



The Bluebird

A Publication for the Alumni of Goessel High School

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Contact Information

abrahamsi@usd411.org

Alumni Association

P.O. Box 68

Goessel, KS. 67053

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

USD 411 Acquires Preschool

In 1966 the school board began conversations surrounding the possibilities of a kindergarten program. Space was limited, but constituents were showing interest in adding a kindergarten program to the existing 1-8 grade school building. If it were to be added where would it be located? Various locations were discussed, including the stage at the grade school and also the basement at the Goessel Mennonite Church. Finally, a decision was made to purchase a mobile home. With more room for expansion, the board approved the kindergarten program on March 14, 1967. Martha Loewen was hired as the teacher and 24 students were enrolled. Now, fast forward 50 years to 2017.

In April of 2013, our community passed a \$3.2 million bond project at 92% approval. A portion of that bond money was designated to fund a storm shelter for the grade school. However, the school board had a vision beyond just a school storm shelter for that part of the project. They envisioned the facility to be used as a community storm shelter and also a future facility to house a preschool. It just so happened that during the building project, Gayle Voth, who was the owner and director of the privately run Kinderhaus Preschool for over 30 years, decided to retire. The preschool was purchased by Rachel Boden, and after the storm shelter was completed, she was invited to rent the space.

With the introduction of some new state grant money for early childhood education, a team of teachers made up of Rachel Boden, Sheri Janzen and Chrystiana Voth, began work to apply for these grants. With the support of Dr. Fast and the Board of Education, the plan was to transition the privately run preschool to a publicly run preschool. With Kinderhaus run as a public preschool, it meant that all children, even those less advantaged, would have full access to the preschool. This transition also meant special education services would be made easily available and close communication could occur between the preschool and kindergarten. This also came at a time when the Kansas State Board of Education announced its new emphasis on early childhood education and kindergarten readiness.

Today, the preschool retains its name as the Kinderhaus, as founded by Gayle Voth. The director is Mrs. Bonnie Gaeddert, a graduate of Kinderhaus' first class years ago! Mrs. Rachel Boden serves as an assistant and outreach instructor to parents. We are so thankful that our community caught the vision for this educational opportunity to come to fruition when they voted for the bond project!

*Information regarding the preschool was provided by Dr. John Fast, Superintendent of Schools, USD 411.

There's A New Bird In Town

Have you been the Bluebird mascot? It seems like only a few lucky individuals have had the privilege of going undercover and actually wearing the outfit. Were you one of them? Did you stay warm during football and extremely HOT during basketball?

Interestingly enough, there have been a number of full body suits that students have worn to raise school spirit. In December of 1993 students decided it was time for a new bluebird full body mascot. Talon Bunn with the aid of Ratzaff Drapery created and designed the mascot which made its debut at the December 7, Peabody game. I'm not sure if the picture on the right is this mascot. A contest was held to determine a name, but I couldn't find the results of the contest. Perhaps someone has additional information about this mascot.

Bobby the Bluebird, shown below, was created by Brian Stucky, (past art teacher and coach). Brian shared that it was constructed from a hockey helmet, basketball, and part of an old band major's hat from the prop room. Ronn King ('2010) remembers wearing both of the suits.

This year it was decided a new costume was needed. The picture in the lower right corner is the "new bird in town". The new bird has already made a number of appearances at football and basketball games. The new bird has been known to inconspicuously sit by someone and innocently run their hand over a bald head, give kids a high five and hand out hugs to young bluebird supporters. So, when you come out to support the Bluebirds this season make sure you extend a warm welcome to Blaze. Interestingly, one of the suggestions for the 1993 mascot was, Billy the Blazing Bluebird.

I would be interested in acquiring more information about these mascots and who might have been underneath all this school spirit.



Christmas Programs at Goessel

Christmas programs have been a part of the Goessel Community for years. Many people fondly remember the Christmas programs that were held in the one room schools. Students would perform musical numbers, provide a Christmas skit, and many would learn and recite a special Christmas poem. Often times students would go home with a special bag of candy and a sack filled with peanuts and a piece of fruit.

Students no longer recite “pieces”, nor do they receive a sack filled with goodies, but they do provide the Goessel community with exceptional Christmas programs. The first recorded Christmas program at the grade school was on December 23, 1960. It was directed by Mrs. Leona Kaufmann. As you can see in the picture to the right, the students sat on the main floor. How then, was there room for the audience? Remember this was a grade 1-8 school at the time.



Additional room for the audience would have extended into the cafeteria area, because the wall between the gym and the cafeteria was not installed until sometime later. The picture below and right shows the opening as it was in 1961-1962.

To accommodate a growing audience a morning program was added in 1984. The grade school continues to offer a program in the morning and evening. This year 125 people attended the morning Christmas program and a record crowd of 375 attended the evening program. The pictures below show the 2017 evening Christmas program. To accommodate this many people, students who are not performing are in their classrooms. After the performance, the audience is invited to view the classrooms.



A Publication from the
Alumni Association

Iiona Abrahams,
Editor

Goessel High School Alumni

Only alumni who contribute a yearly fee of \$5 every January, will receive the newsletter via the mail. The contribution will be used to pay for the cost of printing and mailing the newsletter. Newsletters will continue to be sent to all current email addresses. As a Goessel High Alumni I would like to continue to receive this newsletter through the postal service.

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