and would you fight for your rights?

What Patriotism Means to Me

By Devin Patton

A dictionary will tell you patriotism means loving the country you were born in; however, I've always thought people are the ones who give words their meanings. Everyone has their own special view on what a word means



to them.

Patriotism to me means having pride in your country's accomplishments, recognizing its flaws and embracing them. Some people will say a true patriot is someone who is willing to risk their life for their country, but doing what? Is it fighting wars with other countries or is it doing dangerous jobs? I think how much of a patriot you are, shouldn't be measured by your willingness to give your life, but how you love its people and history.

America is a relatively young nation so we don't have a very long history, but we do have some major accomplishments. We've provided people who've changed the world over and over again. Like Ben Franklin, who was credited with discovering electricity or other inventors such as, Thomas Edison, and the Wright brothers.

Our inventions weren't the only things that set us apart, but our strive for equality, with people like Martin Luther King Junior or Amelia Earhart. Many of our well-known people of the past had bravery. They dared to do something different. Then when things didn't work out, they kept trying.

We Americans have a sort of adamant quality that makes us almost sort of single-minded. In some cases, it's a commodious quality.

When I was younger, I moved around a lot so I've lived in many different places across the country. Some places the people were friendly, others not so much. But inside, everyone is the same. We're all different, like in our actions, decisions, family situations, ethnicity, and speech, but deep down we're all just human.

No one starts out better. We're all equal. It's our decisions on what we do and how we treat others that set us apart.

What does patriotism mean to you?

Bandshell restoration progress reviewed by the city council

*By Amanda Miller
amiller@nwkansas.com*

St. Francis City Council members met on Nov. 25 and discussed the bandshell restoration, how the city will fund the electrical upgrade over the next six years, and the budget billing and connection fees for city services.

Bandshell restoration halted

The bandshell progress is halted until spring due to weather. The city council members discussed the bill that was received for the concrete work. Council member Bruce Swihart asked if there was a bid made before they came out this summer. Roger Jensen, council member, said that they had accepted a large bid, not knowing what portion the concrete was going to be.

Mike Day, city attorney, asked that they contact Mr. Johnson to have him explain the bid on the concrete work, why the bid was so high, what regulations may have been in place, and what the \$38,700 bill they paid was for.

Roger Jensen said that if the bill was truly \$150 a cubic foot, the bill would have been double what it is. But ultimately, city council members should have thoroughly reviewed the bid and that it was our mistake.

City website

Council member Paula Keller presented information on a person to create a website for the city. Terri Richardson, in Goodland, has created many websites for the area. Paula said that a whole redo of the website would be the easiest way to start over.

Richardson said she can do a website for the city for \$800 to \$1200, and that she could train someone to maintain the website over the following 60 days.

Mrs. Keller said she has not talked to Jason Padgett, a local computer technician, about the website at all.

Mrs. Keller said she would email links to Terri Richardson's websites to council members for them to look over, and they will discuss the website further at the beginning of the year.

Electrical upgrade funding

The electric upgrade is a six year, \$600,000 project, that is expected to begin next year. The funding of the project has yet to be determined. There was much discussion on how to fund this project at the city council meeting. Please look for the related article in this issue of The Herald.

Connection fees

Budget billing will be implemented, beginning the fall of 2014. Customers will receive a 1.1% discount if they participate in budget billing. Glori Milne, city clerk, suggested that now, rather than require a deposit, customers pay a non-refundable fee to the city, called a connection fee. The amount of the fee has yet to be determined. Some towns do \$100. If the city does

that, they will have to refund deposits after the first year it is implemented. The switch would then do away with deposits.

Currently, the city pays interest every year on deposits. This would eliminate this problem. With a connection fee, customers pay a set amount and do not get that back.

New business

JR Landenberger said that the Christmas lights over main street are on their last year. The wire is getting to the insulation and they are worn out. He suggested may-

be using a rope light that doesn't require bulb replacements.

Derek and Leslie Hook were granted a utility incentive for the B&B without breakfast they are putting in.

The Scout hut floor is in the process of being replaced. The hut will remain closed until it is finished.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the city council is set for 7:30 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 9, in city hall on Main Street. Council meetings are open to the public to attend.

Critical care hospital funding in jeopardy

*By Amanda Miller
amiller@nwkansas.com*

At the Nov. 25 Cheyenne County Hospital board meeting, Shawna Blanka, the hospital's quality and safety coordinator, handed out some information regarding the fragile state of the critical access hospitals. Cheyenne County Hospital is considered a critical access hospital.

Under a new proposal, advanced as part of a report from the Department of Health and Human Services office of the Inspector General, Medicare would curb enhanced payments to as many as two-thirds of these facilities according to Kaiser health news.

There are 1,330 critical access hospitals across 45 states. This would mean that more than 800 hospitals would lose enhanced Medicare funding for providing healthcare access in remote settings under the proposal.

According to the information provided by Mrs. Blanka, critical access hospitals receive a special Medicare payment structure. They survive in large part due to a federal reimbursement structure that provides them funding 1 percent above the cost of providing care. Even with this reimbursement,

revenues from other payers often don't cover costs. More than 60 percent of these hospital's revenue comes from government payers, so any payment reductions will have an immense impact on critical access hospital's ability to provide access to rural communities.

Kaiser states that the critical access hospital program was intended to financially stabilize small, rural institutions by providing them with higher Medicare reimbursement rates. The hospitals in the program are supposed to have 25 or fewer beds and be at least 35 miles away from another facility (15 miles across mountainous terrain) in communities that would otherwise have limited access to health care services. The effort was a response to 360 rural hospital closures in the 1980s and 1990s.

The proposal has been made, however there are many opponents. They say the proposal could put hundreds of hospitals out of business and roll back years of progress on access to healthcare.

Alan Morgan, chief executive officer of the National Rural Health Association, said deep cuts to Medicare funding "would effectively kill rural healthcare."

Book Review

Silencing Eve
By Iris Johansen

When it comes to Eve Duncan, never say never... That is the question on everybody's lips. Eve appears to have been the victim of James Doane, the psychopath who kidnapped her and forced her to use her skills as forensic sculptor to reconstruct the skull of his depraved son. That's what everyone attending her funeral thinks, at least. But not even some of her top brass colleagues know for sure whether her death is a hoax - a way to ensnare her brutal captor once and for all. But even if Eve really is still alive, how much longer can this charade continue before she falls into



even greater danger? CIA agent Catherine Ling will waste no time trying to find out. Years ago, Eve risked everything to help Catherine find her missing son. Now Catherine, along with Eve's beloved Joe Quinn and Jane MacGuire, will go to the ends of the earth to save her.

Book review from the St. Francis Public Library