



## Phi Theta Kappans attend convention



Courtesy photo

**ALI PRY**  
Staff Writer

Paris Junior College Phi Theta Kappa members attended last weekend's 91<sup>st</sup> Annual Phi Theta Kappa international convention in Grapevine.

The four-day convention included guest speakers Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. (environmental activist and attorney) and Dr. Fareed Zakaria (editor of Newsweek International and CNN host).

Jennifer Boyd, PJC's President of the Beta Zeta Chapter, and Vicki Slayton were awarded \$6,000 scholarships from Texas

A&M-Commerce through Phi Theta Kappa.

There were over 3,000 students that attended the convention. Phi Theta Kappans came from all 50 states and seven other countries including the British Virgin Islands, Canada, Federated states of Micronesia, Germany, Republic of Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the United Arab Emirates.

Phi Theta Kappa is the oldest and largest honor society serving the two year colleges around the world.

The next Phi Theta Kappa International convention will be held April 8-10, in Orlando, Florida.

**Left: Attending the Phi Theta Kappa Convention were back left: Andy Pickles; Dr. Cynthia Steward, adviser; Caitlin Commiato; David Larkin, adviser; Ali Pry; Jed Allen. Front left: Tammie Brown; Vicki Slayton; Jennifer Boyd, PTK president; Kristi Hill, vice-president.**

## PJC rewards creativity

**RANDI JONHSON AND  
STEPHANIE NORMAN**  
Staff Writers

Students were recognized for writing and art accomplishments at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Creative Writing Awards, Wednesday, April 8.

"I encourage students to hold on to their "A" papers and submit those in Research, Narrative, and Argumentative/Informative categories," said Marsha Dennis, Director of Creative Writing Contest. "I also encourage students who enjoy

writing poetry and short stories to submit those works in the appropriate categories."

Dwight Chaney, Dean of Academics, spoke of the lives of William A. Owens and Rebecca Fitch who had a special way of inspiring students at PJC.

Many students received top honors in their categories. The presentation of the William A. Owens Scholarship for Creative writing went to Stephanie Norman, a freshman at PJC and Co-editor of The Bat.

To see the award winning pieces, contact the

English department, room AD 134 to receive a copy of the Swinger of Birches.

The winning student's art pieces are currently on display in the lobby of the Student Center and will remain there until the last week of school. For a complete listing of all winners, see the PJC website, [www.parisjc.edu](http://www.parisjc.edu).

Mike Graxiola, publisher of The Paris News, presented The Paris News Scholarship to freshman Marta Goerte, who also serves as Co-editor of The Bat.

## Upcoming in the art department

**STEPHANIE NORMAN**  
Co-Editor

This summer, the art department has been asked to paint an underpass near the southeast portion of Loop 286 and Highway 271.

"It's a project the art

department has been asked to do by the Rails of Trails Committee and will be done by the end of summer," Art Instructor Susan Moore said.

They have an area of approximately 30 feet high and 40 feet wide to work with

and Sherwin Williams has agreed to donate paint and supplies to the art department, Moore said.

The theme of the acrylic painting will be "based on all the things we are going to seek people doing on the Trail De Paris," Moore said.

## Final exam schedule

Final exams will be conducted according to the schedule below

### Monday, May 4, 2009

Exams are to be given for all Mon. - Wed. classes regularly meeting at these periods:  
8:25 a.m. - 9:40 a.m.  
11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
6 - 9 p.m. (All Monday evening classes)

### Wednesday, May 6, 2009

Exams are to be given for all Mon. - Wed. classes regularly meeting at these periods:  
9:50 a.m. - 11:05 a.m.  
1 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.  
6 - 9 p.m. (All Wednesday evening classes)

### Tuesday, May 5, 2009

Exams are to be given for Tues. - Thurs. classes regularly meeting at these periods:  
8:25 a.m. - 9:40 a.m.  
11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
6 - 9 p.m. (All Tuesday evening classes)

### Thursday, May 7, 2009

Exams are to be given for all Tues. - Thurs. classes regularly meeting at these periods:  
9:50 a.m. - 11:05 a.m.  
1 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.  
6 - 9 p.m. (All Thursday evening classes)

### Friday, May 8, 2009

Exams are to be given for all Friday classes during regular meeting times.

## Library hours during finals

The library on the PJC campus will have its doors open for students until midnight to study for final exams on Sunday May 3, until Wednesday May 6. Refreshments will be available.

# Opinion / News

## Opinion

# Size doesn't matter

**RANDI JOHNSON AND  
STEPHANIE NORMAN**  
Staff Writers

A rush of nerves and excitement built at the Texas intercollegiate Press Association convention a fortnight ago in Dallas as two amateurs embarked on a competition where the odds of taking any prize are slim.

We are those two amateurs. Call it beginner's luck if you will, but we were

As we walked into the Two-Person Photo Essay Contest, our faces went blank when we realized what we were up against. Our competitors had huge thousand dollar cameras with amazing zoom lenses. We stood there in the back trying to hide our dinky digital cameras in fear everyone would make fun of us.

We looked around at those beside us, taking a hard look at the very high

rarely travel outside Paris. We walked so far, that at one point we thought we were lost somewhere on the streets of Dallas. We couldn't even see the huge hotel that we were staying in, nor did we have any transportation besides our feet.

Soon enough, we found our way back and jotted down some words explaining our photographs in depth with many details. We were sure that this competition was a waste of our time because we thought there was no possible way two beginners could wipe out four-year university students with tons of experience.

Saturday morning rolled around, and we sat patiently at the awards ceremony. As they introduced the winners of our section, photo essay, we just shook our heads as they first announced the runners up with honorable mentions. We tuned the presenters out because we were convinced we were doomed.

"First place winners are —" the announcers said. "Randi Johnson and Stephanie Norman of Paris Junior College."

We stared at each other; flabbergasted. No words made it out of our open mouths as we about fell out of our chairs with our instructor, Sharon Dennehy, cheering with excitement.

We did it! Two amateur photographers won first place at the annual TIPA convention. We, as a team, proved that "size doesn't matter."

*This column is re-printed with the permission of The Paris News.*



Courtesy Photo

There's something new on Interstate 30 near Caddo Mills.

## Proposed gun bills cause campus worries

**MARTA GOERTE**  
Co-Editor

St. George Tucker, a lawyer, scholar, judge and politician in the mid 1700s and early 1800s once said, "In America we may reasonably hope that the people will never cease to regard the right of keeping and bearing arms as the surest pledge of their liberty."

It seems as if the second amendment to the U.S. Constitution, "The right to bear arms," is being questioned by many. Is banning guns really the answer to preventing violence in today's society? As far as I'm concerned, banning guns only disarms the innocent.

Do people really think a sign saying "no guns beyond this point" is going to stop a criminal from carrying one? I don't think so. It only assures the criminal that he

will more than likely be the only one with a gun. No state license is required to possess a rifle, shotgun or handgun, but there are many

everyone he has talked to has been against it, as well.

According to the Associated Press, of the 150 House members, 70 support

the bill and 12 of 31 Senators have signed in support. Many say if students had been carrying guns during the shooting at Virginia Tech, they could have stopped

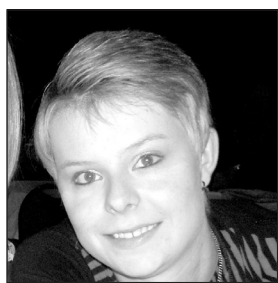
the killer before he had a chance to kill anyone. This also raises concern that there could be shots coming from every direction, causing even more harm, not to mention it could leave the defenders liable for civil action in some states.

Would students being able to carry a gun on campus discourage someone from going on a killing spree? There's obviously no way of physically stopping someone from carrying a gun on campus. However, legally allowing it may be a recipe for disaster.

controversies over carrying a handgun, especially on college campuses.

As of right now, Texas campuses are gun-free zones, but House Bill 1893 and Senate Bill 1164 have been introduced in the Texas legislature and if the legislation passes, it would allow a student over the age of 21, who has a concealed handgun license, to carry a gun on a college campuses.

Otho Bowmer, PJC Chief of Security says, "It's a bad situation and we're better off without it, but whatever the law says, we'll follow it." He also says that



"Trying to keep smiles on our faces, we attempted to stand our ground."

-Randi Johnson

stunned when our names were called at the awards ceremony.

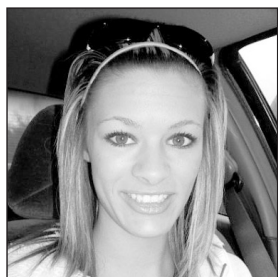
We are members of The Bat, the Paris Junior College newspaper, as well as writers for The Paris News.

Walking into a room filled with 50 other new faces and observing our opponents, an overwhelming feeling of being out of place over took us. We were a team that was to become photographers for two hours to submit five photos of "The Big City" of downtown Dallas.

quality and high dollar equipment others possessed. In our case, we came in with a "dinky hot pink" camera and a "middle class" camera with mediocre zooms.

Trying to keep smiles on our faces, we attempted to stand our ground. People looked at us as if we had stepped into the wrong room.

We were instructed to hustle around downtown Dallas for two hours and capture five photos and then write a caption for each picture. Here we are two country girls who



"Here we are two country girls who rarely travel outside of Paris."

-Stephanie Norman

## The Bat

The Paris Junior College student newspaper

Comments and views in *The Bat*, the student newspaper of Paris Junior College, reflect thoughts and opinions of individual writers and are not necessarily the views of other students, staff members, faculty, administrative offices, or the PJC Board of Regents.

### EDITORS

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### LETTERS POLICY

*The Bat* welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should be typed, double-spaced, signed, and include a telephone number. Mail letters to *The Bat*, 2400 Clarksville St., Paris, TX 75460. Letters will be edited for spelling, grammar, and libelous statements.

To reach staffers: 903-782-0321  
sdennehy@parisjc.edu



# Features

## Photos take TIPA first place



Above, below and right: All three of these photos were taken by freshman Stephanie Norman. She is a Co-Editor of *The Bat* and also won second place in the Magazine Layout competition.



The *Bat* staff attended the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association (TIPA), April 9-11, in Dallas. They competed against junior colleges and universities from across the state, in multiple categories.

These five photos were taken by Randi Johnson and Stephanie Norman, of *The Bat*, in the Two-Person Photo Essay contest. The theme of the competition was "The Big City," and they won first place.



Above and below: Both of these photos were taken by sophomore Randi Johnson. She plans on continuing with journalism next year at Texas A&M University-Commerce.



## Great experience but not competition worthy

QUENTIN CARPENTER  
Staff Writer

Who wouldn't be excited to be on a bus heading to a \$1.2 billion wonder of the NFL? Or how about having the chance to see the one-of-a-kind "I" shaped, center-hung scoreboard, which totals over 25,000 square feet of display area? What about seeing the largest retractable end zone doors in the world?

If that doesn't excite you, surely just knowing you are heading to Arlington to visit the new home of the five-time Super Bowl winning Dallas Cowboys has to do it. But is having a sports writing and photography competition, centered on the construction of a stadium, really the best decision, when on the very same day a real sporting event is going on right next to it?

I recently was given the opportunity to participate in the TIPA (Texas Intercollegiate Press Association) convention/competition in Dallas. I was competing against several other sport writers and several of them felt that covering the construction of the stadium was quite an honor. At the same time, they believed that covering the construction was not a very good topic for sports writers.

I remember one writer saying, "I cover sport events. Sure I will cover players and coaches now and then, but covering the construction of a stadium is not sports writing."

Someone asked me how sports writers are supposed to write about a stadium? I had not done much writing and had never taken a news-writing course so I just told him that I was in the same boat as he was. Now I was feeling

even more at a disadvantage. If these people, who have taken news-writing courses and are more experienced than I was were still struggling with this topic, did I even stand a chance?

Although the sports writers were not happy about the assignment, I heard the most complaining from the sports photographers. Most of the photographers had special camera equipment used for catching movement or sports action shots.



"I came into the competition with nearly zero experience in news writing in general and I had no real chance of winning."  
Quentin Carpenter

One photographer said, "How are we supposed to take SPORTS photos in a place that has no SPORTS happening. Nothing in there is sports related: no coaches, no players, not even an equipment manager." Several other photographers felt that it was a waste of what could have been a good competition.

I got the chance to see some of the photos that were taken, and it was pretty obvious that all the photographers had trouble finding shots they were comfortable with. The

person sitting next to me had taken a picture of stadium seats, and another person just took a bunch of pictures of the big video board in the center of the stadium.

Now I can see the reasoning behind the negative responses to covering the stadium. Some of the contestants wanted awards and felt robbed of their chance to show their skills. Some people like to show awards off to family, and others just like having a memento showing they did a good job.

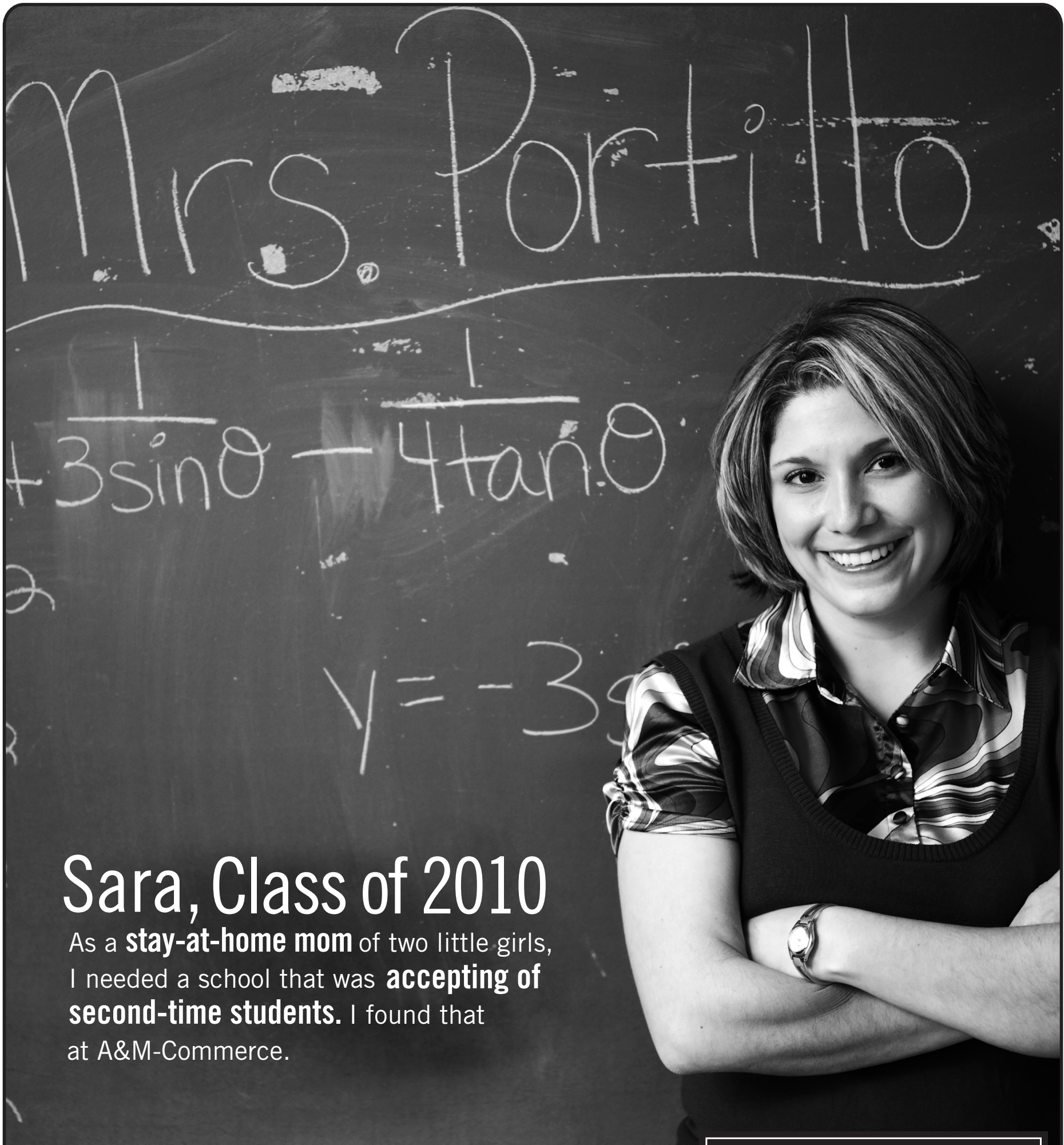
At the same time I felt some of the bickering was ridiculous. How many people get the chance to see a \$1.2 billion stadium from the inside while it is still being built? Most people have to go to the Cowboys website and look at pictures, but we were privileged enough to see it in person.

I came into the competition with nearly zero experience in news writing in general and I had no real chance of winning so I was just happy to get a chance to see the stadium. I did my best to take the trip as a learning experience and try to pick up a few things from the more experienced writers.

After I got past the complaints, I ended up having some good conversations with the other people on the bus. Most of them in the end, agreed they were thankful they had the chance to come and see the new stadium. I am very happy I got to see the stadium and I will probably brag about it to my friends for a long time.

All that said, I really hope next year the people from TIPA do a better job of choosing a topic that will better suit sports writers and photographers. It is a shame the photographers never got to use their expensive cameras to catch real live sports action.





## Sara, Class of 2010

As a **stay-at-home mom** of two little girls, I needed a school that was **accepting of second-time students**. I found that at A&M-Commerce.

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