

# RING, FREEDOM, RING!



WINNING ESSAYS

*from*

THE ROCHESTER PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL ESSAY CONTEST

CONDUCTED AS PART OF THE ENGLISH  
CLASSROOM WORK ON THE THEME OF

CITIZENSHIP *in our*

AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

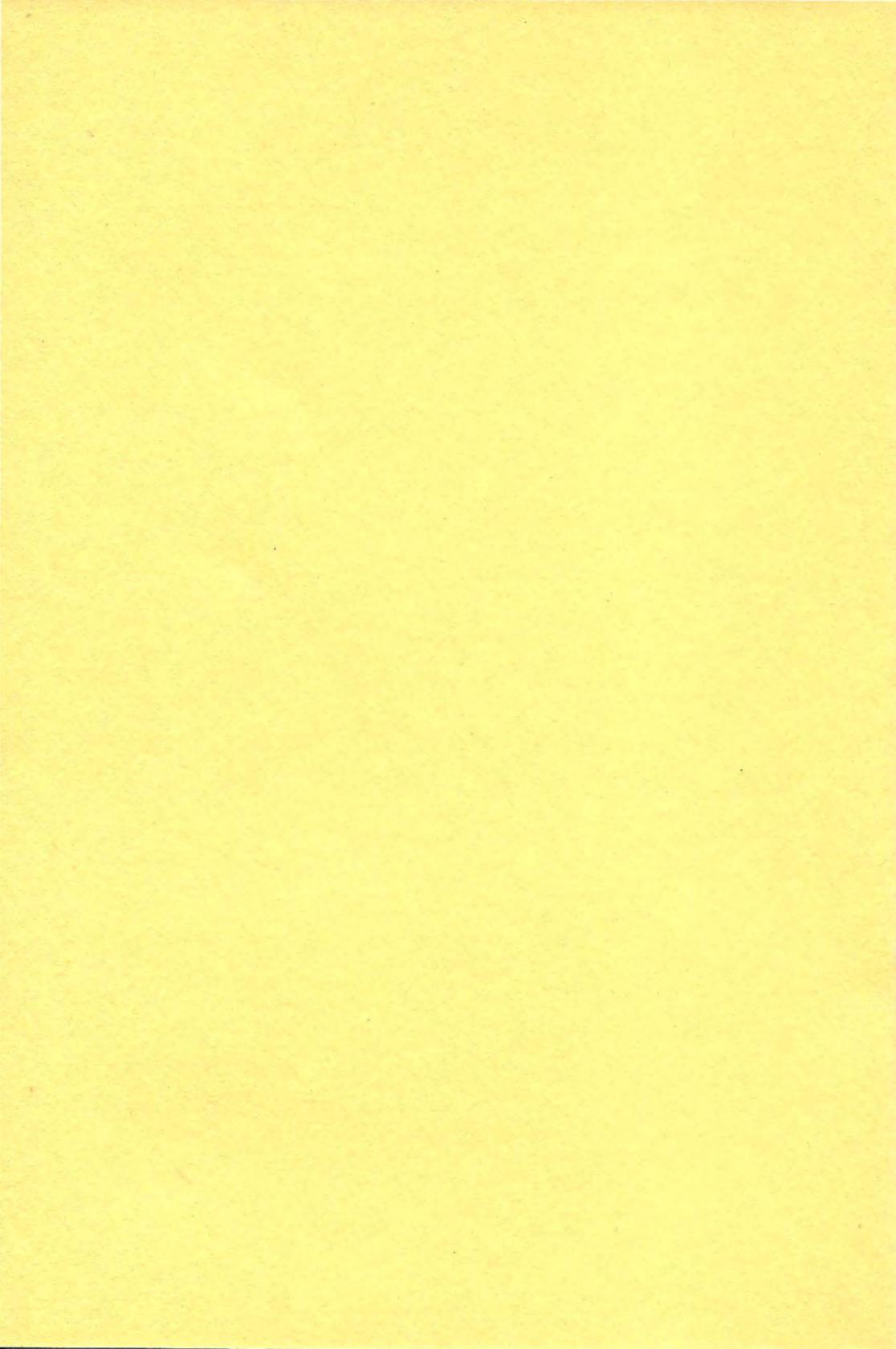


*Final selection of these  
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# SAGA FOR AMERICANS

JANE AGNES BISSELL

*Grade 12*

*West High School*

As the great sun leaps above the horizon, dragging with him into the material world faint reflections of eternity,  
And the clippety-clop of iron-shod hoofs brings milk and the bustle of day into drowsy, night-stilled streets;  
As cattle low in the pastures, and the first light-beam darts across the dew into dusty, sweet-smelling barns;  
As sturdy mill workers hurry through great gates into the factories, and shop girls crowd into the first buses, and commuters run for the morning train;  
As the shrill voices of children clamor in the school-yards,  
I feel you stirring, America, uncoiling your mighty strength to meet the tasks of the day.

And your great energy is shown in the cities;  
The song of your cities is heard in the skies, and the smoke of your cities hovers over the horizon.  
The hum of machines is the bass, lifting in a never-ending crescendo, Timed by the rhythm of the printing press,  
Spiked by the tinkle of typewriter bells and the ring of cash registers.  
And all are trapped in the rhythm of the song and breath the smoke-laden air.

And your calm strength is shown in the country,  
For yours is an abundant nation whose song is a song of plenty,  
Of green fields as far as the eye can see.  
The bass is made by the mighty oceans, the crash of timber, the gush of oil wells.  
The deep Mississippi beats the rhythm.  
The whisper of wind through a wheat field,  
The soft sounds of animals as evening falls,  
The murmur of poplars near a brook in the moonlight,  
These are the melody of your song, oh America, a symphony sung by the strong, the anthem of a free people.

Sharp-eyed slum children, playing on railroad tracks, learning how to beat the game;  
Immigrants, sweating in steel mills, offering old cultures and new virility;  
Farmers, working the rich soil, tending the green crops;  
Scientists, doctors, relieving pain, helping humanity;  
Financiers and politicians, grabbing for money and glory quickly,  
Fanatics, fighting for a new order;  
Idealists, dreaming of reform for mankind;  
You are a strange and lusty people, America.  
You, in whom mingle a thousand races, cultures and ideals;  
I believe in you, America.

As the wind whips the white blossoms of the apple trees into the velvet  
of darkness,  
And the lonely whistle of a locomotive and the clickety-clack of freight  
cars re-echo into the silence;  
As all your might sinks into sleep and the lights of your cities twinkle  
and fade in the distance,  
I love and understand you, America.

## A CODE OF HONOR FOR STUDENTS

VIRGINIA TISCHER

*Grade 12*

*Monroe High School*

- D—stands for discipline, a quality essential to the past, present, and especially to the future of America without which we could not be free to enjoy our civil liberties.
- E—is for education. Public Schools are the equalizers of the many varied nationalities within our shores and are the invaluable institutions in which are assimilated the American traditions, customs, and ideals.
- M—stands for moderation—moderation in all things. Many of our moral standards are based upon Biblical teachings and in this instance specifically St. Paul said “Be thou temperate in all things.”
- O—denotes obligation. Every individual in a democracy has an obligation to every other individual, for he is dependent upon his neighbor for his protection, health, and well-being.
- C—stands for community spirit and pride. Community spirit is the mobile force which transforms a disintegrated group of people into a unified one having a common interest for the betterment of the whole.
- R—stands for relationship. Speech is the medium through which we comprehend the ideas, hopes, and fears of our fellow men without which we should be unable to maintain law and order.
- A—denotes the activities in the home, school, and community in which all good citizens personally participate, not only for their own betterment but also for that of others. They are usually a form of relaxation and enjoyment which make for a fuller and richer life.
- C—stands for citizenship — that is, the means by which one should meet opportunity, obligation, and responsibility in a lawful and courageous manner. Citizenship is the right and duty of everyone to uphold the privileges of a democracy to the best of his ability
- Y—stands for you, the citizens of this American democracy, who, upon fulfilling your obligations of citizenship, realize that you are the standard bearers of our country. To you will fall the responsibilities of taking an active and intelligent part in the successful functioning of our government.

# MY FIRST IMPRESSION OF A DEMOCRACY

JERRY LESS

*Grade 9*

*Franklin High School*

I spent seven years of my life in a country ruled by a dictator. During those years I had a chance to see with my own eyes the horrible way of ruling a country which is unwilling to live under this frightful treatment. Millions of people live in fear and terror, afraid of what may happen to them the coming day. Children go to school, not to learn Latin, mathematics, or other instructive subjects. They learn to march and to shoot instead. This is what they call education.

Then I came to the United States, a democracy. I don't think it is possible to describe in words my first impression of this new and wonderful world. People who have lived in fear and terror in a dictatorship are now enjoying their life by dancing, singing, and working with joyfulness in a democracy. Everybody is free; nobody is suffering. Newspapers which are strictly censored in a dictatorship write their stories in their own way and their own words, uncensored in a democracy. Here children go to school not to learn how to shoot or to kill others. They learn how to get a good education for their later lives. The teacher in the United States is not a ruler of children, like the teacher in a dictator's country. He is a friend and helper instead! Churches which are burned in a dictatorship are kept in honor in a democracy. Moving pictures, theaters, and other entertainments which are allowed only for certain people in a dictator's country are for everybody in a democracy.

I think that all this will show the life in a true democracy in contrast to that in a dictatorship. I am proud to live in the United States of America, a country of real democracy.

# THE LEGACY

MARION E. MORRIS

*Grade 12*

*West High School*

From men and women whom I have neither seen nor heard of, yet know very well, I have inherited a legacy. This gift is not gold nor jewels, but a prize many times more valuable; a prize secured by bloodshed, toil, and loss of life; and retained by honesty, determination, fellowship, and the highest ideals.

I had received at birth, free, parents who had every opportunity for advancement. At the age of six, I began to receive my share in education and accomplishment. I was free to come and go, and I was provided with a pleasant environment in which to learn. Nowhere in this land was I forced to fall into step with military music or wear a uniform. During my childhood, there were rolling green hills, cool woods, and safe playgrounds in which I could entertain myself or join the games of others.

Later on there were jobs for me; the jobs which I could do and desired to do well. There were public games and parades where I could go on my days off, and where no armed guards or soldiers lurked.

I always had the right to speak or write what I really thought.

When I looked into the future, I could see security and comfort. In my old age I would not be treated like a ragged garment long past its useful days. I would be provided for and even respected.

Above all, my legacy gave me the right to worship and believe in God in any way which I considered fitting. I could worship publicly or in seclusion. Never need I fear ridicule or persecution.

All this had been given me in my great legacy and the only stipulation was that I use it wisely.

But I hear you ask, "Who are these benefactors? Who are you?" And then, "What is this legacy?"

My benefactors are those valiant Americans who made this country and paved the way for me. I am, in reality, the American Youth, and my legacy is this democracy in which I live.

## SODA FOUNTAIN PATRIOTISM

WILLIAM ENGAN

*Grade 12*

*East High School*

I feel that there are too many efforts on the part of certain patriots to wax eloquent over their inalienable rights. I don't believe that any such pump priming is either beneficial or necessary. The average person is certain that he is entitled to all that he gets, and he is not so constructed as to be particularly reverent over his great privileges. After all, he has never been without freedom, and he can't really be expected to imagine the conditions of dictatorship.

This average American feels entitled to enjoy himself to the extent which his income permits. He probably has a car and either rents or owns a house of modest proportions. He pays his taxes with relatively little complaint and supports the Community Chest. He has respect for the rights of others and teaches his children a similar respect. At the present time he probably approves of great aid to Britain, thinking it would be better to aid Britain now rather than have the whole fight on his hands later. Yet the possibilities are that you could live next to him for years, whether in the midst of a crisis or no, and never see him do any flag-waving.

At the present moment there is a great deal of flag-waving. I believe that the basic patriotism can not be made stronger by talking about it. All that is done is a whipping of froth, like foam on a soda, which will vanish if touched with a finger. For me, all that results is a sickening feeling in the pit of my stomach. Genuine people don't make a great display of the things which they hold most dear. They feel greatly embarrassed when called upon to talk about their real patriotic convictions, and I believe rightly so. It is the sentimentalists who like to do the flag waving and the weeping, and, nine times out of ten, they are by no means such good Americans as those who talk less. The talkers must get pleasure when they turn on a tap somewhere, as in the school system, and hear the patriotism gush forth. I doubt whether there is any real value to be obtained from explicit statement of feeling.

After all, the students probably have more chance to be really democratic than any other group of people. They enjoy, in most classes, a

great deal of democracy, but they don't say much about it, except to please the teachers. My conviction, when I am called on to praise democracy, is that we should end the patriotic soda jerking and do something useful. I believe that much more good can be gained by examining the methods and defects of the European political machines. Above all, a thorough study should be made of the machinery of the American government, not its glories but the practical prosaic side, so that the schoolboy of today will be the intelligent voter of tomorrow.

## WHAT WOULD WE DO WITHOUT DEMOCRACY?

LAURA CIARPELLI

*Grade 12*

*Madison High School*

Men with guns against our backs to see that we go straight to work.  
We cannot ask for higher wages or lower working hours,  
Guards may kill us, if we do?  
Men at our key holes listening to the conversations in our home.  
Our papers censored, we read only what another wants us to read.  
The news we hear is what another wants us to hear.  
We dare not listen to foreign broadcasters.  
Men with swords are forcing us to a government church and to believe  
only what the government chooses.  
Our children are being taught by men who teach intolerance.  
We can not go to meetings because meetings are forbidden.  
Officials tell us what taxes we should pay and how much.  
We have no right to object; or demand that we be told why we must pay  
the taxes;  
We shall be put in camps and mistreated if we do.  
Our families will suffer because of our demands.  
Yes, you have guessed right; we do not live in a democracy.  
We work in a meat factory; no one forces us to go to work.  
We go of our own free will.  
We can demand higher wages and lower working hours.  
We can strike if we do not receive them.  
The news we hear is not what others want us to hear, but what we  
ourselves want to hear,  
Whether foreign or domestic news.  
Our papers are not censored because we have freedom of press.  
We go to any church we please whether it be Catholic, Jewish, or  
Protestant; no one forces us to another belief.  
Our children are taught tolerance in school—not hate.  
The conversations in our homes are private;  
There are no men listening at our key holes.  
We go to meetings without fear;  
At the meetings we are allowed to express our own opinions if we wish.  
We live in a democracy.  
Where do you wish to live?

# DEFENSE FOR AMERICA IN TIME OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY

LEONARD RUBENS

*Grade 9*

*Monroe High School*

America does not have a Great Wall, as in China, nor does she have a Maginot Line as in France, but she is surrounded by a ring of steel. She has ships and planes and guns. America lacks now the same thing that was lacking when the Great Wall fell, and the Maginot Line crumbled. This is the building of men, in character and in spirit.

One of the first ways to have a people secure is to build strong, sound homes. America must produce families like those that built America. "Sound homes produce not only the man power, but the will power to defend America." Fathers who know how to unite their families will do well in their jobs. Mothers who can teach their children to be responsible will help build the character of the nation. Families that are thrifty in the kitchen will show the nation how to use everything to its capacity. They will help make America secure.

Without unity in industry a country can not survive. Industry can defeat a nation before its army reaches the battle-field. If employers or workers create a friction between themselves, there is apt to be more danger than friction in machines. To have our industries working at capacity we must all join forces for the national good.

National unity is the very heart of national defense. We must unite our nation to prevent Fifth Column sabotage. We must stop internal quarreling. If our nation is united, it will have faith in the country in time of disaster.

I agree with these words uttered by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. He said, "If we perspired more in time of peace, we would bleed less in time of war."

# DEMOCRACY IN THE HOME

HELEN ARESTRY

*Grade 12*

*Franklin High School*

I am the third youngest in a family of nine, and if ever there were a need for dictatorship it is in our family. But quite on the contrary, the family carries on its affairs in a democratic way, from Jerome who is eleven to Jules who is thirty-three. Each one performs more than his share in conducting the affairs of the household.

Was there ever a place where more freedom of speech existed! If you have ever heard nine voices raised to a shrill pitch at one time, you will know exactly what I mean. We have our say in everything from hanging a new picture to my getting a pair of shoes. Everyone feels free in giving his comment, and all are willing to accept the advice of the others.

You may be certain that my mother takes great pride in seeing my brothers home from college—one cooking in the kitchen, another mopping the floor, and still another using the carpet sweeper to clean the dirt that the other two have accumulated. Although this makes an amusing

picture, it is an example of what, to me, is vital in the functioning of a successful democracy—cooperation.

Before the people of a country can rule themselves with success, the first principles of self-government must be taught in the home, for the home is the foundation of society. One of my brothers has been called by the United States to serve one year of compulsory military training, and two other brothers will go upon graduation from college. I feel that because they have been brought up upon the principles of democracy, they will have a better understanding of the cause for which they are being trained.

## THE AMERICAN SPIRIT

*A Radio Play*

BARBARA EATON

*Grade 9*

*Madison High School*

ANNOUNCER: On the wide veranda of the Morton's large home, the porch hammock is swinging to and fro. On the small table nearby lies an unopened volume of a "Modern American History." Nancy, a high school student, is lying on the swing reading a new movie magazine. Gradually she becomes sleepy and at last she drops off altogether. A few moments pass. She turns over to a more comfortable position and, so doing, she detects something very strange about everything.

NANCY: Why the book, the book. It's getting larger. I must be imagining it. It simply can't be possible.

OLD MAN: What can't be possible?

NANCY: The book, it—. Why you came right out of it. How on earth could you have come to life?

OLD MAN: Please, do you want to hurt my friends' feelings?

NANCY: Why, no. That is—. My goodness, look at them all marching out of the book like that.

OLD MAN: Yes, they're my friends. We've come to help you win the contest. Now if you'll just get out a pencil and paper we can begin.

NANCY: Just a minute. What contest do you mean? I don't want to enter any contest.

OLD MAN: It's all very simple. I mean the citizenship contest, all about your country.

NANCY: Oh that. I wish I didn't have to enter, I can't think of a thing to say.

OLD MAN: That's why we're here, to tell you about America. We think you have been taking it too much for granted lately.

NANCY: Why, yes, I guess I have. How can you help me?

OLD MAN: We'll work it this way. One by one my friends will step forward and explain something about our democracy. You can write it down and later put it into a composition. I'll call off the names and as they come I'll check them off. Do you see?

NANCY: Yes, go ahead.

OLD MAN: Freedom of Speech.

F OF S: (Little girl's voice) I represent freedom of speech. I am a privilege, and therefore you are obligated to perform some duties in my behalf. You must, when taking advantage of me, tell the truth. You should allow this right to others also. Learn to express yourself clearly and well and inform yourself on subjects before expressing your opinions. If you do this well you will prove to yourself that you deserve me.

OLD MAN: Freedom of the Press.

F OF P: I represent freedom of the press. Don't forget to read both sides of the story before drawing your conclusions. Demand correct and unprejudiced news.

OLD MAN: Freedom of Assembly.

F OF A: I represent freedom of assembly. See that you take advantage of me. Behave yourselves at assembly meetings. If you are a true American you will let others take advantage of me also.

OLD MAN: Freedom of Religion.

F OF R: I represent freedom of religion. Exercise this privilege and be tolerant of others exercising it. Never vote discriminatory measures against any certain group. Show due respect for all faiths and religions.

OLD MAN: The Right to Vote.

R TO V: Always take advantage of the right to vote. It is the privilege that makes for democracy before all other rights. To be well informed and active in government, you must see both sides. Vote for what you really feel.

NANCY: But you, old man, who are you?

THE GROUP: (Looking at each other amazed) Why he's the *spirit* of democracy.

NANCY: The spirit of democracy?

OLD MAN: Yes. I wake up the spirit of the American people. I make them realize that the word democracy doesn't just mean a form of government. It is a way of living, the best way of life, where one may feel safe and secure. Here in the United States we don't have to worry about our telephone wires being tapped, our radio news being censored. We don't have to watch our every word, for fear of saying what we really think instead of what the government compels us to think. We have a Constitution and constitutional rights, and no one person is better than another whether rich or poor. And all this, because the country is ours and the government is ours and we are a part of it. That's what makes our United States of America the greatest factor in our lives, and for my part I should live, and if necessary, die for it.

NANCY: You have taught me something—you—. Why the book, it's getting smaller. Wait, I haven't thanked you yet. He's gone back into the book.

MRS. MORTON: Nancy, hurry and get ready if you want to go downtown with me.

NANCY: All right, mother. Why, I must have been dreaming. Here, I'll look and see. Well, can you bear that. Here's the picture of the little old man and his friends right in the book. And here, here is my composition. It couldn't have been a dream. I wonder.

THE END

