

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 356 474

CS 213 763

TITLE Arizona Statehood Day Creative Writing Contest, 1991.

INSTITUTION Arizona State Dept. of Education, Phoenix.

SPONS AGENCY Department of Education, Washington, DC.

PUB DATE Feb 91

NOTE 56p.

PUB TYPE Creative Works (Literature,Drama,Fine Arts) (030) --
Collected Works - General (020)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Creative Writing; *Poetry; *Prose; Secondary
Education; Secondary School Students

IDENTIFIERS *Arizona; Writing Contests

ABSTRACT

This booklet presents a collection of 33 poems and stories, written by Arizona students in grades 7-12, who were finalists and winners in the 1991 annual Statehood Day Creative Writing Contest. (SR)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

CS

ED356474

1991
ARIZONA
STATEHOOD DAY
CREATIVE
WRITING
CONTEST



CS 213763

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Linda Edgington

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

☐ Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
C. Diane Bishop, State Superintendent
of Public Instruction
February 1991

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The contents of this publication were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of that agency, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.
[20 U.S.C. 1221e-3(a)(1)]

The Arizona Department of Education is an equal opportunity employer and educational agency and affirms that it does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or handicapping condition.

Printed in Phoenix, Arizona by the
Arizona Department of Education
Total Copies Printed100
Total Printing Cost.....\$370.00
Unit Printing Cost.....\$3.70
Date of Printing 2/91

1991

Arizona

Statehood Day

Creative

Writing

Contest

Arizona Department of Education
C. Diane Bishop, State Superintendent
of Public Instruction
Muriel Rosmann, Language Arts/
Writing Specialist
February, 1991



Statehood Day Reflections

The celebration of Statehood Day, through special ceremonies by the Arizona House of Representatives, has been a long standing tradition. Representative "Polly" Rosenbaum has orchestrated these ceremonies over the years and as a former teacher, she has chosen this time to honor outstanding students in Arizona's schools through a special contest.

The annual Statehood Day Creative Writing Contest, in cooperation with the Arizona House of Representatives and the Department of Education, had over one thousand entries in this year's competition from students in grades 7-12. Sixteen winners were chosen and these students represented schools from around the state. The winners, their families and teachers were honored guests of the Arizona House of Representatives for the 1991 Statehood Day Ceremonies on February 11, 1991.

A special thanks to Representative "Polly" Rosenbaum for her continuing dream that the greatest resource of Arizona is that of the young people as they learn and grow. Arizona educators, parents and students say a special "thank you" to Mrs. Rosenbaum for her many years of hard work and dedication in support of education.

Muriel Rosmann
Language Arts/
Writing Specialist

Table of Contents

Jason Fata	Arizona's Treasures	1
Anne O'Connell	Echoes of the Past	2
Christine Merrill	Desert Treasure	4
Gregg Bach	The Christmas Kachine	5
Jacquie Layton	Monsoon	7
Jack Long	Arizona Gold	8
Laura Valenzuela	Arizona: Treasures of Eternal Beauty and Life	10
Emory Clark	Alley Oop!	12
Anida Stevenson	Cacti	13
Chelsea Earney	The Grand Experience	14
Amy Greenough	Arizona's Treasures - The Coronado Mountains	15
Danny Tingle	Arizona's Highs And Lows	17
Amy (Smallwood) Abbl	Arizona's Question	18
Fawn Scheer	The Colorado River And Grand Canyon	19
Katie Curran	The Treasure of the Arizona Night	20
Kelly Ailen	Arizona's Treasures	21
Tori Manning	Grand Canyon	23
Shannon Moore	Arizona	24
Jason Gabriel	The Gold Miner of Arizona	26
Kristin Derdenger	Cultures Apart	27
Michelle Roop	Nighttime View From A Mountain Top	28
Rachel Doerr	The Thunderstorm	30
Christina Palacio	Hidden Treasures in the Arizona Desert	31
Heather Stockton	Monsoon	32
Barbara McDonald	Textures	34
Nathan Moody	Arizona Sunset	36

Stacy Gorman	My Grandfather, Ben Gorman: An Arizona Treasure	37
Gene Bukhman	The Benefit of Friendship	39
Erin Dickinson	A Patchwork History	41
Michael Brophy	Sanctuary	42
Michael Sortino	Capturing the Essence of Arizona	43
Chad O. Olson	Kinesthesia of Arizona	46
Dionne Fox	Beth	47

ARIZONA'S TREASURES

As I stand, with tear-filled eyes
Gazing at the clear blue skies.

I thank God for Arizona treasures
Which surely are beyond all measures.

Although I can't name them all
The unique ones I do recall.

The desert a familiar sight,
Hot by day, cold at night.

Filled with cacti of all kind
Your favorite, you're sure to find.

The stately saguaros are some of these;
They are the desert's giant trees.

The sunrise takes my breath away
While the sunset ends a beautiful day.

The relics in the Desert Museum
I enjoy when I go to see'em.

The Painted Desert, the Sunset Crater
Could only come from our Creator.

The Lost Dutchman's Mine with all its gold
Is a hidden treasure that no one can unfold.

The Petrified Forest in all its glory
Tells another great and wonderful story.

The Grand Canyon, a natural wonder
Is awesome in the wild-blue yonder.

Old Tucson brings back western days
Through modern movies with cowboy ways.

Colossal Cave, a fabulous sight
With its stalactites shining bright.

The majestic mountains with their snow-capped peaks
Have people raving for weeks and weeks.

And, so for all this splendid art
I say, "My God, how great Thou art."

Jason W. Fata
Magee Middle School
Tucson Unified School District
8th Grade Winner

Echoes of the Past

*He leans against the old weathered post
And we gather around.*

*We listen,
Quietly, reverently, and attentively.*

*He tells us the story,
The story of the
Old West,*

*The Indians,
The outlaws,
Bullets blazing,
Arrows flying,
The cries of the people.*

The Old West was full of excitement.

*Yet, there is one special place
He would tell us about,*

A place in Arizona.

*It was called
Dos Cabezas.
This little town
Was nestled in the hills.*

*This town had its saloon, its women,
Its roughnecks, and its gunfights.*

*And when something was wrong,
They made it right in a hurry.*

*Up in the mountains high
The mines flourished.
The ringing of the jackhammers
Was heard through the canyons.
The stamp mills rumbled,
The smelter belched smoke-
Then. . .the ore died out.*

*Before the mine died,
It gave birth to Cochise County's
First public school.
It was only one room,
But its students became
School teachers, Doctors, Scientists, and Lawyers.
When the winds blow through the
Skeleton of the building,
You can still hear the children
Reciting their ABC's.*

*Wyatt Earp played Faro in the saloon;
Johnny Ringo rode through town;
Geronimo raided surrounding ranches.*

*Now days it's a rundown ghost town,
But its spirits are still alive.*

*When he finishes his story,
He pulls a silver watch
Out of his pocket.*

*We turn around to say
So long.
But he has already
Disappeared.*

Yes, its spirits are still alive. . .

Anne Frances O'Connell
Willcox Middle School
Willcox Unified No. 13
8th Grade Winner

Desert Treasure

An open treasure chest
Forever overflowing
With gold and jewels and valuables,
Always brightly glowing.

The cacti standing proudly
Are the emeralds, brilliant green.
Scattered upon the hillsides,
They glimmer, glisten, gleam.

The iridescent cloudless sky
Represents the shiny gold.
The sun reflects upon it,
Flashing colors, bright and bold.

When clouds make rare appearance,
They are pearly atop the gold.
Gems placed inside the chest with care,
Never to be sold.

The precious timepiece of the dark,
Most elegant of all,
Colored silver, it is the moon,
Shining through night's pall.

These treasures are protected,
But you need no key.
Let your heart unlock the beauty
And reveal the mystery.

Christine Merrill
Willcox Middle School
Willcox Unified School District No. 13
8th Grade Winner

The Christmas Kachina

Another Christmas was here as Dan, Ron, and Cindy, along with their parents drove to their grandparents house for a Christmas dinner and then to open some presents. The three kids always enjoyed this special event, not just because of the great food and neat presents they received, but because it gave them a chance to talk with their Great Granddad who is an 82 year old Hopi Indian. He always told them exciting stories about the Hopi spirits. The three children hardly even knew about him until about a year ago, when he left the Hopi reservation and moved in with their grandparents because of many health problems which he was suffering from.

On this particular Christmas, the kids could hardly wait to once again visit with their Great Granddad. Finally Dan, the oldest child, lost his patience and exclaimed, "Are we almost there yet?"

"Not much longer, honey," answered his Mom, "To keep yourself busy, look for Christmas lights."

"Owww! Ron pinched me," yelled Cindy.

"But you hit me first," yelled back Ron.

"Kids, would you ---

"Hey, we're here," interrupted Dad as he skillfully pulled the car into the driveway. A few minutes later they were greeted by their grandparents. Hugs and kisses were exchanged as they moved up the driveway toward the house.

"Where's Great Granddad?" asked Dan.

"Oh he's in his sitting room probably sleeping," answered Grandma. "He's been acting so strange lately." Once they entered the house, Dan unlike the other two kids immediately went to his Great Granddad's sitting room where he found him sitting in his old rickety rocking chair.

"Hi , Great Granddad," exclaimed Dan, "How are things today and what great stories are you going to tell us?"

"Today I just want to talk to you," answered his Great Granddad slowly. "I have been carefully watching you and have told you much about the Hopi spirits in your past visits with me," continued his Great Granddad wisely, "and now I think it is as good a time as any to tell you what I have been preparing you for. It's the sacred art of Kachina making. It has been

passed down for generations and I have chosen to teach you. Go and fetch that small pouch from in the closet." Dan did as his Great Granddad had told him and soon returned with a small leather pouch.

"Where would you like me to put this?" asked Dan.

"Bring it here and set it in my lap please," answered Great Granddad. "Boy, pull up that chair and watch and learn." (This is when his Great Granddad began to explain the sacred art of Kachina making.) "First, before you do anything you must ask the spirits to guide your hands skillfully along the wood in order to make the doll that you envisioned in your mind. Then choose a dry cottonwood root that is the proper size for your doll. Study the root with all your thoughts, look deep into the soul of the wood. With a wood-rasp you should round off the sharp corners of the wood. Take a sharp pen knife and whittle the wood into the shape you want. Next, give the doll a smooth finish by rubbing it with a piece of sandstone. Take another piece of cottonwood and carve any headdress or other parts of the doll that you need. The steps in painting the Kachina go like this. First, you give the figure a thin white undercoating. To make any other colors you must use the juice of berries. After the doll's paint has dried, you must attach some small bird-feathers and beads."

"Once you have followed all of these steps, you have created your first Kachina. But you are not quite done until you have given the Kachina's soul to the spirits."

"You are to pass this tradition on to someone that you trust dearly, but not until you feel that your time has come. When you select this person, make sure that they will be able to take this responsibility." After saying this, he took from around his neck a necklace with a small clear stone on the end. In handing this to Dan he said, "Wear this around your neck and when you pass on the tradition, give it with the same instructions I have given you." Then he handed Dan the small leather pouch with all the tools he needed inside (he was to pass this on as well). Dan assured his Great Granddad that he would follow his instructions exactly and told him not to worry.

Later that night as Dan and his family were driving home. His Mom asked him, "what was in the leather pouch and what was with the new necklace." Dan replied "Let's just say that it's the best Christmas present I'll ever receive."

Gregg Bach
Cocopah Middle School
Scottsdale Unified School District
7th Grade Winner

MONSOON

The sun beats down
Upon the dry and
Lifeless
Earth.
Nothing moves;
Nothing stirs.
There is nothing
But immense heat and
Pressure.
Then, in a moment,
In the blink of an eye
The sky darkens,
And the sun is covered.
Removed from sight.
Suddenly, life begins to stir.
From every corner, every crevice
Creatures come,
Come and
Wait.
Wait in anticipation
Of what is to come.
All of a sudden,
It Begins.
The sky seems to
Open up
And the clouds,
Dark and Menacing,
Release themselves.
They hold back
No longer,
As buckets of water
Pour along the Earth.
Relieving Her.
Reviving Her.
Renewing Her.
And every living thing knows
It has come.

MONSOON

Jacquie Layton
East Flagstaff Junior High School
Flagstaff Unified School District
8th Grade Winner

Arizona Gold

Are you looking for treasures--something to keep?
Arizona has them all--you need not dig deep.

The treasure chest of Arizona brims to the top. Our sky, our land, and our people--each gem adds to our prosperity.

Our Grand Canyon remains a record of geologic history with artistry and grace for all to savor. Sample, too, our Petrified Forest. For miles upon miles, brilliantly colored stone logs and stone pieces clothe the desert floor. Rising up from this desert deck stands Sunset Crater. Once a vibrant volcano, now it stands as a lone cinder cone, ruby red against an azure sky. Nearby, from nearly thirteen thousand feet, our highest point, Humphrey's Peak, watches over all her children. All this terrain--diverse as it is--has its roots in one of Arizona's richest treasures--her deserts.

The forestland teems, bearing a grand strand of ponderosa pine--standing guard at Arizona's northern boundary. While in the south, the cacti come in assorted species--all shapes and sizes. Cheery colors of blooming buds pay homage to the desert landscape. Dodging these monoliths with speed of light, the roadrunner races to his next destination. Perhaps his quest is for food; perhaps it's escape--for coyotes can be found most anywhere. Put your ear to the wind to his lonesome lyrics filtering through the net of night air. The flora and fauna flourish with abandon--just another access to Arizona's growing wealth.

Arizona's land, flora and fauna would cease to exist without an accommodating climate. From three to thirty inches of rain shower moisture in just the correct doses. From mountainside snow, to the rains of the riverbeds and desertlands, precipitation brings forth life--giving moisture, while keeping our outdoors crystal clear. Truly this is one more Arizona treasure.

Let us not overlook the gold mine that can be found in the populace of Arizona. Our names, our ruins and our history all reveal the Indian impact on our culture. Ghostly spirits loom over towns like Tombstone in the south--reminiscent of shootouts at the O.K. Corral and the eternal moanings of Boot Hill residents. Flashing forward into more modern times, Lowell Observatory scientists encounter a remote planet and name it Pluto. Mankind and his contributions--one more nugget to relish.

From mountain to canyon, from desert to peak,
Arizona's got treasures for those who seek.

Jack Long
East Flagstaff Junior High School
Flagstaff Unified School District
8th Grade Winner

ARIZONA: TREASURES OF ETERNAL BEAUTY AND LIFE

ARIZONA,
LAND OF EVERLASTING SUNSETS—
SKIES OF GLEAMING SUNRISE.
ANCIENT REMNANTS STILL ABOUND,
MODERN STRUCTURES ON COMMON GROUND.
TRUE, NATURAL BEAUTIES.
FROM MAJESTIC MOUNTAINS TO DESERT SANDS.
THE GOLDEN DESERT BLOOMS IN THE
ELDORADO OF THE SOUTHWEST.

ARIZONA:

RICH IN COPPER, GRAZING CATTLE,
PIMA COTTON BEST;
PINE TREES PUT TO REST.
PEOPLE STEM FROM ANCIENT HOHOKAM
INDIANS, CONQUERING SPANIARDS,
WESTERN COWBOYS TO NAME A FEW.
WILDCATS, SUNDEVILS, LUMBERJACKS,
AZTECS OF MAROON, GOLD, RED, WHITE, AND BLUE
SHINE LIKE THE SKIES, MOUNTAINS AND DESERTS.
ARIZONA, TRUE ETERNAL BEAUTY. . .
FROM CACTUS TO PINE,
FROM ROADRUNNER TO PROUD COUGAR,
FROM SINGING COYOTES TO MOUNTAIN BEARS
AND MAJESTIC ELKS.
MOUNTAIN CRYSTAL WATERS NOURISH GREEN VALLEYS.
ARIZONA:
MINERS, STUDENTS, CLERKS, TEACHERS, DOCTORS,
LAWYERS--ALL MOLD OUR RICH ARIZONA.

TRAVELERS VISIT OUR CRISP SNOW AND BASK IN
THE ARID SUN. . .

SOON TO BECOME PERMANENT RESIDENTS--
OTHERS TO RETURN ONLY IN THEIR MEMORIES.

ARIZONA: TREASURES OF ETERNAL BEAUTY AND LIFE. . .
FOREVER IN MY HEART.

Laura Valenzuela
Calabasas Junior High School
Santa Cruz Unified No. 35
8th Grade Winner

ALLEY OOP!

The Phoenix Suns are the state treasure
While we watch they bring us pleasure
They represent our state with PRIDE
young hopefuls they will guide.

KJ leads the team to victory
In the near future
National Champions they will Be.

SHOOT the ball in the HOOP,
KJ..... to..... WEST
Alley oop !

Tom Chambers sure plays fine,
Of all the NBA
He is on the front line.

And... of course,
there is West
He has more *power* than the rest!

Hornacek is next on the team
You can't touch him
when he plays mean.

Then comes the teamwork
They are BAD in every way,
planned Jump Shots from 3 miles away.

Drive to the BASKET
SLAM JAM..... BAM....
If the SUNS can't do it
NO ONE CAN!

Emory Clark
Heritage Middle School
Chino Valley District No. 51
7th Grade Winner

CACTI

CACTI.*
LARGE,*
GREEN,*
AND****
SUCC-**
ULENT.*
SHAPED*

IN*** THEIR** *
OWN** PRICKLY *** WAY,*
THEY* ALL**** LOOK*
SPEC- TACULAR AND**
FLAM- ING**** WITH*
BEA-* UTY**** AGAI-
NST** THE DES -ERT*
SKY.**THE SILHOUETTES OF
THESE FORSAKEN PLANTS***
OFTEN LOOK TO *****
TO THE*
ORANGE*
SUNSET*
IN THE*
SOUTH-*
WESTERN
SKIES,*
FOR****
COMPAN-
IONSHIP
THERE'S
NOTHING
SO*****
LONELY*
AS THE*
CACTI.*

Anida Stevenson
Willcox Middle School
Willcox Unified School District
8th Grade Finalist

THE GRAND EXPERIENCE

Have you every been to a place that makes you feel free, a place that appears to have no end? Well, I have seen such a place.

Every time I visit this place I am overwhelmed. I am at once filled with near dread and euphoria. It is a place which, for me, creates mental images of peoples and concerns of bygone millenia. It makes me pointedly aware of my own limited realm of possibility. I am forced to wonder, "how will future millenia alter the face of this monument to nature?"

It will doubtless remain an awe inspiring, radiant, enduring, intimidating experience for countless generations to come.

It is timeless; a realm of peace, an expensive panorama of beauty in my soul's eye.

It is unmatched; it is unmatchable.

It is mystical, magical, eternal.

It is truly and in every sense.....THE GRAND CANYON.....

Chelsea Earney
Desert Horizon School
Pendergast Elementary District
8th Grade Finalist

ARIZONA'S TREASURES — THE CORONADO MOUNTAINS

The Coronado Mountains hold many astonishing secrets of nature. Brown Canyon is my favorite. I horse back ride there often. You get there by riding up on a rocky ledge. When you look down from the ledge you can see a layer of soft green velvet with wispy clumps of dry love grass protuding from the seams of the land.

Then as you proceed in the forest you can feel a cooling sensation, and smell a sweet and smooth aroma of oak and damp mossy lichens emanating through the trees to ease your mind and cradle you into the depths of nature.

Listening to the even crack of hoofbeats upon the rocky crust makes you want to drift into an eternal sleep.

Falling deep into the canyon you find things that bring you back to reality; a gentle stream gurgling over a pile of smoothed stones and pebbles or the feeling of towering canyon cliffs dwelling above and beside you.

Moving along you approach a mystic pool of water surrounded by a hollowed cave of grey wall with a drizzle of shining liquid dro,pping down from the towering wall above.

Your eyes progress to the top, but you won't be able to see the top; only the steep mountains emerging from somewhere far off and invisible to all except the birds soaring in the blistering hot summer breeze.

The pool itself is ice clear from the frozen runoff of the cascading mountains of January.

The liquid drizzles down the cold stone wall chilling everything around it and leaving ripples upon the surface of the pool. The chattering splashes echo mildly sifting and whispering through the heavily leafed trees all around.

The sound is so astonishingly peaceful that you won't want to emerge from the canyon and face civilization. You would like to stay and become a small animal, tree, insect, or tiny living organism too small to see, but one that can enjoy its surroundings without being noticed or disturbed.

Amy Greenough
Palominas School
Palominas Elementary District No. 49
8th Grade Finalist

Arizona's Highs and Lows

Rex Allen, and his D P voice;
EE

Grand Canyon, and its L W pitched echoes;
O

Dos Cabezas, and its H H R C Y heads;
IG
O K

Yuma, and its E S CALATI N G temperatures;

The Willcox Playa, and its E Y bottom;
MPT

The Saguaro Cactus, and its H L arms;
OL
WU

Arizona mystifies you with its highs and lows.

Danny Tingle
Willcox Middle School
Willcox Unified School District
8th Grade Finalist

"ARIZONA'S QUESTION"

What makes Arizona beautiful?

Is it a Saguaro cactus

blooming bright yellow flowers?

Or is it a Cactus Wren

building a nest for hours?

Is it a ghost town

giving you a chill?

Or is it Indian ruins

balanced on the edge of a hill?

Is it the Palo Verde

blossoming right on cue?

Or is it the sunset

with lots of glistening hue?

Is it the Painted Desert

and it's nickname, "The Desert's Daughter?"

Or is it the Grand Canyon

and it's deep blue water?

Is it rugged mountains

with their majestic pines?

Or is it the lonely desert

and it's ancient sands of time?

Asking all these questions, we'll never really know

of all the beauty Arizona holds.

*Amy (Smallwood) Abbl
Willcox Middle School
Willcox Unified School District No. 13
8th Grade Finalist*

THE COLORADO RIVER AND GRAND CANYON

A muddy trickle of water
washes away the bottom of a
ravine

I get closer to it, and the trickle
seems to have grown to a flowing
stream

at the bottom of a gorge, depleating
along with time and nature, before my
very eyes

As I near this place of awe and wonder
even more, I realize that the stream is
actually

a roaring, gushing, Colorado River,
slowly, oh so very, very slowly, eating
away at

the enormous Grand Canyon

Fawn Scheer
Prescott Mile High Middle School
Prescott Unified District No. 1
8th Grade Finalist

THE TREASURE OF THE ARIZONA NIGHT

Sparsely spread stars glisten against the charcoaled sheet of darkness, hanging over the spacious Arizona desert.

Saguaros cast deep shadows over the sand showing off their great limbs of spokes and spines.

Soft, obscure waverings of crickets chirping, oblivious to the reverberating sounds of the night.

A distant howl echoes through the canyon as a coyote bays at the iridescent piece of cheese floating overhead.

Owls hoot their nighttime call and beckon their mates to enjoy the sparkling lights of the crowded sky.

A cool breeze of autumn waltzes by, dancing among the sand bringing a partner of rain to cascade among the swaying plants.

A cloud swings over the canyon playfully hiding the opalescent glow of the full moon. It dodges back and the pale shadow of the moon once again wins the honor of lighting the Arizona desert.

Katie Curran
Rhodes Junior High School
Mesa Unified District No. 4
7th Grade Finalist

ARIZONA'S TREASURES

Arizona has
Many treasures untold,
From it's heated days
To its sunsets of gold.

There are Indian ruins,
Such as old Casa Grande.
They are buried deep
In the very hot sand.

The many Superstitions are
One of mountains very small
Another one is Camelback;
It is not very tall.

We have many desert animals
In the Valley of the Sun.
The tiny kangaroo rat
Is only one.

Other creatures are the roadrunner,
The scorpion and the snake
The cactus wren is pretty special
Because it's the bird of our state.

People in Arizona
Are usually pretty kind.
If you ask them if you can borrow their pen,
I'm sure that they won't mind.

One thing you'll see a lot of
In this dry desert state of ours,
Is cactus all over the place-
In my front yard and yours.

Arizona is a special state,
As you can plainly see.
I'm so glad I live here;
It's the best place for me.

Kelly Allen
Rhodes Junior High School
Mesa Unified District No. 4
7th Grade Finalist

GRAND CANYON

I stand and stare
My mouth agape.
The wide expanse
Of your breathtaking landscape
Lies before me
As far as I can see
So colorful and peaceful
As any wonder can be.

My breath escapes
As I lean over the rail
To watch the tourists
Wind down your trails.
They seek deeper wonders
Hidden in your walls.
Ancient civilizations
A majestic waterfall.

The sun sets slowly
In vivid oranges and reds.
Your mysteries and beauties
Burned forever in my head.

Tori Manning
Rhodes Junior High School
Mesa Unified District No. 4
7th Grade Finalist

ARIZONA

Arizona's a happenin' place
You can see it in every smilin' face

We're really cool cause we've got Oak Creek
No one else does so we're pretty unique

The Grand Canyon is really very deep
And if you go down there it's kind of steep

Our desert sands may be hot
But still they've really got a lot

The Saguaro cactus is green and tall
If you come to Arizona you can see it all

Plenty as the sands may be
There's more than enough for you to see

The desert plants are nice and green
If you travel down here you'll see what I mean

The nights are clear, the days are blue
Arizona's got a lot in store for you

The mountains are so very high
You can't miss them as you go by

Indians live here day and night
When you see them it's quite a delight

Different outbacks cover our land
From big canyons to the water's flowing hand

Arizona's got it all
Small and tiny, big and tall

So when you get the chance to come on down
It's really simple: Arizona's the best place around

Shannon Moore
Mohawk Valley School
Mohawk Valley School District No. 17
8th Grade Finalist

"THE GOLD MINER OF ARIZONA"

The Gold Miner of Arizona began his task at an early age, before the time of man and beast. Before his task was done and finished, he was struck by a black and foul evil wind. His body and inner self were set to lay and melt into the earth. The wear and toil showing on our world.

His body placed onto our world like a turtle with his shell, life and time forming to never ever dwell.

Easily came night and with it the stiffness and coldness of his body. His body lay there, still, to the everlasting atmosphere, in a way resembling his surroundings. His day-old beard a cactus, the fading of his blue eyes the lack of water, his bushy hair like the passing of a tumble weed, and the wear on his forehead showing the passing of the day.

In the rush of the flowing wind, the sand covered over his tanned, dried, browned wrinkly skin, his body forming into the earth of what we now call Arizona's treasures.

In his last dying thoughts he dreamed, dreamed of a perfect imaginary place, a place of wonders, of treasures. As he thought, thought hard, his dreams became reality.

The world he had imagined was one of many desires. It had a variety of climate, like a child in a candy store trying to pick his choice of sweets. This world of beauty had a canyon of grandness. The overwhelming beauty and grandeur was suspended in the air hanging over this place of glory. He visualized an electrifying sky of angry lightning bolts flying sideways, diagonal, striking the ground with the force of Titans. He pictured a fiery sun beating down on the earth with such a force it turned the plush grass into a limp sand. His image was with happiness, and on his last thoughts he died, leaving our world to enter into death.

But not death, as we can now see. Instead he lives as never before, helping the universe to be like his dreams. But this was too great a task and could only help one part of our treasured planet, which is Arizona. Arizona was formed from the dreams and hopes of an old Gold Miner.

Jason R. Gabriel
Shepherd Junior High School
Mesa Unified School District No. 4
9th Grade Winner

CULTURES APAKT

The Hopi Indians had always warned
Their children to stay away
From all the danger and all the harm
The Navajos brought their way.
A dispute arose long ago
Between the two Arizona clans.
These two tribes have always argued
About who would receive the land.
One fine day, a Hopi girl
Took a desert stroll about.
She collected stones, picked up leaves,
Then spotted a boy on the mount.
She looked at him, and him at her.
He signaled her to come.
She hiked up to see him there.
He was Navajo. She was stunned.
They engaged in conversation.
They knew it was not right.
She left him there, standing alone,
Only to return that night.
They met at twilight, on the same hill.
They spoke with each other again.
They stared at the stars, made a pact
To remain eternal friends.
She fished into her satchel,
Gave him a gift of her love.
He smiled at her gently.
He liked the feather of a dove.
Then they went their separate ways,
Knowing the danger and all the risks.
He smiled at her, and her at him.
Closed his eyes, blew her a kiss.
His mother found out, thought it cute,
Although the tribe would frown.
But if he loved her, and if he cared,
She would let him marry down.
Many moons later, the Hopi girl
Revealed her secret to her friend.
She said it would never work.
Their relationship had to end.
So the young girl set out
To find the one she loved.
All she found when she reached the hill
Was the feather of a dove.

Kristin Derdenger
Chaparral High School
Scottsdale Unified School District
10th Grade Winner

Nighttime View From a Mountain Top

I had just finished hiking to the top of one of Arizona's smaller mountains as the sun was finishing its descent behind the distant mountains. My eyes were fixed on the valley below, admiring the view of Arizona, after the sun's unmerciful rays had ceased to scorch its calloused soil.

With one final effort to keep the sky lit, the sun swept a paint brush dripping with reddish orange paint across the clouds, and then it was gone. However, there was too much paint for the wispy clouds to absorb. The excess color dripped onto the mountains below, staining their once purple heads with a luminescent glow of rust. Yet soon all the color shed from the clouds had trickled down the side of the mountain. Arizona had changed into its coffee black robe for the evening.

Silently the very tip of the moon peeked out from behind the earth's horizon, checking to see if the sun had finished its descent. Pleased to see it had gone, the moon shyly pulled the rest of its pale face above the concealing line of the horizon and cast a broad beam of white light into the monotonous black of the night's sky. Yet the signal of light fell upon closed eyes, for the stars were tired that night and had not yet awakened. Patiently the moon ascended higher into the sky, its face becoming smaller but its light becoming brighter until the first star awakened with a start, opening its eye to reveal a rich golden color highlighted with sparks of yellow. It blinked for a few moments fighting the urge to continue to sleep, causing its intense color to twinkle against the black sky.

The moon had finally reached the top of the sky. It rested for a moment while eyeing with distaste the dull robe of black shielding Arizona from light. With instant decision the moon untied the knot holding the robe in place. Slowly it slipped away. One by one the lights of the city sparked to life, winking at the now fully awakened set of stars, copying their image like a mirror.

The mass of lights engulfed the base of the mountains surrounding the valley like waves lap at an ocean's shore. The outline of the mountain's jagged peaks were highlighted faintly against the speckled sky. Vague silhouettes of slender cacti were visible standing proud and tall at the tip of the mountain's peak, saluting the moon, stars, and city with their raised arms.

The view from one of Arizona's mountains at night reveals a beauty unseen to those who remain at ground level. Although one can see the moon, stars, and city lights in every state, not every state holds the treasure of the extraordinary view of these things like Arizona. Nightfall is like a treasure chest. It is present everywhere, but only Arizona possesses the key to unlock it and view its priceless treasures.

Michelle Roop
Chaparral High School
Scottsdale Unified School District
10th Grade Winner

The Thunderstorm

The clouds begin to roll in, suppressing the last rays of the setting sun. In the distance, the sky is gray and menacing-a thunderstorm is approaching the desert valley. A light breeze whistles through paloverde trees and long ocotillo branches. All becomes quiet. Then, little by little, until there is a long, constant sound, the crickets sing their nightly lullaby. A bird flies down from atop a Joshua tree and then disappears into a hole in a saguaro cactus, for the impending storm is about to begin.

Lightning now flashes across the sky! Boom! Crash! The thunder echoes throughout the valley, bouncing off the surrounding mountains. As if a dam in the heavens has suddenly burst, the rain, all at once, starts to pour down, soaking the desert floor. The steady beat of the rain replaces the evening chorus of the crickets. In a matter of only a few minutes, a growing stream of water flows rapidly down the desert washes. Building up momentum, these streams weave around cacti and thorny shrubs, eroding sand and pebbles along the way. Brilliant bolts of lightning illuminate the entire valley in a spectacular twenty minute show.

At last, the rain begins to subside, a calm pitter-patter on the sand. Suddenly and dramatically the thunderstorm began; it now peacefully comes to a close. One by one, the crickets again start up their choir, and an owl hoots from his perch on a cactus. The moon peeks out from behind the last clouds. The desert valley rests.

Rachel Doerr
Chaparral High School
Scottsdale Unified School District
10th Grade Winner

HIDDEN TREASURES IN THE ARIZONA DESERT

The qualities that make a place special often lie hidden in smaller less prominent details. In Arizona, one quality might be a frightened quail hidden in a bush, or the rough, gritty earth of which I am composed.

I was born not too long ago, about eight and some odd years, by an avalanche in the nearby mountains. A very large rock somehow got loose and tumbled down the side, causing all sorts of pebbles and earth to come down in the landslide. Hence, I was born. In the desert where I make my home, qualities like the aforementioned ones surround me from all four directions. Each day is a complicated painting; there are always fresh and exciting things to observe- from dawn till dusk.

As the day unfolds, the sun lightly touches my head and rouses me from my sleep. The rising of the sun is like a work of art- a delicately executed masterpiece. While I blink the sleep from my eyes the little rabbits and groundhogs scamper out of their homes to greet the day. Some take a quiet spot under a shrub to recline and relax. The day continues on peacefully, with only the lizards, insects, and creatures to keep me company. But that does not matter, because the beauty of the scene is company enough. Later on in the morning, a very young Navajo Indian girl and her grandmother from the nearby Indian reservation wander right past me. They, of course do not notice me, but I notice them. The little girl is about four years old. She is wearing a colorful velvet dress, and her big eyes are surveying everything. Her grandmother looks like a very kind elderly lady, and she is clutching her grand-daughter's hand. The two are out collecting some wild roots and herbs, maybe for a healing remedy.

Christina Palacio
Chaparral High School
Scottsdale Unified District No. 48
9th Grade Finalist

"MONSOON"

Darkness falls upon the sky. In it comes. The billowing clouds build upon each other seeming to never end. Layer upon layer they grow till a total greyness consumes the immense desert sky.

The echoing thunder rumbles on. The sound booms throughout the serene wilderness. It is the riders who come through on their ferocious steeds. Their hooves thundering and pounding among the threatening clouds.

The wind howls and moans like a lost soul searching for its keeper. Whistling through the shrubs where the critters hide. They run for cover, back into their burrows to protect each other.

An unusual, curiously sweet aroma fills the air. The pouring rain crawls across the dehydrated, cracked desert floor. The rain tap dances across the ground, but it won't drink the water given to it.

The water runs off the land creating floods. As they run, they kick dirt and pebbles along with it, destroying anything in its path, changing the landscape.

Lightning branches out reaching for anything to grab hold of. Lighting the damp ground below. Great displays illuminate the mountains and plateaus as they jut out into the sky. Their red and brown are enhanced from the rain. They are like fire against the background.

As quickly as the monsoons have come, they rollback out again, later to return and once again change the land. All this could last forever, unfortunately, man has altered nature. If change isn't made, this may be no more.

Heather Stockton
Centennial High School
Peoria Unified District No. 11
9th Grade Finalist

TEXTURES

Close my eyes and fall into
the land's serenity
Breathe in the finely woven air
-intoxicated by the season's perfume
I seek the kind of peace of
the few clouds scattered accidentally
across the tones of blue sky
diffusing softly into one another
-so I look about me
and inspiration befalls me
cloaked as nurturing valleys
and protective mountains
I reach out with my eyes as far as I can
and I caress the mighty land's texture
with imagination and envy
I long to assimilate the beauties
of our land into my being.....
I deeply inhale its essence
but I can not possess its substance
It eludes me,
but only because I am
chasing a reflection
I am part of the texture-
part of the beauty of Arizona

I am as the tranquil winds
dancing lightly across the plains,
through the valleys and canyons,
over the mountains and gently across
the delicate faces of the youth
The youth - the true beauty
lies in the youth
In their eyes and their dreams
-in their unbreakable union
of expectancy and hope
for their future and their ability
to build what they need
I am part of that union of architects.....
Architects of Arizona's future

Barbara A. McDonald
North High School
Phoenix Union High School District
10th Grade Finalist

"ARIZONA SUNSET"

I stood in wonder as
the sun fell behind the wrinkles of
this ancient vista and
silver clouds against a
brilliant canvas of
celestial color were
centerstage in the
sky and
silhouettes of saguaro
stood majestically,
governing the Arizona desert
were the coyotes sing in discord
and dust clouds rise at the feet.

Nathan C. Moody
Shepherd Junior High School
Mesa Unified School District No. 4
9th Grade Finalist

My Grandfather, Ben Gorman: An Arizona Treasure

My grandfather
Benedict Gorman, member of Diné. . .
Born on the largest Indian reservation
In the world. . .

A man
Of many sides .
Who gave people reasons
to respect him.

He was a shepherd. . .
Crossing holy lands a thousand times with
his flock.
When winter turned to summer, he stole their wool
For my grandmother's loom.
She weaved rugs with pictures of
Two Grey Hills and all the sacred mountains
So that the children could rest their heads
On the beautiful threads of their clan helpers.

He was a medicine man:
Praying in the sweat lodge for himself and others
Shaking the gourd to open the mind
Beating the water drum to the rhythm of his heart
Burning sage to protect against evil
Passing clockwise the bowl of peyote
Drinking to give strength to the sick
Blowing the eagle bone whistle to bring the spirits
from
all
four
directions
Holding the eagle feather to the heart.

Ché Ben . . .
Around his neck a medicine bag
Containing cedar to bless the Grandfathers.

In his eyes, happiness, joy, friendliness. . . tears.

Ché:
I think of you when I sweat in the lodge
Where you used to pray. . .

Shá jéy nezgáye.

Navajo translations: Diné--the Navajo
Ché--grandfather
shá jéy nezgáye--my heart hurts.

Stacy Gorman
Apache Junction High School
Apache Junction Unified School District
11th Grade Winner

The Benefit of Friendship

A wonderful fact to reflect upon, that every human creature is constituted to be that profound secret and mystery to every other.

—Charles Dickens

I visited Crown King years ago, not long after my grandfather died. November had just laid its white blanket on the mountains, and only the trees gave color to the sky. The winter floods of frozen loves had left my heart bereft of both friend and blood, and, melancholy, I walked among the spruces and ferns near my khaki tent.

The snow muffled everything, absorbed even voices, and made the campfires scattered across the valley seem small. Even my father seemed weak in the face of so much adversity; and the way he rubbed his hands together suggested the arthritis that cold had brought out. Amid such ice, a lone boy stood against the white sky.

I remember Keisha.

He was brown: that was my first impression. Years of outdoor labor had left his skin the same deep color as his leather jerkin and breeches. His hair was the color of the new mud on his old boots. And his eyes were nearly the same hue as his skin and clothes. In fact, most of the details of his face and expression were blurred. Behind the brown, he looked like a cross between a turnip and a fence post.

But then he smiled — shyly, almost deferentially — and his smile pulled his wrinkles into definition. He had a kind face and just seeing him made my heart lighter.

Almost immediately, he took it upon himself to show me around. And in fact there was more to see in the forest than I had expected. At any rate, Keisha thought there was a great deal to see, and he liked to see it all thoroughly, with an attention to detail which was both loving and analytical. For instance, near Birch Creek lived a pack of deer, competing for winter mates, each one prospering or failing from factors which Keisha took pains to understand.

And he was a mother lode of information. He knew the name of every tree, animal and rock. He knew precisely when the snow would fall. And he knew every child he saw by name, parentage and predilection for mischief.

In a short time, I realized I only had two choices. I could cut off the tour now, before he drove me to distraction, or I could relax and let him do whatever he wanted. With him there was no middle ground. Just for a minute, I considered stopping him—telling him I had had enough, going my own way. But then I noticed that in his company I did very little else except smile. He filled me alternately with amusement and affection. He knew his way in every canyon, knew the sound of every bird, knew the taste of every stream; and he liked everybody around him; he loved the details he expounded on me. The more he talked, the more gentle and companionable he seemed; and the more I listened, the more I could feel my tensions and fears going to sleep.

Instead of stopping, I relaxed and let him give me the whole tour. As a result, the day seemed to melt away. He began showing me around a little before noon—and then the shadows were slanting towards late afternoon, and my legs hurt gently with so much walking and standing, and my boots had rubbed a sore place on one of my toes, and my heart was full of rest for the first time since I could remember. Keisha wasn't just amusing, likable and meticulous: he was a healer. Soon, I could see the beauty of the land around me, and the sun seemed to peek its face through the clouds. I then understood what Keisha had known for a life time: that nature was the greatest healer of all.

Gene Bukhman
Chaparral High School
Scottsdale Unified School District
12th Grade Winner

A Patchwork History

There is a quilt on my bed. It's of the "wedding ring" pattern, where patches of different fabrics form countless interlocking rings. On my tenth birthday, my great aunt presented it to me, along with its equally beautiful history. This quilt, I was told, was made by my great-great grandmother in the months approaching her wedding. The couple was moving West, and the last days of the young bride's girlhood were spent preparing for the rugged journey that lay ahead. "There were others," my aunt told me, "but this one, this is the only one of her quilts still with us." Sure, it's frayed and tattered; it's at least a hundred years old. Looking closely, however, one can still see the love and pride sewn into its fabric—and I can see that my old aunt takes as much pride in the quilt's colorful history as the young bride must have taken in its fine stitching.

Eventually the newlyweds and their quilt settled in Arizona, and my family has lived here ever since. The quilt has become an heirloom of sorts, although it may soon go the way of the others. For the time being, however, I still like to wrap myself in its warm folds and dream about the past. I marvel at the courage of a young girl who was brave enough to leave her home for this then barren, desolate land. To me, the worn yet long-lasting fabric of this quilt is symbolic of this courage--the courage of all the men and women who sacrificed so much to make this state what it is today. Tracing the endless circles with my finger, I think of all of the generations that this quilt has been a part of. Even if it's soon retired to camping and picnics, I find it appropriate that the last generation to use this quilt will be seeing Arizona's wonders in its presence. . . just as the first did.

Erin Dickinson
Chaparral High School
Scottsdale Unified School District
11th Grade Winner

SANCTUARY

Each hue unveils its vibrant brand
The greens and browns aligned like brothers
Unblemished land of earth and sand
Is mine alone; it sees no others.

Its fragrant flowers sway serenely
It hides in unstirred timber-soundless
It waits for me, warmheartedly
Its patient beauty stretches, boundless.

A piney garnish guards the place
Secluded entrance longs for me.
A loving space that knows my face
Invites; my heart flies wild and free.

The nearby river wants to enter
But nature has ignored her dream
The elder mentor, green inventor
She slowly steers away the stream.

The scorching southwest sun is prying
The branchy eaves-a waxy cloak
The rays keep trying, efforts dying
I laugh and greet the shadow folk.

The mold and must escape my soul
The land heals all, a gift well-blessed
Each singing knoll, a cleansing role
The peaceful winds massage my chest.

The outside world restraining, binding.
Inside, one day repairs a year
Erases the grinding, ends the blinding;
Thy misty fingers I revere.

Thy silence soothes and slows my head
My bed of moss, a bed of grace.
With nothing said, with thee I wed
I lie alone, no human race.

O, Verde vale, I slip away--
Too much perfection taints the taste
My dreams at bay, I cannot stay--
O wondrous soulmate, please stay chaste.

Michael Brophy
Tolleson Union High School
Tolleson Union H. S. Dist. No. 214
12th Grade Winner

CAPTURING THE ESSENCE OF ARIZONA

My sweat covered hand grasped the coarse rock and I pulled myself up onto the ledge. I look out over the purple valley and plains below me and sighed, "Beautiful. Absolutely beautiful." Hurriedly, I unstrapped my camcorder from my back and embraced the west. Thence, I beheld a dim, orange and red setting sun, the rays of which prised through the clouds in visible columns that fleeted upward toward heaven. My cold finger braced the record button and I breathed in awe over the spectacular sight, knowing that it would be the perfect effect to my film project. Yet, as I packed up my equipment and moved to descend, I noticed four other classmates, each on different ledges, each filming the exact same sunset. "So much for originality," I groaned.

The project our rather demanding teacher had assigned us in film class was to produce an edited video tape on the beauty and genuineness of Arizona. So far it had been a difficult task, but I never knew how much enjoyment Arizona held until I began this project. In my efforts, I had nearly relinquished the camera to the depths of the Grand Canyon, had captured live footage of a shedding rattle snake in the desert, and had ventured wholeness of body while filming on skis down the bunny slope in Flagstaff. I had obtained personal interviews with a grey, wood-gnawing squirrel in Prescott forest and a milky, bread-munching swan at Scottsdale's McCormick Lake. My lens found the sun shining bright through the clear sky in the daytime and the stars and moon seeming so close to us at night.

My microphone absorbed the roar of the water at Hoover Dam, and the chirping of the sparrows and cactus wrens in my backyard trees. But even with all these natural wonders on tape, I knew I was missing something. I knew in my heart that there was much more to Arizona.

Then I realized that this state has greater merits than its physical attributes. It has special people as well. Immediately, I sought a rodeo and a cowboy hat and tried to portray the tenacity and the talents of those men and women who had tamed this land. And I visited the Indians, the Pimas, Navahos, Hopis, and Apaches, seeing in them the cultivators, the warrior, and the spirit deep within Arizona. A weathered, ageless Hopi was also kind enough to bestow upon me a tribal song which I would later employ to dub over much of the scenery footage. The song, with its guttural, rhythmic, and soothing lyrics, brought tears to my eyes as I thought of how things have changed, and of how the instruments of change have hurt many innocent in the process. In portraying the people of Arizona I also stumbled upon the precious shot of a young toddler walking hand in hand with his grandfather. The businessman swerving in and out of traffic lanes while conversing on a carphone served as the perfect ending shot, symbolizing the growth and modernism of Arizona today.

When the hardest of filmmaking was done; when I had meshed, edited, and dubbed these moving pictures into a presentable piece of work, it was time to write the ending credits. The cast of characters was easy: Arizona, everywhere and everyone. Next, to top off the project, I needed a list of thanks. With this opportunity, I thanked the people of Arizona for keeping the state going through

their caring and hard work. I thanked the congressmen for being responsible in their legislation, and even though I knew of still needed improvements, I know they are working hard for the betterment of the state's citizens. Lastly, I gave special thanks to God in heaven for giving us the wonderful state we live in. And with this last touch, my project was complete, even if I was unfortunately, several weeks late.

Michael Sortino
Chaparrel High School
Scottsdale School District
12th Grade Finalist

KINESTHESIA OF ARIZONA

Lithe liquid bounces happily
Skipping through tiny crags
Wearing away a pompous peak
Water makes a mount
The oldest babe in the world
Smoothest skin existing

Tremoring trandrills, bedizen boldly
Sultry sun loosens her locks
Whipping head defiantly
One last glorious confrontation
Tossing iridescent ochroid wisps
Until she braids them up in the darkness

Trembling tree limbs undulate
Dancing natives to unheard drums
Thrumming, drumming brazen branches
Tune without measure, mesmerizing
Surging, sinking the song they send
That dies with the wind

Parading pollen permeates air
Acrid smell swells then dances
Travels around parent trees
Miniscule nymphs taunt the nose
Fragments promenade
Swirling in airy circles

Cloying atmosphere adjourns
After turbulent tumbling droplets
Calm and air unpuquanted, lolling
Savoringly sugared
Tasting peace undaunted
Unstopped stillness, sweet eye of storm

Chad O. Olson
Tolleson Union High School
Tolleson UHS District No. 214
11th Grade Finalist

BETH

Her name was Beth. She was about thirty-five years old and mildly retarded. I met her about three years ago while riding a city bus home from school. The first thing I noticed about her was not her handicap, but instead her enthusiasm while talking to another passenger. She wore a beaming smile.

As the weeks wore on I saw her conversing with a different person almost every day. She seemed to have a knack for transforming a person's tired appearance and frown (which stems from working all day, then having a long, hot bus ride home) into cheerfulness. Silence usually filled the bus until Beth began a bubbling conversation with someone sitting next to her. Through politely eavesdropping and talking with Beth myself, I discovered that she was a truly special person, in more ways than one.

Everyday she brought a book on the bus. She said that she loved to read and spent hours in the library. Beth seemed to have a desire to learn as much as she could about life. She might not have fully comprehended all she read, but she had a amazing memory and could recite children's storybooks practically word for word.

Beth told me she lived with her older sister and her dog Oreo. Her father had passed away about ten years ago, and her mother shortly thereafter. Before they departed, however, they tried to instill in her the importance of being independent. That, she most definitely was. Although Beth resided with her sister, she insisted that she not be treated as a helpless child, but rather as a roommate and friend. So, Beth acquired a job and helped to pay bills and buy

groceries. I was not sure what exactly her job entailed, but I could tell that she was very proud of it. She worked full time and loved every minute of it. Never wanting to be late, she would arrive fifteen minutes early and not miss one day of work. Modestly, Beth showed me the pin she deservedly received after being named "Employee of the Month."

With the help of her sister, Beth managed the money she made carefully. She gave some to her sister to help pay for the bills and groceries, and some she put in the bank. Beth also always set aside a portion of her paycheck to help what she referred to as "the poor homeless people." Periodically she would speak about them and express the sincere concern and unhappiness she felt for them. Worry clouded her glowing eyes.

Then, almost suddenly, they would spark again and she spoke of something else, such as a longing to go to New York to visit relatives. Excitement welled up within her when she talked about traveling, for she had dreams of seeing the world. So far, Beth had been to the Grand Canyon. Being very descriptive, she told me about how beautiful it was. One day she even brought pictures from the trip to share with us and to illustrate her already colorful words.

Last year I began driving to school, leaving the days of long, bumpy bus rides behind. As a consequence, I no longer saw Beth, but oftentimes thought about her. Then, one day several weeks ago while eating lunch in the mall, I saw Beth picking up trays and cleaning tables. I wondered if this was the "wonderful" job she always spoke of. Her gait was light and carefree as she worked. I noticed

Beth's trademark smile, and saw others return her smile as they walked past. My mind replayed our bus conversations and I remembered how warm, caring, and hardworking a person she was. Beth inspired and continues to inspire others, as well as myself, to be happy and enjoy life. Beth is truly an Arizona treasure.

Dionne Fox
Chaparral High School
Scottsdale Unified School District
12th Grade Finalist