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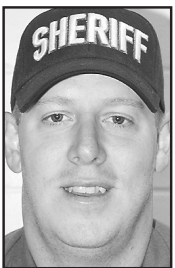
8 pages

Undersheriff lands a job in area town

By Kimbelry Davis

The Oberlin Herald
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A former Thomas County undersheriff who quit his job after his boss lost the fall election plans to start work with the Decatur County sheriff's department on Monday.



Alan Marcum

Alan Marcum said he has worked in Thomas County law enforcement for the past 10 years. Marcum received a degree in criminal justice from Colby Community College in 1999, then was an intern for a few months with the Thomas County Sheriff's Department.

The department had an opening, said Marcum, so he was a detention deputy in the jail for two years, then went on the road for six months as an officer, then to the Colby Police Department for about 2 1/2 years. He went back to the sheriff's office as the chief detention deputy, then became undersheriff close to two years ago.

Marcum said he knew when his boss, Mike Baughn, didn't win the November election that he wouldn't have a job. The new sheriff made it clear that he had his own undersheriff, or right-hand man, coming in. So, Marcum

said, he decided to resign. His last day was last Monday.

He said he knew that Sheriff Ken Badsky had a job opening in his department in Oberlin, since Undersheriff Randy McHugh had recently quit to take a job with the Nebraska National Guard.

Sheriff Badsky said he talked to someone in the county about the job, but they weren't interested. He then talked with Marcum at the fall sheriff's conference in Topeka and got his resume. Marcum is pretty level-headed, said Sheriff Badsky, he has the experience and qualifications.

Sheriff Badsky didn't say whether Marcum will serve as the undersheriff or if the current deputy, Jay Tate, will move into that position. He said he'll know by Monday.

With a heated campaign in Thomas County, Marcum has been in the newspaper a lot in as things both from the past and recently months came up.

One of those items was a claim that Marcum shot an ostrich that he claimed was attacking him. The

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Nation ready for new chief

WASHINGTON (AP) — On the eve of his inauguration, President-elect Barack Obama talked with wounded troops at a military hospital and then visited an emergency shelter for homeless teens. Grabbing a paint roller to help give the walls a fresh coat of blue, Obama said there can't be any "idle hands" at a time of national hardship.

Obama appealed to the nation he will soon lead to honor the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. through service to others. "It's not a day just to pause and reflect — it's a day to act," Obama said on King's national holiday. "I ask the American people to turn today's efforts into an ongoing commitment to enriching the lives of others in their communities, their cities, and their country."

Ever-growing crowds thronged to the capital city on the eve of Obama's elevation to the presidency. "Tomorrow, we will come together as one people on the same Mall where Dr. King's dream echoes still," Obama said.

A day away from becoming the nation's 44th president, Obama visited 14 injured vets from Iraq and Afghanistan at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

Then he visited Sasha Bruce House, a shelter for homeless teens in the District of Columbia, chatting with volunteers who were helping to repaint rooms and then pitching in himself.

"We can't allow any idle hands. Everybody's got to be involved," Obama said. "I think the American people are ready to do that."

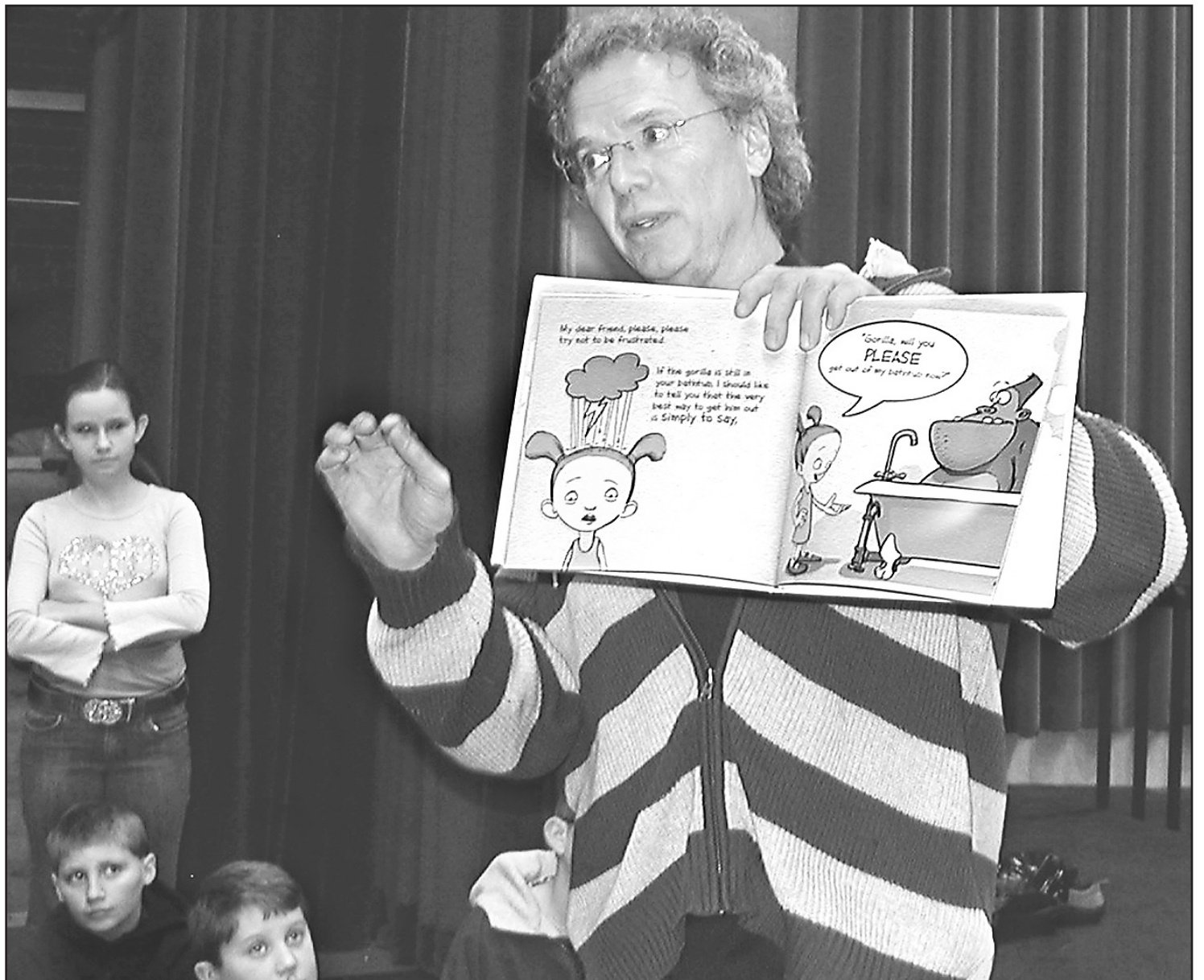
Obama, whose presidential campaign made extensive use of the Internet to rally support and gather contributions, said, "The Internet is an amazing tool for us to be able to organize people together. We saw that in our campaign. But we don't just want to use it for winning elections; we want to use it for rebuilding America."

"Don't underestimate the power for people to join together to accomplish amazing things," Obama said.

As to his own painting efforts, Obama said: "I think I've got this wall covered." He once was immersed in such work as a community organizer in Chicago.

Michelle Obama and Vice President-elect Joe Biden's wife, Jill, were visiting RFK Stadium where people were at work wrapping

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VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press

Children's author John Hall (above) read from his book, "How to Get a Gorilla Out of Your Bathtub," on Friday at the Colby Alexa Sims showed her notes while Claiborne Kyles mugged the camera.

Lively author shows students how you get a gorilla to leave

By Vera Sloan

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Colby Grade School children were treated Thursday and Friday to author John Hall's whimsical, lovable, presentation on writing.

Students responded as Hall dared them to make funny, crazy faces, close their eyes to imagine and write whatever came into their minds on white eraser boards.

"When you use words to communicate, writing them down makes you a writer," he said while talking about his book, "How Do You Get a Gorilla Out of Your Bathtub?"

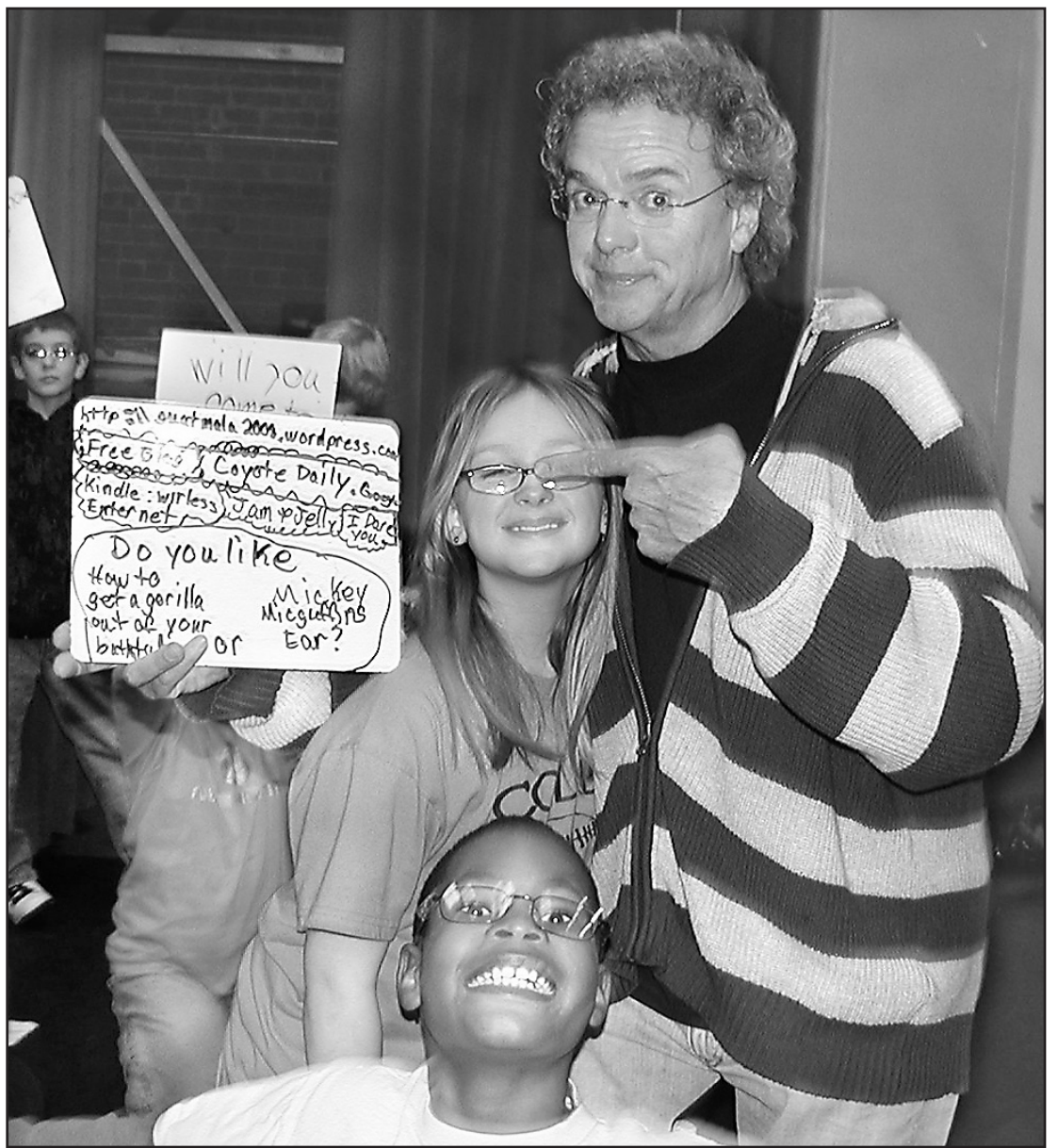
Hall's lively interaction with the kids allowed them to become a part of his presentation. He encouraged them to be expressive when they read, acting out the story, and creative when they write.

"Boring is not a word, smiling is allowed, and ideas come from experience," he told boys and girls from Sally Smith's and Jim Myer's fourth-grade classes.

Asked how long he had pondered writing his first book, he said, "about 3 seconds." He added that he wrote it at recess one day on a yellow legal pad.

"The book didn't start out to be

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Briefly

Cookies may come a knockin'

If you're on a diet, you may not want to answer the door. But who can resist Girl Scout cookies? Sales began Saturday and run through Sunday, Feb. 1, said Scout leader Penny Cline. Cinna-Spins have been renamed Daisy Go Rounds in honor of the littlest Scouts, who will be out selling cookies this year, but they still come in 100-calorie packs. If you miss the knock on the door, call Mint Culver at 460-6005 or Cline (after 6 p.m. only) at 460-2929 to order.

College offers fitness free

Colby Community College will waive all costs for community members who enroll in a cardio and strengthening class beginning Tuesday. The one-credit-hour class, taught by Linda Pitner, will be held in,

the Cultural Arts Center. Classes will be from 5:30-6:30 p.m. each Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday through May 21. Call the college Admissions Office to enroll.

City offices to close Thursday

Colby City Hall will be closed Thursday for staff training. Report any utility emergency that day to the Police Department by calling 460-4460.

Pets available for adoption

Looking for a pet? Colby Animal Clinic has one dog, a medium-size, fairly young female, maybe a spaniel or border collie-mix with a nice temperament, available for adoption on Tuesday. Lost or strayed animals are brought to the clinic.

Call or stop by 810 E. Fourth St. All animals have current shots, and costs are minimal. For questions, call 460-8621.

City crew trimming trees

The Colby city crew is trimming trees over streets and sidewalks as the weather allows. Trees will be trimmed to 13 feet, 6 inches above streets and 8 feet above sidewalks, said City Manager Carolyn Armstrong. For questions, call the city office at 460-4410.

Group does private well testing

The Northwest Local Environmental Protection Group in Colby tests private wells for bacteria and other contamination. For questions or to make an appointment, call (785) 462-8636 or stop by the office, 350 S. Range Ave., Suite 4, Colby. Call the Thomas

County Health Department, 460-4596, to set up an appointment.

Conservation meeting Feb. 16

The Thomas County Conservation District will hold its annual meeting at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 16, at the Colby United Methodist Church. Deadline for reservations is Friday, Jan. 30. Call district manager Debbie Potter at (785) 462-7482, extension 303.

Museum offers kids' program

To mark Kansas Day, the Prairie Museum of Art and History plans a free art workshop for kids in grades three to five from 2-4 p.m. Saturday Jan. 31. Participants will make colorful oil pastel sunflower designs in honor of the state flower. Registration is limited to 2; deadline is Thursday, Jan. 22. Call Rosanne Dougherty at the museum (785) 460-4590.

