

**Camera club exhibits work  
By Tommy Mann Jr.**

**The Orange Leader**

**If photography is your passion, or even a hobby, then you should probably check out a photography exposition this weekend.**

**Today and Sunday during normal business hours near the Food Court area inside Parkdale Mall in Beaumont, the Beaumont Camera Club will hold its annual Mall Expo.**

**Besides showcasing many quality photographs, the purpose of the event is to gather new members.**

**Although the name of the club sounds location specific, members come from all over Southeast Texas and from all walks of life. The club welcomes novice photographers as well as camera experts.**

**The club has been in existence since 1982, and this is the 14th year to hold the event at Parkdale Mall.**

**Beaumont resident Matthew Fortenberry, 35, has been president of the camera club for about seven years.**

**“The purpose of the club is to promote the art of photography,” Fortenberry said. “It provides a local outlet for like minded people, be they photo enthusiasts or professionals. The club is a place where we share ideas, teach and learn all that we can about photography.”**

**Fortenberry became interested in photography in 1990 when he received a camera as a graduation present from his parents.**

**“I lived in the woods, so shooting photos of deer and other wildlife was something I liked to do,” he said. “I was hooked for life after I entered a photo at the county fair and won first place.”**

**Not only is the camera club made up of photographers of various experience levels, but from multiple occupations and age groups as well.**

**The club has about 50 members, including teachers, engineers, public information officers, animal control officers, retirees and more.**

**The camera club meets at 7 p.m. on the first and third Monday of each month at the Beaumont Art League facility located at the old fair grounds on Gulf Street in Beaumont.**

**Besides fellowship and the sharing of information, special guests often visit for presentations at monthly workshops. An inner-club photo contest is held each month as well.**

**“I love portraits and glamour photography,” Fortenberry said. “People photography is my passion. I believe God made all of us unique and beautiful in our own way, and I try to capture that in my work.”**

**Orange resident Betty Nichols, 56, has been a member of the Beaumont Camera Club for more than six years. Nichols is a licenses sales assistant, but also an avid camera enthusiast.**

**“Scenery is my favorite form of photography,” Nichols said. “And I feel being a member of the camera club has really improved my photography. The members who have more experience are always ready to help or answer questions.”**

**Nichols said she has greatly benefited from programs presented by professional photographers who specialize in different types of photography such as portrait, journalistic, and scenery.**

**“Without the camera club, I would not have these opportunities,” Nichols said. “Certainly not for dues of only \$25 per year. I would definitely recommend the club to someone if they are serious about learning and improving their photography skills beyond the snapshot stage.”**