

**WEST VIRGINIA ELKS ASSOCIATION
AMERICANISM COMMITTEE
CONVENTION REPORT
MAY 06-09, 2010**

Past GER, Lester C. "Ted" Hess, Jr., State President, Randy Holley, State Vice Presidents, Trustees, State Officers and Lodge Delegates.

Before proceeding further, I would like to recognize the members of my committee and thank them for another year of unending support. My Assistant Chairman and District Chairman North, Bernie Johnson, PER, Sistersville Lodge #333, District Chairman Central - Jerry French, PDD, Clarksburg Lodge #482, District Chairman South - Harry Palu, PER, Huntington Lodge #313, and the remaining committee members: Sally Tarley, PER - Fairmont Lodge #294, Patrick Duffy, PER, Wheeling Lodge #282, Thomas R. Wiseman, PDD, Huntington Lodge #313, and Committee Advisor - Donald E. Barger, PSP, Elkins Lodge #1135.

It is with some apprehension to say that the grading of this year's submissions for the Grand Lodge Americanism Essay contest was relatively easy due in part to the lack of participation in this year's program. Only seven lodges, four lodges in the northern district, one lodge in the central district and two lodges in the southern district participated in the 2009-2010 "The American Dream: What Is It?" essay contest.

The winners in Division I – 5th and 6th Grade students were:

Third Place: Kamron Milhoan of Sistersville Elementary School, sponsored by Sistersville Lodge #333;

Second Place: Anntwinette M. Fox of Long Drain School, sponsored by Mannington Lodge #388; and

First Place: Alyssa Faith Fadlevich of Mabscott Elementary School, sponsored by Beckley Lodge No. 1452.

The winners in Division II – 7th and 8th Grade students were:

Third Place: Andrea Gump of Corpus Christi School, sponsored by Wheeling Lodge #28;

Second Place: Ryan Crouse of Hayes Middle School, sponsored by Charleston Lodge #202; and

First Place: Maria Schmitt of St. Michael Parish School, sponsored by Wheeling Lodge #28.

It is requested that the First Place winners in Division I and Division II be asked by their sponsoring Lodges to attend our Mid-Year State Convention in August to read their winning essays and to receive their awards.

The theme for the 2010-2011 Americanism Essay Contest has been announced as “Why I am Proud to be an American”. Further information about this year’s contest will be made available shortly after the Grand Lodge Convention in Orlando. I have made some changes in how each Lodge in our State will be asked to handle this year’s Americanism Contest which should, or optimistically **will**, guarantee a 100% participation rate. Packets for this year’s contest will be provided to each Lodge at our mid-year convention in August.

The Americanism Essay Contest is one of many factors in our WV State Americanism Program. I commend each of our Lodges for their continued adherence to performing their Flag Day Ceremony. Flag Day 2010 is June 13th. Invite members of your community, especially Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, to participate in and/or attend your Flag Day Ceremony at your Lodge. An added touch to any Flag Day Ceremony is the Flag Disposal Ceremony where torn or tattered replicas of our greatest symbol of freedom can be properly discarded.

Continue to show your Lodge’s Americanism spirit by holding a 4th of July picnic, giving out small hand flags or American flag lapel pins at parades or events in your local communities, presenting a flag to a local school or charity, hosting a Red White and Blue Day at your Lodge or participating in the observance of National Patriot Day on September 11, 2010.

I look forward to working with each of the Lodges this year in what is anticipated to be one of the most successful years for Americanism in our State.

Mr. President, this concludes my report and I move for its adoption.

Walter S. Ice, PER
WV Americanism Committee Chairman