

1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner

Paisley Carter, Jolley Elementary School in Vermillion

*If Barn Walls Could Talk – My Barn on My Farm in Clay County*

As you drive down Main Street, in rural Clay County, you may pass by my farm and see my old barn. To some people it seems like an old red barn, but to me it is part of my history. I have spent my whole life growing up in this barn. It's one of my favorite places on our farm. My parents tell me that it is over a hundred years old.

This barn has taught me many things including the circle of life. At two years old I remember watching my first calf being born and her name was Minnie. I have also gained a lot of knowledge about raising livestock from caring for sick animals, to feeding them, washing them, cleaning their pens, training them for shows and then selling them to make a profit, this barn has been where I have learned all of it. I have learned about hard work and responsibility in this old red barn. No matter if it is one hundred degrees or zero degrees outside, I still must go out and feed my animals because they depend on me.

When my parents bought this farm, they could have torn down this barn, but instead they repaired it because a barn is an important building to have on a farm. This barn is home to my show pigs, lambs, cows, and rabbits with the occasional visit from my cat and dog. This barn has been a lifesaver for us when the cows are having babies. It also provides storage for our feed, machinery, and equipment. I think the coolest part of my barn is the hayloft because I can climb on the haybales and help throw the haybales down for the cows. There is still a rope in the hayloft from previous owners where they had a rope swing.

Nowadays they don't build barns sturdy like this old barn so I'm thankful my parents preserved this old barn. I remember one summer thunderstorm came through our farm. My dad and my brother got caught out in the barn during the storm while my mom and I took shelter in the basement. Straight-line winds took out our windmill next to the barn and many trees fell over, but the barn remained untouched. I'm sure there are many more stories this barn could tell if these barn walls could talk.

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner

Sydnee Stevens, Gettysburg Elementary School

*The Bait Shop – West Whitlock Bait Shop Located on Lake Oahe Near Gettysburg, SD*

A place that matters to me is the West Whitlock Bait Shop. It is located at West Whitlock Resort, by Gettysburg, South Dakota. It is located on Lake Oahe of the Missouri River. The bait shop has beautiful views of the river and is located next to a State Park that has lots of trees and is a great place to camp.

This place is important to me because it has been passed down from generation to generation. It started with my great grandpa Dan Cronin. Then down to my grandma and grandpa, Monty, and Nancy Cronin. Finally, it was passed down to my mom and dad, Shane, and Tracy Stevens. It started in 1963. The Bait Shop used to be a place where my family would keep their irrigation equipment. One day, my great grandpa Dan Cronin decided to sell minnows to the local fishermen. They sold minnows out of the shed until they decided to build a real bait shop.

In 1999, my great grandpa became sick with cancer. That is when he passed it down to my grandma and grandpa, Monty and Nancy. They remodeled and expanded the bait shop and added a kitchen so they could begin to serve food.

In 2012, my parents took over the bait shop. They now sell bait, gas, groceries and serve food and drinks everyday from May 1<sup>st</sup> to the end of September. This is a fun place for people to visit on their way boating and fishing. The bait shop is also very special to me because my sisters and I have grown up there. Because we live so far from town, my sisters and I didn't really go to daycare. Instead, we would spend the day at the bait shop with our parents. My sisters and I help our parents during the summer doing whatever needs to be done, waiting on customers, cleaning, serving food, or working till. It really is a family business.

3<sup>rd</sup> Place Winner

Chiles Heien, Gettysburg Elementary School

*212 Forest City Bridge – Forest City Bridge in Gettysburg, SD 57442*

The 212 Bridge connects Forest City and the Cheyenne River Reservation. The 212 Bridge helps people cross the water to travel, farm, hunt, fish, camp, go to school, go to activities, and eat. The 212 Bridge is so beautiful to look at and watch the sunset in the distance. The 212 Bridge was built in 1958 by the US Army Corps of Engineers and restored in 1980. It entered the National Register of Historic Places on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2001. The Department of Transportation is studying the 212 Bridge and is worried that the bridge is in need of repair because of its age, repairs needed, and landslides near the bridge.

The 212 Bridge is special to me because every time I see it, I think of the things I love to do on the river. My family has a boat, and we dock it at Bob's dock that is right by the bridge. We go under the bridge every time we go out on the water. When I go under the bridge while tubing, I scream, and it echoes really loud. The things I do on the water are swim, fish, tube, float, wakeboard, and jet ski. I love to do all the activities with my family and friends. It is also fun to drive over the bridge and look at the water.

My grandma and grandpa have their camper parked at Bob's Campground which is close to the 212 Bridge. My brother and sister and I like to stay at my grandma and grandpa's camper because we get to go on golf cart rides, go to the beach, eat at Bob's, and play games. I love to shoot baskets and play games at the basketball hoop that Bob's put-up last summer. At Bob's Steakhouse I eat steak, sweet potato fries, and drink a Shirley temple and I like to get a table by the window so I can see the bridge and the water. I like when there are boats in the water, and they leave a trail behind when they're driving that looks like a maze.

The 212 Bridge is special to me because it reminds me of my family, fun, friends, and my favorite things. When I see the bridge, I smile and know I am in a good place.