



# Columbus Public Schools Alumni News



Winter 2009

## Alumni News goes electronic!

**Steve Anderson '68**  
**President**

In an effort to reduce costs and provide better services to our alumni, we have decided to make some changes to how we handle the newsletter. Those of you who would like to help reduce our costs can do so by indicating your preference for one of these options: A) Send us your Email address, and we will forward all future editions of Alumni News to you electronically; or B) Send us an Email or letter indicating that you no

longer want the hard copy newsletter and will review all future additions on line by accessing the following website: <http://www.columbuspublicschools.org>. Click on "Alumni" and then on "Newsletters."

Those of you who wish to continue to receive the hardcopy of the Alumni News in the mail do not need to do anything except help us out by paying your dues.

We want to thank those of you who continue to support us financially by submitting your annual or lifetime dues. Without your support, we could not

publish the newsletter. We would also encourage those of you who rarely or have never contributed to do so by sending us a check.

Thank you!

Your requests can be sent to:

**Michelle Cruise**  
**Communications Coordinator**  
**Columbus Public Schools**  
**PO Box 947**  
**Columbus, NE 68602-0947**  
**402-563-7000 Ext. 1102**  
**[michelle.cruise@cps-ne.org](mailto:michelle.cruise@cps-ne.org)**

## Band earns awards at bowl

The senior leadership played a key role in the Columbus High School Band walking away with several awards at the Valero Alamo Bowl.

"We have a special group of seniors who are awesome leaders," CHS band director Jeff Peabody said. "We will really miss them next year."

While at the Alamo Bowl, CHS won the parade competition and swept all six captions – drum major, percussion, color guard, marching, music and general effect. They also earned plaques for superior concert band performance, halftime participation and parade competition.

CHS Senior Kyle Oppliger said the trip will be something he always remembers.

"It was a lot different (performing) because of the large stadium," he said.

CHS Sophomore Camille Channer said the event was less stressful than other performances.

"It was a way you could let loose because there was not a lot of pressure,



**PRACTICE** – The CHS band practices at the Valero Alamo Bowl in San Antonio. The band not only played at halftime but also walked away with several trophies.

and we were there just to have fun," she said.

The trip also brought the band closer together, Channer said.

"There was a lot of memories and a lot of the band members bonded," she said.

**Continued on Page 3**



## Ron Klutman

**1. Graduating Year:**

1965

**2. Favorite Class and/or Teacher:**

Chemistry and biology.

**3. CPS teacher that most influenced you.**

Chris Dixon did an excellent job of preparing me for my first year of college chemistry. I also liked David Swartz.

**4. Your most memorable high school experience.**

The train ride to Sidney, Nebraska for a football game, the state semi-basketball game and my first and only Friday afternoon football game. The Friday afternoon game was between CHS and North Platte. CHS won the game and were later declared the Class A football champions. The team was undefeated and was the only football championship team that CHS has ever had.

**5. What you would change if you had to do high school all over again?**

Would have paid more attention to foreign languages. My wife and I do a lot of traveling outside of the USA and it would be nice to be fluent in another language.

**6. Where do you live now?**

My wife and I came back to Columbus in 1976 where I established my medical practice.

**7. What are you doing now?**

# Introducing the Klutmans

He is active in state and national medical boards, is a delegate for the House of Physicians and past president of the Medical Association. He is most proud of a Central Community Health Center he and others helped start. This center is instrumental in helping many individuals in this community with health issues. He and his wife have three grown children who graduated from CHS.

## Deborah Klutman Therkildsen

**1. Graduating Year:**

1967

**2. Favorite Class and/or Teacher:**

In high school, I enjoyed math classes such as geometry with Mr. Bowers, and senior math with Miss Owens. My favorite, however, was music with Mr. Larsen.

**3. CPS teacher that most influenced you.**

If I had to pick one teacher that influenced me the most, it would be Miss Owens. I was able to use what I learned in her class when earning my Bachelor of Science in education, as well as when I returned to Pharmacy School.

**4. Your most memorable high school experience**

I had many memorable experiences at Columbus High such as being in the Mateys or senior prom. But my most memorable was graduation, since to me it signaled the start of a whole new adventure.

**5. What you would change if you had to do high school all over again?**

If I had to do high school over, I think I would pick a time when women's sports were available so that I could participate. I guess growing up

with three brothers (all of whom were active in sports), I think I would have enjoyed competing.

**6. Where do you live now?**

Omaha Nebraska. I have lived here since I started pharmacy school in 1980.

**7. What are you doing now?**

I am an evening pharmacist at Methodist Hospital Pharmacy, where I've been since 1990. I enjoy my profession, and have seen many changes over the past 24 years. I am working 30 hours a week now, and hope to have more time to spend with my children and grandchildren.

## Steve Klutman

**1. Graduating Year:**

1969

**2. Favorite Class and/or Teacher:**

U.S. History with Tom Walsh.

**3. CPS teacher that most influenced you.**

Tom Walsh.

**4. Your most memorable high school experience**

Qualifying for the state basketball tournament my junior year.

**5. What you would change if you had to do high school all over again?**

Applying myself more academically.

**6. Where do you live now?**

Brandenburg Lakes outside of Bellwood, NE.

**7. What are you doing now?**

I graduated from UNL in 1973 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary/Special Education and received my Master's Degree in Special Education in 1979 from the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, Colorado.

**Continued on Page 3**

# Family Spotlight

## From Page 2

I received my Post Master's Degree in Vocational Special Needs in 1992 from UNL. I was a multiple handicap special education teacher from September 1974-August 1981, mild/moderate special education teacher from September 1981-August 1988 and special needs/special education vocational coordinator from September 1988-May 2008 all at Columbus Public Schools. I retired in May 2008 after 35 years of service. Now I'm looking for something to fill my niche.

Renee and I have been married for 34 years and have two grown children, John and daughter-in-law Jen of Lincoln and Julie and son-in-law Kevin McPhillips of Grand Island.

Julie and Kevin have two kids, Sydney Renee, 5, & Ethan 7.

## Neil Klutman

### 1. Graduating Year:

1971

### 2. Favorite Class and/or Teacher

Too many to mention and might leave someone out. I am sure they would be shocked I could write succinctly and publish a scientific article. However, Jack Johnson and Drivers Ed allowed an abundant amount of driving time to talk basketball.

### 3. CPS teacher that most influenced you.

Robert Chamberlin for not signing my football participation card in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. I was passing his class but his reason was I was not working up to my capabilities.

### 4. Your most memorable high school experience.

Some of the players (TZ, DH, and JA) loaded my Father into a van (Jackson Cleaners) and took him to our final basketball game. The spirit squad did a cheer for him and he was overwhelmed by the experience.

### 5. What you would change if you had to do high school all over again?

Not procrastinate and be more diligent in learning from the teachers that work so hard.

### 6. Where do you live now?

Lawrence, Kansas

### 7. What are you doing now?

Regional Scientific Director for a Pharmaceutical company responsible for anti-infective scientific information and research.

## Band earns awards

### From front page

In addition to CHS there were seven other bands that participated in the halftime show at the bowl. There were several schools from Oklahoma, one from Colorado, one from Arizona and one from Columbus, Georgia.

Peabody said the students received the halftime music several months before the bowl game. He said this gave them time to memorize the music. Peabody said the formation was a simple march onto the field and a simple march off the field.

"In less than six hours of rehearsal, they put together the show," he said.

Peabody said he selected the Alamo Bowl because it is one of the more inexpensive locations.

"I worked very hard to keep it at a reasonable price," he said. "I didn't want to price it out so kids couldn't go. For the most part, kids that wanted to go could go."

He said there were 132 students who went and around 12 who didn't go.

"We had a real nice mix of business and pleasure, which is probably why the students were so well behaved," Peabody said.

San Antonio is a perfect location. He said they had a chance to go to Sea World, to the River Walk, ride on a barge cruise on the River Walk and even go to attend the bowl game.

"If you make it to the Rose Bowl, you don't get tickets to the game," he explained. "We got to go to the game and had nice seats."

The Alamo Bowl featured the Missouri Tigers versus the Northwestern Wildcats with the Tigers winning 30-23. Peabody said when deciding on a bowl, he likes to pick one with Big 12 ties. This way the kids are familiar with the teams.

He said he enjoys taking the students on a trip.

"My favorite part about going to another area is the kids are just having fun and they aren't worried about acting cool or what others think," Peabody said.

In the future, he said he would like to do a smaller trip with perhaps a group like the symphonic band. He said there are a couple of nice trips that would be good experience for the kids. The next "big" trip will be in four years.

## What's Happening

### Maj. Dr. Greg Hutcheson

'89 – Completed his MBA degree from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Greg and Julie (Insinger '90) Hutcheson and their three boys, Evan (10), Ryan (6) and Luke (4) were re-stationed from Ft. Wainwright, Alaska to Ft. Bragg, North Carolina. Greg will be managing the Robinson Eye Clinic

home of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne.

### Jonathan Barnes '91 –

Account Manager for Freightquote.com.

### Bradley Peters '98 – Master's

Degree in Photography from Yale University on May 26, 2008.

### Brittany Hirschbrunner '02

– BS in Industrial Engineering and works at Caterpillar.



## What's happening

**Charlotte Birkholz Nordeen `41** – Retired from teaching at NW College. Knit lap robes for the Veteran's Home and nursing homes.

**Bette Alice Woods Leatherbury `42** – Still trying to adjust to being a widow after 52 years together.

**Sylvia A. Stevens `45** – On my 80th birthday in August, I finally retired.

**Kenneth Janssen `55** – Retired general manager of Labarge Inc. in Huntsville, AR.

**Mary Cochran Clementson `67** – Lived in Europe for five years. Retired teacher of 30 years and now a personal trainer and world traveler. Last in Nebraska in 1977.

**Dr. Rebecca Ronkar Hissong `00** – Recently received her doctor of dental surgery degree from the University of Nebraska Medical Center. She returned

to Columbus to practice dentistry with Rex Kumpf DDS. She married Chad Hissong on June 21, 2008.

### Columbus Alumni Association

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

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

### Board of Directors

Steve Anderson `68, President	Anne Cruickshank Hughes `90
Bob Markham `76, V.P.	Robert Jaeggi `47
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Bob Hausmann `88	VanVelkinburgh `58
	Steve Zaura `81

# 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 \_\_\_\_\_ Class of \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please include maiden if applicable.)

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 2009.**

\_\_\_\_\_ 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





# Fall sports round-up

**Bob Markham**  
**Class of 1976**

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The fall sports season at CHS was led by a successful run to the State Cross County Meet by the boys and girls teams coached by Dave Licari.

The boys team led by seniors Trevor Urkoski, Alex Markham and junior Jon Powell qualified for the state cross country meet for the first time in 19 years finishing seventh as a team. They also finished second overall at the district meet in Seward.

The girls' team with the experience of seniors Jena Schwalenberg, Danielle Archuleta and Carrie Wiese won the district meet and finished as the state runner-up at the state competition in Kearney. Both teams lose key seniors; however, they return good talent on both squads.

The Discoverers football team guided by Coach Craig Williams, in his third year at the helm, finished the season at 5-5 with a state playoff loss to McCook. They were led by seniors Grant Otten, Nathan Hughes and Michael Ziola. With a talented group of underclassmen, the Discoverers figure to build on the successes of the past two years.

The girls golf team led by Coach Anne Robertson again

finished strong with a fifth place finish at the state meet. The Discoverers were led by state medalists senior Sara Thurley (13<sup>th</sup>) and sophomore Morgan Smejkal (tie 13<sup>th</sup>). Amanda Ballweg, Paige Theilen and Shayla Rudy rounded out the state qualifiers.

The Discoverers softball squad with Coach Jack Gutierrez at the helm finished the season with a 13-22 record. A gutty run through the district tournament, battling injuries to key players, ended with a 4-3 loss to Grand Island in the finals. The softball squad was led by seniors Megan Kresha and Ashley Szlag. The team loses some experience but has good talent coming back next season.

The volleyball squad led by Coach Jared Johnson was in a rebuilding year finishing the season at 9-26. The Discoverers were led by seniors Molly Brown, Kerrin Thomas, Rachael Weber, Shelby Hughes, Ashley Meyers and Alecyia Watson. The CHS volleyball squad looks to improve next season with a group of underclassmen.

The Boys Tennis team was led by seniors Jared Ostdiek, David Gokie and Simon Schacher. The Discoverers finished the year at the state tournament placing 17<sup>th</sup>. A young but talented group return to lead Coach Scott Bethune's squad next year.

## North Park earns energy award

North Park Elementary School was the first school in the Columbus area to earn the Energy Star designation.

North Park Elementary School, Loup Power District, and Nebraska Public Power District recently teamed up to apply for the Energy Star honor.

ENERGY STAR is the national symbol for protecting the environment through superior energy performance. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) sponsor this award.

Loup and NPPD assisted the school with their application for the Energy Star label, by verifying energy consumption, occupant comfort, and proper lighting and ventilation levels.

To date, some 3,200 buildings nationwide have earned the ENERGY STAR designation with North Park being the first school in Loup's service territory to earn the award.

"North Park Elementary School is pleased to have earned the EPA's ENERGY STAR in recognition of our energy efficient efforts," said North Park Principal Bob Hausmann. "Through this achievement, we have demonstrated to our community and our students a commitment to environmental stewardship while also keeping our energy costs down."

By earning the ENERGY STAR, North Park Elementary School is using about 35 percent less energy than average schools, while still providing comfort to its students, staff, and faculty. The cost effective improvements to the building help in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The building was renovated in 2002, during which ground source heat pumps were installed throughout the entire facility. Following startup of the ground source heat pump system, Loup and NPPD assisted the school with reviewing its heating and cooling control system and evaluating its electricity and natural gas consumption.

Its energy performance was found to be very good, and it has maintained that track record over the years.

"The heating and cooling system is the major energy consumer in most buildings. Many buildings have state of the art heating and cooling systems installed but still need maintenance and tuning to keep them running at optimum efficiency," said Rick Cheloha, New Business Supervisor at Loup.

"North Park has a good system that has performed very well over time and the Energy Star designation is testimony to that."



# New faces in old places

**Anne Cruickshank Hughes**  
**Class of 1990**

Celeste Ditter returns to Columbus Public Schools to teach.

Better known to most as Celeste Ritter, the 2004 graduate of CHS has returned to her roots to teach vocal music at Columbus Middle School.

She married her high school sweetheart, Scott Ditter (Scotus Central Catholic graduate), on July 4th, 2008 right here in their hometown, Columbus. Celeste attended Doane College the past four years receiving her Bachelor of Arts in Music Education.

In March, she signed a contract with Columbus Public Schools to be the vocal music teacher at Columbus Middle School because both she and Scott saw great potential in moving back home. Their parents, Fred and Becky Ritter, and Harvey and Judy Ditter, are still living in town. They are excited to be back in Columbus and anticipate many years of friendship and success in the City of Power and Progress.

When asked about the advantages and challenges of working at the same school she attended, Celeste responded saying, "Well, the first couple days of working at CMS I felt naughty going into the teacher's lounge... but when I got over that the challenges were



very minimal. It has been great to know where things are in the building as well as be familiar with the other schools in the district."

Another challenge was to get her past teachers and present colleagues to see her as an adult.

"I know in their mind they saw a miniature person running around the room and disrupting their classes, but most of them have gotten over their grudge against me or they're good at hiding it," she said. "Truly, all of the staff at CMS have been very welcoming, especially the ones that survived having me as a student."

Celeste had a similar teaching offer in a comparable school district.

Why did she pursue Columbus?

"I took the job for the benefit of the music students in the Columbus district. With my dad having the CHS vocal music position, I saw this as an opportunity for students to continue to develop their music skills under two teachers with the same philosophy of music education," she said.

"Scott and I are both very glad to be back. Family has always been important to us, so being close to them now is a great blessing. I would encourage Columbus Alumni to pursue great and glorious things, and to always remember that too is possible in Columbus, Nebraska! Go Discoverers!"

## Since Graduation

**Linda Kodad Myers `69** – Acting on stages around the Austin, Texas area.

**Randall Cheloha, Ph.D. `72** – After nine years as a management consultant and partner with Marsh & McLennan, a fortune 200 professional service company, he left to start his own leadership development and executive coaching firm. He and his family live in Wynnewood, PA.

**Mike Berlin `73** – Owner of Excel Physical Therapy.

**Eugene "Sonny" Bokelmann `74** – Son and daughter-in-law expecting in June 2009, and this will be his second

grandchild.

**Susan Mason Greenwald MD `75** – 20<sup>th</sup> year of practicing pediatrics in Kearney, NE.

**Deborah Nienkamp `81** – Bachelor's degree in education from UNL in 1986.

**Andrea Starman Schumacher `95** – Andrea and her husband Mark adopted their daughter, Addison Liya, from Ethiopia. She was born August 2, 2007 and came home April 21, 2008. She was welcomed home by her brothers, Trevor, 4, & Caleb, 2.

# Tourney nets funds for basketball programs

## Tom Zimmerman Class of 1971

Another successful CHS Alumni Basketball Tournament was held over Thanksgiving Weekend. Tournament and gate fees enabled the committee to donate \$1,800 to Columbus High School Boys and Girls Basketball programs.

The members of the boys and girls teams provided supervision, served as referees and ticket takers, as well as handled scoring and time keeping for the entire tournament. We can't thank them enough for all the support they gave us, and we look forward to this relationship again in the future.

Tournament winners were: Maroon Division: 2004; White Division: 1997; and Legends Division: 1982 plus.

The committee members for the tournament included: Steve Anderson 1968, Tom Zimmerman 1971, Bob Markham 1976, Luke Larsen 1986 and Roger Brown 1972.



**MAKING A DONATION** – Alumni Basketball Tournament Committee member Tom Zimmerman presented CHS Boys Basketball Coach Dave Hiebner, left, and CHS Girls Basketball Coach Dave Licari with a check. The members of the teams helped with the tournament.

## 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.**

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## *Columbus Alumni Reunion Plans for 2009 & 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.).

**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.

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

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

**1959** - 50th Reunion, Friday, May 22, 2009 and Saturday, May 23, 2009. Contact: Mary Frauendorfer at 402-564-6738 or mdorfer@frontiernet.net.

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

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

**1964** - 45th Reunion, Memorial Day Weekend 2009: Saturday, May 23rd, Icebreaker at location still to be determined; Sunday, May 24th, Dinner at Country Shadows; Golf Outing Saturday and/or Sunday, May 23rd /24th (contact Gary Fouraker at GL4aker2@msn.com). Questions, contact Suzy Viergutz Engel at jjengel@live.com, John and

Bonnie Kennedy at bonjohnken@msn.com, or Carolyn Hasek Fitzke at cf93924@windstream.net.

**1970** - If you have any suggestions or comments about what you would like to see at the 40th reunion in 2010, please contact Jim Schaefer at 402-564-4274 or email jschaefer001@neb.rr.com.

**1979** - 30th Reunion - August 22, 2009: tour of CHS 2-4 p.m. More details later. Contact: Mike Siedlik at signs@megavision.com.

**1989** - 20th Reunion - July 25, 2009: tour of CHS 2 p.m. More details to follow. Contact: Todd Bartee at 89er20yrreunion@live.com.

**1999** - 10 year reunion - August 7, 8 and 9, 2009. Details to follow. Contact: Andrew Sedlacek at ajsedlacek@hotmail.com.

### **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
  - Tips for planning reunions

Contact Michelle Cruise: PO Box 947, Columbus  
NE 68602-0947; Phone: 402-563-7000;  
E-mail: michelle.cruise@cps-ne.org