

SUNDAY

Daily Sun

A Pulitzer Newspaper serving Flagstaff & northern Arizona since 1887

Arizona Daily Sun

LOCAL/ARIZONA

Book Festival fun continues

APRIL 18, 2004
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Today's weather



High: 53 Low: 24

5-out Forecast: A12

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Laughter and learning are elements of children's books

BY PATRICK FRAWLEY
Sun Staff Reporter

Children's book author Jennifer Ward likes to make children giggle.

Among the the questions she asks herself while in the process of writing: "Are these words going to be really fun?" Ward told an audience Saturday during a Northern Arizona Book Festival panel discussion on writing for children. "Are they going to make the children giggle?"

Ward was one of four authors on the panel. She was joined by Byrd Baylor, who sat as the most experienced of the authors, Martha Blue and Brooke Bessesen. They shared their experiences in creating, writing and publishing their offerings to the world of children's literature.

Giggling is only one goal of any children's book. Dr. Seuss was adept at creating rhyme while blending his books with reason.

Bessesen, author "Look Who Lives in the Desert!" said her goal was to layer the humor of her book so readers both young and old would find new tidbits each time they flipped through the pages.

"I make an extra effort to put in things that only adults will get, but kids will laugh at because they are silly," Bessesen said.

Bessesen, still riding high from her first publication, was contrasted in experience by Baylor. Baylor, author of 18 children's books since the late

1960s, opened up to the audience a piece of her eccentric and boldly endearing writing style.

"I have a very small vocabulary," Baylor said. "I write for me, then I throw some of the pages out and it comes out children's size."

Baylor said her style of writing could be considered free-flowing — she cannot make herself re-write anything she has put down on the page. And editors beware: Once Baylor has penned the final ink of a story, she will not change much.

"If they don't like it, I will just keep it for myself," Baylor said.

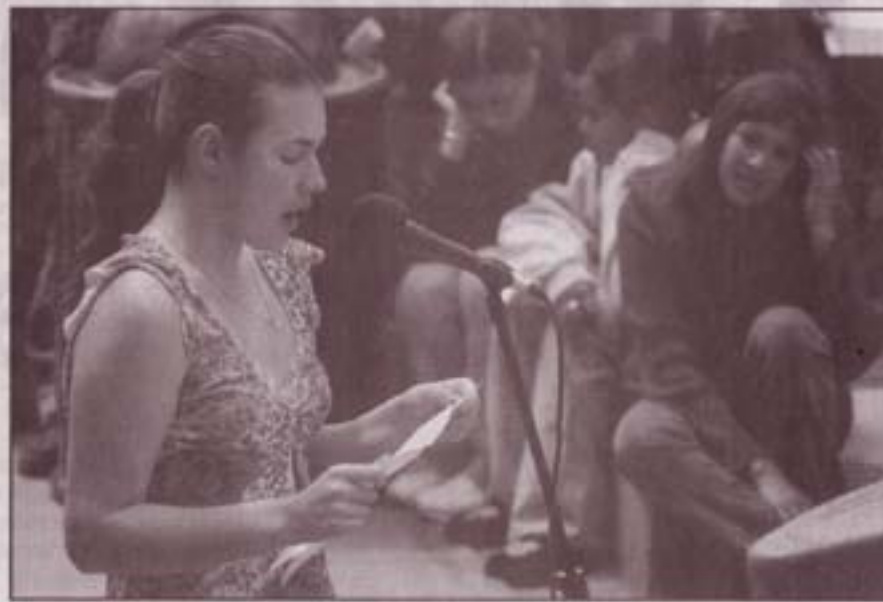
As a seasoned author with a pridesworthy career at her back, Baylor has the freedom and power to do what she fancies with her books. Authors looking to write themselves into the world of children's books face more difficulties with editors.

Martha Blue, author of "Little Prankster Girl," said she was passed over by 30 publishers before one bit on her lines. Blue warned the audience to shy away from spending time worrying about marketing a book when there is no finished product.

"If you keep on producing your work, you will find a connection with an audience," Blue said.

Blue, an avid and dedicated writer, catches her rhythm by journaling and keeping up her writing.

Each author brought an unparalleled background to the



FLAGSTAFF HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR CLAIR STOECKER, 18, reads samples of her poetry Saturday at Heritage Square. Stoeckler was one of several high school students who took part in the reading, a Northern Arizona Book Festival event.

Greg Bryan/
Arizona Daily Sun

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Sunday, April 18

9 - 10:30 A.M.

Northern Arizona Authors Showcase
"Kids' Authors in the Wild West"
With Jolene Rohrbacker, Sae Tone,
Margaret Grimes
At the Orpheum Theater, 15 W. Aspen
Ave.
Free Admission

9:30 - 11 A.M.

Panel Discussion
"Culture, Class and Writing"
With Simon Ortiz, Ana Maria Spagna,
David St. John, Laura Tohe and
Warren Doody; moderated by Dr.
Lomayumeta C. Ishii
At the Coconino County Board of
Supervisors' Auditorium, 219 E.
Cherry Ave.
\$4 Admission

11 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.

Readings with Judyth Hill, Craig Chids
and Ana Maria Spagna
At the Orpheum Theater, 15 W. Aspen
\$3 Admission

12:30 - 2 P.M.

Writing Workshop with Mary Sojourner
No sign-up; limited to first 75 partici-
pants
At the Coconino County Board of
Supervisors' Auditorium, 219 E.
Cherry Ave.
Free Admission

1 - 2:30 P.M.

Readings with Pat Mora and Byrd
Baylor
At the Orpheum Theater, 15 W. Aspen
Ave.
\$3 Admission

3 - 5 P.M.

Northern Arizona Authors Showcase
"Northern Arizona Women Write"
With Rebecca Byrkit, Lois Truffa,
Michele Luisi and Darcy Falk
At the Orpheum theater, 15 W. Aspen
Ave.
Free Admission

5:30 - 7 P.M.

Readings with Laura Tohe, May
Sojourner and Simon Ortiz
Receded by drawings for the raffle for
the original painting "Jack Was Street
Smart and Book Wise" and a gift
basket for a festival attendee who
has filled out a festival evaluation
form
At the Orpheum Theater, 15 W. Aspen
Ave.
\$3 Admission

panel, creating a fresh and evolving discussion. The questions posed both by the moderators, Jean Boreen and Sandra Raymond, and the audience forced the panel to look back at how each of them landed in the chair in front of the audience at City Hall.

"The questions make me

conceptualize things," Blue said. "You live your life and one thing segues into the next. They help you define the path you have taken."

Blue was formerly a practicing lawyer on the Navajo Nation. Bessen worked for Channel 3 in Phoenix. Ward has a background in education

and Baylor never finished any of the three universities she attended.

The common thread tying these women together is their ambition to write children's books. Whether to scratch an itch to write or to pay the bills, each woman walks a different road.