



# The Bluebird

A Publication for the Alumni of Goessel High School

Volume 10 Number 2

Summer—2022



## Recognizing Support Staff

Despite the integral part they play in the education of students, school support staff are often the unsung heroes in many schools.

It has been said it takes a village to raise a child. In a school setting it takes a team to have a healthy and nurturing environment so a child can learn and grow.

USD 411's school support staff is an incredibly diverse team. It is composed of cooks, custodians, bus drivers, paras, aides, secretaries, school nurse, social workers, psychologists, speech therapists, audiologists, physical therapists and administration. I apologize if I missed someone. Everyone is needed.

These individuals are loyal, enthusiastic, hardworking, and most importantly they care. They care for the welfare of the children as well as the teachers.

They play a vital role in every aspect of school life and without them USD 411 could not function. Support staff work tirelessly behind the scenes, performing essential work. They are the glue that helps provide the best education possible for the children of USD 411.

This issue of The Bluebird will attempt to recognize and give a brief history of three of the support areas that have been and continue to be a part of this amazing and diverse team.

*School programs were and continue to be an important part of school. In the early 1960's some older people found it impossible to drive to these programs. The school would take a bus around Goessel and pick up folks who had indicated they were interested in coming to the program. Elsie Schmidt, the grade school's secretary at the time, would ride along because she knew where everyone lived. Current grade school secretary is Lacie Hill and high school secretary is Debbie Schrag.*

### Contact Information

[alumni@usd411.org](mailto:alumni@usd411.org)

Editor: Ilona Abrahams

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

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## Custodial Services

Custodians work diligently to keep the gym spotless, pick up the endless trash, paint walls, polish floors, water and mow the grass, take care of the football field and take care of requests from staff and administration. It takes a lot of dedication and a lot of work. Their efforts are noticed, because one of the first things people see when they visit the school grounds is the cleanliness.



Arnold Franz

Irvin Boese was the first janitor at the grade school when it opened in 1958. In August of 1960 Roy Schmidt was hired.

Pete Unruh was hired in 1935 to be the custodian of the new high school building. He and his wife would continue as custodians until 1957.

Currently, Ben Schmidt, head maintenance, and Scott Frobenius offer custodial services at the high school. Londell Duerksen and Donna Washmon are maintenance and custodians at the grade school.



Londell Duerksen

*The minutes of the December 17, 1959 board meeting reveal that the first custodial job at Goessel Elementary School paid \$320.00 a month for a nine month contract.*

## Dietary

There was no lunch program at the high school prior to 1949. In 1949, Susan Quiring Wedel, a graduate of Goessel High School, was hired as the Home Economic and Business teacher. Susan held this position for two years. It was during this time that Susan was asked to establish a school lunch program for the high school. The meals were prepared in the former Home Economics room, which now houses the Special Education department. Students lined up in the hallway and were served through the window on the north corner. They ate in the Study Hall room and were to spend at least twenty minutes for lunch.



Left to right: Irene Peterson, Rose Wedel

Cooks were Mrs. H. K. Wiebe and Erlene Boese.

The new Goessel Grade School was proud to offer a hot lunch program to their students. Irene Peterson and Rose Wedel were hired as cooks. The next year Mae Frey also began cooking at the grade school.

For many years eggs were purchased from a local farm lady. Commodities were mainly purchased from the Coop Store and sometimes a local farmer would donate a beef to be butchered. The cost of a hot lunch in 1959 was 25 cents which included milk.



Left to right: Janice Voth, Sandra Duerksen

Today a student can purchase a hot lunch at the grade school for \$3.00 and \$3.20 at the high school. Current cooks at the grade school are Sandra Duerksen, food service director, and Janice Voth. Susie Shipp and Jennifer Hagedwood are cooks at the high school.

## Transportation

With the consolidation of country schools in 1958, transportation became an issue. Prior to 1958, parents were responsible for getting their children to grade school. Most high school students either drove to school or if you were a girl you stayed in town and rented a room in someone's house.

From the beginning, transportation was problematic. The boundaries of the new district were wide and administration quickly realized a transportation committee was needed. Five men were elected at the first annual meeting to discuss the issue of buses and establish routes. Three used buses were purchased; two from Wichita and one from Oklahoma. For the first two or three years there were numerous issues with the buses and the routes. Old buses were generally purchased which in turn required a lot of maintenance. As routes were considered, the county was contacted so rock could be secured for roads that were currently mud roads. School was rarely called off because of snow and the school somewhat expected local farmers to be available with tractors to either open the roads or pull buses out of ditches. For a number of years the buses only picked up students who lived outside a 2 1/2 miles radius of Goessel. The school received reimbursement for these students.

Orville Unruh, Otto Bartel and Irvan Buller were hired as bus drivers the first year. Having only three buses meant some families would still need to drive their own children. They were contacted and asked if they could make arrangements to drive their children plus some of the neighbor's children to school. These folks were paid .05 cents per mile. If two or more families drove together the school would pay them \$2.50 per month, per family as an incentive, in addition to the mileage payment. Bus drivers were paid \$100.00 per month. They were also paid \$3.00 for driving bus to a school activity. By 1962 five buses were being used. The transportation committee determined it was costing approximately \$175.00 per month for salaries, gas, oil and repairs to run the buses. Since there were two businesses who could provide gas and grease jobs for the buses, it was decided that three buses would go to Lehrman Oil Company and two would go to Crossroads Coop.



Pictured left to right: Ernest Unruh, Elsie Flaming, Ernest Harris, Marvin Banman.



Current Bus Drivers: Ron Plenert, Diana Schmidt, Jim Schmidt, Larry Lindeman.



## Tribute to Norman Schmidt Custodian at Goessel High—1993-2009

There are many school custodians who take their “custody” of a school seriously. Their dedication and commitment goes well beyond their contractual duties.

Norman Schmidt was one of these individuals. He took his job seriously, did his very best, plus interacted and forged lasting relationships with students.

Norman began his work career at Hesston Corporation. He took two years off for 1-W service in Topeka as an aide at the Menninger Foundation and did janitorial duties at Stormont-Vail Hospital. After that, he returned to the Goessel-Newton area and he resumed work at Hesston Corporation. In 1993, he accepted a grounds/maintenance/custodial position for Goessel High School. Norman was willing to lend a hand whenever or wherever he was needed. He worked at the school until his retirement in 2009. He enjoyed his work but more so, loved interacting with the staff and especially the students.



Throughout 2020 Norman experienced numerous health challenges. He passed away January 22, 2021, at Newton Medical Center.

Students, friends, and school staff responded with these comments on social media after Norm’s passing. They are testimony to a man, whose dedication and commitment to his job, was noticed.

“Stormin’ Norman was one of a kind. He was the coolest custodian any high school ever had.”

“Someone we should all strive to be more like.”

“Stormin’ Norman was one of my favorite people.”

“Norm had a positive impact on so many students, staff, and community .”

“He was a great man who was loved by many people.”

“He was my favorite person in high school.”

“Rest in peace Stormin’ Norman.”