

5/4/96

By DEBBIE MUSTIAN  
*L'Observateur*

The Book Cellar in LaPlace played host to a poetry celebration earlier this week, as local students and poets gathered in-between the shop's stacks of books to share their original works.

In honor of National Poetry Month, East St. John High School teacher Philippe Ernewein organized the event to give students and other poets in the community the opportunity to share their poetry.

Ernewein also invited students Matt Macloud and Steve Duhe to provide a musical accompaniment to the poetry reading which added a certain coffee house appeal to the evening's event.

"Ron, I have you on the list... 'Izzy', I put you down," said Ernewein, as he organized an order to the program.

"No, don't put me down," the young lady responded. Later, she decided to read.

"Andrew, can I put you down?" Ernewein asked.

Andrew Baldwin agreed to read.

As the reading began to pick up speed, members of Project Poetry, a student poetry group that assembles once a week at East St. John High School, took turns sharing their original writings.

Student Ron Hall was one of the first poets to step to the microphone to read his poem.

"Ron likes to write about death and the after-life, but now he's writing about love," Ernewein said as he introduced the young man.

Hall's poem confessed his innermost fear about letting someone else know that he was 'in love.'

Poet Baldwin read several of his poems which expressed the trials and tribulations that often accompany one's walk into young adulthood.

Before taking a seat, Baldwin decided to sing one of his poems, thereby turning it into a song.

Baldwin's impromptu perfor-

mance received an enthusiastic round of applause from the crowd.

Ernewein offered his own set of appreciative comments, too.

"Wow, I had an out-of-body experience," Ernewein said.

Baldwin shared some feelings about writing poetry prior to the reading.

"Society inspires me," he said.

Ernewein billed this week's event as an ideal opportunity for student poets to share their original works. He noted, too, that other poets were invited to join the reading.

"There's a pool of talent out there," Ernewein said.

Poet Steve Allange, for example, said he did not write poetry when he was a student in high school. Recently, Allange has started to pen a poem from time to time.

He was pleased to learn about the poetry reading at the Book Cellar this week.

"This is the first time I've ever been exposed and it's good to have a group where you can be accepted," Allange said.

When Allange stood up to share his poetry with the group, he apologized for being a bit nervous.

"It's my first time here," Allange said. Then he began to read.

Uncomfortable with taking credit for helping his students develop enthusiasm for writing and sharing their poetry, Ernewein simply expressed pride about the group's talents. "They're certainly not afraid of poetry."

About the idea of having students combine poetry and music during the evening, Ernewein said, "It's improvisation at its best."

Macloud, who's associated with the local band 'Smears', said it made perfect sense to combine poetry and music.

There were students and poetry fans at the reading that decided not to share their writings with the group.

But, that was fine with Ernewein.

After all, he said, "All poems are published in heaven."

# POETRY! Local students bring original words to life