

## Holiday Gifts for Readers 8 to 80

BY DAVID E. BROWN

*Look Who Lives in the Desert*, written and illustrated by Brooke Bessen, is a clever children's introduction to Southwest animals. Published in 2004 by Arizona Highways Books, this colorful paperback features the Sonoran Desert and 21 of its inhabitants, each accompanied by an engaging drawing, a descriptive rhyme, a short factual account, and a color photo of the actual animal. The critters, which range from Mr. Pinacate "Stink" Beetle to Miss Bighorn, and their environs, from kangaroo rat's Muncher's Market to scorpion's Stinger's Takeout,



are cleverly drawn and the "fascinating facts" are informative and fun.

Wondering if the target audience would agree, I went to my 8-year-old granddaughter for her review. The book passed Brianna's inspection with flying colors. The rhymes came across as great fun, and she was soon reciting several favorites. Each portrayal was examined carefully for the accompanying detail, and she gleefully pointed out such sideshows as the mother scorpion changing a diaper for one of the babies on her back, and the nearsighted javelinas trying to read newspapers. The descriptive texts required more time to decipher, but have kept her interest, being read at the rate of about one an evening—a good endorsement from any youngster.