



**Lamar State College-Port Arthur**  
*A Member of The Texas State University System*


# *Early Expressions*

*Spring 2002*

*For additional information  
about the  
Early Expressions Magazine,  
please contact  
Peggy Gene Knight  
or  
Sally Griffin Byrd  
1-800-477-5872  
Peggy.Knight@lamarpa.edu  
Sally.Griffin@lamarpa.edu*

Lamar State College-Port Arthur  
P.O. Box 310  
Port Arthur, Texas 77641-0310  
409-983-4921

Lamar State College - Port Arthur a member of The Texas State University System, is an equal opportunity affirmative action educational institution and employer. Students, faculty, and staff members are selected without regard to their race, color, creed, handicap, age, sex, or national origin, consistent with the Assurance of Compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Executive Order 11246 as issued and amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Inquires concerning application of these regulations may be referred to the Vice President of Academic Affairs.



*As I gathered together bits and pieces of  
poetry and prose  
it occurred to me that there are a few  
special people  
without whom this magazine would not be possible.*

*Mike LaFleur, who supports this program,  
financially and emotionally,*

*Sally Griffin Byrd, the friend, helper, judge, and  
co-conspirator who constantly boosts me  
to the highest,*

*Tim Knight, my best friend and helper,  
who fills my days with joy,*

*Janet Polk, one of the most energetically creative persons  
I've ever had the pleasure to work with and who  
is responsible for the entire layout which  
makes the magazine what it is,*

*and*

*Finally, our students who put their lives under a spotlight  
and reveal their thoughts and feelings. They are the  
very best part of it all.*

**Peggy Knight**

# **Table of Contents**

## **Narrative**

### **First Place**

#### **When A Lie Becomes A Lesson**

*By Julie Huddleston* ..... 1 -6

### **Second Place**

#### **El Flechero**

*By Juan Ceja* ..... 7 -9

### **Third Place**

#### **Tuesday, September 11, 2001**

*By Laura Mack* ..... 10 - 12

### **Honorable Mention**

#### **Darky**

*By Adrian Landry* ..... 13 -15

#### **A Run Away Railcar**

*By Melba Thomas* ..... 16 - 18

#### **Being Possessed**

*By Alex Tho Tran* ..... 19 - 22

# Table of Contents

## Description

### *First Place*

#### *Who Does She Think She Is?*

By Rekina Reed ..... 23 - 25

### *Second Place*

#### *The River*

By Ben Broussard ..... 26 - 27

### *Third Place*

#### *She's So Fine*

By Jeffery Howard ..... 28 - 29

### *Honorable Mention*

#### *My Grandmother*

By Shannon Ellerbee ..... 30 - 31

#### *Abuelita*

By Sebastian Mendoza ..... 32 -34

#### *Dream Again*

By Wendi Powell ..... 35 - 36

#### *"Time in Time"*

By Gregory Tillman ..... 37 -38

**Table of Contents**  
**Special Topics**  
**Neighborhoods**  
**Essay**

**First Place**

**Old Port Arthur**

By Charles Linton ..... 40 - 43

**Second Place**

**About Port Arthur**

By Joseph Decuire ..... 44 - 45

**Third Place**

**My Hometown**

By James Malet III ..... 46 - 48

**Honorable Mention**

**"Port Arthur: My Home"**

By Sharonda Harris ..... 49 - 50

**A Beautiful Day**

By Leticia Louviere ..... 51

**My Memories of Port Arthur**

By Theron Pierre ..... 52 - 53

**Port Arthur**

By Vinh Truong ..... 54

**Table of Contents**  
**Special Topics**  
**Neighborhoods**  
**Poetry**

**First Place**

**Port Arthur**

By Alex Tho Tran ..... 55 - 56

**Second Place**

**Port Arthur**

By Hiep Tran ..... 57 - 58

**Third Place**

**My Neighborhood**

By Daniel Caballero ..... 59 - 60

**Honorable Mention**

**Sour Lake**

By Dana Arena ..... 61 - 62

**My Neighborhood**

By Carla Butler ..... 63

**My Block**

By Jeffery Howard ..... 64

**My Neighborhood**

By Todderick King ..... 65

**My Life**

By Sparkle Porter ..... 66

**My Neighborhood**

By Eddie Waite ..... 67

# ***Table of Contents***

## ***Special Topics***

### ***Museum of the Gulf Coast***

#### ***First Place***

##### ***The Museum of the Gulf Coast***

*By Rhonda Mathews* ..... 68 - 72

#### ***Second Place***

##### ***The Museum of the Gulf Coast***

*By Gregory Tillman* ..... 73 - 75

#### ***Third Place***

##### ***Museum of the Gulf Coast***

*By Wendi Powell* ..... 76 - 78

#### ***Honorable Mention***

##### ***I Never Knew...***

*By Magan Flores* ..... 79 - 81

##### ***Museum of the Gulf Coast***

*By Katiba Hill* ..... 82 - 83





*Narrative*  
*First Place*

*When A Lie Becomes A Lesson*

by  
*Julie Huddleston*

## *When A Lie Becomes A Lesson*

by  
*Julie Huddleston*

*I*n the wilder years of my adolescence I learned a very valuable lesson. In my quest for popularity, I compromised my values as a young woman, the confidence of a friend, and the trust of a loving father.

It was the last Friday night of the school year. Summer vacation had finally arrived. It had been a long and tedious school year. Like any other Friday night I was off to my best friend Mylinda's house. I think that it was the difference in our personalities that made us so close. I was the wild one, and she was a little more on the tame side. Maybe it was because of our home lives. She had her storybook family and their hometown values, and I had the typical parents fighting all of the time. I suppose that is why I enjoyed Mylinda's company as much as I did. She was the little girl that I always imagined I could be if I only had the chance. However, what did I care? I was the wild one. I did not need all of that powder and fluff. All I needed was to be the life of the party.

That night the phone started ringing off of the hook. The word on the wire was that a big party was going on, and anyone who was anyone would be there. This was it. This was my chance to show the world what I was made of. This was a chance to show them just how grown up I really was. The only problem was that my father would kill me if he knew that I was at some wild party. The answer rang out loud and clear in my mind. The choice was simple. Those magical four little words that have been tried and true throughout history. The universal language of juvenile-justification was to, "Just lie about it."

*Mylynda was very upset. She knew that I was crazy, but she also knew that the last thing I wanted was to lose the trust of my father. I explained to her the importance of this party and that it would be social suicide not to show up to the first major party of the summer. Besides, this was not just any party. This was a party at Tammy's house.*

*Tammy was not your average teenager. She was special. The reason that she was special was because her mother did not just experiment with drugs, she was in full-blown research with the mind-altering substances. This meant that she would provide the party with all the drugs and alcohol our little under-aged hearts could desire.*

*For some reason Mylynda decided to stay home. She promised not to tell her mother and father that I was sneaking out, although I must admit it took some persuading on my part. I simply stated that if she were to blow my cover I would have to remove her head from her body. I did not mean it literally of course; but she seemed to take me seriously, and the threat got me out of the house.*

*I arrived at the party just as it was getting wild. Everyone was there, and everyone who was anyone was drinking. Tammy's mother greeted me with a beer in one hand and a Lucky Strike hanging from her lips. She invited me in and handed me a cold one. I was finally here. I was with the in crowd. Hell, I was the in crowd.*

*The average age group of this party was thirteen to sixteen years of age for the girls and around seventeen to nineteen years of age for the boys. I am not sure why there was such an age gap between the genders, but I can tell you that everyone still standing was either intoxicated or very close to becoming that way. I knew that in order for me to be accepted, I needed to get to their level as soon as possible.*

*I started with the beer, but it soon became the "un-cool" thing to do. All of the older kids had switched to the harder stuff. In order for me to show these people that I could hang with the best of them, I had to switch gears.*

*You always hear stories about what narcotics can do to you. Everyone has a wild tale to tell about how wonderful and mind altering the experience is. I wanted to be one of those people. I followed the cloud of noxious fumes, which led me to the wilder side of the party. These were the people I was striving so hard to fit in with. These were the ones that I was destined to impress. I met a boy named Roger. Roger was a nineteen-year-old bad boy of sorts. He was not a student at our school. He had been far too cool to be a part of something like school. He was too busy doing drugs and living off his parents. In retrospect, he was most likely the biggest loser that I ever had the displeasure of sharing the same air with. However, at the time I thought that he was just the coolest guy ever. He introduced me to the in crowd, took me under his wing, so to speak. Little did I know, he had a separate plan all along, and it did not involve the in crowd at all.*

*I was very much feeling the effects of the evening and started getting a little loose, laughing and carrying on without a care in the world. Roger suggested we walk to his house to pick up his truck and return to the party later after he picked up a few things. I saw nothing wrong with the plan. I had always heard Roger had a killer stereo system in his truck and thought it would be really cool to be seen driving back to the party with one of the most popular boys in the neighborhood.*

*I don't remember much about the stroll to Roger's house, but after we got to his truck and started back to the party, what happened next was very memorable indeed. Our journey back to the party was abruptly halted by a human road block in front of Roger's truck. It was Mylinda, and she was waving her hands like a mad woman motioning for Roger to stop. She beat on the driver's side window and*

*motioned for Roger to roll it down. She asked him where the hell he was taking me. I told her that we were going back to the party. She then brought it to my attention that he was driving off in the opposite direction. Roger and Mylinda argued for a while until finally she invited herself into his truck. She told him to take her and her friend back to the party and that she knew exactly what his intentions were towards me. This upset Roger. He pressed on the accelerator so hard that I expected it to be pushed right through the floor. About half way through his manly display of hormone-driven stupidity, I was slammed against the windshield. A horrible laceration appeared where smooth skin once was.*

*The once cool Roger now turned into the spineless, shell of man he was pretending he was not. He knew my father's reputation and quickly began to quiver with fear. He told Mylinda and me to get out of his truck. Mylinda begged him to take me to the hospital, but the jerk was too scared of the consequences and fled like the coward he always had been. Mylinda walked me back to the party and told everyone what happened. Tammy's mother loaded me up in the Pinto, and we were off to the emergency room.*

*I realized just how far my lying and deception had brought me. Not only did I jeopardize my virtue with that creep, not only did I hurt my best friend by being selfish, I was about to have to face my father. It was like ice water running through my veins. I would have preferred decapitation instead of the laceration if it meant not having to look into my father's tear-stained eyes and tell him that I had lied, anything but that. I never wanted to hurt anyone. I just wanted to be popular. At that moment I was probably one of the most popular girls in three counties.*

*The plastic surgeon zipped me up with twenty-one stitches. It was the first time in my life when I was not ready for a doctor to hurry up and get through. The longer he took, the longer it would be until I had to face my father.*

*As I was lying there on the gurney in that cold emergency room, the tears flowed down my face. I am not sure if the tears were from the pain of the stitches, the fear of what was to come, or just the effects of the alcohol and drugs wearing off. I could not believe what all had happened. Right when I was feeling the worst, right when I felt the lowest, I felt two strong hands on my shoulders. It was the comforting hands only a worried father could have. I raised my head and stared into those grief-stricken eyes of his, blue like the sea after a storm. He did not speak at first. He just caressed my head and shoulders as if to make sure that I was real. I tried to open my mouth to explain, but before I could utter the first word he placed his thick finger on my lips halting my speech. He simply shook his head and smiled. He wiped the tears from my eyes and gave me a big hug. I squeezed him so tight that I thought that I would snap him in two. We stayed in that embrace for what seemed like hours until he finally spoke to me and said, "Don't worry, Baby. Daddy is here." No words of scorn, no punishment set forth, just love and affection from the most loving man that I have ever known, my daddy.*

*I learned a lot that summer. I was no longer interested in being the most popular girl. I simply decided that people could like me for who I was, or they did not have to like me at all. My mother and father soon realized that their marriage would never last, and that it was best for everyone that it ended. Mylinda and I were closer than ever. No one ever saw Roger again. As far as my father and I were concerned, the incident never happened. To this day, I am still his special little angel, just a little wiser because of the lie that became a lesson.*



*Narrative*  
*Second Place*

*El Flechero*  
by  
*Juan Ceja*

## *El Flechero*

by  
*Juan Ceja*

**F**rightened, scared, and angry was I. In the year of 1993, I was still a kid. I can remember as if I was there, where a crucial war broke out. Both of my parents were born and raised in a little ranch called "El Flechero." This ranch was known as the ranch of the death. The reason was due to the fact that the five families that lived there hated each other including my family. El Flechero didn't have stores, doctors, phones, and or churches. It was just a six-house ranch with a pretty good bit of land.

The land was one of the causes of the hatred. Land in El Flechero was like life. The land led to a war against two families, and one of them was my family. It was around mid-December when one of my uncle's best friends came running in our house as my family was having lunch. His face was upset, and he also looked frightened as my uncle asked him to calm down. His heart was beating so fast that it caused him to speak in a fast tone. He said that the Figueroas were surrounding our house, and they had guns. This man was a man who was friends with both the Figueroas and us, the Cejas. This man was seen by the Figueroas as he passed to warn us, but on the way back, they shot him and killed him. At the moment we heard the gunshot, my mom grabbed me and all the other kids. As the women started to cry, my uncles, my grandpa, and my dad grabbed their guns and headed up the road to go protect their land. My mom, aunts, and grandma were praying and crying. Yet in an eye-close and eye-open, I was gone. I had gone to hear the gunshots. Since I was small, my brothers and I were taught how to shoot a gun. As I went up the road, I



shooting and the others shooting back. One of my cousins was injured in the arm. I raised my head up to look, and a bullet hit a rock about two inches away from where I was. I started to cry, and my uncle Juan saw; and as he was coming for me he got shot right in the forehead. His whole head flew everywhere. The sound of the women grew louder and louder as they heard that one was down. Yet the war ended in a very sad moment. Everyone around was coming to see what happened. After that, the other family disappeared and was never seen again. I will always have Uncle Juan in my memory and heart, but I will never forget that crucial moment.



*Narrative*  
*Third Place*

*Tuesday, September 11, 2001*

*By*  
*Laura Mack*

*Tuesday, September 11, 2001*

*by*

*Laura Mack*

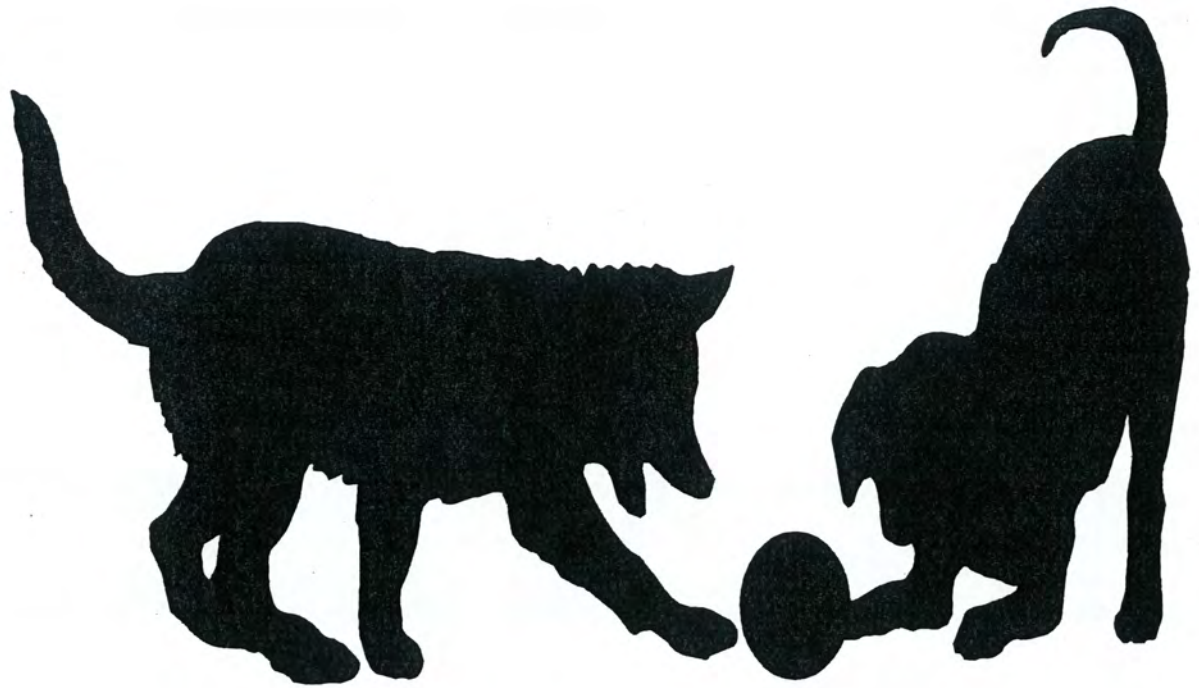
*When this day began in the early morning, I was happy. I kissed my husband bye, and we both started our day. He went to work, and I went to school. At 8:00 a.m., I was in my computer class. When class was over, I went home to start my house cleaning. Suddenly I heard a knock on my door. It was my neighbor who told me my husband had been trying to reach me, and he then told me to turn on the T.V. I turned the T.V. on, and then it happened. My life was being changed right before my eyes. All I wanted at that moment was to see my husband. Finally I got in touch with him on the phone, and he told me that he had to report to 373<sup>rd</sup> U.S. Army Reserve Building in Beaumont. He also told me he wanted to see me. I drove to Beaumont in a daze of disbelief. My legs felt like they weighed seventy pounds each. My heart felt like a train had just taken over my soul. Then I began to cry with fear and hurt. I began to pray to God that he would bless my country, my people, and help us come together as a great nation. I also felt angry and wanted revenge on whoever did this or had this done. What happened left my soul in a hollow.*

*When I got to the unit where my husband was, the first thing he did was hug me. This was not just any hug. This hug took my whole body; I could feel all 265 pounds of his weight on my body heavily. It was a grip like hug, like the one my son gave me when he went to college. He was scared, and he didn't know what to expect when he got there; and my husband had that same grip on my body. Then I saw the fear, and I also felt the fear. I saw it on his face, and I felt it in my heart. I told him I loved*

him very much, and whatever was going to happen, we would do it as a whole and not by individuals. When I said that, he smiled and said, "That's why I married you!" Then he told me, "Okay, I've got to get back to work."

When I got back home, I cried a little more. To see on T.V. the planes crashing into the buildings and people jumping from windows made me sick to my stomach, and also made me wonder was it that bad inside that building that they felt jumping was the only way out? My heart was aching and will be aching for a very long time to come. So I pray and pray. I love my country, and I know without a doubt we will come together as one. We will overcome, not forget, but overcome.

*God Bless America*



*Narrative*  
*Honorable Mention*

*Darky*  
by  
*Adrian Landry*

# *Darky*

by  
*Adrian Landry*

***T**ragedy struck our little rural community in the form of one little old lady named Darky. She was known for her kindness to animals. She would take in all of the strays, feed, water, and take care of them. All the neighbors knew that she got attached to each animal.*

*One day Darky was greeted by a little black pup, that rolled instead of walked. This pup was special to Darky, which she names Pugsly. You could tell that she cared deeply because of the lavish attention; that she placed on the dog.*

*In the weeks that followed, you could see the bond between the two. The pup was mischievous and would often be found in a neighbor's garbage can or dragging some petrified object to Darky as a gift. Darky had to leave for a doctor's appointment one day. She was unable to take Pugsly with her. When she returned home she found that Pugsly had made his way onto the road. Someone had hit the pup.*

*Darky was devastated. The neighborhood, seeing how upset Darky*

*was, decided to hold a funeral for Pugsly. The date was set, and everyone in the community came. Darky arrived in widow's splendor. To everyone's surprise, she wore widow's weeds with a long black veil. She wept as though she were laying to rest a member of the family. We laid Pugsly to rest in a small grave by Darky's back door. To this day you can see Darky attending to Pugsly's grave and talking to him as though he was still here.*



*Narrative*  
*Honorable Mention*

*A Run Away Railcar*  
*by*  
*Melba Thomas*



# *A Run Away Railcar*

by

*Melba Thomas*

*I*t was September 30, 1999, a day I will never forget. I had an encounter with a run away railcar. It was at work very early in the morning. I don't know if everyone was fully ready for work or not. We were working on our second car for the day. I was underneath the car cleaning the break wells when all of a sudden, the railcar started to move. Not a whistle blown, no one even checked the line. I screamed as loudly as I could, "Stop", but my scream was unheard. I screamed again with all of my might, "Please, stop it", yet another scream went unheard. I couldn't believe this was happening to me, as in a bad dream where I couldn't wake up, as if time stood still. Then I heard a voice. It was like a whisper, but I heard it clearly. It said, "Roll". I know I was alone, so where was the whisper coming from? There I laid as the wheels began to come closer and closer, my body lying across the tracks. I screamed again. Still I was unheard. "Closer, closer," the wheels were coming. "Oh my God! I'm going to die", I thought. I had to turn my body and get my head off the tracks if

*I was going to have a chance, or I would be trapped between a pile of grit and the wheels. "Lord, please help me", my mind cried out. My body began to turn. "My God the wheels were passing over me." As the railcar passed, I noticed I was still alive. Thank God, I was still alive. I was free. Then I felt the pain. As everyone came running, I asked, "Is my leg gone?" I knew that it was. However, the horror of the run away railcar was not over. Not only was my leg gone, but half of my palm, and four fingers were missing. Now I had to learn to live in a way I never imagined could.*



*Narrative*  
*Honorable Mention*

*Being Possessed*  
by  
*Alex Tho Tran*

# *Being Possessed*

by  
*Alex Tho Tran*

*One late night in the middle of the summer, my mother and I were walking home from my aunt's house. There was a little town right outside of Port Arthur called "A Little Town Right Outside of Port Arthur," where my aunt and I used to live. After some hot tea and cookies, I gave my aunt a great big hug and my mom and I were on our way home. On this night it seem colder than all the other nights. It was around thirty degrees, but we didn't mind too much because our house was just around the corner. My aunt is a hyper, strange, but funny woman. You might think after being married for fifteen years with twenty children, she would eventually mature a little, but she still thinks she's in high school. She likes to play jokes on people, so she thought it would be funny to beat us to our house and scare us. That's when all the trouble started.*

*She was hiding behind bushes and trees. All of a sudden, she was possessed by a friendly ghost. Instead of her scaring us, we were shocked at how pretty it made her look. It was scary looking, but nothing can compare to how she really looked. She began to float towards us. Mentally, we wanted to run, but our legs were stiff and could not be moved. We started to run when her head began to spin in an unusual direction.*

*We ran inside the house and slammed the door in her face. The rest of my family members ran up to us and asked what was going on. I told them that something weird had happened to Aunt Ann. My mom ran to get the phone to call her family and relatives. For fifteen minutes, I*

*could not hear anything outside the house, but the wind blowing. Suddenly, there was a knocking on the front door. I looked through the peek hole and saw my aunt's ugly face. She knocked again and I said, "What do you want?" She replied in a soft friendly voice that she was all right now, and she wanted to come in and apologize for scaring us. I felt sorry for her because outside was cold, and I believed her, so I opened the door. She stepped inside my house fully naked. My mom yelled out, "What are you doing, Ann!" I did not know what to say because I was too busy staring. Meanwhile my aunt just stood there in the middle of the room laughing loudly and crazily. My mom then sent all the kids to their rooms, and she sent me to get some clothes for Ann. I went to my Mom's closet to try to pick out something sexy.*

*When I walked back into the living room, I saw a family reunion. I guess my mom called everybody to come and help. There was little nephew, Billy Cao and lost little cousin Eagle. Everybody jumped in, held my aunt down, and we managed to put some sort of clothing onto her meatless body. She was talking all sorts of trash to us. After awhile she calmed down when her husband arrived. We started to bargain with the ghost. We wanted her to leave the body, and in return we would pray for her. She rejected and started to flip tables, chairs, and throwing objects at us. Considering how close my great-grandfather was to the church and with great wisdom he came up with a unique plan. He got Ann's husband to strip to his underwear to distract Ann. By then we were able to tie her up. My great-grandfather had learned two ways to make evil spirits that possess the human body to go away. The first way is to make her look at herself in a mirror. We jerked both of her eyelids up and put a big mirror in front of her face. Nothing happened; instead, she seemed to like it, and she licked the mirror. My great-grandfather told everybody the only way left is take underwear that had been worn by her soul mate and put it over her head. Strangely it worked. When Ann's husband put the underwear that he was wearing on top of her face, she screamed wildly and fainted.*

*Aunt Ann's nightmare was finally over. She changed dramatically after that. She became a lovely woman, but her appearance got worse. Her hair fully turned gray, and there were thousands of wrinkles that covered her unattractive face. I guess mentally the ghost went away, but the special effects on her body did not.*



*Description*  
*First Place*

*Who Does She Think She Is?*

*by*  
*Rekina Reed*

## *Who Does She Think She Is?*

by  
*Bekina Reed*

*Who does she think she is? A young person moving into that house. I want her to know it is not going to be parties, loud music, or chitter chat. I see her vibrant body walking back and forth carrying boxes and bags. There goes the neighborhood! One young person moves in and next thing you know all the cars of her friends are blocking my driveway. Now how is the Meals on Wheels van supposed to deliver my meals to me? I know, I will start a petition. Everyone on this block is at least 55 years of age or older. If we let her come, no telling what time of the night she will stop having fun.*

*Who does she think she is? Her lanky body almost covered with clothing, the image that I don't want my grandchildren to see. It is getting late, and she is still not through. I will just keep the police number handy. I know if I need them, they will come.*

*Who does she think she is? She cannot be any older than twenty or*



twenty-one. Child, let me go inside the house because if I don't get my eight-hours of rest, I will be highly upset. Days have passed. Still no party; I wonder what is she waiting for? She rarely stays home. I guess that she lives alone. Maybe she just might be the quiet type. I know now it has been that way every night.

Who does she think she is? I just might go see, since I am the President of the neighborhood welcoming committee.



*Description*  
*Second Place*

*The River*  
by  
*Ben Broussard*

# *The River*

by  
Ben Broussard

**T**he Guadalupe River is the most beautiful river I have ever seen. It has huge canyon walls that reach the sky above. The banks have an abundance of wildlife. I can see two massive bucks fighting over a doe or greenheads and wood ducks swimming in the water. There are also some beautiful houses on the banks. Some are sitting on top of cliffs overlooking the river.

The sound of the white water rapids rushing down the river, the peaceful sky, the birds singing, hearing not another sound for miles is the most relaxing feeling one will ever experience.

The sweet smell of the cedar trees is like honey in the air. The scent of the river's mist in the morning is an awakening smell.

The melting hot sun bakes the skin. If a person wants to cool off, he can hop in the river for a swim or just let the current take him down river.

The best fish one will ever put in his mouth comes from the Guadalupe River. When camping outdoors on the river, everything tastes better and life seems so peaceful.



*Description  
Third Place*

*She's So Fine  
by  
Jeffery Howard*

# *She's So Fine*

by  
*Jeffery Howard*

*Once again I remember the sight of the way this woman looked. She had nice long hair that came past her shoulders, straight hair that you could run your fingers through, so soft and shiny that it glowed in the sunlight. Her eyes were as pretty as diamonds. They sparkled like blink-blink never a dull moment, always full of life. Her body was so fine that no model could even come close to her. Her curves were like cut from a goddess, head to toe. Her style was unbelievable. Comparing her to other girls was like comparing a three course meal to a T.O. dinner. Her voice sounded like music to my ears. I could listen to her go on and on about nothing and still be pleased. When I kissed her lips, I could taste the cherry lip gloss; it made me hungry like eating fresh fruit that was just picked. The touch of her skin was so soft that I could not stop touching her, like a soft cushion every where. The smell of her perfume attracted every little thing in sight. It is so outstanding that I could not resist it. The smell could be tracked from up the corner and back. She's So Fine.*



*Description*  
*Honorable Mention*

*My Grandmother*  
*by*  
*Shannon Ellerbee*

# *My Grandmother*

by

*Shannon Ellerbee*

*She is only a memory that lies in the back of my everyday thoughts. My grandmother of French heritage, so caring, so loved, sat in her old rugged recliner, wrinkled and serene. I remember so clearly her smell of fresh wild flowers she would bring in from the outside on a warm spring day to make her room smell sweet. She would call me to her and speak the language of her land. As I held her frail, gentle hand, I listened as though I understood. There were times we would just peacefully sit for what seemed like meaningless hours. Oh, how simply amazing she had been in my eyes and to all that knew her, teaching the skills that she had come to master over the years, to my eldest brother and myself. Cooking was one of these great achievements in her family; I still remember the sweet smell that filled the kitchen in her cozy apartment, making my mouth drip like a faucet for the taste of rich fudge. Those were the times that I remember of my grandmother, so long ago, yet still close in my heart.*



*Description*  
*Honorable Mention*

*Abuelita*  
*by*  
*Sebastian Mendoza*



# *Abuelita*

by  
*Sebastian Mendoza*

*One of those rare people who could capture an audience with a simple word from her mouth, my grandmother was a teacher during the first part of her life as a single woman. She first began teaching at "racherias," small villages located on the shores of big cities. Maybe that's why her humbleness was always a remarkable aptitude of her personality. She also was a hard worker and very intelligent, something that was very unusual for women at that time, a time in which women were put aside from labors designated only for men.*

*I'll always remember the peculiar way she would tell a story. She used to tell a story with such vivid and wise words almost making me feel as if I was part of the story. The images would pass through my mind as I closed my eyes and listened to her. A single conversation with her seemed endless. She could capture the attention of everyone around her, and we were unable to go until she finished her speech.*

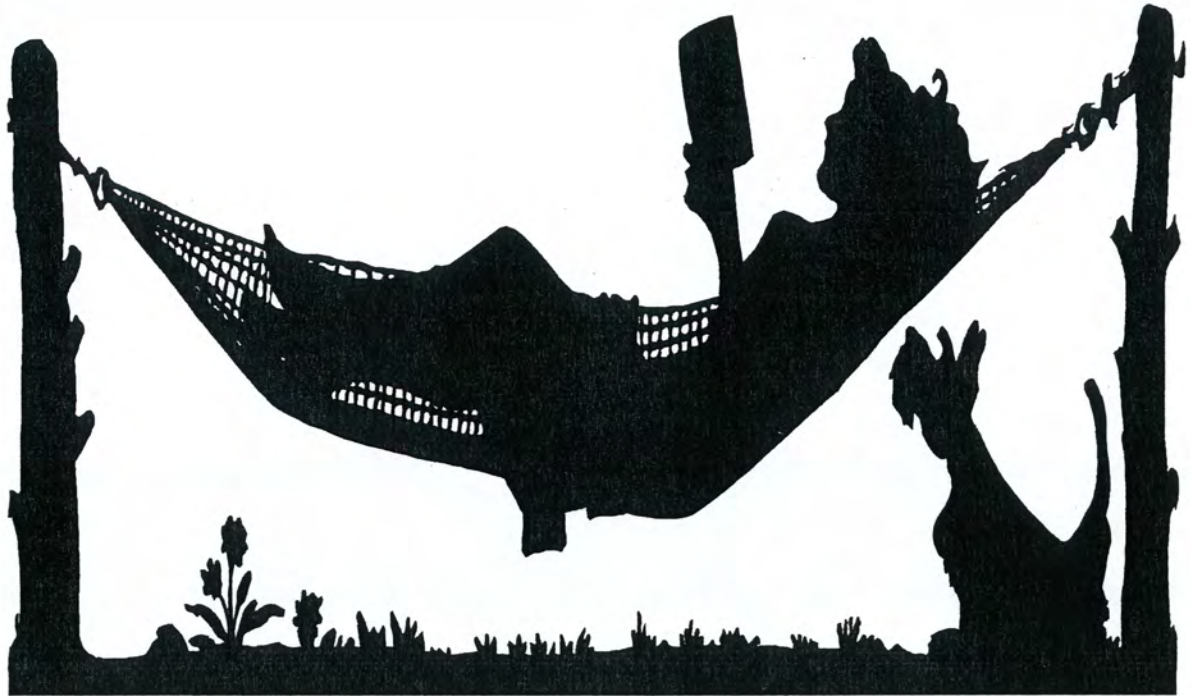
*As for writing she was very skillful. She could make a poem or verse by only taking a pen between her fingers and transporting us into an environment full of magic and enchantment.*

*It seemed to me like she knew everything that a person could possibly know, knowledge that only a lifetime and wisdom can give to special people. In fact my grandmother was a special woman. How could I forget the long walks around her big old house surrounded by extending hickory trees? The mysterious objects contained in her pockets fascinated us as if we were looking for an adventure, and there*

*was some kind of treasures in them. Of course I now realize that they were only mere objects and nuts that she had picked while on her long walks. Her smell will always prevail vividly in my memory. It was a mixture of her favorite perfume Musk, I believe, and her own maternal smell, including sometimes what she had for breakfast.*

*I remember her sitting in her favorite rocking chair on the front porch of her house. She would sit quietly with her sight lost, maybe removed to a time when she was happy with my grandfather.*

*I have never been able to recall the months leading to her death, because I wanted to remember her as a strong woman, and as my "Abuelita."*



*Description*  
*Honorable Mention*

*Dream Again*  
by  
*Wendi Powell*

# *Dream Again*

by  
Wendi Powell

**I** lie here awake thinking of opportunities and challenges  
There are too many to speak or think of, but analyzing is my  
greatest strength. Dreams and aspirations seem distant,  
unfamiliar to the touch, but always familiar in memory. As goals long to  
be accomplished, and I long to lounge around, all hope fades away until  
next time when I will dream again.

Knowing all is now achievable, I believe I am a failure, prohibiting  
all which would be embraced, sent away by despair and disbelief. An  
opportunity arises. A soul awakens. Dreams and aspirations try to prevail,  
only to remember soon it will fail. Change? Depends on the one changing.  
Life? Depends on the one living. Success? Depends on the worthy successor.  
All of it is in the midst and making. Terrifying, yes. The outlook, the goal,  
the dream; maybe. Until then dream again.



*Description*  
*Honorable Mention*

*"Time in Time"*  
by  
*Gregory Tillman*

## ***“Time in Time”***

by  
Gregory Tillman

**T***ime?* Time is the essence of life, as we know it. Every part of our world revolves around time. From the infant who knows that feeding time is here, to the grandparent who never gets to spend enough time with the grandchildren. Time is versatile. You can set aside time (which really isn't going anywhere anyway), or you can spend time. A time-out is nice, at anytime. You can have a time to come around or a time to say good-bye.

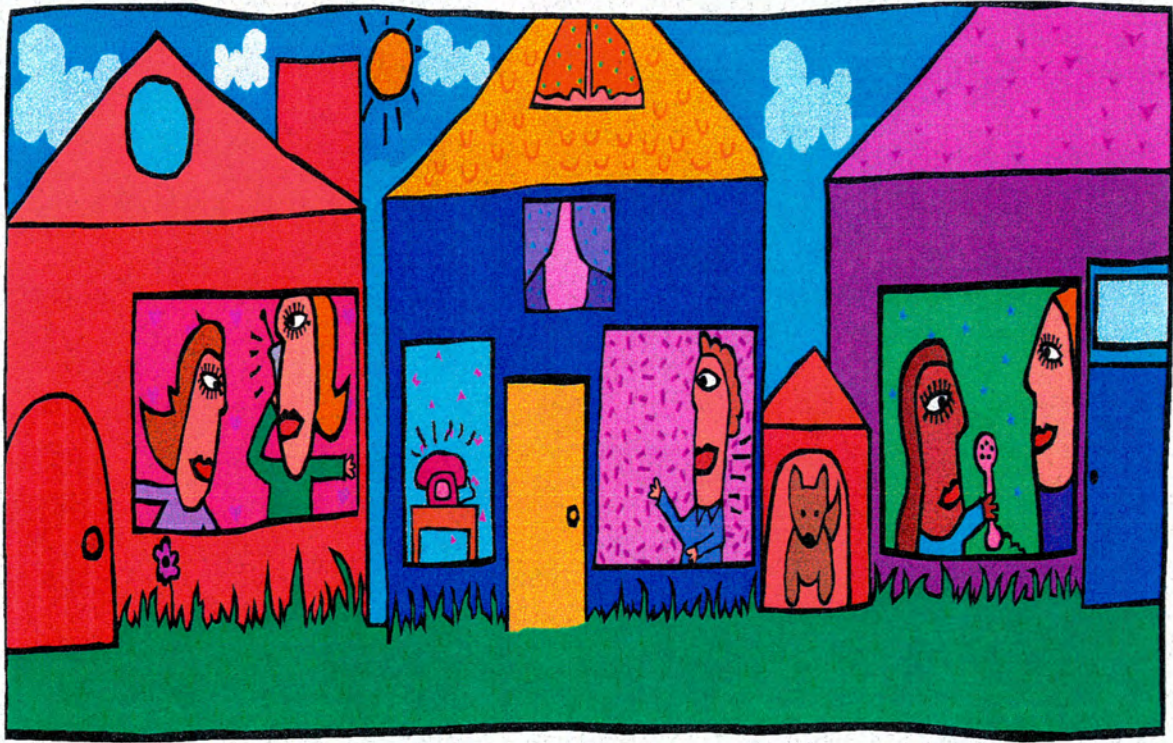
You can take time, give time, or just wait until next time. Time always seems to be there, yet you can never seem to find the time. From the young child, who thinks that time will never end to the elderly who know all too well that time surely must.

***Time?*** Time to think?

*Think about your time and how you use it!*

*Because the one thing you can't do with time:*

***Is add time!***



# *Neighborhoods*

*Essay  
and  
Poetry*

*Neighborhoods*  
*Essay*  
*First Place*

*Old Port Arthur*  
*by*  
*Charles Linton*



# *Old Port Arthur*

*by*

*Charles Linton*

*O*ld Port Arthur, it seems like just yesterday I wanted to come back home. I tried to make myself comfortable with different places, but they were never the same as old Port Arthur. Although other places are more interestingly bigger, more populated and some are state capitals with historical landmarks, there is still no place like home. My hometown is a historical landmark to me. It's also a great place for education. Sometimes it snows once a score of years. My family kind of moved here one at a time until some of them decided to move elsewhere.

Born here in Port Arthur at St. Mary Hospital, history began to unfold. As I began my quest I learned of all the places that were once up for business and are now closed. The old buildings down on Procter Street are all decayed looking. However, I've heard many stories about them when they were looking good. An old man named Joe told me that "in the fifties and sixties, Procter street was the street to be on." He also told me, "People from all over had come to Port Arthur for one reason or another. They would party all night long until the cows came home. Do you see all of those buildings? There were clubs, hotels, businesses, restaurants, and stores, but now people just prefer to take their business elsewhere." I always like talking to old Joe about Old Port Arthur's past. Joe seemed to know everything

*about everything as if he were in three places at once.*

*Our educational programs are good. One after school program allows the elementary students to stay after school to work on a weak subject or to just do better. There is a kid I know very well, he never comes home with any homework, but I excuse him because he is in that after school program. The program allows him to do his homework if he so chooses. One day he came home and requested that he dress up for school the next day. Never did he say why, so no one paid him any mind. The next day he came home with a trophy and a certificate saying, "Congratulations! You have successfully made the A honor roll for the entire school year." High school programs also help kids with anything they could ask for. They tutor, stay late for special attention, and some teachers will come in early if students needed their help. Kids grow up to have a great respect for someone that takes time out to do something of that nature for them.*

*My mother was born in Louisiana along with her twelve brothers and sisters. She is the oldest of thirteen. When her mother and father were not getting along, they separated which started everyone moving to Texas in Old Port Arthur's direction. My mother was the first to move to Old Port Arthur. She found her an apartment on the west end of town called Joe Louis apartments. Within a year, she had two sisters and two brothers come and stay with her until they got on their feet. They were soon exploring Old Port Arthur on their own, and three more were on their way to my mother's house to take their places. Two years later most of them were here working, going to school, and living life. Others moved to Houston, Austin, and Kansas City. The rest joined the military to travel the world.*

*After twenty years of living in Old Port Arthur, I've made it home in my heart. I used to dream of building Old Port Arthur back up. However, I have*

*realized it was much too much work for one man to handle. So I'll just keep the sweet memories in mind, the memories that I painted in mind from the stories that I've heard. Old Port Arthur is my home without a doubt. I'll always love Old Port Arthur. Being representatives we need to make Old Port Arthur a town that one can smile at, not for its memories, but for its presence.*

*Neighborhoods*  
*Essay*  
*Second Place*

*About Port Arthur*  
*by*  
*Joseph Decuire*

# *About Port Arthur*

*by  
Joseph Decuire*

*All I've heard since I've been here is how boring Port Arthur is. All I know is that I love the city I live in. And I have some reasons why I feel the way I do. The first reason is because of the many cultures here. Everyone from Europeans to African-Americans to Asian-Americans live here. In other words, it's a melting pot of different cultures, something that most cities or small towns just don't have.*

*The second reason is because of my family in Port Arthur. Ever since I was a baby, I've been around family. Both my mother and my father's family grew up in Port Arthur. Though some relatives eventually moved to other cities, some relatives have decided to remain here. And I will remain here in Port Arthur until I'm ready to move on.*

*The last and final reason is because most of my best friends are here. I'm very close to most people in Port Arthur. Some people I've known since elementary school and others I've known since high school. I have a good relationship with most people here in Port Arthur.*

*And these are the reasons why I love Port Arthur. It really hurts when people talk down about this great city. But there are many people who feel the way I do. In my view, if you really love your city or town, defend it. That is how you show how much you care about your city. And that is how I show my love for the city of Port Arthur.*

*Neighborhoods*  
*Essay*  
*Third Place*

*My Hometown*  
*by*  
*James Malet III*

# *My Hometown*

*by*

*James Malet III*

*My hometown is Port Arthur, Texas. My hometown is like most hometowns. We have a shopping mall, refineries, and Pleasure Island. I have lived in this area all of my life and have memories of all of these places.*

*The shopping mall we have is Central Mall. Central Mall has many stores with different varieties of merchandise. These are stores with tools, electronics, clothing, vitamins, and jewelry. There is a movie theater with several screens and a snack bar. We have a Mexican restaurant and a restaurant that has a large selection of southern food. There is a bowling alley across from the mall for family entertainment.*

*Port Arthur is known for the many different refineries in the area, like Texaco, Gulf, Chevron, Mobil, Huntsman, Dupont, and many others. They produce fuel for our automobiles, oil, lubricants, plastics, and many other products we need to make life a little easier. My father and mother both worked for Texaco. My father worked as a machinist for Texaco when it was actually Jefferson Chemical Company in Port Neches, Texas. My mother worked as a chemist at Texaco research lab on Savannah Avenue in Port Arthur, Texas. They both retired several years ago, and now I have other family members working in refineries. I hope to work in a refinery in the near future.*

*My favorite place to spend spare time is Pleasure Island in Port Arthur.*

*Pleasure Island has some interesting history to it. The island was man made in 1896 and stretches nineteen miles along the shore of Lake Sabine. In the early 1900's, the island had a dance hall, an Olympic-sized swimming pool, and a wooden roller coaster. The island has survived fire and storms. Today people enjoy boating, fishing, picnicking, hiking and biking. There is a park, restaurant, store, hotel and a residential area with big beautiful homes with million dollar yachts. The island will soon have a golf course. The island holds an annual fireworks show on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, a music festival and the shrimp festival. People come from all around to enjoy the attractions. I personally like the island because I like to be by the water. I enjoy watching the bright orange sunsets on the water and looking at the moon and stars. It is very relaxing to sit by the water and feel the cool breeze. Pleasure Island has something for everyone to enjoy, and it's a beautiful place to spend time.*

*Port Arthur has many other attractions, but these are the main landmarks that people recognize first when they visit Port Arthur. I have many memories growing up in Port Arthur, and I will continue to enjoy these memories now and forever.*



*Neighborhoods*  
*Essay*

*Honorable Mention*

# *“Port Arthur: My Home”*

*by*

*Sharonda Harris*

*When I graduated from high school, I moved away from Port Arthur, went to Houston and worked two jobs before going to Texas Southern University. As the spring classes were scheduled to begin, I found out that I was pregnant. I then decided to return to the town where I was raised.*

*Port Arthur has proven to be the best choice I have ever made to raise my family. It is a small place where everybody knows everyone, and as a young single mother, it helps to know that I have people who are willing to help me when I need it.*

*My son started school, and he went to the same school I went to. He’s even had some of the same teachers as I. I know he is getting the best education that I got at his age. The teachers know me. They do not have a problem with me when I ask questions, even when it is not parent-teacher conference. I go to church with some of these people. We are friends with some of the same people.*

*If I had stayed in Houston, I cannot say that I would have had the same relationship with the teachers. I did not know anyone who taught there.*

*I am happy that I made the decision to move back to Port Arthur. It was the best thing that I could have done.*

# *A Beautiful Day*

by

*Leticia Louviere*

*A*s I am rising out of bed and seeing the sun beam down from my window, I think to myself that today is going to be a beautiful day. When walking to my car, I can smell the wonderful fresh air and can feel the breeze just blowing through my hair. It feels like spring is just around the corner, and such beautiful weather makes me want to take the day off. As I am standing there noticing everything around me before getting into my car, I can hear the birds singing, dogs barking, and people talking. I have excellent neighbors who are wonderful people. They take care of their homes and are always there if you need anything. I think to myself, "Why would anyone want to live anywhere else?" I am just thankful for the home that I have and knowing that I am safe at night when I go to bed. Nederland is a wonderful place to live. Since I was born in Port Neches, I have a hard time admitting that because we are just great rivalries. I thought I would never move to Nederland. It was not my choice to move here. I always thought Port Neches was a better place to live, but I am finding out that I am enjoying my Nederland home much better. I grew up living in Port Neches all my life until my parents got a divorce, and then things changed. I realize I am happier where I am and that things happen for a reason.

# *My Memories of Port Arthur*

by

*Theron Pierre*

*My neighborhood, it's like a big empty black hole. Nothing exciting ever happens around here anymore. When I was younger, I could remember all of the kids getting together and playing in the hot scorching sun all day. Sometimes we would form teams and block the street off so that we could have relay races. I could remember so clearly.. Our parents would stand in the grass at one of the neighbor's houses and cheer for their children as we ran our little hearts out. Now, everyone is slowly fading away. Another thing that bothers me now is the train that passes by every hour after hour. Being younger, we were so busy trying to yell over one another that we didn't actually notice the train creeping by. Since the neighborhood is so quiet now, you can hear the train's metal wheels strolling along the rusty, weather-beaten tracks. Seconds later, you can hear the screaming whistle of the train, which could send little chills down your spine if it caught you off guard. Sometimes I feel like a bundle of Grand's Biscuits stuffed inside its small cylinder can, because we're very crammed up. I do believe that "Good Fences, make Good Neighbors." Around here, the houses are very bunched together, but we all make sure that we don't cross that fence into the other neighbor's yard. This is because we all have much respect for one another. There are some beauties pertaining to my neighborhood. We have a wide variety of people living here, and we all manage to keep peace and lend a helping hand at any time. All in all, I love my neighborhood because of the eleven years experience and*

*memories I have here. From jumping ditches to skinning my knees, then growing up, getting a car, and going to college. These are all the memories that will follow me through all the years of my life!*

# Port Arthur

by

Vinh Truong

*The city of Port Arthur is a small city. It only takes about fifteen minutes to drive across it. There is nothing really here for a person like me. It's a city for the workers. It offers jobs for people who didn't get a chance to go to college. Port Arthur has many resources that provide jobs for the workers, jobs that require no hard skills. The dry docks, the oil companies, and the shrimp boats, these are the things that run the city of Port Arthur. Yet it does not need people with degrees to work. A person doesn't have to try and struggle to go to school to learn how to shrimp or how to cut metal. This is a city that gives hope for people who are the providers of their families. It helps pay for the rent, helps put food on the table and helps care for the children. It is also a place that teaches the young that life isn't going to be easy. It shows them that they have to try hard to get where they want to go. What does this city offer the young people with hopes and dreams of becoming something? It shows me that I don't want to work on a dry dock, a shrimp boat, or for an oil company. It's telling me that I do not want to be the worker of this city. This city shows me that to make my life better I have to try to get out of here, to get my education and succeed, so that I won't become another of the city's workers. So Port Arthur actually showed me that a better life is out there for me. This city may be a small piece of land, but this small piece of land is called the City of Port Arthur.*

*Neighborhoods*  
*Poetry*  
*First Place*

*Port Arthur*  
*by*  
*Alex Tho Tran*

# *Port Arthur*

by

*Alex Tho Tran*

*Port Arthur is where I stay  
Everyday is another dollar another day  
Low class soldiers hustle so they can get pay.*

*Gang bang  
Switching lane  
Middle finger in the air  
Like they don't care.*

*Feeling like I am going nowhere  
The sky is falling, and I will still be right here  
A little town  
Where I was found.*

*There is nothing here  
But crack and beer  
Dreams come true but not in Port Arthur  
It just makes your life harder.*

*Moving out  
Is what I am all about  
Short on green  
Suck it up because tomorrow is another routine.*



*Neighborhoods*  
*Poetry*  
*Second Place*

*Port Arthur*  
*by*  
*Hiep Tran*

# *Port Arthur*

*by*

*Hiep Tran*

*Lures of boats to a city port  
Control in oil and middle nobles,  
Down to the old artifact as a town.  
The oldest memories are in the walls of the building.  
Back then brought wealth by boats,  
Now the other side of Wal-Mart brings wealth to a  
nation,  
But then we celebrate Mardi Gras to its roots.  
In the summer we share rains.  
Like every town there is hope like the sun rise after  
the rain,  
We together are not the same  
In belief in the Holy Mary  
When the Vietnamese put a tall statue of Mary.  
But down in our hearts we are too close like a family,  
We put aside our differences as our children go to play  
with each other on the island of pleasure.  
Memory of the oil that paved its yellow brick road,  
We together will build a bigger future.*

*Neighborhoods*  
*Poetry*  
*Third Place*

*My Neighborhood*  
*by*  
*Daniel Caballero*

# *My Neighborhood*

by

Daniel Caballero

*Living in my neighborhood is all good  
The neighborhood watch is off the hook  
People don't hate  
Fake the funk  
Act like no punks  
True to the game  
Everybody knows my name  
Ask them and they would tell you the same  
Never hold any rain  
Cause we have no ditches  
Pass down my block  
You'll see lots of riches  
Lights on every house  
That's what I'm talking about  
My block's full of peace  
It's on the East*

*Neighborhoods  
Poetry*

*Honorable Mention*

# *Sour Lake*

*by*

*Dana Arena*

*Yes, we are minute in population.  
Nevertheless our community is a well-built  
constellation,  
So our lakes are sour;  
They once held magical power.*

*Our soil is full of oil,  
Yet it is desired by all.  
We may be segregated in location,  
But racism has no conformations.*

*To say hillbilly  
Is just plain silly,  
To say first-class  
Is a big laugh.*

# *My Neighborhood*

by  
*Carla Butler*

*People who come from afar describe you as the city that sleeps,  
instead of the city that never sleeps.  
With a population of only a few thousand they ask how does it feel to  
live in the country?*

*They criticize and talk about our schools and malls.  
They make jokes about the cows roaming in the fields grazing on  
greenish-brown grass, and the horses playing in the pastures.*

*Visitors ask what is there to do for fun and entertainment out here?  
They hate how the weather never stays at a normal temperature,  
and if it does, it brings out the worst.  
They make comments about the population being only a few thousand people.*

*I am proud of my town; everyone knows and looks out for one another.  
The schools do a very good job at teaching the students  
everything they need to know.  
The weather is all right to us, and that's all that counts.*

*My town is a terrific place to stay for families and for people  
who have love for the peacefulness of the country.*

# *My Block*

by  
*Jeffery Howard*

*Walking on my street you'll never worry about heat.  
Why is that, because if you get a flat or even  
a little spark, just step out of the sun and  
into the dark.*

*Its very cool on my block like every single windy day,  
sunny day, rainy day anyway.*

*Shade everywhere from beginning to end.  
From one to ten ask my boy Ben that's my kin.  
Its always quiet too quiet if you ask me.*

*Sometimes I just go outside and yell Jeffery, loud as I can.  
That's who I am but what's the point.  
Run from corner to corner I bet your legs  
get out of joint.*

*Don't, because the streets are long,  
you dead wrong think you can beat me it's on.  
Crack of dawn is the sun up? Can you tell?  
Move the trees out from the shade man,  
it's hot as hell.*

*It's called Griffin Park.  
My street is known as Woodrow, very quiet  
and soft like a pillow.*



# *My Neighborhood*

by

*Todderick King*

*O'Westside, O'Westside, How I love the way the  
police siren rings out and scare me.  
Late at night when I'm asleep, the neighborhood  
is still on the creep.*

*O'Westside, O'Westside, How I love thee.  
Is that a crackhead in the tree?  
Like a bird trapped in a corner, the hoods are  
hiding smoking marijuana.  
Our rims are big but not on a Hummer.  
We are ghetto.  
Believe me, Baby, we have 20's on a Tacoma.  
Our music is loud and harsh, but soothing to us  
like a baby's voice.  
We talk crazy, but in God we Trust.  
We have gold teeth, but we are catching the bus.  
We love our neighborhood for this is simply us.  
Once again in God We Trust.*

# *My Life*

by  
*Sparkle Porter*

*Rise the sun blazes  
across my face as  
swift as an eagle  
I rise as a zombie in pain.*

*Sliding, gliding, dragging  
swish, swash, up and down  
As bent as paper folded.*

*Up and about I go  
Knowledge I will soon know;  
Bells ring as my brain sings.*

*Fiddley, faddy, fiddle  
On to what pays for vittles  
So friendly but fragile.*

*You can't help but be thankful  
Helpless, tired and through  
As I lie and wait to be with you.*

*My Neighborhood*  
by  
*Eddie Waite*

*My neighborhood, so quiet, so peaceful*

*My neighborhood, no street lights, no ditches*

*My neighborhood, one way in, one way out*

*My neighborhood, so quiet, so peaceful .*



## *Special Topics*

# *Museum of the Gulf Coast*

*Special Topics*  
*Museum of the Gulf Coast*  
*First Place*

*The Museum of the Gulf Coast*  
*by*  
*Rhonda Mathews*

# *The Museum of the Gulf Coast*

by

*Rhonda Mathews*

*T*oday I visited the Museum of the Gulf Coast. I am supposed to write this paper on my favorite exhibit at the museum. As I walked through the museum I stopped and looked, read the articles, and studied each exhibit carefully and came to a couple of conclusions, one: I didn't know very much about the area that I grew up in. I didn't realize all the history that took place. Two: there was just too much important information for me to choose one. You see, I grew up here on the Gulf Coast. I was born in 1955; my dad worked at the Gulf Oil Refinery. He has a pair of the safety glasses like I saw on exhibit today. We had the oilcans, wax, most of the articles that I saw today, at one time or another. We even had a sign that was placed on the bathrooms designating which ones were for blacks and which were for whites. We went through strikes, which had my dad out of work for quite awhile. My dad was a union man, and at the time I didn't understand how when this "union" said to not go to work, the men Did Not Go TO Work! I saw some of my parent's friends get divorced, lose their homes, and move away. Some of my best friends moved away, either so their dads could find work or because of divorce. At the same time, my dad provided for us very well, which I found out was in part because of the "union." So looking at the exhibit of the Gulf Refinery and the other refineries brought back memories. The refinery has gone through several name changes, and I know them all because my husband started to work for the Gulf in the 70's. Then it changed to Chevron, Clark, and now

*Premcor. I'm sure in our lifetime it will change many more times, but no matter what it is called, it will always be the Gulf to me. It will always hold fond memories of my childhood and my waiting for my dad to come home from work.*

*The next exhibit was on the coast and on the marine life in our existing waters. I never really thought about what had happened on our shores. I found out today that Alvarez de Pineda was the first European to set foot on Texas soil. And I thought the only thing the beaches were about was sun, surf, and sand.*

*I went upstairs and walked around the lighthouse. I had just read about Sabine Pass, and I thought I knew pretty much about what had happened there. After all, I had visited the battlefield, I had gone fishing in its waters, walked on the very ground where the battles took place, took pictures of the bunkers, and even stuck my fingers in the bullet holes that were left in them. However, I found out today I didn't even know a fraction of what happened there. As I was thinking about Sabine Pass, I entered the music area. Growing up in the fifties, I have an advantage over my classmates. I well remember Tex Ritter, George Jones (he played in the Port Arthur, Groves area before he ever became the George Jones we know today) Jimmy Clanton, Cookie and the Cupcakes, and the Big Bopper. Many nights my family would listen to the radio, or my mom would get out the record player and her collection of 78's, yes, I said 78's. That was before albums which was before 45's and eight tracks, cassettes, CD's. I remember them all. As I looked around the room, I recalled the artists I had seen perform, Jivin' Gene, Z.Z. Top, Edgar and Johnny Winters, and the Boogie Kings. I had even seen Harry Choate sing "Jole Blon." What held my attention the most was "the car." The car I had heard about, read about and seen pictures of and as a teen-ager had wanted one just like it. I was taken back to my teenage years almost instantly. I could hear Janis's record playing as I got ready for school, "Busted flat in Baton Rouge,*

waiting for a train..." "Good enough for Me and Bobby Mcgee..." I looovvveeddd that song. Since Janis was from Port Arthur, the younger generation, thought she was so Groovy, you know, hip, cool, awesome. She was the best. She dressed the way she wanted to, wore her hair long and wild, and sang her songs from her heart. People liked her, girls wanted to be her, boys wanted to be with her. She had friends like Jack Nickelson, Kris Kristofferson, and she came from Port Arthur. She inspired people. If she could come from here and make it big, anyone could do it. She came back here once. I remember wishing I could go meet her and talk to her, but, of course, that didn't happen. I did hear how she was treated, not as the celebrity that she was. She told a magazine that she felt like she was shunned, and that she didn't get the attention she deserved. She vowed never to come back. It was rumored that she came back once to see her family, but no one really knows for sure. Some people didn't agree with the way she lived her life. It was really no one's business. Her fans didn't care; we just wanted to hear her music. Maybe if we had cared, she would have lived longer. Maybe if we had gotten the chance to tell her that she was loved, that she wasn't alone in the world, she would not have made the choices that she made. Maybe she would not have died on Sunday, October 4, 1970.

As I stood in the museum looking at the pictures of her, I couldn't help but think...How sad, she was never recognized by her hometown for her talent when she was alive. We never gave her the credit that was due. But isn't that how it goes...Maybe today she looks down and smiles on us, for how we are acknowledging her, or maybe she looks down and doesn't. I just wonder if the lyrics of one of her songs wasn't written in foresight. "Take another little piece of my heart now baby, break another little piece of my heart..."

I left that area and looked at the art that was on display and over to the



sports. Now here were some names I could remember. Richard Manchaca was a boxer. My dad, was a big fan, but again I didn't know he was from this area. Carroll Reswever, the race car driver, I knew about. He used to live by me when I was growing up. I went to school with his children. Bum Phillips and Jimmy Johnson, I knew too. But as I looked around, again I didn't know nearly what I thought I knew about the people on the wall. Most of them I had never heard about. On my way out I looked at the display for the Red Hussars and the Colleens. I had always wanted to be a Red Hussar. My brother had dated a girl who was one, and I thought the uniform was so cool. I even took drums in elementary school so I could play one as a Red Hussar, but when I got to Thomas Jefferson my outlook had changed; some things just didn't seem so important anymore. And as for as the Colleens, they were just as cool. A lot of my friends from my neighborhood went to Bishop Byrne, and it was a great school. As I walked back to my car, things were running through my head. I had learned today. I had also learned how much I didn't know, and saw how things had changed in my life, like the refineries changing and schools closing, good and talented people dying. I knew all these things had taken place, but when I looked at them in a surrounding like I did today, it puts everything into perspective. I have made up my mind that even though I had gone to the museum to write a paper for school, that I had walked out of there a different person, one who is definitely prouder of the area that I grew up in and where I still live. This is the first step in learning all that I can. When I bring my grandchildren into the museum and they ask me "Who is that?", I know that I will be able to answer with the correct information and that I can only hope that when they leave they will feel as touched and proud as I did today.

*Special Topics*  
*Museum of the Gulf Coast*  
*Second Place*

*The Museum of the Gulf Coast*  
by  
*Gregory Tillman*

# *The Museum of the Gulf Coast*

by  
*Gregory Tillman*

*A*t the Museum of the Gulf Coast, what I liked most would be hard for me to tell, since I really enjoyed it all. I guess if I had to pick just one section, it would be a toss up between the music and the Civil War sections. Since I was a child, I have loved to watch movies about the Civil War, read books, or just anything that was about the war. To this day I still will watch *The Blue and the Gray* when it's on, over something else. Even if I haven't seen the other movie before, it would have to be a really good movie to top *The Blue and the Gray*.

Young and old should see the exhibit in the museum of the War Between the States. The tragedy of that Great War was a lesson we as Americans should forever remember. A time when as a people we couldn't come to an agreement on a subject that stirred such passion in the soul of a nation, that war between brother and brother, cousin and cousin, father and son was the only way the people found to still the cry of freedom that burned so deep in the South.

The story of Dick Dowling was a major part in that war for Texas. The Museum's mural and the story it tells is one of courage, stamina, and intelligence that so portrays the average Texan. To wait out a five hundred round cannonade bombardment was not only heroic but also the smart thing to do. Waiting for the Federal ships to get into range before giving the order to fire not only saved the day, but also won Dick Dowling and his men a place in history as the heroes of Sabine Pass.

The next thing I found interesting in the Museum was the section on what life was like back when Port Arthur was founded. The exhibit showing how an average bedroom would look and the old tools used to craft the bed, the chairs, and anything else the pioneer would need. I personally have always thought that it would be exciting to live in those times. In those days a man had to come up

*with what he needed to live. The story about the mural over the entrance was particularly interesting. Being from Port Arthur, I thought that I had heard all there was to the history and the beginning of this area. I don't know if the elementary schools still teach Port Arthur history, but when I went to school they did. So I was really surprised that there was a story that I had not heard.*

*In keeping with the program of the museum tour, the visitor will go from the ancient cave man, to the Kawakawa Indians who were cannibals, and dined on the Spanish and French explorers of the fifteen and sixteen hundreds. A celebrity hound, will find out about the most famous people from this area, which will be a real pleasure. In Southeast Texas we are proud of our heritage and our Museum.*

*If you are like me and love music, then you have to see the exhibit on the local boys and girls that made it to stardom. At the Janis Joplin exhibits, for instance, Janis's singing and music will live on as an expensive reminder of how drugs can take a person down, where ever they are in life. The musical celebrities don't start there with Janis. J.P. Richardson, better known as the Big Bopper, in the 1950's, was one of the founders of Rock and Roll and from Beaumont, Texas. The Winters brothers, better known as Edgar and Johnny Winters, formed a group called, The Winters Group in the 1960's and 1970's and was a rock and roll band that made it big. Johnny broke off and started a blues band and went on to be one of the best Blues musicians of our time. One of his many accomplishments was a remake of the old blues hit "Tobacco Road." Another great musician from our area was the country music star Tex Ritter. Tex hailed from Nederland and made many hit records. Tex's son is the actor John Ritter. Other famous people from Southeast Texas include plastic kings, football coaches, actors and artists, Medal of Honor winners, world famous cowboys, athletes, regular folks that found a slice of life and made it their own. Such is the spirit of our area. This spirit of the pioneers is still alive and well today in Southeast Texas.*

*To visit the Museum of the Gulf Coast should be on every school's list of things to do, during the school year. The museum would benefit anyone in this area or anywhere, and show him the culture that is and was this part of Texas we call our home. In closing, I would like to say that I personally am proud of the museum, and I hope it grows to be one of the finest in the state.*

*Special Topics*  
*Museum of the Gulf Coast*  
*Third Place*

*Museum of the Gulf Coast*  
*by*  
*Wendi Powell*

# *Museum of the Gulf Coast*

by

*Wendi Powell*

*A* museum is a building or institution where objects of artistic, historical, or scientific importance and value are kept, studied, and put on display. They serve as a great importance to any community. They are located around the world, and are often a tourist attraction. Many people have visited museums from all over, but they have yet to visit their hometown museum. I am twenty-two years old and have never been to my hometown museum in Port Arthur, Texas. The Museum of the Gulf Coast has more than just artifacts from Port Arthur, but has exceeding interest in all of the state of Texas, as well. In the paragraphs to come, I will put into words what I thought of the Museum of the Gulf Coast, and emphasize what touched me most out of the visit.

*As I walked through the doors of this eloquent institution, I was astonished to see how big it was, considering the size of Port Arthur. As I looked around, I saw a mural. It was a painting covering an entire proportion of one of the inside museum walls. It was a painting that I will never forget, as it was like watching evolution take place. It had stages that showed an era in time. First with dinosaurs, then elephants and native Indians, and all of the sudden immigrants washed on shore of the Gulf Coast. Wartime made its way into this beautiful mural, and ended with celebrations for Spindletop, our gateway to success and expansion. It was the perfect setting to get me interested in the details that were in the Museum of the Gulf Coast.*

*There were so many things for me to look at, and so many things that I took great interest in, that it leaves me bewildered to only write about one. There were birds, sea creatures, war heroes, old diaries, a great many pictures, and not just American history, but Italian American history also. There is not just history itself, but people that influenced my community as well. I was astonished at all the different types of information that this museum had to offer. Everyone has different interests, and the Museum of the Gulf Coast cover a wide ranges of interests, and so it is important to me to see the new exhibits form a place in this institution.*

*It made me sad to see how many things that I take for granted in this small town. I never knew that some of the actors, musicians, or sports legends, were from my hometown. I never took into perspective how much people did for the Gulf Coast. Because of the museum, I will forever remember the important significance that everyday people can and have had in this world. One person, one event, or one artifact can change evolution for the rest of existence if just that attempt was viewed in a much broader perspective. That is what my everlasting memory of the experience of the Museum of the Gulf Coast meant to me.*

*Special Topics*  
*Museum of the Gulf Coast*

*Honorable Mention*



# *I Never Knew...*

by

*Magan Flores*

*When Mr. Knight first talked about going to the Museum of the Gulf Coast, I was kind of excited. I had never been there before, but I had always heard it was very interesting.*

*When we first arrived, I thought that the downstairs portion was very unique in its style of artistry. Especially with the gigantic painting that covered the whole west side of the room, it really brought it to life. I never really appreciated all the history that took place in this area. I was very fascinated with all of the actors and actresses that were from around Southeast Texas. An actress, Frances Fischer, had worked with my Paw-Paw Wylie out at Firestone in Orange for many years. I also noticed a floral designer who was an honored part of the museum. I have always wanted to be a floral designer, and maybe if I really put forth an effort, I can achieve the high goal and honor that he received, and my name will be placed in the museum also. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever imagine that I would get the chance to see an actual Academy Award. However, I did and to my surprise, it looks the same as*

*it does on T.V., just as dignified and beautiful as the recipient does.*

*When we came to our last exhibit, I was in awe. I never knew of all the athletes who were from this area as well. It seemed so real, as if I had met each and everyone of these people in person and was told their personal story to stardom. Maybe it was their high spirits among their awards, plaques and pictures that brought the realization that if you put your mind to something, you can do it. I really enjoyed myself throughout the whole museum. Like Mr. Knight said, I will probably want to bring someone there to show them what it is all about. I really think my brother would enjoy going. One day, I hope he can experience the same thing I've experienced, realize the history of our area, and have a desire to go back. I really want to thank Mr. Knight for taking us there and having us experience this wonderful piece of history. I'll never forget it, and I hope on one else does either.*

# *Museum of the Gulf Coast*

*by*

*Katiba Hill*

*The Museum was very interesting, because of all the different things that make it up. It was a learning experience for me; one that before starting in this class I was unaware I would have need of. I didn't know that the Golden Triangle had that much history to it, but it is not hard to grasp the idea that there was actually something here before the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries or should I say the last eighteen years that I have known the area as it is today. A great deal of my strength comes from music. This is the reason that I have made it through trying things in my life, so it is no surprise that I was most interested in the musical part of the museum. It gave me comfort to see so many small town people made it, and what I mean by that is not just making money but having goals and doing things that gave them peace of mind and made them happy. Take for instance, the Big Bopper. The story about his career was very fascinating to me because you rarely hear of a young white man in those days pretending to have a black man's voice, although some could say that's just the white man in those days working for his own profit. However, it wasn't like that, and I saw that; but I know some people would take it the wrong way. The museum for me was a realization of what is important in life, not always money or fame but for most being able to live with peace of mind. There were also other things in the museum that interested me, for instance the Snell Parlor. I couldn't*

*believe that two people by themselves collected so many things from all over the world and came back to share it with Southeast Texas. The museum has history in it. I think that's what I liked the most about the museum there is so much that has come from the Golden Triangle. Over all I enjoyed my time in the museum, and I learned more about the history of Southeast Texas that I didn't know before we went to the Museum of the Gulf Coast, so for that thank you Mr. Knight.*

*Layout and Printing:  
Janet G. Polk  
Print Shop  
Lamar State College-Port Arthur*