



Bear Essential

NEWS for KIDS

August 2004
Tucson Edition
VOL. XXV • ISSUE 12

Author Rhymes with Desert Animals

by Reporter Allegra Breedlove
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Brooke Bessesen, author and illustrator, came to the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum to promote her new book for children. "Look Who Lives in the Desert!" tells the story of 21 desert animals completely in rhyme!

It also includes fun facts about each animal, beautiful illustrations and a photograph. I was anxious to interview the author and ask her some questions from the perspective of a young author.



Children's author Brooke Bessesen with Young Reporter Allegra Breedlove

My first question was why she chose the subject of desert animals. "Animals are my area of expertise," she

says. "Desert animals are close to home." Since the entire book is written in rhyme, I was curious if it was difficult to find the right words. "No, my grandfather taught me how to rhyme when I was little. So, I guess it comes naturally."

Since she is an expert on animals, I asked her what her favorite character in the book is. "I love all of the characters—some for the art, some for the prose—but one of my favorites would be the tarantula," she explains.

Bessesen has worked as a wildlife rescue volunteer, on a medical team as a certi-

fied veterinary technician and as a naturalist who handles animals on TV.

I wondered even with so much experience and training if it is hard to work with animals on camera. "Well, yes...one time, I was on camera with a 300-pound white tiger and as soon as the camera was off, he pounced right on top of me! Fortunately, I was okay. The tiger was just being playful!"

Since I am very interested in animals, I wondered when she had become interested in nature. "I have always been interested... since I was a little girl!"

MORE AUTHOR, page 7

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KID TIMES CONTINUED from P. 5

Author, continued from page 5

Since many kids are interested in writing, my final question asked for some pointers.

"My advice to young authors would be to write about your passion. The reader should always know that you love what you're writing about...and you must love to write!"

I purchased a copy of "Look Who Lives in the Desert!" and had it signed.



Children's author Brooke Bessesen signs books at the Desert Museum.

I was very inspired by someone who knows so much about our desert animals, and the talent to write and

illustrate such a wonderful book!

"Look Who Lives in the Desert!" is a publication for Young Imaginations by Arizona Highways book division (www.arizonahighways.com) and is available at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum gift shop.