



Author Dave Sargent raised his right hand several times to signal the children it was time to be quiet Tuesday while talking to students from West and Central Elementary Schools.

Photo by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Daily News

Authors use tales to teach kids

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a tale about each of the "live animals" he was going to show them. Throughout the tale, he told the students they needed to be absolutely quiet so as not to upset the skunk.

Then, Dave asked Librarian Marcia Smith to choose a fourth grade girl to hold the skunk. She chose Chelsey Hachmeister, and Dave asked Chelsey to choose the oldest teacher in the room to come up and kiss the skunk.

Every teacher with any gray hair or wrinkles looked very nervous as Chelsey scanned the room, but they did not need to worry, as Dave secretly told her to choose a young teacher. She chose first grade teacher Lynette McLean.

After building the anticipation, Dave pulled a stuffed skunk out of the box for the teacher to kiss. Then he showed them a rubber bat.

That's what writers do, Dave said, they tell stories.

Dave then said he wanted to introduce the most beautiful woman in the world, his wife. She was Miss Universe, he said, the first year they had the

pageant, in 1918.

She taught fifth grade for 68 years and has been retired for 35, he said. When Pat, who was clearly not that old, came up to the front, she smacked him and told the students to remember he's a storyteller and makes things up.

Pat told the students about wanting to go coon hunting as a child. Her mother told her "no," Pat said, and when mother said "no," she meant it. The only one who could get her to change her mind was dad, she said.

She said her father pinched her mother's cheek and said, "You sure are cute when you're mad."

Then her parents talked it over, she said, and she was allowed to go.

Pat said she put on a long coat and her mother put a big pin at the collar to hold it around her neck.

Pat said she had trouble running in the woods with the coat that nearly touched the ground and the pinned collar was uncomfortable. She thought about taking the pin out, Pat said, but she always obeyed her mother.

She said when wild animals attack, they go for the neck. She hadn't known that then, Pat said, but her mother did.

"If I didn't obey my mother," she said, "I wouldn't be here."

She related how she had been separated from her father during the coon hunting and was attacked by a timber wolf. Her cousin's dog Barney, who she considered her dog, came to her rescue, Pat said, and killed the wolf.

She had a big sore on her face and had been very scared, Pat said, but survived because of the pin her mother put on her coat.

Pat said her mom told her if she couldn't talk about the experience, maybe she could write about it. It became her first book, "The Timber Wolf."

Pat said her nightmares about the experience ended after she wrote the book.

Dave told the students he and Pat had just showed them how easy it is to be an author.

"All you have to do is make a story up like I did," he said, "or write about something that happened to you like my wife did."

The Sargents are from Prairie Grove, Ark., a farming community. Dave began writing in 1990, and Pat has writ-

ten since she was in the fourth grade. They have written many children's books, including the "Feather Tale Series" and the "Animal Pride" series. He has written an autobiography, "An Uphill Climb."

Dave has inverted-mirrored vision, a severe form of dyslexia and didn't learn to read until he was 19. He learned to read by recognizing whole words, Dave said, not by syllables. He said he had to see each word as a picture.

"With big words, I just guess," he said, "then when I see what comes after, I realize what the word should be."

He said he knows some big words but doesn't use them much.

"I don't need to know those \$50 words," he said. "For every one, there's a nickel word that works as well."

Smith said the school received a \$1,000 literacy grant from the Wal-Mart Foundation which would pay for having the authors visit. The Sargents didn't charge anything, she said, but sold books to the students.

Smith said she would buy books for the elementary schools with some of the money.

Candidates for governor to meet Sunday in Colby

Are you interested in what the next governor of Kansas has to say? Then clear your calendar for Sunday night.

Four candidates for governor will debate state issues and answer questions from the audience at 6 p.m. Mountain Time in the Cultural Arts Center on the Colby Community College campus, 1255 Range. The Kansas League of Women Voters is sponsoring the free event and will provide a moderator.

Candidates will include Democrat Kathleen Sebelius, the state insurance commissioner; Republican Tim Shallenburger, state treasurer; Ted Pettibone with the Reform Party; and Libertarian Dennis Hawver.

Issues important in this governor's race are increasing money for education, the state's serious budget problems, economic development and highway maintenance.

People are asked to come early so they have time to submit questions to the candidates. The candidates will each be allowed three minutes for a brief introduction, and will spend the rest of the debate answering questions.

The event is part of the annual Dr. Max Pickerill Lecture Series, which is paid for by anonymous donors.

For information call Tom Moorhous at 785-462-3984, ext. 340.

Class provides keys for leadership

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reception on Tuesday night at Sugar Hills Golf Club.

They then gathered at North Elementary on Wednesday morning to begin the team-building session.

Darin Neufeld, a former class member and co-chairman of the board that runs the program, led activities to help the classmates learn each other's names and build trust and teamwork. The exercises were fun, but required brain and muscle power.

One activity called "Acid River" required the class to get each member from one side of the room to the other

by using three narrow boards to build bridges between wooden blocks laid on the floor.

Several rules made the activity physically and mentally tough. Anyone who touched the floor with their body or a board had to finish the exercise blindfolded, balancing their way across a shaky, narrow board with direction from fellow classmates.

The group spent the afternoon in the Sherman County Fairground's 4-H building learning more about what makes each person tick.

Stacie Edgett-Minson, a Kansas State University research and extension agent in Hays, led the class

through the True Colors program, which helps people identify their personality type and explains characteristics of each personality.

The personality types were broken down into four colors, blue, green, orange and gold. After participants identified their primary color they did exercises to determine how different personalities react in different situations.

The group's next session will be on Oct. 23 and the theme will be agriculture. The class will visit fields in Sherman County and talk with farmers and ranchers.

Members of this year's class are Cindy Bowman, David Daniels, Hazel

Estes, David Floyd, Mitch Hixson, Rachel Hixson, Carrie Peter, Rebecca Schmidtberger, Amy Sederstrom and Chad Tuttle.

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