

# Class of 1956 remembers 'good old' days'

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Star-News

Saddle shoes, penny loafers, school dances, the Sherman Sals, favorite teachers and a dance with a cow chip that cost the Class of '56 at Sherman Community High School its senior assembly, along with its wills and prophecies — those are among the memories shared by the class celebrating its 50th reunion.

Some can't believe it's been that long, others had to really think to remember what mattered most. One even said, "That was 50 years ago — I can't remember yesterday."

But members of the reunion's honor class were happy to reminisce once their memories were prodded a little.

All the girls remembered the Sherman Sals, and all the alums commented on how times have changed since their high school years. Sharon (Stephens) Mann remembers good times with friends, a cow chip that cost the class its senior assembly and the high school sweetheart who is her husband 50 years later. She said she often wonders how it could be 50 years since she was in high school.

Patsy (McClung) VanVleet remembers dances, drive-in movies and dating the classmate she later married. Lucy (Harper) Ackerman remembers a favorite teacher and being part of the largest freshman class ever at the school. The school reunions are also fam-



Vickie White



Sharon Mann

ily reunions for her, she said.

Jack Eklund remembers playing sports, especially the good times going to the games, favorite teachers, since he enjoyed school (it was a nice break from working on the farm, he said) and driving to school from the farm, even in seventh and eighth grade.

Vickie (Richards) White remembers drama club, wearing jeans on Thursdays, taking pictures for the yearbook, "The Buckaroo," and the fashions that are no longer "in."

Many things at Goodland High School have changed over the past 50 years, Mann says, but the 1956 class is still the same, just not as young.

"It's amazing how we've all changed in some ways," she said, "but we've all stayed the same,

the same personalities."

As for recognizing each other after so many years, White said, even if you have nametags, they're hard to read with trifocals.

Mann said she remembers good times with friends, a lot of fun, everyone getting along and no trouble (well, only a little).

"The high school years were great!," she said. "We had a lot of fun. We had great teachers, great friends.

"I have great memories of high school."

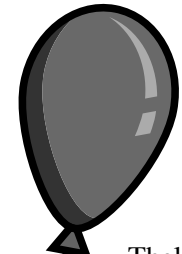
The dances were a lot of fun, VanVleet said;

there wasn't all the drinking and stuff like today. Most everyone went to the dances, she said, and had fun.

She said she attended school in Ruleton through the seventh grade and then came to Goodland. Her memories are of cheering with the Sherman Sals, time with friends, going to drive-in movies and dating classmate Ronald VanVleet, who became her husband.

Ackerman said she also enjoyed school, and

See CLASS OF 1956, Page 11



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# Honor class reminisces about teachers, sports

## CLASS OF 1956, from Page 9

her most vivid memory is of her favorite teacher.

"I always had a pretty good time in high school," Ackerman said. "I always had a lot of friends."

She remembers her favorite teacher was William Tiegreen, her freshman math teacher.

"The very first day of school," Ackerman said, "I was nervous. I walked up to him and asked where Mr. Teagreen's room was. He was wearing a green tie and pointed at it and said, 'I'm Mr. Tie Green.'"

It was one of the largest freshman classes, she said, with over 90 students, but their numbers dropped during their sophomore or junior year.

Ackerman said she thought about 69 students graduated with the class, but she wasn't sure. Eklund also remembers the largest freshman class and said there were over 100 students and about 80 who graduated. Usually about 60 or 70 attend the reunions, he said.

Ackerman said she looks forward to the reunions, not just to see classmates but also because most of her family graduated here. Her brother



Lucy Ackerman



Jack Eklund



Larry Ihrig



Conrad Pettijohn



Diane Workman



Lois Sieck

graduated in 1942, one sister in '59, another in '60 and that sister's husband in 1961. He was a wrestling champion, Ackerman said, and went to state.

Her sister, Carol Tupper of Goodland, graduated in 1955. The reunion is a time for family gathering, Ackerman said. Her first husband, Charles Sides, died in 1977 in an a sugar dust explosion in the elevator at the old sugar mill west of town. Their two adopted sons, Terry and Curt Sides, graduated from Goodland High in 1982.

Ackerman said she doesn't wonder how it could have been so long since she was in high school. Raising

kids and everything catches you up, she said.

Her mother had plenty to catch her up, she added, raising 11 children, but she felt she graduated from school late in life.

"When my youngest sister graduated," Ackerman said, "Mom put on the cap and gown. She felt she finally graduated after 36 years of (kids in) school."

Mann's memories also include the Sherman Sals. All the girls belonged to the pep club, she said, and they all wore gold sweaters and black skirts.

"It was great," she said. "I miss that."

The band was large, Mann said,

because there were no girls' sports except at the small schools. The band was the big activity, about 100 strong and it went on trips.

Having so many sports has hurt the band and vocal activities, she said, which is a shame. She said she tried to get girls' sports started when she was in high school.

"I was not a cheerleader," Mann said. "I was one who went to the principal and asked to start a girls' basketball team. I thought we could play Kanorado, Brewster and Edson."

The principal said "no," Mann said, "it's not ladylike."

Mann said she has told her daughters and granddaughters, "You don't

know how lucky you are."

But Mann agrees with VanVleet about what was better about going to school in the 1950s.

Kids didn't get in trouble then like today, Mann said. Back then, you didn't step out of the classroom without a pass, she said, and there was no skipping school like today. Teachers could discipline students, and you knew when you went home, you were in double trouble. The teacher was always right, she said.

Teenagers did rebel sometimes, but not by drinking, using drugs or violent fighting. The big class "scandal"

See CLASS OF 1956, Pg. 12

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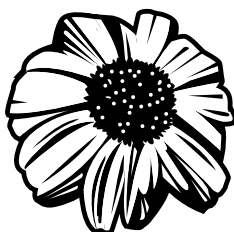
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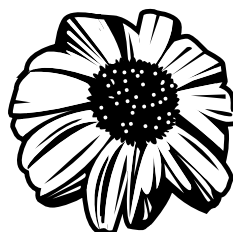
Lori (Coon) Leonard, '79

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# Play was highlight for one 1956 graduate



Dr. Samuel J. Higdon and Vickie (Richards) White, 1956 graduates, performed in the play "The Robe," based on a book by Lloyd C. Douglas during their senior year at Sherman Community High School. Yearbook photo

## CLASS OF 1956, from Page 11

the one that cost the class of '56 its senior assembly, class wills and prophecies and class officers, involved a cow chip.

There was a "twerp dance," Mann said, where the girls ask the boys, like what's now called a Sadie Hawkins Dance. All the plans had to be approved by the principal, she said, and that included the big cow chip they wanted to bring. The principal said "no," she said, but that didn't stop them.

For disobeying, she said, they lost the senior assembly, so the class didn't get to do wills and prophecies, no one was voted "class clown" or "most likely to succeed," and the class officers were stripped of their titles.

White remembers the drama club play was "The Robe" their senior year. It was based on a book by Lloyd C. Douglas, she said, set around the time of Christ and about a slave who found Christ.

"It's a book I'd recommend everyone read,"

**See CLASS OF 1956, Page 13**



Roxann (Jensen) '77  
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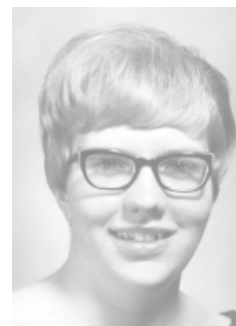
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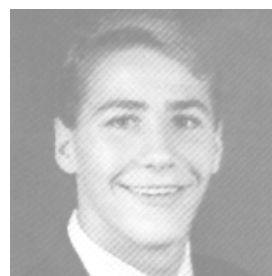
Byron Elliott, '72

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Richard Vasquez, '75

Not pictured: Chuck Engel, '77



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# Some married their high school sweethearts

CLASS OF 1956, from Pg. 12

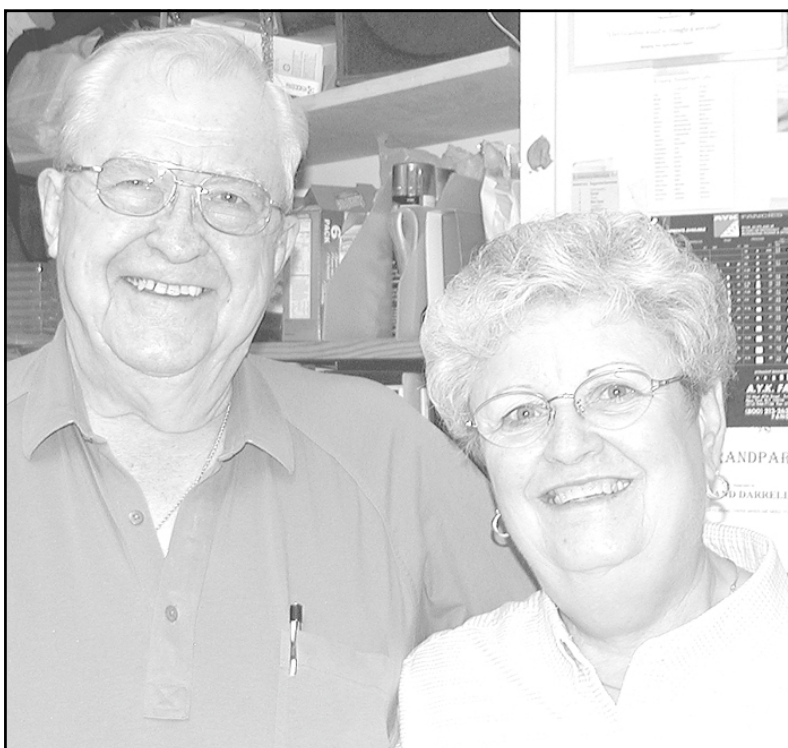
she said.

The club did a lot of radio plays, short plays and one-act plays, she said. White remembers being in the Sals and Kayettes, a club involved in community service that ran concession stands and coat checks.

Though there was no major trouble, she said, there were antics. The art class was in a room where students could climb out the window onto the roof, White said. Styles have changed, she said, the eyeglasses, hairstyles, saddle shoes, penny loafers and crinoline slips.

White's favorite teachers include Elizabeth (Conover) Taggart, who taught senior English and plans to be here for the reunion this year. She was the young, single "babe" teacher, White said.

Other favorites were Ruth McCurry, who taught junior English and was the drama club sponsor; Audrey Smith, who taught government and history; Jay Williams, the band director; and class sponsors, their senior year Milford Johnson, who taught math and science; junior



**Darrell and Sharon (Stephens) Mann, class of '55 and '56**

year Edgar "Ozzy" Osborne, social sciences and driver ed; sophomore year Basil Thomas, sophomore English; and freshman year Al McCall,

chemistry, physical education and mechanical drawing.

Eklund said his favorite teachers include Osborne, Johnson and Smith.

He remembers Maurice Little, the vocational agriculture teacher.

Eklund said he enjoyed school.

"It beat the heck out of working," he said. "We were hauling bales or something if not in school."

Also, school was where the kids got together and where they had something to do, he said.

"We didn't have television back then," Eklund said. "We didn't have much of anything, no cell phones, no computers, no laptops."

Eklund had fun in sports and remembers the good times going to games.

"We didn't have buses," he said. "Different people's parents hauled us to the games in cars."

There were little cliques, Mann said, groups they ran around with, but most of the class had attended together since kindergarten, so they were close. Many have stayed in touch for the 50 years since high school, she said.

"We have watched each other's kids grow up," she said.

Mann said she's really looking forward to the reunion.

"My girlfriends are all coming," she said. "Last time, we stayed up

talking until we lost our voices."

Her husband Darrell graduated from Goodland in the class of '55. They were high school sweethearts and celebrated their 50th anniversary in November. They farmed for 40 years before buying Mann's Jewelry 11 years ago. They have four children, the late Craig Mann, Brad Mann of Dighton and Dana Murray and Joni Guyer, both of Goodland.

Their children all graduated from Goodland High School, and four of their grandchildren have. When Emily Murray graduates in 2007, Mann said, she will be their fifth, and there are three more in school here.

"I'm proud of the fact that we've had so many go through here," she added.

Patsy and Ronald VanVleet have five children. They moved to McCook, Neb., where their kids spent most of their school years, before returning to Goodland. She was a nurse at the Goodland Regional Medical Center until she retired; he was grain manager at Collingwood Grain until retiring two years ago.

**See CLASS OF 1956, Pg. 14**

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# Several honor class members here

## CLASS OF 1956, from Pg. 13

Lucy Sides married Ron Ackerman in 1984. She worked 22 years as a deputy county treasurer before retiring. Mr. Ackerman, a Sherman County native, graduated from Brewster High School. He retired from Yellow Freight after driving triple trailers for 22 years.

White's husband was classmate Wendell White, who died in 1998. She said they started dating their senior year and married in college; both went to Kansas State University. He was a farmer, and she taught high school English and started the General Equivalency Degree program in 1968 and taught it for several years.

They have three children, Shelley Messner of Olathe, Goodland class of 1978; Lisa Murphy of Salina, Goodland class of '82; and Brandon White of Goodland, class of '86.

Eklund said he and his wife Marilyn grew up 10 miles apart but didn't meet until after high school. She



Sally Michael



Sylvia Zimbelman

graduated from Cheylin High School in Bird City. They met when she was working at a beauty shop in Goodland.

They have two children, Jacque Drennan, who works for them at Eklund Insurance, and Shanna (Todd) Tibbetts of Shawnee, and four grandchildren. They have owned the insurance company 20 years and were in farming and ranching before that. They still own farmland, he said, but rent it out.

Other members of the Class of '56

who still live here include Larry Ihrig, Robert Beckner, Robert Bradshaw, Lois (Parish) Sieck, Conrad Pettijohn, Mac Thompson and Sylvia (Brown) Zimbelman. Sally (Smith) Michael lived many years in Brewster and was the Brewster correspondent for *The Goodland Star-News* and *The Colby Free Press*. She moved to Hays after her husband Roger, retired minister of the Living Waters Church, died in November 2004.

Connie Morgan, class of '56, was crowned homecoming queen during half-time of the Colby-Goodland football game 50 years ago. Her attendants were Sally Sanderson and Jana Little. The football picture shown was taken at Atwood.

Photo of a yearbook page

## SPORTS



Miss Connie Morgan was crowned queen during the half-time of the Colby-Goodland football game. Her attendants were Sally Sanderson and Jana Little. The football picture below was taken at Atwood.

On the opposite page is an aerial picture of the Smoky River. Below it are snapshots of the Goodland-Norton basketball game and wrestler Gale Young during a wrestling match.



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# Book published on Ruleton and the school

By Sharon Corcoran

*The Goodland Star-News*

A Goodland woman has been digging up the good ol' days, and a couple of her friends, plus many people and organizations, have helped her turn them into a book.

Arbutus Topliff has spent the last three years researching the history on Ruleton and its school. Lois Sieck and her cousin, Janice Parish Scanlon of Florida, helped her compile the information and put the book together.

And, the author says, countless others helped her find records from the school and contributed photos for the book.

From the town's founding in 1887, under the name of Rule, to the country school consolidation in 1927 and construction of the brick building in '28 to the tornado in 1941 and beyond, the people, events and tales from the school yard have been laid out in print.

The book, called "Ruleton and Its School," has sparked interest among those who attended

the school, those whose family did, history buffs and people who have just heard about it, she said.

The book has been available since mid-December, and Topliff had sold 16 copies by January and had 20 more ordered, many of which are already spoken for. At \$25 a copy, the book has already found homes in California, Nebraska and Arizona, besides Sherman County.

It's been selling like hotcakes, Topliff said.

At four pounds and about 215 pages, the book is in a loose-leaf notebook, allowing the own-

ers to take things out if they want and to add pages later, when more information is discovered. They can even add their own Ruleton pictures and memorabilia, Topliff said.

While talking about Ruleton, the book, the school and old times, Sieck and Topliff came across a few questions about Ruleton history they would like to have answers to and possibilities for gathering more information to add to the book. There could be some more pages

See RULETON, Page 20

## Goodland grad's finger on Denver's pulse

BURGESS, from Page 7

the South Platte River.

"In some ways, it has always been the back door into downtown," said Steve Gordon, development program manager for the city. "Now it has the potential to be the front door, except that the street is not attractive. It doesn't give people a good impression of Denver."

Several developers have set their sights on the area, the article reports, including Dana and Jack Crawford, probably best known for redeveloping historic Larimer Square.

Real estate consultant Bob Gollick said he has gotten a number of calls about the area over the past three years and has helped several landowners get their properties rezoned.

The commitment of neighbors who are in-

vested in the area will make development successful, he said. People such as Burgess, president of the Eyria Swansea/Globeville Business Association, will make sure it's developed responsibly.

Burgess has a vision for the block he owns, bounded by Delgany Street and Brighton, 35th and 36th avenues. He plans to build live-work spaces and would like to see larger retailers fronting Brighton, with smaller independent retailers in the rear facing the river.

Burgess is leasing space in his building at 3519 Brighton to small businesses. He doesn't plan to let the growth drive out small businesses.

"As I start developing my block," he said, "I may want the guy across the street to put in more trees, but I don't want to get rid of the third-generation family businesses."

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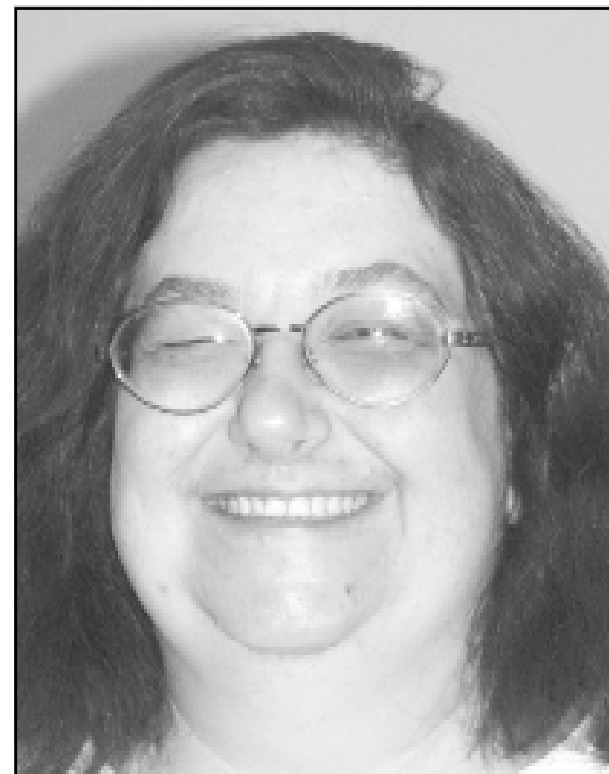
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# Class of 2006 gets pep talk from top coach

The Goodland High Class of 2006 got a pep talk from a former graduate as the main speaker as the 63 seniors graduated on May 20 at Max Jones Fieldhouse.

Nyla Wilson Milleson, a 1980 graduate, talked about her success since she received her own diploma 26 years ago.

Milleson, women's basketball coach at Drury University since 2000, has the most wins of any active Division II coach in the country with 85.6 percent.

She built the program from the

ground up and made it into a winner.

Milleson was named the NCAA Division II Region 7 Coach of the Year by the Women's Basketball Coaches Association after leading the Lady Panthers of Drury University (Mo.) to a 30-3 season.



Milleson

She was introduced by Shelley Angelos, the new superintendent, who took over the district in July.

Milleson said she has had a simple life with many

blessings.

"Goodland is still home to me, even if I have been gone 26 years," she said,

adding that some of her teachers are still here.

She gave the seniors five keys to success, starting with yourself.

"You must believe in yourself," she said. "Have faith and rely on that. Faith acts as a safety valve."

Her second key was to set goals and have a good work ethic.

"A successful person always sets goals," Milleson said. "Athletics are very goal oriented."

Her third key was commitment. That is what drives a person, she said.

"Are you happy with your efforts?" she asked. "Hard work's constant companion is sacrifice. How do you

react to the bad days?"

Milleson's fourth key was perseverance.

"That separates the winners from the losers," she said. "Quitting is not an option. Expect to win."

Her fifth key was to be a good person everyday of your life.

"There are so many more important things than winning," she said. "Hope to make a difference in one person's life."

In her six seasons at Drury, Milleson's teams compiled a 160-27 record. The Panthers' best season was 2003-2004, when they went 36-2 and finished as the national runnersup.

Drury finished 19-0 in conference play. The Panthers lost in the conference postseason tournament finals to the Northern Kentucky University, a team they beat in December.

In the national playoffs, Drury made it to the Great Lakes regional championship, losing the Grand Valley State University (Mich.) 91-76. The Lakers of Grand Valley State went on to win their first national championship.

In high school Milleson lettered in volleyball, track and basketball. She helped the Cowgirls win the state Class 4A basketball championship her senior year.

## Former Goodland graduate designs, paints historic mural in Topeka

**MURAL, from Page 8**

ers and creeks, and other unique land formations. The sunrises and sunsets are breathtaking and calming at the same time. Our four seasons create a myriad of colors worthy of any artists' palette.

"Any artist can see the grandeur of the great mountains and oceans, but to find beauty in the simplest of

rocky plains, tall native grasses, back roads, meandering creeks, fields of grain, takes someone who loves the plains.

"Regional art plays an important role in American history. I feel it not only records our place in time, but it is a window for others to see the ordinary in a not so ordinary way. I try to share that in each painting I create."

Krallman attended Hillside School,

one of the last one-room rural schools in Kansas, and earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Washburn University in Topeka in 1981.

Her parents are Darlene Kirby, who lives north of Kanorado, and the late Allen Kirby. She and her husband Mike live in Topeka.

People can see Krallman's work featured on her web site [www.prairiesagestudio.com](http://www.prairiesagestudio.com).

She has been featured in one-person shows, including the Eva Reynolds Gallery in Kansas City, Mo.; Carnegie Cultural Arts Center of Ottawa; Roy's Gallery, Lawrence; Beauchamp Gallery, Topeka; and Framewoods of Topeka; and is exhibiting a solo show at the Birger Sandzen Museum and Gallery in Lindsborg through September.

Her work has been selected in many

juried shows, including Corporate Woods' "Art in the Wood" and the Kansas Triennial, a three-year show that traveled the state, sponsored by the Kansas Arts Commission and Mulvane Art Museum.

Her work is in many private and corporate collections.



# WELCOMES

## all Sherman County Alumni to the Reunion!

- **MARTY MELIA** - Class of 1973
- **KATHY (REMPE) MELIA** - Class of 1974
- **BARB (BISHOP) NEITZEL** - Class of 1960 Kanorado
- **RON REMPE** - Class of 1977
- **TAMMY (ALLEN) FREEMAN** - Class of 1988
- **ANDREW MELIA** - Class of 2002

