



The Bluebird

A Publication for the Alumni of Goessel High School

Volume 13 Number 1

Winter-2025



From Typewriters to Computers

If you were interested in learning to type, more than likely you would have taken a typing class with Miss Neufeld, Mrs. Miller, or Mr. Dick. Typing was first offered as a class option in 1932 and by 1945 Typing I and II were being offered. Prior to the early 70's only manual typewriters would have been available for use. By the early 1970's a number of electric typewriters were purchased and a rotation schedule was set up so everyone would have an opportunity to use the new technology.



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.



In June of 1977 the first Apple II computers went on sale with a MOS Technology 6502 microprocessor running at 1.023 MHz, 4 KB of RAM, an audio cassette interface for loading programs and storing data, and the Integer BASIC programming language built into the ROMs.

Only three years later, in 1980, after many hours of research, Mr. Marvin Smith, math and science teacher at the high school, approached the board about the possibilities of purchasing a Pet Apple II micro-computer. He intended to use the computer the second semester of the 1980-1981 school year, with a full credit course being offered in the 1981-1982 school year. Along with this, a course in programming would be offered the following year. The computer could also be used as a teaching aid for other classes. After many hours of sorting out advantages and disadvantages the board went ahead with the purchase.



From Typewriters to Computers: Continued

Since there were no actual programs, Mr. Smith had to program everything from scratch in the computer language of “Basic”. He spent long hours every day trying to figure out what to teach using this new machine.

Unfortunately, Mr. Smith was able to pursue this new technology for only two years. He passed away unexpectedly in the summer of July 1983. This was a huge loss to the school system and many students who had excelled under his leadership.

One of those students was Max Schmidt ‘85, who was a sophomore at the time. He immediately was intrigued and began to learn the programming skills necessary to operate the computer. He used spreadsheets to make his treasury reports and wrote his own program for identifying different kinds of crops and weeds in Kansas. To solve the problem of figuring real estate depreciation, Max wrote a program to calculate depreciation on a fifteen year Accelerated Cost Recovery System schedule. Max put his award winning computer skills to work and won first place in the state Computers in Agriculture award program for Future Farmers of America. It was noted in the Goessel Bluebird newsletter, that computers were fast becoming a part of agriculture and agribusiness and that farmers would make more computer purchases throughout the upcoming years.

Upon Mr. Smith’s death, Mr. Darward G. Nice was hired in early August to fill the science and math vacancy. In 1984, Mr. Phil Duerksen was hired to teach science. The first computer class appears in the student hand book in 1984.

The board had some of their first discussions about technology in the classroom in 1990. By November of 1991 the board began pursuing the possibilities of a computer lab in both the grade school and the high school. It didn’t take long to decide the labs could be used as an educational learning tool. By January of 1992, the board approved computer labs for the grade school and the high school. The grade school received 32 IBM computers with the high school receiving fifteen. Classes rotated through the computer labs several times a week. Also, discussion began about computerizing the Library systems. Finally, in 1994 the school purchased the Winnebago system, which was the latest method in organizing and running a library.

By the 1995 school year the board approved personal computers for the teachers. Each classroom received an IBM compatible computer that was to be used by the teachers primarily for attendance, grading, and communication. At this time the computers were stand alone PC’s. The time of teachers checking their mailboxes for messages soon was a thing of the past as email communication became the norm. Later they were networked to the office, library and computer lab. By 1997, all computers were networked together at both buildings.

In Computer classes at the high school, students began to learn what they could do with a computer other than checking their email and playing games. They became familiar with Microsoft Office and memorized the parts of a computer. They also began using it for research in many of their classes.

In 2002 Dr. John Fast, principal at the grade school, brought a laptop computer to a board meeting and demonstrated how it worked. Thirty-six teacher workstations were purchased on November 14, 2005, for \$48,600.

By 2011 there were carts of laptops throughout the district. Throughout the next several years as replacement computers were bought, administration began to assign personal laptops to students. Around 2017 USD 411 was 1:1 laptops from grade 3 through grade 12. While dealing with COVID in 2020 older devices were put to use. With this change, 1:1 computers were now available in grades K-12. The current goal at USD 411 is to put new devices in service in K-6th grade and have students use the same device as they move through a building.

It is easy to see that USD 411 has kept up with changing technology. Alumni, who come back for class reunions, are pleasantly surprised to see how Goessel has adapted to technology changes and is equipped to effectively enhance student learning. It is apparent that USD 411 continues to challenge students in so many ways. This is only possible because of past and present teachers, administration, and board members who are dedicated to providing excellent educational experiences for all students.

Keeping Up With Alumni

At some point in a child's school career, someone will ask the question, "What would you like to do when you grow up?" And as we all know, the answers are all over the board. Some students do actually pursue those childish dreams and become successful, while others seek out another path, and are equally successful.

Josh Schmidt '17 didn't ever really dream about becoming a referee, but instead caught "the bug" and then stuck with it. As someone who thrives on challenges, the competitive aspect of officiating appealed to him.

His first officiating experience was as a junior in high school. Josh and a friend were asked to officiate biddy ball games at Goessel on Saturday mornings. Since the rec commission offered to pay, and they were two broke high school students, they jumped at the chance. The hard part came when they realized they actually had to do the job! Ben Schmidt taught Josh the ropes and worked alongside him on the court.

After high school, Josh told Ben he was heading to K-State. Ben recommended reaching out to the intramural department. While attending K-State, Josh set a goal to officiate a varsity basketball game and as he pursued this goal, he fell in love with officiating.

Four years ago he was hired to officiate football at the Division II level in the MIAA. Since then he has been working in the league.

While in high school Justin Coup, a teacher at Goessel, began to encourage Ben Schmidt '03 to referee JH C team games. His sophomore year at Tabor College he decided to register with KSHSAA and started officiating basketball games for the main purpose of making money. He didn't start officiating football until he moved to southwest Kansas in 2008.

"Ben and I threw the first two flags of the game, and honestly, I wouldn't have it any other way—at least people knew we were there!"
Josh Schmidt

Officiating at college games wasn't really on his mind at the time. But then he was called at the last minute to fill in for someone, and work as part of the crew for the KCAC, even having to borrow a shirt in order to work. Ben set a goal to be hired into the MIAA and achieved that goal in 2015 and set his sights on working D2 postseason games and also getting hired into Division 1.



Josh had officiated basketball games with Ben Schmidt over the years. And as they worked together they realized they were pursuing the same dream. But 2024 was a special year. For the first time, they were on the same college football crew and worked the entire season together. Then they were both selected for the same D2 playoff crew. This year was "their year" when they found themselves on the DII MIAA Football Crew 7. Both Josh and Ben commented it was an incredible experience and look forward to wherever their journeys continue to lead them.

Ben and Josh are examples of two high school kids who connected with teachers and friends who encouraged them to think big, and try something new. And throughout the process became colleagues doing something they both love.

A big thank you to Josh Schmidt and Ben Schmidt for sharing their stories.

2024 Class Reunions



Class of 1954 celebrated 70th anniversary. Eight of the original thirty-five were able to come. BR: Joan Nikkel, Ruben Ray Schroeder, Phyllis Goertzen, Eva Reimer. FR: T. P. Nikkel, Don Schmidt, LeRoy Goertzen, Stan Wiens



Class of 1969 celebrated 55th anniversary. BR: Stan Goertzen, Geneva Goertzen, Russ Abrahams, Verney Voth, Agatha Duerksen, Ron Goerzen, Mary Funk, Pauline Buller, Sheryl Gardner, Wendy Black. FR: Barb Abrahams, Ava Lipp, Elaine Banman, Sheri Epp, Fran Duerksen, Carol Aurenheimer



Class of 1974 celebrated 50th anniversary. BR: Gayle Elliot, Bryce Woelk, Gayle Voth, Bonnie Ratzlaff, Lois O'Leary, Susanne Buchhorn, Carol Kane, Darlene Baranek, Norma Peters Duerksen, Londell Duerksen, Jon Buller. FR: Dwight Flaming, Vernon Epp, Brian Klassen, Arden Voth, Steve Goertzen, Jim Schmidt, Bill Bestvater.



Class of 1977 celebrated class members turning sixty-five. BR: Tim Goertzen, Kendall Heinrichs, Ron Wedel, Dave Wedel, Larry Schroeder, Bob Klassen, Bob Woelk, Kevin Hiebert, MR: Vaughn Juhnke, Sheri Bonnet, Alice Unruh. FR: Rory White, Duane Unruh, Rick Campbell.



Class of 1984 celebrated 40th anniversary. BR: Brad Schmidt, Daryl Wedel, John Unruh, Steve Schrag. FR: James Krehbiel, Kay Schroeder, Kris Schmucker, Denise Duerksen, Denise Hackney, DeVon Hiebert.



Class of 2009 celebrated 15th anniversary. Chrystiana Miller, Jessica Cleveland, Kendall Voth, Kristin Kaufman, Laura Unrau.