

Author uses puppets to teach that anyone can write

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Star-News

If you are over 2 years old, you can write a book. That's the message Daina Sargent and her puppets, Liz and Matt, brought to West Elementary School on Monday.

Daina is the daughter of Dave and Pat Sargent, authors and publishers who visited the school in September 2002. She said she is carrying on her parents' tradition along with her brother, Dave Sargent Jr.

Daina told students at West Elementary that her parents are retiring, and she and her brother will carry on their business, Ozark Publishing, a company that has published hundreds of Dave and Pat's books, many of which are in the school's library.

When the elder Sargents visited the school two years ago, they told students anyone can write a book. Their daughter brought a similar message.

Writing an autobiography is simple, she said; if you are keeping a diary or a journal, you are writing one. Daina told the students she learned a lot about her father from his autobiography and about her grandmother from a biography her father wrote.

Daina added that she keeps journals and wants her autobiography to be available to her descendants.

"I won't be here 200 years from



Daina Sargent talked to her puppets, Matt and Liz, to test the cues for the compact disk player before her program at West Elementary Monday morning. She ended up having trouble getting the disk to respond to the cues, but the students enjoyed the puppets and learned about writing and storytelling nonetheless.

Photo by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Star-News

now," she said, "but members of my family will, and I want them to know about me."

Daina showed the students a couple of books written by children, one of whom was 2 when she wrote her book and is 18 now, and told them: "If you are over 2 years old, you can write a book."

She asked the students if they have a dog. Several said they did, and Daina told them her brother wrote a book about a "wiener" dog. You can write about your favorite things, she said.

Fiction is false, Daina said, fake story telling. She then enlisted help from Liz and Matt to show the students how to tell a story and how easy it is.

Daina said she is working on a series of books that will include all 50 states when it is done. The first book in the series is "Arkansas: Dig for Diamonds." She asked Liz and then Matt questions to get them to relate tales of their "visits" to states, using information about those states that will be in the books.

Liz related experiences that included meeting Satchel Paige, who pitched in the Negro Leagues and Major Leagues from the 1930s-1965, in Alabama, and encountering alligators in Louisiana.

She told a story about "Disastrous Drew," a cowboy, in Texas. He was in a rodeo, Liz said, and fell off a

horse, but he kept getting back on.

"Kansas was my favorite place," Liz said. "I met Amelia Earhart."

Matt related the same stories but added his own flair, breaking into "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" while talking about meeting Paige and singing a western song while talking about the rodeo.

After the puppets told their tales — with the aid of a compact disk player hidden behind the cloth backdrop — Daina pointed out to the students that she had just asked three questions to elicit the puppets' tales.

They were "Where did you go?" "Who did you meet?" "What did you do?" she said. When you write a story, Daina said, you have to have an imagination and the five Ws — who, what, when, where and why. You can do it, she said.

Daina said she has lived in several states but considers Arkansas her home. She was born in California and raised in Arkansas, graduating from West Fork High School with honors in 1981.

She attended college in Jonesboro, Ark., and Tulsa, and plans to continue her education. She has three daughters.

Dave Jr. also gives talks at schools, using his dogs in his presentation. All of the Sargents sell books at the schools and autograph them.

Leadership program kicks off with pool party

Tomorrow's leaders rubbed elbows Tuesday night at a poolside reception at Goodland's Howard Johnson Hotel.

Kicking off the eighth year of Leadership Sherman County, members of this year's class met with former class and board members to get a preview of what they've gotten into.

The reception started with a "get to know you" exercise, where each class member was given a secret identity that was placed on his or her back — a cartoon character, movie star or famous personality. They had to introduce themselves to the other class members and ask "yes-or-no" questions to determine their identity.

This year's class learned that the program is a complete overview of Sherman County, and the way it works.

Dana Belshe, county extension agent and a leadership board member, said the group will have 10 all day sessions where they will learn about the county's schools, government and media. He said toward the end of the program, they will take trip to Topeka to learn about other communities and state government.

matters of record

District Traffic

The following fines were paid in the Sherman County District Court:

Aug. 27 — Tamara Duhamel, 37, Universal City, Texas was fined \$144 for speeding.

Janine T. Griffith, 24, Miramar, Fla. was fined \$144 for speeding.

Marcus A. Frederick, 22, Goodland, was fined \$241 for speeding.

Sreenius S. Cheruvu, 36, Dallas, Texas was fined \$168 for speeding.

Felipe Olivas, 32, Goodland, was fined \$120 for no valid license.

Curtis D. Bramble, Jr., 18, Kansas City, Mo. was fined \$120 for improper parking.

Aeshna K. Sikand, 23, Englewood, Colo. was fined \$138 for speeding.

Aug. 30 — Rachel L. Oster, 19, Superior, Colo. was fined \$177 for speeding.

Tyler G. Powell, 22, Colorado Springs, was fined \$132 for speeding.

Nicholas Monda, 27, San Antonio, Texas was fined \$120 for speeding.

Debra S. McNab, 49, Cumming, Ga. was fined \$138 for speeding.

Clyde Proctor, Jr., 33, Westminster, Colo. was fined \$144 for speeding.

Willie L. Hampton, 48, Beverly Hills, Calif. was fined \$138 for speeding.

James E. Duncan, 52, Norman, Okla. was fined \$255 for speeding.

Derek J. Marotta, 38, Boston, Mass. was fined \$144 for speeding.

Zachary P. Egan, 21, Evergreen, Colo. was fined \$138 for speeding.

Peter S. Brown, 45, Kansas City, Mo. was fined \$138 for speeding.

For their first activity, new class members took a personality profile and went through a rope course Wednesday.

The class comprises Dan Rasure, Rasure Lumber; Joshua Dechant, vice president at Bankwest; Justin Burgess, sales manager for Nation Wide Homes; Sherri Knitig, recep-

tionist at the Northwest Kansas Technical College; Jay Jolly, chief executive officer for Goodland Regional Medical Center; Mark Gillming, information systems officer at First National Bank; Penny Nemechek, the city-county grant writer; Brooke Draper, a credit analyst at First National Bank; Tina

Goodwin, director of the Carnegie Arts Center; and Mindy Greene, a social worker with Hospice Inc.

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