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Photo by Duane Schrag

The University's second Young Authors Conference on Wednesday attracted hundreds of elementary and middle-school children from Lane County to learn some of writing's finer points from a published author and an illustrator.

# Child authors meet to hear experts

By Marian Green  
Of the Emerald

Nearly 400 elementary and middle school children — all book authors — descended on the University Wednesday in search of the Great American Novel. They found the next best thing — the University's Young Authors Conference.

The students came from as far away as Florence to participate in the conference, which included storytelling, skits, book-sharing, a movie and two speakers — children's author Catherine Feller Bauer and children's illustrator Marcia Sewall, who has illustrated books by Newport children's author Richard Kennedy.

Bauer, a former University professor, is the author of "My Mom Travels A Lot," which is on the New York Times children's bestsellers list.

Filing into the EMU Ballroom, some children were prim and quiet and others were giggly and noisy, but all had one common

characteristic — each had written a book.

Teachers and principals from 54 Lane County schools chose four children from each 100 who had written books to attend the conference, said University education Prof. Jane McPherson, a conference organizer. University students in McPherson's children's literature course also wrote books and acted them out for the kids.

The first conference in 1980 "generated a lot of excitement" among teachers and students, McPherson said.

"They've been out there writing and illustrating their books, and now they're meeting a real live author," McPherson said. "It becomes more meaningful."

Students from county schools will have books on display at the Lane Educational Services District office. Springfield schoolchildren's books will be displayed at the Springfield Public Library.

Paul Staples, a 10-year-old fourth grader from Springfield's Douglas Garden School, wrote his book about go-carts in two weeks,

he said. He chose go-carts because "they're like miniature cars."

"It's called 'A Race,'" Staples said modestly. The book is about a go-cart race between a team of two boys and a tough opponent and begins ominously with "11:30 a.m. Death Valley"

Lisa Thrower, a 10-year-old from Eugene's McCormack School, said she "knew she wanted to do a book on poems, but I just wrote on my feelings."

Her "Poems of Feeling" cover a range of subjects such as being scared, angry, brave and lonely, and one verse about The World. On loneliness, she wrote "Loneliness is lost inside someone and will eventually find its way out."

McPherson said the conference "took a lot of work, but it's well worth it."

Looking out across the sea of schoolchildren munching lunch, McPherson said with relief, "they're going to watch a film while everyone else has a rest."

"It's quiet time."

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## Candidate for governor talks on social justices

Democratic gubernatorial candidate Don Clark will talk on "social justice" today in the EMU.

Clark, executive officer of Multnomah County, speaks at 11 a.m. in the Forum Room — one speech of a 10-part statewide series on issues ranging from economic recovery to health care.

"As a candidate for governor, I believe that it is my responsibility to present citizens with clear programs so that Oregonians have a clear choice at the polls on May 18," Clark says.

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