



Columbus Public Schools Alumni News

Winter 2008



CPS Foundation gets focused

**Board President Steve Anderson
Class of 1968**

In the last issue of CPS Alumni News, we explained the difference between the CPS Alumni Association and the CPS Foundation (Foundation). This article will focus on the enhanced direction the Foundation is taking. The Foundation's Mission statement is:

“The mission of the Columbus Public Schools Foundation is to enhance student learning by working with the school district, businesses, and community to provide financial support for innovative programs not covered by the school district's funding sources.”

Recently, the Foundation partnered with Nebraska Community Foundation to counsel and guide us in a more focused direction. Not only will the Foundation be concentrating on providing scholarship opportunities

for students, they will also be working to meet other needs of students, staff, and teachers which are not currently funded from tax dollars. The Foundation settled on a case statement which reads:

“The Columbus Public Schools Foundation helps optimize the future of all Discoverers.”

The Foundation also wants donors to be able to select what area their charitable assets should be directed. Those areas are:

- Innovation and enrichment grants for students, teachers & staff
- Funding for after school programs
- Funding for supporting staff positions not currently in the school budget
- Funding to provide alternative educational opportunities including

- online learning for students
- Scholarships for current and graduating students
- Teacher, staff and student recognitions

The Foundation wants the students of the Columbus Public Schools to have every opportunity to succeed and become successful alumni like you. The Foundation can provide those opportunities with your support. The Foundation is a 501 (c) 3 organization ready to accept your tax deductible assets (money, stocks, bonds, land, real estate, etc.).

Please include the Foundation in your estate planning and your yearly charitable giving choices. Your Foundation Board of Directors will manage your contributions wisely and direct them to needed areas. Contact Michelle Cruise at 402-563-7000 Ext. 1102 if you have questions.

CHS graduate gives Lost Creek kids a glimpse of her world

**Amy Busted-Blaser
Class of 1988**

Parts of the story were reprinted with permission by Julie Blum of the Columbus Telegram.

It was a big step going from fish slinger to senior aviculturist. The same could be true for the step Brienne Thomas took when she left Nebraska to live in San Diego.

Continued on Page 2



STRONG BOND
– Brienne Thomas poses with a four-month-old flamingo chick that she had a strong bond with.

Working at Sea World

From front page

The Columbus native graduated from the University of Nebraska-Kearney with a music major and advertising minor and decided a change of setting would do her good.

"I wanted to get out of town and experience life. One of my friends lived in San Diego. She was a dolphin trainer and worked at Sea World," Thomas said.

Thomas, a 1997 Columbus High School graduate, moved to California and took a job working at Sea World as well. She anticipated it was only going to be for a few months, maybe just an interim job. But that was five years ago, and now Thomas can't imagine doing anything else.

Thomas, the daughter of Rick and Kathy Thomas of Columbus, recently came back home and spent a day visiting kindergarten students at Lost Creek, the same facility she attended grade school.

Students got to see flamingo and penguin feathers and replicas of eggs. Thomas also spoke about her start at Sea World, telling her audience that her first job was making meals for penguins everyday.

She worked in the penguin enclosure for three years before moving to the avian center. There she has helped

raise a variety of winged creatures, from flamingos to geese to toucans.

Working with birds has become her passion.

"The relationship you have with these animals, knowing that you raised them from an egg, and then three months later it's squawking next to you," Thomas said is the most rewarding part of her job.

She also enjoys educating the public, especially children, of the importance of caring for animals and the environment.

"Conservation is one of the biggest things for us. We are really making that our mission," Thomas said.

She said Sea World houses some animals that are endangered, such as Humboldt penguins, a warm weather bird, which is facing endangerment due to destruction of breeding areas, commercial fishing and exploitation by humans. Sea World has a conservation fund that works on behalf of wildlife and habits worldwide.

Thomas said there are simple steps people can take in their own communities to help the environment such as using less water, turning off lights when not in use to conserve energy and recycling.

School District of Columbus Foundation Inc. Endowment Fund Contribution

Yes I wish to support the schools with a **tax deductible gift to the Foundation.
Here is my donation in the amount of \$_____**

First Name _____ Last Name _____ Class of _____

Address _____ City, State, Zip _____

If you would like someone to contact you about including the CPS Foundation in estate planning, please call Michelle Cruise at 402-563-7000 Ext. 1102 to set up an appointment. The Foundation provides money for Columbus Public Schools programs that cannot be funded from tax dollars. The organization sponsors scholarships, guest speakers and various other activities.

**Please make checks payable to the Foundation Endowment Fund. Return to: CPS Foundation * 2508
27 St. * PO Box 947 * Columbus NE 68602-0947.**

The Foundation is a 501 (c) 3 organization.



1982-83 tennis team honored

The Nebraska High School Hall of Fame presented Columbus High School with a plaque commemorating the selection of the 1982-83 Class B State Championship tennis team as the Silver Anniversary Team. Team members included: Clarence Costner, Robert Sjöholm, Martin Sipple, Brad Scheidegger, Troy Gaver, Shawn Miller, Tim Gay and Coach Gary Duranski.

Class of 1947 makes donation to Foundation

The Class of 1947 donated \$180 to the School District of Columbus Foundation Endowment Fund.

The classmates' support of the Foundation is greatly appreciated, and the gift will be put to good use.

They have given a gift that will continue giving and is truly meaningful to the students and staff at Columbus Public Schools. The Foundation funds such projects as scholarships for seniors and current students, innovation and enrichment grants for students and staff, after school programs, alternative educational opportunities and students and staff recognitions.

Let us help you plan your reunion!

What we can do for you:

- Class list and mailing labels
- Nonprofit Bulk rate for qualifying mailings
- Tours of CHS or CMS

Contact Michelle Cruise: Phone: 402-563-7000 Ext. 1102;

E-mail: michelle.cruise@cps-ne.org.

Columbus Alumni Association

Let's Keep in Touch

Please use this form for address corrections or changes, what's new information, or if you wish to pay dues.

First Name _____ Last Name _____ (Please include maiden if applicable.) Class of _____

Spouse _____ Last Name _____ Class of _____

Address _____ City, State Zip _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

What's New (job, degrees, comments, suggestions etc.) _____

I/we would like to become an annual member(s) for the year 2008.

_____ Annual Single \$10

_____ Annual Couple \$15

or

I/we would like to become a lifetime member(s).

_____ Lifetime Single \$200

_____ Lifetime Couple \$300

Return to: Columbus Alumni Association * 2508 27 St. * PO Box 947 * Columbus, NE 68602-0947



CMS performs Music Man Jr.

Bob Hausmann
Class of 1988

This year not only did the high school students have a chance to shine, but so did the future students of CHS as the Columbus Middle School presented "The Music Man Jr." on November 8th and 9th.

The shows were performed at the Nantkes Performing Arts Center. Music Man Jr. is a special condensed version of the Broadway production of Meredith Willson's Music Man. The junior version of this musical is scored specifically for middle school voices.

This production is not

associated with a class. It is an after school activity. Auditions were held in early September in which 100 students auditioned. Four staff member judges selected 50 cast members. Students were scored according to their abilities to sing, dance, act, and speak. After auditions, the cast practiced for two hours after school each day and on some Saturdays.

Columbus Middle School teachers, Neely Moser was the musical director, Amy Mancini-Marshall was the assistant director with Tim Gould being in charge of sound.

A grant was received to



MUSIC MAN - There were 50 CMS students who were in the cast of the Music Man Jr.

pay for a portion of the musical along with various Columbus patrons helping with the costs

associated.

(Information for this story provided by Neely Moser.)

CHS performs High School Musical

Bob Hausmann
Class of 1988

The Columbus High School musical happened again this past fall, but did not necessarily follow a normal route getting there.

Usually picked in the spring of the previous school year, the decision was not made until the summer after the codirectors of the show, Marc Baue (theatre) and Fred Ritter (vocal music) could come together on a decision. The production is not a traditional show in that it started as a made for TV Disney show.

Disney's High School Musical is also not a typical name for a show. For those without young children, we always had to add "no really, that's the name of the musical." For those who have youngsters at home and the Disney channel, they have seen or heard the musical many times over and over.

Knowing this Fred had to see a live version in Lincoln in July before he was sold on the many benefits of the show and finally the announcement came. Auditions were August 16th with around 100 trying out. Fifty-five were selected to be either a "Brainiac," "Jock," "Thespian," or "Skater Dude."

In reality, there was a lot of type casting going on in the selection of the cast as many fit right into those categories anyway. Especially the two leads, Troy played by Devin Thomas, and Gabriella played by Kristin Menchaca.

Troy had no theatre or music experience, but had participated in athletics, and this was Kristin's fourth musical in a row. The same was true of the entire cast with Ryan and Sharpay (brother and sister who always get the lead roles) played by experienced actors David Ritter and Elizabeth Bartels. Another experienced



SOLD OUT PERFORMANCE - High School Musical performed by CHS was a sold out show for Friday's performance.

actress, Alina Swoboda, played the role of the Theatre Director. Kyle Curry who was performing in his first musical played the coach.

The show was an outstanding success in that all the cast came together in the end, breaking down stereotypes and singing and dancing their way into the hearts of three large crowds performed on October 26, 27, and 28. Friday night's crowd was considered a sell out by Mr. Ritter who has not seen an official sellout in his 19 years as the vocal director at CHS.

(Information for this article provided by Fred Ritter.)



CHS fall sports round-up

The fall sports season was highlighted by a Discoverer football team that finished the season with a 5-4 record, its best in nearly ten years, narrowly missing a spot in the state playoffs. Coach Craig Williams' squad had big wins over rivals Fremont and Norfolk as well as a big season ending win over Lincoln Southwest. CHS returns a talented group to lead the team into Class B next season.

The Discoverer football team will drop to B for the next two years because of a reclassification in the classes. Football is the only sport that has dropped to B for sure, but other sports could also be lowered.

The Discoverer girls cross country team again contended for a state title finishing 5th at the state meet. Jena Schwalenberg led the Discoverers with a seventh place finish. Others running for the team included Morgan Mancuso, Bridgette Schneekloth, Nikki Green, Carrie Wiese, Gaby Goc and Danielle Archuleta. Schwalenberg, Wiese, Goc and Archuleta all will return to lead next year's squad. The boys team was paced by Trevor

Urkoski (two time state qualifier). Urkoski, Alex Markham and Jon Powell will be returning next year. The cross country teams are coached by Dave Licari and Stacey Smith.

The softball squad had an up and down season that ended at districts with an 8-7 loss to Grand Island. The Discoverers finished the season with a 21-19 record. Seniors Becky Siedel, Molly Jones and Jaisa Gutierrez led the way. A young but talented

team returns next year for coach Jack Gutierrez.

The girls golf team coached by Anne Robertson qualified for state finishing 9th. Team members included: Sara Thurley, Mallory Bell, Maggie Kildare, Morgan Smekjal and Amanda Ballweg. Thurley earned a 10th place finish at state. The team finished first at districts. The Discoverers had four top ten finishers at districts: Thurley, Bell, Kildare and Smekjal.

The boys tennis team made great strides this

year with a squad that lost much to graduation. Scott Bethune's squad led by underclassmen Jared Ostdiek, Jason Augspurger, Nathan Klatt and Blake Munson gained valuable experience with Klatt and Munson scoring a victory at the state meet.

The volleyball team coached by Jared Johnson finished the season with a 10-26 record. The team matured as the season progressed. Seniors Anne Gates and Sarah Schroeder paced the Discoverers.

Yearbooks for sale

Janice Anderson Hayek Class of 1964 has acquired several yearbooks that are in excellent condition with no writing in them. The books used to belong to CHS teacher Herb Alpers. The books available are 1941, 1943, 1945, 1946, 1947 (two), 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1954, 1956, 1957 and 1960.

She is selling them for \$50 plus \$4.95 for priority shipping. Anyone interested in purchasing a book can contact Janice at villager@iowatelecom.net or by mail at PO Box 147, Vail, Iowa 51465.

Columbus Alumni Association

2508 27 St. ~ PO Box 947~ Columbus, NE 68602-0947

Phone: 402-563-7000 Ext. 1102 ~ Fax: 402-563-7005

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Autos class seeks to provide shop experiences

Most high school students don't get the opportunity to use wheel alignment equipment unless they go to work in a repair shop.

This is not the case at CHS.

"We are the only high school (that I know of) that has two wheel alignment machines," automotives teacher Ron Haefner said. "Our goal is to expose these kids to what a real repair facility is like."

Most of the time, wheel alignment machines are only found in the large technical high schools and not a comprehensive 9-12 high school, he said.

"It's a great experience for them," Haefner said. "They realize what's involved in a wheel alignment."

Haefner said several dealerships from around the state were looking to update their equipment and by donating them to a school, it provided a good tax right off. Out of five that were given to CHS, two were kept.

Haefner has always tried to give students as many opportunities as possible in his classes. In his advanced class, the students get to build a Cobra from the ground up. Rich Anderson, President and CEO of Shell Valley Companies Inc., allows the students to build a Cobra kit vehicle, which his company manufactures.

The class has also undergone numerous changes since Haefner started in the fall of 1989. The automotives program started around 1969-70 and Haefner is only the third instructor.

The way students find out information has gone from looking it up in a book to now going on the Internet.

"The information is out there," Haefner said about finding things on the Internet. "The hard part is figuring out what really applies."

Vehicles now almost all come with a computer.

"When I first started there were not a lot of computers in cars," Haefner said. "We did a lot of engine work and tune-ups."

Engines are also lasting longer. Haefner said 120,000 miles used be a good life for an engine, but now if a person



FIXING WHAT'S WRONG – In the CHS consumer automotives class, students learn how to do basic maintenance on their cars. Kristin Wagner looks in the book for the process of changing a break light as Javier Saldana replaces the bulb and Tate Olsen watches.

takes care of it, the engine can last up to 300,000 miles.

The most popular class Haefner teaches is consumer autos. Students learn the basics of how a car works. He said the intent of the class is not so they will be able to fix everything that goes wrong with their vehicles but to know how to do basic maintenance such as changing the oil.

"The students do a nice job," he said. "They have an interest in learning about cars."

Haefner's advanced students also have done well in automotive competitions. His students have won the state Ford/AAA Auto Skills contest nine times since 1990. They even placed as high as fifth at nationals, and three or four years finished in the twenties at the national competition.

"They are really motivated to do good," he said about how the students feel about the state competition. "They get a lot of support from the Ford dealership in town."

Haefner said past students still have an interest in the competition even after they graduate. He said they come back and place bugs in the practice car that they have seen in the industry.

New features on Alumni website

In previous newsletters, we have referenced the CPS Website, <http://www.columbuspublicschools.org>, where you can find information about the Alumni Association and the Foundation. I'd like you to visit this site again and click on "Alumni." You will note that we have added some additional information. We will start to put our Newsletters on-line; there is a history section of CPS; class reunion information; City of Columbus Facts Book and a city profile. There is some real interesting information in the Columbus Facts Book. Most of you will find this to be not only entertaining, but very informative. Enjoy these new features and let us know what else you would like us to publish at the "Alumni" website.

Class of '88, coaches' team win tournament

Annie Slusarski Sokol
Class of 1998

The 9th CHS alumni volleyball tournament took place on November 27th, 2007, at CHS. There were 13 teams that participated in the tournament.

Teams were from the classes of '78-'80, '83/'76, '88, '94, '96 (2 teams), '98/'02, '99, '03, '00/'06, '04, '07, and new to the tournament a team of CHS volleyball coaches plus some alumni.

There were three divisions in pool play. After pool play the teams were divided into two brackets with a silver and gold division.

The class of '88 won the silver division. The

team consisted of Kim (Janssen) Kwapnioski, Sandy (Schafer) Voss, Mindy Kobus, Stacy (Rieck) Westfall, Kim (Seipel) Kasper, Tina (Mahlin) Kirby, Amy (Busteed) Blaser, Sara (Kotrous) Haggard, and Sandra (Otte) Bruttly. The coaches' team won the gold division. The team consisted of Jared Johnson, Leigh Cerny, Anne (Cruickshank) Hughes, Misty (Moser) Marking, Sean Johnson, and Tara (Went) Georing.

The next alumni volleyball tournament will be the weekend of Thanksgiving 2009!! If you are interested in the planning or playing, please contact Katy Scheel at katyscheel@hotmail.com or Annie (Slusarski) Sokol at aslusarski2@hotmail.com.

What's Happening

Eulalia Dahmke Engel '38 – Eulalia and her husband, Chris, were chosen to serve as the Grand Marshals in the David City parade during Butler County Days in 2007.

Bette Alice Woods Leatherbury '42 – Keeping busy as a Pink Lady Volunteer at the local hospital in Santa Maria, California.

Tom Ernst '49 – New job as Business Development Officer for Union Bank & Trust in Lincoln NE.

Aurilie Mohrmann Brown '60 – B.A. in elementary education from Tabor College in Hillsboro, Kansas in 1971. Taught fifth and sixth grade in Fremont Nebraska. She has three children: Tim, Lin and Ryan; nine grandchildren; and one great grandchild.

David Moss '66 – B.S. in information systems, master's in education.

Kathy Ann Stradley '67 – Has doctorate from UNMC. The Med Center is and was a great place to work.

Don Conyers '68 – Retired from the Hastings Regional Center after 32 years where he worked as an activity therapist & sheltered workshop supervisor. Currently works at Health & Human Services as a driver for the foster parent and incarcerated youth

program. Occasionally drives for the Adams County Senior Services. He also continues as a school bus activity driver for Hastings Public Schools. His wife, Dianne, is a second grade teacher in Hastings. Both kids are gone and neither is married, so he rents grandchildren to spoil by babysitting occasionally. Some retirement!

Cynthia Shaffer Jerome '72 – Went to Florida in April to welcome ninth grandchild, Madeline Jerome. Husband, Greg, retired from Jeffco Schools in 2004.

Brenda Muller '75 – Co-owner of Dove Enterprises LLC-Transportation and co-owner of Timberline Horses & Track.

Sheri Mason-Robertson '83 – Has the coolest 6-year-old daughter. After 20 years in the group health insurance industry, started own business – Strategic Insurance Designs.

Kelly Fitzpatrick Konen '91 – Kelly and her husband Brad have two children, Kelsie, 4, and Easton, 2. Brad is the CFO of American National Bank and she works part time for Harrah's & Horseshoe casinos in marketing.

Justin Young '98 – AAS degree in electrical from SCC Milford. Currently working as a mechatronics





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Columbus Alumni Reunion Plans for 2008 & Beyond

1932 - Contacts: Caroline Siebler Siefken, 2880 29 Ave., 564-8223.

1935 - Local class members meet every 4 months for lunch (Oct., Feb., Jun.). All '35 grads welcome.

1937 - Meets 1st Wed., every 4 months (March, July, Nov.).

1943 - 65th Reunion - July 19-20, 2008. Contact Ardes Flesner Sims, 402-246-6301.

1945 - Meets the last Monday of the month at Picket Fence at noon.

1946 - '46 locals meet the first Friday of each month for lunch. All classmates welcome. Contact: Regina Giersdorf Gondringer, 402-564-7000 or Laura Eller Stuefer, 402-564-2057.

1949 - Locals meet the first Monday of the month for breakfast at Picket Fence Cafe. All classmates welcome. Contact: Rosella (Blaser) Norris for info, 402-564-7498.

1953 - 55th Reunion, June 20, 21 & 22, 2008. More details later. Contact: Gerald E. Karlin at GerNaKarlin@aol.com.

1956 - Meets at 10 a.m. the first Wed. of every month at Stack & Steak for morning coffee. All classmates welcome.

1958 - Class lunch the first Wednesday of every month at noon at Maximus. All classmates and spouses welcome.

1958 - 50th Reunion - Labor Day Weekend - August 29 and 30, 2008. Friday - Wunderlich's; Saturday - VFW. Please note the correct phone number for Marva should be 402-562-7831 not as on the information sheet. Please send in your reservations and check please. The checks need to be made out to Class of 1958 Reunion. Contacts: Marva Eckmann VanVelkinburgh, 402-562-7831, Shari (Sharon) Welch Lehr, 402-465-4610 or email slehr@windstream.net.

1959 - Planning meeting for the 50th reunion on March 27 at 7 p.m. at Maximus. For more information, contact Mary Coffey Frauendorfer at

402-564-6738 or Jeanne Sandahl Haney at 402-564-7233.

1960 - 50th Reunion in 2010. Details to follow later.

1961 - 50th Reunion planned for September 2011. Details to follow later.

1963 - 45th Reunion, June 28, 2008. More details later.

1964 - 45th Reunion, Memorial Day Weekend 2009. Details later. Contact: Suzy Viergutz Engel at 402-564-0948, Carolyn Hasek Fitzke, Gary Fouraker, Jim Hellbusch, Randy Krumland at 800-467-0244 or John and Bonnie Knight Kennedy at bonjohnken@msn.com.

1968 - 40th Reunion, August 8 & 9, 2008. Friday - Tailgate and horse races; Saturday - School tours; social and dance at VFW. Details to follow. Contact: Diane Schwank, 402-910-1539 or Steve Anderson, 402-563-1347.

1977 - The class is looking for volunteers for a reunion planning committee. Anyone who is interested in helping, contact Ann Graham at aegraham@appliedrisksolutions.com.

1988 - 20th Reunion, July 25 & 26, 2008. July 25 - 6:30 p.m. casual night at Columbus Races at Ag Park (cash bar, snacks, kids optional/welcome); July 26 - 8:30 a.m. golf at Elks Country Club; 1-3:30 p.m. tour of CHS and ice cream sundaes (kids welcome); 6:30 p.m. dinner, social and cash bar at Elks. Contacts: Amy Busteed-Blaser at cablaser@frontiernet.net, Steve Hughes at shughes@neb.rr.com or Shelly Nielsen-Schmidt at shellynielsen@hotmail.com.

1998 - 10th Reunion - August 8 & 9, 2008. The planning process is still going on. If you haven't been contacted, please e-mail Michelle Svoboda at svoboda-michelle@yahoo.com or Annie (Slusarski) Sokol at aslusarski2@hotmail.com, so they can get your information updated. Spread the word.