



The Bluebird

A Publication for the Alumni of Goessel High School

Volume 12 Number 1

Winter-2024



The Value of Art in the Public Schools

Is there value in teaching art in the public school system? Some suggest it's just a lot of scribbling, cutting, and pasting with an end product that will end up on the refrigerator door. Actually, it is so much more.

The significance of an art program is often times overlooked when school budgets become tight. In reality this program can be a crucial component of a child's school life. An art program can provide the opportunity to learn skills not necessarily taught in the classroom

Thankfully, art is alive and well at USD 411. In the spring of 1975 the school board began discussing the possibility of an art program for the district.

Mrs. Ruth Breeze was hired for the 1975-1976 school year and art became part of the grade school and high school curriculum. Up until then, grade school classroom teachers had been responsible for teaching art in their classrooms. Also, art was added to the high school schedule for two periods in the afternoon. Ruth resigned at the end of 1979.

Mr. Brian Stucky was hired for the 1979-1980 school year. Brian would add photography to the art schedule. One of his first major art projects for the students enrolled in art, was a contest to design a mural for the outside wall of the local grocery store. The best three ideas were combined for the final design. Also, he was hired to coach girls basketball and in 1981 started the volleyball program. Brian led the art program until his retirement in 2013.

Contact Information

alumni@usd411.org

Editor: Ilona Abrahams

Alumni Association
P.O. Box 68
Goessel, KS. 67053

Become a member of
The Goessel Alumni
Facebook Page

The alumni newsletter is
also posted on the
alumni page of the USD
411 website.



Art: Continued

With Brian’s retirement the search for another teacher to lead the program became a priority. Finally, in October of 2013, Kacie McGee Schmidt joined the staff as the K-12 art teacher.

Currently, she sees students twice a week for 40 minutes at the K-5 level. Junior High students have art, 30 minutes daily with a rotation of different groups each term. High school students have the opportunity to enroll in Graphic Design, Photography, Principles of Illustration, Yearbook, Art 1, 2, 3, and 4 classes which include drawing, painting ceramics, printmaking and more.

The 2023-24 school year is her 11th year of teaching art at USD 411 and she can’t imagine anywhere else she would rather be. In an interview for the Hillsboro Free Press, Mrs. Schmidt made this comment, “Teaching in a community like Goessel has made all the difference. As a K-12 teacher, I literally know every kid in the district and have a relationship with almost all of them.”

In 2023, Mrs. Schmidt was recognized as the 2023 Outstanding K-12 Art Educator of the Year. She went on to say, “It is so rewarding to be affirmed in what I’m doing....it is such an honor to be recognized in this way.”

During her tenure at USD 411, Mrs. Schmidt has implemented the grade school art fair and auction. Samples of each student’s artwork from each grade are hung throughout the gym. Hands on art stations are created and individuals visiting the art fair are invited to participate and have fun making small art projects.



An art piece is designed by each class, K-5, and patrons have the opportunity to bid on these pieces. The piece to the left was created by the 5th grade art class of 2020. Because of COVID 19, the art auction was canceled and the piece was presented to Mrs. Abrahams upon her retirement in May, 2020.

At the high school, students in art class attend art contests and also create artwork to enhance the junior high and high school building. A mural was created and painted to enhance the west entry of the high school. In 2016 when Goessel High School celebrated its 90th anniversary, art students designed a piece which reflected the mascots that had been used throughout the history of the Goessel High School.

In 1975 administration saw the need for an art program at Goessel. It is amazing that in a span of forty-eight years, the art position has been filled by only three teachers. An outstanding art program, which has provided an opportunity for students to excel in another area of academia, can be contributed to the efforts of these three teachers.



True or Fake News: Twins, Triplets and Quartettes!

It seems we are bombarded with a plethora of news from multiple sources of media. As individuals it is up to us to sift through it to decide whether it is true or fake news. Apparently, as early as 1880 individuals were having to make those decisions. While doing research for another project I came across this article which was written and published in the March 3, 1890, McPherson Republican.

“Mrs. Jacob Schmidt, a robust, healthy, Mennonite woman, residing in Meridian township, presented her husband with four sons. The children are quite small, only weighing eighteen pounds, making an average of four and one-half pounds each. Mr. and Mrs. Schmidt are the parents of twenty-two children, all of whom live in this county. Mrs. Schmidt has given birth to four pairs of twins on former occasions before coming to this country. Twelve of these children are sons and ten are daughters. The last quartette are as spry as children usually are at their age and the parents are much prouder than if but a single child had made its appearance.”

So true or fake news? It could be true. Jacob Schmidt was a common name and large families were also very common. Plus, Meridian township was established in 1874, in McPherson County. The article was actually published. Although, I'm not sure which paper published it first, there were at least sixty-seven other newspapers that carried the story.

If you guessed fake, you're right. The Moundridge Journal, from March 13, 1890 printed this announcement in their Local and Otherwise Column. “The story reported at home and abroad that Mrs. Jacob Schmidt of Meridian township, gave birth to four children is proven to be a hoax, from the fact that there is not a Mrs. Jacob Schmidt in that township, and also there has never been a Kansas Woman so prolific as to have four babies at any one time.”

So apparently, as early as 1880 individuals needed to remain vigilant and sift through the news they heard and read in the newspaper.

After reading this I began to think about multiple births. Who wouldn't, right? Were there twins, triplets, or even quadruplets enrolled in Goessel? The answer is yes and no.

After looking through class lists I found twenty-two sets of twins. Of those twenty-two, seven were girls, eleven were boys, and four had a boy and a girl. Records are a bit sketchy after 1946, so I'm sure there could be several more. The oldest living set of twins are the Schroeder twins who graduated in 1946 and turned 96 in July.

So what about triplets or quadruplets. There have never been any quadruplets, or a quartette, as they were called in 1880, enrolled at USD 411, but 2022-2023 was the first year triplets were enrolled in Goessel.

As for identical twins, there are definitely some, but since I don't want to be accused of fake news, I won't throw out any numbers. Kudos to all the teachers and staff, who for years have found themselves devising ways to tell identical twins apart when they walk into the classroom.

Class Reunion Pictures



Class of 1963 celebrating 60th. Twila Dirksen, Rosemary Nikkel, Carol Reimer, Mrs. Harlow Schmidt, Harlow Schmidt, Pete Unruh, Ira Frey



Class of 1978-celebrating 45th. Back Row: Dwayne Schmidt, Marlin Janzen, Kathy Schroeder, Robert Derksen, Patty Goertzen, Bob Ratzlaff, Brian Voth, Tim Wedel, DeVona Schroeder. Front Row: Lynn Schmidt, Greg Schmidt, Debra Woelk, Penny Morgan, Gayle Funk, Mark Schroeder, Sandra Hiebert



Class of 2003 celebrating 20th: Back Row: Kent Peters, Kelcy Voth, Melinda Stucky, Andrea Rains, Katherine Krehbiel, Mark Voth, Zane Unrau. Front Row: Ben Schmidt, Tyler Huntley, Tara Goerzen, Peter Goerzen, Shannon Schmidt, Lindsey Unruh, Jesse Goertzen

2026

*Goessel High School
will celebrate 100
years. Keep This
Year in Mind when
Planning Class Re-
unions.*



Class of 1973 celebrating 50th. Back Row: Dwight Flaming, Marlo Klassen, John Janzen, Jerry Lehrman, Janell-Schmidt. Front Row: Barb Schmidt, Dee Gaeddert, Jenny Frey



Class of 1966 celebrating 57th. Back Row: Ivan Schmidt, Dick Goertzen, Floyd Nickel, Richard Reimer, Linda Koehn, Ronnie Frey, Harlan Bartel. 2nd Row: Galen Dyck, Alvin Banman, Delbert Reimer, Darla Banman, Gwen Voth, LaVera Voth, Max Krause, Jerold Franz. 1st Row: Eileen Goerzen, Sharon Schmidt, Susan Schmidt, Erna Bestvater, Delora Hiebert, Pete Flaming