

Loutensock wins essay contest

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

An essay written by Jeremy Loutensock, a student at Holyoke High School, was selected the top winner of the 2012 Nell Propst Northeast Colorado Local History Essay Contest.

The winners were announced Monday, April 30 on the campus of Northeastern Junior College during the program's third annual awards luncheon. This year's contest featured 18 entries.

For his winning entry, Loutensock earned a \$2,000 scholarship to the college of his choice.

Loutensock wrote an essay entitled "Unseen Glory," which was centered around the history of Fort Sedgwick. From October 1864 until May 1871, Fort Sedgwick (known as Camp Rankin until September 1865) served as an outpost of the United States Army, charged with the task of protecting westward-bound pioneers.

During its short life, Fort Sedgwick remained a small but strategically located fort near the Oregon, California and Mormon trails. At this time, the expanses of Northeastern Colorado and Southwestern Nebraska were just beginning to be settled by fairly large groups of people.

Indian uprisings, due to outrage over actions of the U.S. Army and from fear of again being forced to move, were complicated by the ongoing Civil War that demanded the vast majority of the United States' military power. This research paper examined the founding and functions of Fort Sedgwick and how Fort Sedgwick itself played an important role in settling the Midwestern territories and in American history.

The runner-up essay was written by Katelyn Kaus of Haxtun, who wrote about the Sharpe Family Legacy, covering the lives of prominent characters in the Nels and Johanna Sharpe family, some of the earliest pioneers in Phillips County. Kaus received a \$1,000 scholarship.

In addition to the student scholarships, Dan Conn, faculty sponsor to Loutensock, received a \$1,000 award and Amy Schadegg and Vickie Fuesz, faculty sponsor to Kaus shared a \$500 award. Money for these scholarships and awards has been donated by Frank and Gloria Walsh

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and is managed by the Northeastern Junior College Foundation.

The essay contest is run by a group of individuals who collect the entries, arrange for a panel of judges and oversee the awards ceremony. The awards luncheon is always followed by a tour of the Overland Trail Museum. This year, long-time historian and museum advocate Lana Tramp was the keynote speaker at the luncheon. She reviewed the history of the museum with her audience.

The goal of the contest, according to the organizing committee, is to stimulate an interest among young people in the local history of Northeastern Colorado. Students are asked to write up to a 2,500 word thesis on local history, about an individual, group of individuals or event affecting and occurring within the geographical area of Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington, Weld and Yuma counties in northeast Colorado.

The essays written have been placed into a published book, which is now available at area museums and libraries. It may also be purchased through the essay committee by contacting Ken Horner, chairman, at 970-522-2440.

In this contest, named in honor of one of this area's most noted authors, Nell Propst, students grades 9-12 have an opportunity to put their writing skills together to not only win significant scholarship awards but also to become published authors. Entries are due March 1 each year.

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