



**Story Matters**  
**Kremlin-Hillsdale 2015-2016**

# STORY MATTERS

Each student in Mrs. Chelsea Edington's and Mrs. Deanna Chesser's language arts classes at Kremlin-Hillsdale was requested to visit with a graduate of Hillsdale, Kremlin, Kremlin-Hillsdale, or a person who has worked at KHS. Our purpose was to collect stories about the lives of those who have passed through the halls of our schools. We asked that our narrators be at least one generation older than students. Each pupil recorded a story, and you are about to read the tales that were printed and submitted for publication.

Every person has at least one story to tell, and now you have the privilege to read about a small part of another's life. Our intent is to capture narratives of the daily lives from those who are associated with our community. Soon, a new school building will take on its own identity, and new chapters in history will commence. Until then, let us enjoy our past.

We thank all students who interviewed, all parents who assisted their students, and all who allowed the rest of us into your personal lives. Your stories are interesting, inspirational, and entertaining. We appreciate your sharing them with us.

Many people's collaboration helped make this project successful. Thanks to all who were involved.

We recognize **T&M Printing, Inc.** for the generous donation to help us publish our book.

*Peggy Harris*

2016



## Preface to the Digital Indexed Version by Myron Toews

First, I want to acknowledge and thank Peggy (Smith Guthrie) Harris and Chelsea (Lloyd) Eddington for their foresight and dedicated effort in helping students collect and edit the stories in this book; because, yes, stories do matter! This book has special meaning for me beyond its stories, because Peggy Harris (then Mrs. Peggy Guthrie) was my own KHS and KHHS English teacher and now remains a good friend in my adulthood, and because Chelsea Eddington's father Russell Lloyd was a KHS and KHHS classmate of mine who also remains a good friend. I was honored to be asked to provide an interview/story for the book, and through my connections with Peggy Harris I was fortunate enough to obtain one of the few extra copies of the book for myself. During my Class of 1969's 50<sup>th</sup> Class Reunion in May of 2019, several of my classmates browsed my copy and/or Peggy's copy of the book and expressed their interest in having copies for themselves. I took on the task of scanning and assembling a digital copy of the book to make this possible. I also generated three indexes of the stories that were not included in the original: one listing the story-tellers and interviewers in page order from the original; one listing the story-tellers by year of graduation or attendance at Hillsdale, Kremlin, or Kremlin-Hillsdale High Schools, to allow readers to find stories from their own years in school; and one listing the story-tellers in alphabetical order by their last or maiden names, to allow readers to find stories by specific friends or relatives or neighbors. The stories all remain as they were in the original book, but my hope is that this digital and indexed version will allow sharing of these stories with many more who will enjoy reading them. Finally, though I cannot demand or require it, **my hope is that everyone who downloads or otherwise receives a copy of this book will make at least a modest donation, perhaps \$10 or \$25, to the Kremlin-Hillsdale Academic Enrichment Foundation (KHAEF)**, to help them to continue to provide extra support for current KHHS teachers and students for special projects such as this one. For everyone, please enjoy these stories from the past and support the future of Kremlin-Hillsdale Schools!

### Stories Index in Page Order

First Page	Story-Teller Name (Maiden Name In Parentheses)	Year Graduated	Age At Interview ()=Estimated	Which School	Interviewer
1	Guffey, Betty Jo (Thurman)	1947	87	Kremlin	Genesis Garvin
3	Hoffsommer, James	1945	88	Hillsdale	Paul Courtney
5	Voth, John	1950	83	Kremlin	Natalie Haggard
7	Johnson, Walter	1948	85	Kremlin	Elijah Espinoza
9	Kirkpatrick, Howard	1953	80	Kremlin	Cooper Coffey
10	Voth, Janet (Streck)	1977	56	KHHS	Taylor Parrish
11	Lloyd, Chelsea (Eddington)	2003	31	KHHS	Katy Brashears
13	Toews, Myron	1969	64	Kremlin	Cristain Vega
15	Hoffsommer, Steve	1971	63	KHHS	Briley Craig
17	Hudson, Anthony	2001	32	KHHS	Madison Morse
18	Hole, Goldie (English)	1971	63	KHHS	Carina Ramirez
19	Guthrie, Paige (Keithley)	1989	45	KHHS	Beau Brownell
21	Dabney, Eric	1989	44	KHHS	Alice Keithley
23	Voth, Dean	1975	59	KHHS	Jazzlin Stubblefield
25	Lloyd, Charles	1960	74	Kremlin	Donnie Bell
26	Crouch, Scott	1992	41	KHHS	Jordan Young
27	Voth, Peter	2001	33	KHHS	Jamon Caleb
28	Uhrig, Allana (Hart)	1985	48	KHHS	Riley Jung
29	Smith, Peggy (Harris)	1962	71	Kremlin	Austin DaSilva
31	Richards, Leslie (Brown)	1998	36	KHHS	Sayler Gallaway
33	Hayes, Monty	1990	44	KHHS	Lillie Long
35	Messenger, Scott	1991	40	KHHS	Ben Messenger
36	Stovall, John	1996	38	KHHS	Gavin McKee
37	Sharkey, Rita (Bode)	1971	63	KHHS	Andy Lochart
39	Bowen, Joe	1978	55	KHHS	Morgan Miller
41	Voth, Tom	1975	58	KHHS	Taylor Sinclair
43	Myers, Heather (Carson)	1991	43	KHHS	Rebecca Wasson
45	Toews, Eldon	1971	63	KHHS	Makayla Rauschenberg
47	Holland, Shari (Moore)	1989	45	KHHS	Miguel Rodriguez
48	Gray, Robbie	1995	39	KHHS	Bradie Gray
49	Craig, Bailey	2011	23	KHHS	Annie Pekrul
50	Maddox, Nichole	1992	41	KHHS	Isaiah Norwood
51	Zaloudek, Russell (Rusty)	1983	51	KHHS	Tia Phillips
53	Voth, Diane (Fosmire)	1979	55	KHHS	Joe Keithly
55	Simpson, Dian (Salisbury)	1976	57	KHHS	Carlee Salisbury
57	Maddox, Jamie	2003	31	KHHS	Elijah Norwood
59	Leak, Teresa (Helm)	1989	46	KHHS	Emily Felber
61	Youngblood, Holli (Johnson)	1996	37	KHHS	Makayla Ratzlaff
62	Helm, Kevin	1992	42	KHHS	Maranda Sharp
63	Mercer, Tina (Lunday)	1996	37	KHHS	Chloe Aguilar

65	Wiggins, Bradley	1995	(39)	KHHS	Draden Stallings
66	Shaklee, Suzy (Horvath)	1969	64	Kremlin	Katelyn Martin
67	Ellis, Tyler	1998	36	KHHS	Taylor Ellis
69	Hole, Mary (Craig)	1963	70	Kremlin	Mahayla Mitchell
70	Henke, Frank	1961	72	Kremlin	John Rose
71	Porter, Davian	1997	37	KHHS	Gracie Vandiver
73	Lakin, Sid	1976	58	KHHS	Lauren Bonine
75	Sellers, Todd	2006	(28)	KHHS	Logan Baker
76	Henry, Chris	1994	(40)	KHHS	Trace Henry
77	Wuerflein, James	1977	57	KHHS	Kyler Viveiros
79	McCartney, Ross	1998	36	KHHS	Taryn Rhodes
81	Dittmeyer, Kelley	2002	33	KHHS	Destinee Bell
83	Yell, Carla (Estes)	1974	(60)	KHHS	Matthew Wheeler
84	Bowen, Jackie		28	KHHS, Attended	Treven King
85	Craig, Kelly (Moffett)	1994	40	KHHS	Tatum Horning
86	Gordon, Jacque (Voth)	1980	54	KHHS	Mikayla Horning
87	Schultz, Mike	1970	63	KHHS	Ian Franklin
89	Lloyd, Russell	1969	(64)	KHHS	Kalli Rundle
90	Craig, Donna (Raney)	1982	53	KHHS	Kaity Woods
91	Messenger, Gale	1969	64	Kremlin	Kayla Andersen
93	Kirkpatrick, Betty Jo (Tennant)	1960	74	Kremlin	Noah Garvin
95	Mercer, Tina (Lunday)	1996	37	KHHS	Megan Clark
97	Smith, Shelly (Dulinsky)	1996	38	KHHS	Kelsie Brinson
98	Solorio, Cheri (Gannon)	1991	42	KHHS	Rebekah Gannon
99	Siebert, Archie	1974	60	KHHS	Ethan Haggard
101	Messenger, Roy	1964	70	Hillsdale	Karter Dehdezi
102	Sharkey, Wesley	2004	30	KHHS	Ellen Benton
103	Zaloudek, Mark	1980	53	KHHS	Nate Snodgrass
105	Steele, Ida (Hamm)	1965	69	Kremlin	Hailey Hicks
106	Foxm Jeffrey	1986	48	KHHS	Zoe Hawkins
107	Schmidt, Trilby (Long)	1987	47	KHHS	Koby Viveiros
109	Gordon, Lisa	1978	55	KHHS	Malia Voth
110	Hays, Jenifer (Luper)	2002	32	KHHS	Jayden Gerhard
111	Sissom, Floyd	1974	61	KHHS	David Hoover
112	Messenger, Jay	1968	66	Hillsdale	Everett Bonine
113	Hukle, Grant	1985	48	KHHS	Kadence Stewart
115	Beaver, Kay (Putney)	1962	72	Kremlin	Mary Keithly
117	Buller, Alfred	1964	69	Hillsdale	Joshua Reimer
118	James, Bruce	1968	64	Hillsdale	Dori Benton
119	Ransom, Harriet (Lloyd)	1971	(63)	KHHS	Hannah Rundle
121	Wuerflein, Carol (Garrett)	1974	60	KHHS	Shayla Cline
122	Kucera, Jace	2000	34	KHHS	Kellie McKee
123	Hermanski, Jim	1967	67	Kremlin	Caden Russell

124	Zaloudek, Jamy (Perdue)	1990	44	KHHS	Emily Rodriguez
125	Oswalt, Lark (Schultz)	1971	61	KHHS	Zoey Webber
127	Chesser, Tabitha (Buller)	2003	30	KHHS	Kaylynn Brownell
128	Zaloudek, Kelly (Kliewer)	1983	49	KHHS	Josie Larsen
129	Lizar, Lynda	1965	68	Hillsdale	Madison Roberts
130	Jones, Breanna (Easley)	2003	31	KHHS	Carlen Lazcano
131	Sanders, Roy	1962	72	Kremlin	Hunter Miller
133	Darnell, Brenda (Hoffsommer)	1970	63	KHHS	Kenna Lam
134	Johns, Chad	1989	50	KHHS	Rocco Maner
135	Mendenhall, Christie (Neal)	1998	36	KHHS	Jordan Harris
137	Gray, Richard	1963	70	Kremlin	Nicholas Snodgrass
138	Robino, Lindsey (Swart)	1997	37	KHHS	Brittany Hill
139	Buller, Harold	1960	73	Hillsdale	Rachel Reimer
140	Voth, Tom	1975	58	KHHS	Hunter Stroud
141	Mercer, Tina (Lunday)	1996	37	KHHS	Magwire Lunday
142	Hermanski, Carol (Mulberry)	1960	75	Kremlin	Aundera Bratcher
143	Brainard, Katie (McCants)	2000	34	KHHS	Tristin Lockhart
145	Minnick, Holly (Johnson)	1997	36	KHHS	Baylee Smith
146	Duhon, Amber	2003	30	KHHS	Tony Bell
147	Helm, Jody ("Doug")	1989	45	KHHS	Kristin Helm
148	Voth, Diane (Fosmire)	1979	55	KHHS	David Schrader
149	Tarrant, Christy (Baker)	2000	34	KHHS	Sammy Romero
151	Tarrant, Christy (Baker)	2000	34	KHHS	Sammy Romero
153	Lloyd, Royce	2000	34	KHHS	Dakota Wilson
154	Stubblefield, Steve	1972	64	KHHS	Kaya Hackworth
155	Porter, Tara (Yarbrough)	1995	39	KHHS	Abby Vandiver
157	Hayes, Nancy	1959	75	Hillsdale	Marissa Roberts
159	Streck, Leland	1981	52	KHHS	Carissa Streck
161	Stubblefield, Janis (Jordahl)	1976	58	KHHS	Michelyn Stevens
163	Myers, Shelli (Minnick)	1987	46	KHHS	Bailey Hoeltzel
165	Ronck, Kennette (Craig)	1992	41	KHHS	Mary Keithly
167	Mendenhall, Sara (Gorman)	1995	38	KHHS	Garrett Gorman
169	Hermanski, Jim	1967	67	Kremlin	Aundrea Bratcher
171	Ratzlaff, Doug	1991	40	KHHS	Harris Keithly
173	Steele, Elizabeth (Hill)	1976	57	KHHS	Gabrielle Morris
175	Lloyd, Tara (Waddle)	2005	29	KHHS	Andrew Wheeler
177	Biby, Sharon (Ronck)		65	KHS School Board	J. D. Felber
177	Guthrie, Paige (Keithly)	1989	45	KHHS	J. D. Felber
179	Streck, Dave	2000	33	KHHS	Sophie Fosmire
181	Hermanski, Carol (Mulberry)	1960	75	Kremlin	Aundrea Bratcher
183	Harris, Jim		75	Teacher, Coach	Mathew Pritchett
185	Youngblood, Kelli (Schovanec)	2000	33	KHHS	Demi Sutor
187	Craig, James, Jr	1986	48	KHHS	Seth Schrader

189	Crouch, Zac	2002	32	KHHS	Datona Ratzlaff
190	Welman, Johnny	1986	47	KHHS	Dalton McAlister
191	Thesman, Jolita (Jodi, Gossen)	1970	63	KHHS	Zeb Hawkins
193	Hoffsommer, Jeff	1978	56	KHHS	Connor Snapp
195	Bowen, J. C.		78	Hillsdale	Matthew Watts
197	Bundy, Lori (Conrady)	1997	38	KHHS	Daylan Dulinsky
198	Crouch, Zac	2002	32	KHHS	Datona Ratzlaff
199	Crouch, Zac	2002	32	KHHS	Nicole Morse
200	Farmer, Teri (Hicks)	1981	52	KHHS	Josh Streck
201	Welman, Johnny	1986	47	KHHS	Dalton McAlister

### Stories Index in Graduation Year Order

Year Graduated	Age At Interview; ()=Estimated	Which School	Story-Teller Name (Maiden Name In Parentheses)	Interviewer	First Page
1945	88	Hillsdale	James Hoffsommer	Paul Courtney	3
1947	87	Kremlin	Betty Jo (Guffey) Thurman	Genesis Garvin	1
1948	85	Kremlin	Walter Johnson	Elijah Espinoza	7
1950	83	Kremlin	John Voth	Natalie Haggard	5
1953	80	Kremlin	Howard Kirkpatrick	Cooper Coffey	9
1959	75	Hillsdale	Nancy Hayes	Marissa Roberts	157
1960	75	Kremlin	Carol (Hermanski) Mulberry	Aundera Bratcher	142
1960	75	Kremlin	Carol (Hermanski) Mulberry	Aundrea Bratcher	181
1960	74	Kremlin	Charles Lloyd	Donnie Bell	25
1960	74	Kremlin	Betty Jo (Kirkpatrick) Tennant	Noah Garvin	93
1960	73	Hillsdale	Harold Buller	Rachel Reimer	139
1961	72	Kremlin	Frank Henke	John Rose	70
1962	72	Kremlin	Kay (Beaver) Putney	Mary Keithly	115
1962	72	Kremlin	Roy Sanders	Hunter Miller	131
1962	71	Kremlin	Peggy (Smith) Harris	Austin DaSilva	29
1963	70	Kremlin	Mary (Hole) Craig	Mahayla Mitchell	69
1963	70	Kremlin	Richard Gray	Nicholas Snodgrass	137
1964	70	Hillsdale	Roy Messenger	Karter Dehdezi	101
1964	69	Hillsdale	Alfred Buller	Joshua Reimer	117
1965	69	Kremlin	Ida (Steele) Hamm	Hailey Hicks	105
1965	68	Hillsdale	Lynda Lizar	Madison Roberts	129
1967	67	Kremlin	Jim Hermanski	Caden Russell	123
1967	67	Kremlin	Jim Hermanski	Aundrea Bratcher	169
1968	66	Hillsdale	Jay Messenger	Everett Bonine	112
1968	64	Hillsdale	Bruce James	Dori Benton	118
1969	64	Kremlin	Myron Toews	Cristain Vega	13
1969	64	Kremlin	Suzy (Shaklee) Horvath	Katelyn Martin	66
1969	64	Kremlin	Gale Messenger	Kayla Andersen	91
1969	(64)	KHHS	Russell Lloyd	Kalli Rundle	89
1970	63	KHHS	Mike Schultz	Ian Franklin	87
1970	63	KHHS	Brenda (Darnell) Hoffsommer	Kenna Lam	133
1970	63	KHHS	Jolita (Jodi Thesman) Gossen	Zeb Hawkins	191
1971	63	KHHS	Steve Hoffsommer	Briley Craig	15
1971	63	KHHS	Goldie (Hole) English	Carina Ramirez	18
1971	63	KHHS	Rita (Sharkey) Bode	Andy Lochart	37
1971	63	KHHS	Eldon Toews	Makayla Rauschenberg	45
1971	61	KHHS	Lark (Oswalt) Schultz	Zoey Webber	125
1971	(63)	KHHS	Harriet (Ransom) LLOYD	Hannah Rundle	119
1972	64	KHHS	Steve Stubblefield	Kaya Hackworth	154
1974	60	KHHS	Archie Siebert	Ethan Haggard	99

1974	60	KHHS	Carol (Wuerflein) Garrett	Shayla Cline	121
1974	(60)	KHHS	Carla (Yell) Estes	Matthew Wheeler	83
1974	61	KHHS	Floyd Sissom	David Hoover	111
1975	59	KHHS	Dean Voth	Jazzlin Stubblefield	23
1975	58	KHHS	Tom Voth	Taylor Sinclair	41
1975	58	KHHS	Tom Voth	Hunter Stroud	140
1976	58	KHHS	Sid Lakin	Lauren Bonine	73
1976	58	KHHS	Janis (Stubblefield) Jordahl	Michelyn Stevens	161
1976	57	KHHS	Dian (Simpson) Salisbury	Carlee Salisbury	55
1976	57	KHHS	Elizabeth (Steele) Hill	Gabrielle Morris	173
1977	57	KHHS	James Wuerflein	Kyler Viveiros	77
1977	56	KHHS	Janet (Voth) Streck	Taylor Parrish	10
1978	56	KHHS	Jeff Hoffsommer	Connor Snapp	193
1978	55	KHHS	Joe Bowen	Morgan Miller	39
1978	55	KHHS	Lisa Gordon	Malia Voth	109
1979	55	KHHS	Diane (Voth) Fosmire	Joe Keithly	53
1979	55	KHHS	Diane (Voth) Fosmire	David Schrader	148
1980	54	KHHS	Jacque (Gordon) Voth	Mikayla Horning	86
1980	53	KHHS	Mark Zaloudek	Nate Snodgrass	103
1981	52	KHHS	Leland Streck	Carissa Streck	159
1981	52	KHHS	Teri (Farmer) Hicks	Josh Streck	200
1982	53	KHHS	Donna (Craig) Raney	Kaity Woods	90
1983	51	KHHS	Russell (Rusty) Zaloudek	Tia Phillips	51
1983	49	KHHS	Kelly (Zaloudek) Kliewer	Josie Larsen	128
1985	48	KHHS	Allana (Uhrig) Hart	Riley Jung	28
1985	48	KHHS	Grant Hukle	Kadence Stewart	113
1986	48	KHHS	Jeffrey Fox	Zoe Hawkins	106
1986	48	KHHS	James Craig, Jr	Seth Schrader	187
1986	47	KHHS	Johnny Welman	Dalton McAlister	190
1986	47	KHHS	Johnny Welman	Dalton McAlister	201
1987	47	KHHS	Trilby (Long) Schmidt	Koby Viveiros	107
1987	46	KHHS	Shelli Myers-Minnick	Bailey Hoeltzel	163
1989	50	KHHS	Chad Johns	Rocco Maner	134
1989	46	KHHS	Teresa (Leak) Helm	Emily Felber	59
1989	45	KHHS	Paige (Guthrie) Keithley	Beau Brownell	19
1989	45	KHHS	Shari (Holland) Moore	Miguel Rodriguez	47
1989	45	KHHS	Jody (aka Doug) Helm	Kristin Helm	147
1989	45	KHHS	Paige (Guthrie) Keithly	J. D. Felber	177
1989	44	KHHS	Eric Dabney	Alice Keithley	21
1990	44	KHHS	Monty Hayes	Lillie Long	33
1990	44	KHHS	Jamy (Zaloudek) Perdue	Emily Rodriguez	124
1991	43	KHHS	Heather (Myers) Carson	Rebecca Wasson	43
1991	42	KHHS	Cheri (Solorio) Gannon	Rebekah Gannon	98

1991	40	KHHS	Scott Messenger	Ben Messenger	35
1991	40	KHHS	Doug Ratzlaff	Harris Keithly	171
1992	42	KHHS	Kevin Helm	Maranda Sharp	62
1992	41	KHHS	Scott Crouch	Jordan Young	26
1992	41	KHHS	Nichole Maddox	Isaiah Norwood	50
1992	41	KHHS	Kennette (Ronck) Craig	Mary Keithly	165
1994	40	KHHS	Kelly (Craig) Moffett	Tatum Horning	85
1994	(40)	KHHS	Chris Henry	Trace Henry	76
1995	39	KHHS	Robbie Gray	Bradie Gray	48
1995	39	KHHS	Tara (Porter) Yarbrough	Abby Vandiver	155
1995	38	KHHS	Sara (Mendenhall) Gorman	Garrett Gorman	167
1995	(38)	KHHS	Bradley Wiggins	Draden Stallings	65
1996	38	KHHS	John Stovall	Gavin McKee	36
1996	38	KHHS	Shelly (Smith) Dulinsky	Kelsie Brinson	97
1996	37	KHHS	Holli (Youngblood) Johnson	Makayla Ratzlaff	61
1996	37	KHHS	Tina (Mercer) Lunday	Chloe Aguilar	63
1996	37	KHHS	Tina (Mercer) Lunday	Megan Clark	95
1996	37	KHHS	Tina (Mercer) Lunday	Magwire Lunday	141
1997	38	KHHS	Lori (Bundy) Conrady	Daylan Dulinsky	197
1997	37	KHHS	Davian Porter	Gracie Vandiver	71
1997	37	KHHS	Lindsey (Robino) Swart	Brittany Hill	138
1997	36	KHHS	Holly (Johnson) Minnick	Baylee Smith	145
1998	36	KHHS	Leslie (Richards) Brown	Saylor Gallaway	31
1998	36	KHHS	Tyler Ellis	Taylor Ellis	67
1998	36	KHHS	Ross McCartney	Taryn Rhodes	79
1998	36	KHHS	Christie (Mendenhall) Neal	Jordan Harris	135
2000	34	KHHS	Jace Kucera	Kellie McKee	122
2000	34	KHHS	Katie (Brainard) McCants	Tristin Lockhart	143
2000	34	KHHS	Christy (Tarrant) Baker	Sammy Romero	149
2000	34	KHHS	Christy (Tarrant) Baker	Sammy Romero	151
2000	34	KHHS	Royce Lloyd	Dakota Wilson	153
2000	33	KHHS	Dave Streck	Sophie Fosmire	179
2000	33	KHHS	Kelli (Youngblood) Schovanec	Demi Sutor	185
2001	33	KHHS	Peter Voth	Jamon Caleb	27
2001	32	KHHS	Anthony Hudson	Madison Morse	17
2002	33	KHHS	Kelley Dittmeyer	Destinee Bell	81
2002	32	KHHS	Jenifer (Hays) Luper	Jayden Gerhard	110
2002	32	KHHS	Zac Crouch	Datona Ratzlaff	189
2002	32	KHHS	Zac Crouch	Datona Ratzlaff	198
2002	32	KHHS	Zach Robino	Nicole Morse	199
2003	31	KHHS	Chelsea Lloyd Eddington	Katy Brashears	11
2003	31	KHHS	Jamie Maddox	Elijah Norwood	57
2003	31	KHHS	Breanna (Jones) Easley	Carlen Lazcano	130



2003	30	KHHS	Tabitha (Chesser) Buller	Kaylynn Brownell	127
2003	30	KHHS	Amber Duhon	Tony Bell	146
2004	30	KHHS	Wesley Sharkey	Ellen Benton	102
2005	29	KHHS	Tara (Lloyd) Waddle	Andrew Wheeler	175
2006	(30)	KHHS	Todd Sellers	Logan Baker	75
2011	23	KHHS	Bailey Craig	Annie Pekrul	49
	78	Hillsdale	J. C. Bowen	Matthew Watts	195
	75	Teacher, Coach	Jim Harris	Mathew Pritchett	183
	65	KHS School Board	Sharon (Biby) Ronck	J. D. Felber	177
	28	KHHS, Attended	Jackie Bowen	Treven King	84

### Stories Index in Alphabetical Order

Story-Teller Name (Maiden Name In Parentheses)	Year Graduated	Age At Interview ( )=Estimated	Which School	Interviewer	First Page
Beaver, Kay (Putney)	1962	72	Kremlin	Mary Keithly	115
Biby, Sharon (Ronck)		65	KHS School Board	J. D. Felber	177
Bowen, J. C.		78	Hillsdale	Matthew Watts	195
Bowen, Jackie		28	KHHS, Attended	Treven King	84
Bowen, Joe	1978	55	KHHS	Morgan Miller	39
Brainard, Katie (McCants)	2000	34	KHHS	Tristin Lockhart	143
Buller, Alfred	1964	69	Hillsdale	Joshua Reimer	117
Buller, Harold	1960	73	Hillsdale	Rachel Reimer	139
Bundy, Lori (Conrady)	1997	38	KHHS	Daylan Dulinsky	197
Chesser, Tabitha (Buller)	2003	30	KHHS	Kaylynn Brownell	127
Craig, Bailey	2011	23	KHHS	Annie Pekrul	49
Craig, Donna (Raney)	1982	53	KHHS	Kaity Woods	90
Craig, James, Jr	1986	48	KHHS	Seth Schrader	187
Craig, Kelly (Moffett)	1994	40	KHHS	Tatum Horning	85
Crouch, Scott	1992	41	KHHS	Jordan Young	26
Crouch, Zac	2002	32	KHHS	Datona Ratzlaff	189
Crouch, Zac	2002	32	KHHS	Datona Ratzlaff	198
Crouch, Zac	2002	32	KHHS	Nicole Morse	199
Dabney, Eric	1989	44	KHHS	Alice Keithley	21
Darnell, Brenda (Hoffsommer)	1970	63	KHHS	Kenna Lam	133
Dittmeyer, Kelley	2002	33	KHHS	Destinee Bell	81
Duhon, Amber	2003	30	KHHS	Tony Bell	146
Ellis, Tyler	1998	36	KHHS	Taylor Ellis	67
Farmer, Teri (Hicks)	1981	52	KHHS	Josh Streck	200
Foxm Jeffrey	1986	48	KHHS	Zoe Hawkins	106
Gordon, Jacque (Voth)	1980	54	KHHS	Mikayla Horning	86
Gordon, Lisa	1978	55	KHHS	Malia Voth	109
Gray, Richard	1963	70	Kremlin	Nicholas Snodgrass	137
Gray, Robbie	1995	39	KHHS	Bradie Gray	48
Guffey, Betty Jo (Thurman	1947	87	Kremlin	Genesis Garvin	1
Guthrie, Paige (Keithley)	1989	45	KHHS	Beau Brownell	19
Guthrie, Paige (Keithly)	1989	45	KHHS	J. D. Felber	177
Harris, Jim		75	Teacher, Coach	Mathew Pritchett	183
Hayes, Monty	1990	44	KHHS	Lillie Long	33
Hayes, Nancy	1959	75	Hillsdale	Marissa Roberts	157
Hays, Jenifer (Luper)	2002	32	KHHS	Jayden Gerhard	110
Helm, Jody ("Doug")	1989	45	KHHS	Kristin Helm	147
Helm, Kevin	1992	42	KHHS	Maranda Sharp	62
Henke, Frank	1961	72	Kremlin	John Rose	70
Henry, Chris	1994	(40)	KHHS	Trace Henry	76

Hermanski, Carol (Mulberry)	1960	75	Kremlin	Aundera Bratcher	142
Hermanski, Carol (Mulberry)	1960	75	Kremlin	Aundrea Brtcher	181
Hermanski, Jim	1967	67	Kremlin	Caden Russell	123
Hermanski, Jim	1967	67	Kremlin	Aundrea Bratcher	169
Hoffsommer, James	1945	88	Hillsdale	Paul Courtney	3
Hoffsommer, Jeff	1978	56	KHHS	Connor Snapp	193
Hoffsommer, Steve	1971	63	KHHS	Briley Craig	15
Hole, Goldie (English)	1971	63	KHHS	Carina Ramirez	18
Hole, Mary (Craig)	1963	70	Kremlin	Mahayla Mitchell	69
Holland, Shari (Moore)	1989	45	KHHS	Miguel Rodriguez	47
Hudson, Anthony	2001	32	KHHS	Madison Morse	17
Hukle, Grant	1985	48	KHHS	Kadence Stewart	113
James, Bruce	1968	64	Hillsdale	Dori Benton	118
Johns, Chad	1989	50	KHHS	Rocco Maner	134
Johnson, Walter	1948	85	Kremlin	Elijah Espinoza	7
Jones, Breanna (Easley)	2003	31	KHHS	Carlen Lazcano	130
Kirkpatrick, Betty Jo (Tennant)	1960	74	Kremlin	Noah Garvin	93
Kirkpatrick, Howard	1953	80	Kremlin	Cooper Coffey	9
Kucera, Jace	2000	34	KHHS	Kellie McKee	122
Lakin, Sid	1976	58	KHHS	Lauren Bonine	73
Leak, Teresa (Helm)	1989	46	KHHS	Emily Felber	59
Lizar, Lynda	1965	68	Hillsdale	Madison Roberts	129
Lloyd, Charles	1960	74	Kremlin	Donnie Bell	25
Lloyd, Chelsea (Eddington)	2003	31	KHHS	Katy Brashears	11
Lloyd, Royce	2000	34	KHHS	Dakota Wilson	153
Lloyd, Russell	1969	(64)	KHHS	Kalli Rundle	89
Lloyd, Tara (Waddle)	2005	29	KHHS	Andrew Wheeler	175
Maddox, Jamie	2003	31	KHHS	Elijah Norwood	57
Maddox, Nichole	1992	41	KHHS	Isaiah Norwood	50
McCartney, Ross	1998	36	KHHS	Taryn Rhodes	79
Mendenhall, Christie (Neal)	1998	36	KHHS	Jordan Harris	135
Mendenhall, Sara (Gorman)	1995	38	KHHS	Garrett Gorman	167
Mercer, Tina (Lunday)	1996	37	KHHS	Chloe Aguilar	63
Mercer, Tina (Lunday)	1996	37	KHHS	Megan Clark	95
Mercer, Tina (Lunday)	1996	37	KHHS	Magwire Lunday	141
Messenger, Gale	1969	64	Kremlin	Kayla Andersen	91
Messenger, Jay	1968	66	Hillsdale	Everett Bonine	112
Messenger, Roy	1964	70	Hillsdale	Karter Dehdezi	101
Messenger, Scott	1991	40	KHHS	Ben Messenger	35
Minnick, Holly (Johnson)	1997	36	KHHS	Baylee Smith	145
Myers, Heather (Carson)	1991	43	KHHS	Rebecca Wasson	43
Myers, Shelli (Minnick)	1987	46	KHHS	Bailey Hoeltzel	163
Oswalt, Lark (Schultz)	1971	61	KHHS	Zoey Webber	125

Porter, Davian	1997	37	KHHS	Gracie Vandiver	71
Porter, Tara (Yarbrough)	1995	39	KHHS	Abby Vandiver	155
Ransom, Harriet (Lloyd)	1971	(63)	KHHS	Hannah Rundle	119
Ratzlaff, Doug	1991	40	KHHS	Harris Keithly	171
Richards, Leslie (Brown)	1998	36	KHHS	Sayler Gallaway	31
Robino, Lindsey (Swart)	1997	37	KHHS	Brittany Hill	138
Ronck, Kennette (Craig)	1992	41	KHHS	Mary Keithly	165
Sanders, Roy	1962	72	Kremlin	Hunter Miller	131
Schmidt, Trilby (Long)	1987	47	KHHS	Koby Viveiros	107
Schultz, Mike	1970	63	KHHS	Ian Franklin	87
Sellers, Todd	2006	(28)	KHHS	Logan Baker	75
Shaklee, Suzy (Horvath)	1969	64	Kremlin	Katelyn Martin	66
Sharkey, Rita (Bode)	1971	63	KHHS	Andy Lochart	37
Sharkey, Wesley	2004	30	KHHS	Ellen Benton	102
Siebert, Archie	1974	60	KHHS	Ethan Haggard	99
Simpson, Dian (Salisbury)	1976	57	KHHS	Carlee Salisbury	55
Sissom, Floyd	1974	61	KHHS	David Hoover	111
Smith, Peggy (Harris)	1962	71	Kremlin	Austin DaSilva	29
Smith, Shelly (Dulinsky)	1996	38	KHHS	Kelsie Brinson	97
Solorio, Cheri (Gannon)	1991	42	KHHS	Rebekah Gannon	98
Steele, Elizabeth (Hill)	1976	57	KHHS	Gabrielle Morris	173
Steele, Ida (Hamm)	1965	69	Kremlin	Hailey Hicks	105
Stovall, John	1996	38	KHHS	Gavin McKee	36
Streck, Dave	2000	33	KHHS	Sophie Fosmire	179
Streck, Leland	1981	52	KHHS	Carissa Streck	159
Stubblefield, Janis (Jordahl)	1976	58	KHHS	Michelyn Stevens	161
Stubblefield, Steve	1972	64	KHHS	Kaya Hackworth	154
Tarrant, Christy (Baker)	2000	34	KHHS	Sammy Romero	149
Tarrant, Christy (Baker)	2000	34	KHHS	Sammy Romero	151
Thesman, Jolita (Jodi, Gossen)	1970	63	KHHS	Zeb Hawkins	191
Toews, Eldon	1971	63	KHHS	Makayla Rauschenberg	45
Toews, Myron	1969	64	Kremlin	Cristain Vega	13
Uhrig, Allana (Hart)	1985	48	KHHS	Riley Jung	28
Voth, Dean	1975	59	KHHS	Jazzlin Stubblefield	23
Voth, Diane (Fosmire)	1979	55	KHHS	Joe Keithly	53
Voth, Diane (Fosmire)	1979	55	KHHS	David Schrader	148
Voth, Janet (Streck)	1977	56	KHHS	Taylor Parrish	10
Voth, John	1950	83	Kremlin	Natalie Haggard	5
Voth, Peter	2001	33	KHHS	Jamon Caleb	27
Voth, Tom	1975	58	KHHS	Taylor Sinclair	41
Voth, Tom	1975	58	KHHS	Hunter Stroud	140
Welman, Johnny	1986	47	KHHS	Dalton McAlister	190
Welman, Johnny	1986	47	KHHS	Dalton McAlister	201

Wiggins, Bradley	1995	(39)	KHHS	Draden Stallings	65
Wuerflein, Carol (Garrett)	1974	60	KHHS	Shayla Cline	121
Wuerflein, James	1977	57	KHHS	Kyler Viveiros	77
Yell, Carla (Estes)	1974	(60)	KHHS	Matthew Wheeler	83
Youngblood, Holli (Johnson)	1996	37	KHHS	Makayla Ratzlaff	61
Youngblood, Kelli (Schovanec)	2000	33	KHHS	Demi Sutor	185
Zaloudek, Jamy (Perdue)	1990	44	KHHS	Emily Rodriguez	124
Zaloudek, Kelly (Kliwer)	1983	49	KHHS	Josie Larsen	128
Zaloudek, Mark	1980	53	KHHS	Nate Snodgrass	103
Zaloudek, Russell (Rusty)	1983	51	KHHS	Tia Phillips	51

**BETTY THURMAN, 87, interviewed by GENESIS GARVIN, 15**  
**Recorded in Kremlin, Oklahoma**  
**Graduate of Kremlin, 1947**

The girls never had a basketball team growing up, but we had a Pep Club. Our uniforms were red circular skirts with white wool V-necked sweaters with a big K on front. We always attended every game and sat by each other. The boys' basketball team was playing in the district tournament at the time in Pond Creek, so the Pep Club wanted to support the team. But before we went we had to get permission to be there from Leonard Chelf, our superintendent and the Coach of the boys' basketball team. Some of the girls from my class and I asked if we could attend the game, and he said yes, we could. So the next day we all arrived at school in our uniforms, ready to climb on the bus. However, the bus was jammed full with all the basketball boys. Just before we were about to get on the bus, Coach said he changed his mind about letting us attend the game. We were so disappointed that he wouldn't let us go. As the bus was leaving, there were two boys from our high school who showed up, and they had their own cars. So we all decided to just ride with them to the game even though he had told us we couldn't go. We tried fitting as many people in there as possible. When we finally made it to the game, we were so excited and nervous to be there, and we couldn't wait to see how Coach would react to seeing us there. He saw us walking in, but he didn't say anything; he just smiled and looked away. So we didn't think anything of it, and we thought we were getting away with this. We cheered the boys on and then we all headed back home. That evening everyone came over to my house, and we talked and laughed about how clever we had been to outsmart the system. We thought we were off free. So we thought because Coach never mentioned anything to us while we were there.

A couple of weeks passed and there was an announcement that we were having an assembly. We marched into the assembly, and he shocked us about how he had heard that we were bragging that we had pulled off skipping school to attend the game. We knew that we were in some trouble now and would be in trouble at home from our parents as well. He gave us three choices to choose from for our punishment. The first punishment was to read a 500 page book and write a 1000 word theme. Only one girl took that offer because she was good at writing and enjoyed reading. The second punishment was to lose our activity period; the girls who didn't play sports chose that one because it wouldn't affect them in any way. The third punishment was to get a spanking from Mr. Chelf, himself. Only five of us took this offer. One was a senior girl and two were juniors, and one was my sister. One was a sophomore, and I was the only freshmen. The next morning we trudged to school, and we were told to come to the old science that had big windows looking out to the parking lot. About the time we were being swatted, the Enid bus pulled into the parking lot and there was a clear view inside. Everyone was watching me through those picture windows and it was so embarrassing! Everyone watching us getting the swat was worse than the actual swat!

Two years later we finally figured out who turned us in. It was my father! He had overheard us talking about skipping out to the game and not suffering any consequences. So he told Coach Chelf that we should be punished. My own dad had caused me trouble; not for skipping school, but for being so smug about it. Still, the swat was worth it. It was so fun going to the game.

**JAMES HOFFSOMMER, 88, interviewed by PAUL COURTNEY, 17**  
**Recorded in Hillsdale, Oklahoma**  
**Graduated from Hillsdale, 1945**

I was invited to attend a banquet when Ronald Reagan was running for president. At that time he was governor of California. He campaigned in Oklahoma City around 1980. I was county chairman of the Republican Party then, and we were invited to the banquet hosted north of the capitol at the Lincoln Boulevard Hotel on Lincoln Plaza. We planned to arrive at the banquet and then leave for home when it was all over. We showed up and heard his campaign speech. I had heard him before at Tulsa, and he had some form of charisma about him that I can't describe. So after it was over, we stood up, ready to drive home. Then the state chairman approached me and said, "James, you can stay all night here. Reagan has a suite up there on the top floor, and he'd like to have about half a dozen guys show up to his suite in the morning and talk. Do you want to be one of them?"

"Well, yes," I responded.

We rented a room, but he said, "Jeanie (my wife) won't be able to be there, just you. So you guys wake up in the morning, and the Secret Service will escort you to the suite." Sure enough, in the morning, they knocked on our door, and they verified my identity with my driver's license. We took the elevator to the top and entered his suite room. It was about the size of a living room, and it looked out over Lincoln Plaza. First, a guy entered the room. His name was Holmes Tuttle. He was the biggest Chevrolet dealer in the world, and he was Reagan's finance advisor when Reagan was governor prior to this. So, he was hosting Reagan, bringing him back here, and he talked with us before Reagan arrived. Then Reagan entered and shook



everyone's hands all around. One woman there was a state senator. He then told us, "Sit down, and I would like to ask you what you think a president ought to be (or at least something to that effect)."

I thought, *Oh, man, this is rather short notice. I wonder what I'll say.* Fortunately, I was third or fourth in line so I had a little time to think about it.

When it was my time, I said, "I think it's important that a President knows what the Bible says about a nation that violates the Jewish nation."

That was my statement. I can't quote his reaction verbatim, but he said, "Well, 'I will bless them that bless you and curse them that curse you.' Is that what you had in mind?"

"Yes," I agreed.

Reagan replied, "I think you'll find that somewhere in Genesis." Well, Genesis 12:3 is what the reference is. He wasn't offended, and he followed the advice of that Bible verse when he became President of the United States. He took good care of Israel. I'm not saying this because I asked him, but it's quite an honor to be allowed to ask a future president a question.

**JOHN VOTH, 83, interviewed by NATALIE HAGGARD, 15**  
**Graduated from Kremlin in 1950**  
**Recorded at his home in Kremlin, Oklahoma on February 13, 2016**

I was born in 1932 on a farm one mile south and one west of the Midway. I began my school days in 1938. I never was a very good student, but I think the teacher might have had a few favorites, and I was not one of them. When I was in elementary school, the teacher taught those kids to read and write, but the rest of us just sat and colored. During that time the classes were combined; first, second and third grades were together and fourth, fifth and sixth grades were together. My happiest school days were always the last ones. So, that's how I felt about school, but I graduated. I liked to play baseball and basketball. I went to Tabor College for one year, but I didn't like to study. I did play basketball in college, though. In 1953, I was drafted into the Army. After Basic Training, I spent 18 months in Munich, Germany. That opportunity gave me a chance to see other parts of the world, and I am grateful.

After I returned home from the Army, I started farming with my dad and brothers. We farmed for some old people who lived two miles west and two north of the Midway. Their names were Jim and Minnie Stewart. They were the nicest old people. They were married to each other for seventy some years, but they had no children and no close relatives. They treated us like we were their kids. My brothers each had three children as did my wife and I. We would all drive over to the Stewart's house at Christmas time, and they would give each one of the kids a five dollar bill. We all took good care of the Stewarts, not just because of the gifts, but because they were wonderful people. They lived very long lives. Jim passed away first at the age of ninety-one. Minnie followed right behind him; she died within six months after her husband's death. When the lawyer later opened their will, they had willed \$1,000 to Boys Town School in Nebraska and \$20,000 to the Kremlin School. It was very uncommon that someone would will money to a school. Jack Gordon was the superintendent at the time, and he knew that my brothers and I were very close to the Stewarts. We didn't have anything to do with the will though. Between the three of us boys, we had nine kids in this school. Jim and Minnie just wanted something nice for our kids and the community. The administration decided that they would build a swimming pool. Of course the community and the school district had to put some money in with it. Anyway, that is how our pool came to be named the Mr. and Mrs. Jim Stewart Community Pool. You might give them a silent "thank you" next time you walk into the bath house.

In 1956 my sister, Dorothy, set up a date between my now wife, Mary Ann and me. She told me that I was going to have to be nice to her and not say any bad words, and for heavens sakes don't do anything rude. I guess I was charming enough. We got along pretty well, and we were married in the winter of 1957. We've stayed together for nearly 60 years.

I'm very fortunate. My daddy gave this farm, where we now live, to Mary Ann and me. He bought the farm in 1933. Back then there was an old two story farm house sitting here about

where my house is now. One thing I remember about it was that it had an upstairs in it. One day Dr. Sheets came over to the house with his black bag. He walked upstairs, and when he came down, we had a baby. Of course, I didn't know my mother was pregnant; I was just a little guy. Either everything about babies was secretive or else I didn't pay any attention. Whichever, I had no idea a new baby was moving in with us. That's the story of how my sister Dorothy was born.

It wasn't long after that, (now this is no lie.) My parents decided to build a new house right here. While they were building, we lived in the chicken house. Don't laugh, but we did. The way I remember it, we had a few curtains in there. We ate on the east side and slept in the middle, and I don't know what was on the other side. My two grandpas were living then, and the workers would take the boards over to them and they would pick the nails out of the old lumber. Then the good boards that they had separated out were used in the new house. They finished building the house in 1938. Mary Ann and I added the washroom after we got married and a room upstairs after we had children. Finally, this game room and garage, "my man cave," we added in 1978. I told my kids that we lived in the chicken house for a long time while we built this house, but none of them believed me. Honest to goodness, my own children didn't believe me. They had to ask my uncle who was still living. He finally convinced them that we did live in the chicken house.

From humble beginning, I've manage to live a comfortable life. I'm thankful for the many blessings I've received.

**WALTER JOHNSON, 85, interviewed by ELIJAH J. ESPINOZA, 14,  
Recorded at Walter's house in Breckenridge, OK.  
Graduate of Kremlin, Class of 1948.**

I am Walter, but I've been called "Shorty" for as long as I can remember. I come to dinner when I hear either name. I was the youngest boy in my family so maybe that's where the nickname came from.

I attended a small country school called Rosebud, which was located about 4 miles east and 1 ½ miles south of Kremlin. Twelve kids total were in my school, and that included grades 1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>. In second grade, Rosebud closed, and I moved on to Kremlin schools. We were small, but I have many fond memories of school, family times, and growing up in this area close to Enid.

One of my best memories and experiences was when I played basketball. The Kremlin basketball gym was located uptown from the school next to where the old bank used to be and across from the co-op and where the old fire station is located now. The dressing room was in the basement. It had a dirt floor until a group of us high school boys helped put a cement floor in it. We didn't have fancy equipment, but with a few shovels, wheelbarrows, and lots of manual labor, we added the concrete floor to the basement. It wasn't very smooth or pretty, but it did keep us from having to dress in dust and dirt. I remember one of my games was played at the Douglas gym. I am one of the few people who remembers the gym used a pot belly stove to heat the building. The stove was located right in the middle of the court. We had to dribble around it as we ran from one end to the other. Also the backboards almost touched the ceiling so there was no high arch on any ball that was shot from the field. It was pretty much a straight line from the hands to the goal.

I was always an active member of the basketball team and really enjoyed playing ball with my buddies. Maybe one reason was that we had to make the trip from school to the gym, and along the way we would goof around and stop at the bank/post office/candy store to buy a pop at Rathmels. Somehow along the way, we'd forget to make it back to school. Mr. Hubbard, our superintendent, would call us in the office and tell us "you really hadn't ought to do that," but I don't ever recall any other discipline.

Academically, I really enjoyed math; algebra was ok, but I never learned geometry very well. Our teacher was hard, and I never caught on. This teacher stayed all year long, and lucky for me, she graded on a curve, or I would have failed. I think the average was a 35%. During my junior and senior years, we had five different science teachers. Mostly they were all women because the men were involved in WW II. The ladies would stay a week or two and then leave. I think our boys caused them a lot of grief. I never did! Not me! For whatever reason, they didn't like our company much. It was war time and maybe they found better jobs. I'm not sure. I do know that people in the schools and the country were suffering. There was probably much more that my classmates and I could have learned, but there was not enough manpower or teachers so we tried to do the best we could.

After graduation, my dad gave me a choice to go on further to college or to start farming. I decided I wanted to farm. I raised wheat, milo, barley and oats mostly; one year I tried corn, but never again! I raised hogs, cattle, horses, and greyhounds to help hunt coyotes.

I was drafted in 1953 into the US ARMY. I spent two months training at Camp Chaffee, Arkansas. Then I was sent to Fort Hood, Texas. That was the most terrible time ever. I slept in tents and stayed outside all day and night. The weather was hot and dry, and I was just miserable the whole time I was there. For the rest of my stint, I was stationed in Alabama, where I was a member of the chemical decon unit. I was in the service for 21 months. My older brother Lawrence had been in the Marines for two years before I was drafted. He was on his way to fight in the Korean War, but on the trip over there, the war ended, and he was diverted to Japan for more of a vacation. Finally, Lawrence and I returned home to take care of the family farm. My other brother Alvin went to college and had a career in banking and real estate. My sisters Evelyn and Velma attended college, but I'm not sure if Bernice did.

We Johnson kids had a great time growing up on the farm. For fun, once a week we would drive to Enid and sell eggs and cream. On Sundays we would ride horses. We also made trips for entertainment. Max and Rex hamburger joint was located east of the square on Randolph, and we always had a burger there when in town. We shopped at the downtown "Hopkins" grocery store on East Randolph and occasionally we would see a movie.

I know that kids today have better facilities and greater technology than we did, but I don't think that they could be having any more fun than when I was growing up. I wouldn't want to change places with them, anyhow.

**HOWARD KIRKPATRICK, 80, relates a historic tale about the cat caper to COOPER COFFEY, 13**

**Recorded by e-mail from California  
Graduated from Kremlin High School**

My fondest memory of the time I lived in Kremlin was the "CAT CAPER." In 1952 there had been reports of a panther attacking cattle around the Pond Creek area so my three high school buddies decided we would add to that rumor. Merle Phillips, Gene Fawcett, and I decided one evening to build a cat. We drew an outline of a panther on a piece of card board, painted it black, nailed it to a board, and pulled it across the road the next evening after dark. The plan was as simple as that. We wanted to scare one of our friends when he came to the ball game at the high school that night.

We didn't even know what a panther looked like so we had walked to my brother's house to look at a picture of a panther that he had hanging on the wall of his home. We made a good outline of a panther but it did not have a tail. After building it and gluing on a piece of mirror for an eye, we decided to test it. We drove out about one half mile east of Kremlin on the blacktop where the bridge crosses the creek. We pulled the cat in front of three cars, but it didn't seem to have any effect so we just threw it under the bridge and went home.

All of us had gone to bed, and we were listening to the basketball game on the radio when the reporter broke into the broadcast and announced that the panther had been seen one mile east of Kremlin. It was black and had a big bushy tail.

It seems that the last car we had pulled it in front of stopped at the home of F. W. Zaloudek, and he called the highway patrol. When we heard this announcement, I jumped in my 1936 Chevrolet and picked up my friends. When we arrived at the bridge, Gene Fawcett, who was barefoot, ran down to retrieve the "cat" while Merle and I turned the car around so we could make a quick get-away. We threw the "cat" over the front fender and headed back into town. We had just turned off the main road when the highway patrol crept by with its spotlights searching the area for the deadly feline.

The next morning the incident was the main news item. People were listening on their radios and telling how they had lost a calf or a sheep. The lead story in the *Enid Morning News* was about the panther. Other newspapers across the country were writing stories about it.

Every kid in school was talking about the "cat." Only Mrs. Welty, our math teacher, told everyone to quit talking about it and get back to our lessons. She said, "It's probably across the street under Merle's bed," but only the three of us knew that she had guessed correctly. We were scared that our practical joke had gotten out of hand so we confessed to Mr. Braley, our coach, to ask what to do. He said, "Just tell the truth and everything will be fine." When we did say it was a joke, no one believed us. People from all over three states were coming in to track the panther. One fellow had found Gene's barefoot print and said that he'd tracked the panther a half mile up the creek.

After a few days the story all quieted down and things returned to normal. However, a practical joke by three high school boys turned into a sensation that has gone down in Kremlin history. Now the story will be passed down to future generations.

**JANET VOTH STRECK, 56, was interviewed by TAYLOR PARRISH, 15,  
Recorded in Janet's home on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
Graduate of Kremlin-Hillsdale class of '77**

What is one thing that you remember most about high school?

"I have always been deathly afraid of mice. Since I moved here I have just been able to talk myself out of it. Everyone knew that I was scared of mice. My cousin Dan, who has since passed away, caught a mouse one day in the shop. He thought it would be funny to put the mouse in my locker. I believe this had to have been my senior year I'm sure it was because I had a top locker. You know when you come out of class and all the kids are watching you, you know something is up. I couldn't figure out what it was because I got in my locker and I didn't see the mouse and it didn't jump out or anything. The mouse sat in my locker until the next hour. When I left the classroom for the second time someone, I-don't-know-who had already told me that Dan had put a mouse in my locker. Then I was scared to open it. When I finally did, that mouse jumped out, and in my mind it probably had long fangs and sharp claws and was coming right at me. It actually ran down the hall. So this mouse was running loose in school for a while and no one caught it until one day I was in the office working as an office aid. There was about a two inche gap under the doors. Anna Toews was the Secretary in the office next to the one I was in. I was sitting on the bar stool behind the high counter. All of a sudden here came the mouse from under the door running past me into Anna's office. She was trying to chase it, and she finally wacked it with her shoe, but she let me get the final blow in the kill. I have always hated mice, and I still don't like mice. Those boys putting that mouse in my locker still sticks in my mind. I had to take all my books, paper, pencils, and stuff to disinfect it, and it was terrible. I couldn't stand the thought of that little mouse being in my locker.

CHELSEA LLOYD EDINGTON, 31, interviewed by KATY BRASHEARS, 13  
Recorded at school  
Graduated from Kremlin- Hillsdale in 2003

### The day of the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001

I was a junior in high school. Almost everyone took band in high school. Band was first hour. I'm not really the person that's ever late for school, but I was that day. I was driving to school listening to KJ103 on the radio. I don't remember exactly if it was a song I really liked or a commercial I was interested in, but I was listening to the radio when it went silent all of a sudden. A couple minutes later, a reporter announced that an airplane had crashed into one of the Twin Towers in New York City. I was in awe and was wondering what was going on. Who would do something like this? And why would they? Why did they? By that time, I was really late for class and headed into school.

I remember walking into the back band room doors and seeing Mrs. Toelle point her finger at me ready to yell at me and lecture me for being so late. Before she said anything, I told her something bad had happened, that a plane had flown into one of the towers. She told me to look it up on CNN in her office on the computer. We did and we watched all of the updates trying to figure out what was happening.

All of that day was a blur. I don't remember going to any classes to check in or going to lunch. I only remember sitting in the library in awe almost all day watching the news. We watched the second plane hit the tower. At that point it was hard to process what was happening. When the Oklahoma City Bombing occurred, we were in elementary school and didn't get to see it; it wasn't as hard to swallow. When this happened, however, no one could understand why, unlike the bombing where the man confessed. This emotional wound wasn't as easy to close. For me, it's easier to swallow a bad demented guy doing bad things than it is for an entire country claiming responsibility.

It was one of those days, even if you didn't know what was going on, no one got in trouble, there were no fights, no one had a bad attitude. When you checked in to a class, the teacher would undoubtedly let you go watch the TV in the library, and if they didn't, they had the radio on.

The elementary school was told what was going on, and even they sensed it wasn't a good day to act up. Some of them were scared and most of them didn't have a clue what was happening, much less understand any of it. The whole high school didn't understand any of it. To this day, I am still kind of confused why someone would do this and why it happened. Fifteen



years later, thinking about it is still a hard pill to swallow. I hope nothing that awful ever happens again, no one should have to witness something like that.



Twin Towers on September 11, 2001.

DR. MYRON TOEWS, 64, relates a story of his childhood to CRISTAIN VEGA, 14  
Recorded via e-mail from Omaha, Nebraska  
Graduated from KHS

My fourth grade year at Kremlin Grade School began like all the others. I lived in a big old two-story farm house where my great-grandfather had died, my grandparents had lived and died, and where my parents and my two brothers now lived. The house did not have "modern conveniences." We did not have running water or indoor plumbing, so my mornings began with carrying out the "pot" with whatever bathroom issues my family had generated overnight – out to the out-house, which was our daytime bathroom. We collected the rain water that fell on our roof in two large cisterns and pumped out cold fresh water as needed. A bucket of water with a dipper for drinking sat beside the sink in the kitchen. Mom would boil water on the stove for washing dishes or our hands. We would carry in cold water from the cisterns and put four or five buckets into the bathtub, to which Mom would add a kettle of boiling water to heat it up. Then the whole family would take very quick baths in rapid succession, making as much use of the precious hot water as possible. My morning chores were to pump water from a well and carry it to the sheep, pigs, and chickens. I never gathered the eggs from under the hens because they would always peck me; if my Mom reached under to take their eggs, they looked the other way and took the loss of their eggs in stride. Actually, each hen was thankful she could still lay good eggs – if not, she would be our chicken dinner later in the week! Each of us boys had our own cow to milk, and we always enjoyed squirting a little over to the many cats and kittens watching and waiting as we milked.

We rode the bus to school most days, but our road was often too muddy or snowy; on those days Dad would haul us boys through the pasture to the "blacktop" road 1/2 mile further north on the back of the tractor so that we could catch the school bus there. After school, it was more chores, a meal of food we had mostly raised ourselves, and off to bed. Notice I did not mention television – we did not have one!

It may not sound like it, but these were the good old days for me. And they came to an abrupt halt at the end of my fourth grade year, on May 3, 1961. My oldest brother Galen was preparing for college, and my parents took him and his best friend to visit Tabor College in Hillsboro, Kansas, for some church-related youth event. My middle brother Arrel and I stayed with my grand-parents Jacob and Elizabeth Voth and our Aunt Tena Voth about a mile further south and west. I will never forget my mother waking me up in the middle of the night to tell me, "We are all OK, and everything will be OK, but our house has been blown away by a tornado tonight." As Mom and Dad had driven home from Kansas and reached Jefferson and Pond Creek, it was clear that a major storm had just raged through. All the way to Kremlin, water stood on the roads and wheat stalks had been plastered into the fences and that meant strong winds. As Mom and Dad turned up the dirt road to our house, they found electrical and telephone poles toppled across the road. They carefully moved them and drove on toward home. As they reached the top of the hill, where they should have been able to see the roof of our house, there was nothing but space. A tornado had roared through and hit our farmyard dead center. The roof of our house was gone, although the walls were still standing. I could stand in my upstairs bedroom and look up at the wide open sky. If we had been in bed that night, we would have died. Our barn was completely destroyed, and we lost some but not a lot of our cows and sheep. Our "car shed" had vanished, the back half of our machine shed was gone, and the top half of our silo was missing. Life had changed abruptly for our family, but as my mother had said, we were all

OK but never the same. We immediately set out on building our new life, starting by cleaning up the mess that remained of our old life – salvaging what we could from the house, lifting up broken barn segments to uncover another sheep who had survived, and being thankful we ourselves had all lived.

Besides my family and farm life, the next most important part of the good old days for me was our connection with the Mennonite Brethren Church, a major part of my family heritage for well over one-hundred years. I had grown up in the "country" church at the north edge of North Enid, and church was a large part of our lives on Sunday mornings, Sunday evenings, Wednesday evenings, and more. The "country" church had just voted to merge with the "city" church in the town of Enid. My grandfather and several other families were upset about the union – not with the decision to unite, but with the way the decision had been made, which was not done according to the historical peaceful and consensus approach that were supposed to characterize Mennonite churches. My grandpa's family and mine and several others from Kremlin had left the Mennonite Church because of issues surrounding the merger, so my church life was beginning to change.

When the tornado hit our house, many of our neighbors and relatives rushed out for several days to help us with clean up and recovery. Some of the Mennonite church leaders were quick to our rescue, but they came not to help us work, but to tell my parents that this tornado was God's punishment for having left the Mennonite Church. I remember my dad telling me many times that he had informed them that if they had not come to grab a pitchfork and help, they were kindly welcome to please leave – we didn't need their theology or reprimands. And I suspect he maybe didn't say it quite that politely. Needless to say, this cemented my parents' decision to separate from that church, and we never returned. The tornado had not only blown away my farm house and life, but my church connections also. We attended the Kremlin Community United Methodist Church the rest of our days in Kremlin.

After the tornado, we moved into one of my Uncle Henry Toews's rental houses in Kremlin, the one that still stands just south of the Post Office. This was my first introduction to "city life." We lived in town, but we still packed into the pickup every morning and evening to head out to "the farm" to continue to do our chores, from tending our animals to building fence to plowing and sowing and harvesting. And of course, lots of time was spent tearing apart the remains of our old house, so we could use the lumber to build our new house on the blacktop, near where Dad had hauled us to catch the school bus (and where the Streckes now live).

Another life-altering experience that year was the death of Don Roy Beaver in a car accident at the northeast corner of Kremlin. It was the only Kremlin school student's death I can remember. It impacted me even more because my brother Galen had been dropped off at our house in town just minutes before the accident. Galen was yearbook editor the next year and dedicated the yearbook to the memory of Don Roy Beaver.

On November 3, 1963, 18 months to the day after the tornado, we moved into our new house. We had indoor plumbing! Running water! Air conditioning! This wonderful thing called black-and-white television! And, my dad was now one of the school bus drivers. Life at home and in Kremlin was beginning to seem normal and familiar again, a good thing for a sixth grade country boy.

In retrospect, perhaps the tornado that blew my house away was just one early but critical example of the winds of change that blow each of our lives into new directions. Where we land and what we do when we get there become the stories of our lives.

**BRILEY CRAIG, 16, laughs with STEVE HOFFSOMMER, 63, about making poor decisions**

**Recorded in Hillsdale, Oklahoma  
Graduate of Kremlin-Hillsdale**

Wouldn't you think that after you made one bad decision that you'd learn from your mistake and at least try harder not to make another one?

When I was an eighth grader, Mrs. Callahan told Neal Lunday and me she wanted us to participate in poultry judging at the Garfield County Fair. She gave us a book about chickens to study weeks in advance. I had the book at my house for a while and never even opened it. I then gave it to Neal, and he said he never studied it either. The Friday before the judging was to take place on a Saturday morning, I spent the night at Neal's house with the intention of studying about poultry judging. We looked at the book for a minute or two, but I don't remember ever cracking it, and I'm not sure if we had, it would have made any difference. What I do remember about that night is playing pool for hours on his Dad's pool table until his mother finally told us to go to bed since we would have to get up early the next morning to JUDGE.

We had to catch a ride into Enid with Neal's Dad, and he had to be at work at 8:00 a.m. Mr. Lunday dropped us off at the Poultry Barn about 7:50 the next morning on his way to work. There was no one around since the judging was not scheduled to begin until 9:00. However, as we were snooping around, we noticed that the official judging results from the day before were posted on the chicken pens so for about forty minutes, we walked up and down the aisles seeing which chickens of each breed placed first, second, third, and fourth. We kind of got to know those birds. We were cramming for our big test that was about to happen since we hadn't spent any time in preparation to this point.

At about 8:30, a man came driving up in a pickup and asked if we would help him take the chickens out of their individual pens and place them in the show pens when the actual judging took place. We told him we would be glad to help. At nine o'clock when all of the kids showed up and the competition began, Neal and I and two other boys who had just arrived took the chickens out of their pens, put them in the show pens, marked our scoring cards, and took them back to their original pens in the barn. This repeated for all of the breeds of chickens.

I really didn't think much more about it until the middle of the next week when Mrs. Callahan announced to our class that Neal had placed first in the County in poultry judging, and I had placed second. Our whole class as well as several teachers who saw us during the day congratulated us. Mom and Dad both told me how proud they were of me. And it kept on getting worse! We each even got a cash prize for our achievements. We felt pretty guilty about what we had done, but not guilty enough to come clean about having prior knowledge of how the chickens had placed before filling out our scoring cards. We figured we would get in big trouble for cheating so we decided to keep our mouths shut and hope for the best. Ever felt guilty, Briley? Does it ever make you feel better?

After a couple of days had passed, we thought we were home free. You can imagine our horror when Mrs. Callahan told us that our County 4-H advisor had contacted her and wanted us

to represent Garfield County at the chicken judging competition at the State Fair of Oklahoma since we had scored so high at the County competition. We had to concoct some way to avoid looking like total fools. We both came up with lame excuses why we could not compete in that competition as we both knew we didn't know anything about judging poultry.

I have always felt guilty for what we did. I know God has forgiven me for cheating as I have confessed this to Him more than once. I feel really bad for the kids who actually studied for this competition and were cheated out of this honor by two Minnesota-Fats-wannabes.

You'd think that I would have learned, Briley, but remember I was young and a little foolish. Besides, I had a group of friends that often joined me in my harebrained decisions so that always made it easier to take the easy path rather than the right path.

I recall the first day of school my senior year. I was on my way to the shop to join in welding class, taught by Mr. Janzen. My Dad was so excited that I would finally learn how to weld as attempts to teach me by both he and my Grandpa had failed up to that point. Finally, I would be learning a skill that would actually pay off when we were working on the farm.

All of my classmates, except for Neal Lunday, John Mitchell and me, had already entered the shop for class, but we were trailing about twenty steps behind the rest of them. Right when we were about to exit into the south parking lot, the back door came flying open, and a young, very pretty, dark-haired, brown skinned woman in a short skirt rushed through the door and headed up the hallway that led to the office. We concluded that she must be the new Spanish teacher that Mr. Gordon had hired right before school started. We should have just kept walking toward the shop. I don't remember who first said that maybe we should take Spanish that hour instead of welding, but we all agreed and followed her like puppies back to the office to modify our schedule from welding to Spanish. My dad didn't know for a couple of weeks that I had switched classes, and by the time he found out, it was too late to change back to welding class.

It was a very, very bad decision on my part. To this day, I still can't weld and can't speak Spanish either.

**MADISON MORSE, 11, hears a fishing story by ANTONY HUDSON, 32**  
**Recorded in Kremlin**  
**Graduate of KHS**

We were juniors in high school and a couple of buddies and I were big fishermen. Every chance we had Ben, Chad, and I would take off and go fishing somewhere. We would even have permission from our parents and the principal to drive our own cars to out of town baseball games just to fish before the games. Our cars were always full of fishing gear. Well, one night we decided to drive out to Salt Plains and fish all night. We were there about an hour or so, and we weren't getting any bites at all. My buddy Ben had to run to the bathroom, which was about 50 yards away from where we were fishing.

We were bored because the fish weren't even nibbling so there was a fish basket lying on the ground. We thought we would mess with Ben so we reeled in his pole and cut off his weight and hook, and then we tied the basket to his line. Next, we threw it into the water and waited for him to return. We sat there for about 20 minutes, and we were giggling like a couple of little kids. Finally, he headed back from the bathroom. We were laughing even harder as we watched him walk across the parking lot because we just knew he would check his pole and see that it looked like he had a bite.

When he saw his pole, he was all excited since his line was slacked off. Ben had a bad knee so every now and then it would pop out of place just enough for him to not be able to hold himself up, and he wasn't a small guy by any means. So if he fell, he would land hard and roll. Anyway, he picked up his pole and reeled in the slack in his line. He hunkered down and jerked his fishing pole just about as hard as he could, and as he jerked, he took a step back and just happened to be standing at the edge of a wheel chair ramp.

And at just the perfect moment, (I say perfect because it couldn't have played out any better than the way it did) he stepped back and jerked his pole. As he fell back, his knee popped out on him and he crashed to the ground. Not only did he just land on the ground, but he rolled down the wheel chair ramp. At this point Chad and I were rolling on the ground laughing our butts off. We were laughing so hard that I was crying. Ben climbed up off the ground with a disappointed look on his face. I guess that was because he didn't think we were going to laugh at the circus act that had just happened. Really upset, he said, "Thanks, Guys, for making fun of me." Unable to stop chuckling, we tried to ask if he was alright, but it really didn't sound sincere. He finally pulled himself together and picked up his pole and reeled it in. As soon as he got the slack out, he felt the weight of the basket and immediately thought that he had a fish. He started yelling, "I got one, Guys! I got one!" He was reeling about as fast as he could until out of the water popped the basket. He just stopped reeling, and as he was peeking over the wall down to the water, he could clearly see the basket. Completely confused on how it ended up at the end of his line, he slowly reeled it up the wall. The closer it got, the more confused he got because he couldn't see his weight or hook. Well, he pulled it up to the wall and realized that Chad and I had cut his line and tied the basket on. He sat his pole down, mumbled a few cuss words at us, and then stomped off to the car. I guess he'd had enough fishing for one night.



**GOLDIE ENGLISH, 63, is interviewed by CARINA RAMIREZ, 12**  
**Recorded in Breckinridge, Oklahoma**  
**Graduate of Kremlin High School**

I ended my senior year on May 27, 1971, by my class taking a trip to magical places! Our first stop was the Hoover Dam. We stood there just to have a little stretch because we had been on the bus overnight, and we wanted to have a view that wasn't the flat land of Oklahoma. Then we hopped back on the bus to head to Las Vegas. While we were there, we had all spread out and gone our own ways. Some of us girls had mushed into on cab just giggling and looking around unable to believe that we were actually in Vegas! That town was full of lots of things to do, but we had other places to travel.

Our next destination was California so we headed to the beach. While we were there, unfortunately, some of us weren't the best swimmers, and we were sucked into little waves that came crashing in on us. Another adventure we made was to Disneyland, which was located right across the street from our hotel. We all dressed, walked outside, and waited until the traffic was all clear so we could sprint across the freeway. I don't know if any of us had ever seen roads that wide or crowded like that. They sure weren't busy like that in Kremlin or Enid.

Disneyland was magical. We all split up once again and explored our own ways. While I was there, I was impressed by the animatronics. One was a likeness of Abraham Lincoln that stood up and talked to us about his own childhood. He looked real, but I knew he was just a robot. I was very impressed at the new technology.

We had one last stop at the Grand Canyon. While we were there, some were taking in the view, but others were messing around. One classmate ended up spraining her ankle. I guess it was good that it happened toward the end of the trip rather than at the first.

After we had visited all of our destinations, it was time to head back to Kremlin. I will always cherish the memories of our senior trip.

**PAIGE (GUTHRIE) KEITHLY, 45, tells about life lessons learned in Algebra to BEAU BROWNELL, 15.**

**Recorded in the kitchen of Beau's home in Quail Meadows North  
Graduated from Kremlin-Hillsdale**

When my kids ask me, "How is algebra ever going to help me?" I tell them the lesson I learned in Mr. Gossen's Algebra class at Kremlin-Hillsdale. I found out that hard work and perseverance always pay off, but sometimes we don't recognize the results immediately. For me the realization wasn't apparent until after high school. It wasn't until years later, long after the equations and variables had faded from my mind that I found out how much I really learned in algebra.

My best friend, Eric Dabney and I attended Mr. Gossen's algebra class, and we spent countless hours on the phone with each other after school. These calls were filled with anxiety ridden discussions about math class. We spent no time at all working problems together or helping each other with our homework because there was no need. We were both equally inept when it came to math. Instead, we stressed and worried about how terrifying it would be if we were called up to the front of the class to attempt to work a problem on THE BOARD. I was scared of being called on in class and petrified of having to show the entire class that I didn't know how to solve problems involving numbers. I knew right then and there that I'd have to attend college and earn some sort of degree so I could make a living, and the job couldn't involve numbers. I couldn't even work at Sonic since I couldn't make change. I had to study every single night on every single problem of every single assignment. Each evening after all the basketball games and dance lessons were finished, my mother (an English teacher of all things!) and I would sit at our dining room table and work through each and every problem. It seemed like all of my classmates (except for Eric, of course!) either understood the concepts right off or just copied the answers from the back of the math book and hoped for the best! But I remained clueless. I learned then that hard work and perseverance do not always pay off at the time. I passed algebra with a—well...let's just say I passed the class knowing that I was a rather average student.

I began my college career terrified! Even when I was enrolling, I was forced to take a little math placement quiz to determine which math class was appropriate for me. It consisted of only a few questions, but very soon after it was graded, the person registering me walked up and said, "Well, maybe you just weren't feeling well today." "Nope," I replied. "I'm fine; I just don't know any of these answers."

I avoided algebra that first year, but I took a college class the following summer with the help of Joanie Hampton, my tutor and my mother's friend. I earned an A in college algebra, and it wasn't a remedial class, either. Even better than the grade, I found that I was smart enough for normal purposes. By then I was a full time student at Oklahoma State and discovered that my



college classes were actually quite easy! How was that possible? Well, all of that studying for algebra had finally paid off because I knew something that the majority of my classmates didn't. I knew how to study. In fact, I didn't have to study hard in college at all compared to the hours of work I'd put in during high school. My training in perseverance and hard work definitely helped me. Even better, I learned that I enjoyed school because it was fun and interesting. I earned a bachelor's degree from OSU in 1993, my master's in 1997 and my doctorate degree in 1999 both from Wichita State.

Do I still tense up and panic when I have to make change for Mr. Gossen when he buys a Coke while I'm working the concession stand? Yes, I do! But that's OK. What I know now (and it took me a long time to realize) is that we are all smart, each and every one of us. For sure our talents are hidden in various subject matters, but we are all smart! The problem is that we have to find out for ourselves and search within to find them, and that is where the hard work begins. The lessons I learned in algebra taught me to never give up, to keep trying, and to work hard. I am beyond thankful that I had to study. That is how I learned not a lot of algebra, but a lot about life, in algebra.

Thank you, Mr. Gossen!

**ERIC DABNEY, 44, interviewed by his Goddaughter, ALICE KEITHLY, 15**  
**Recorded in Guthrie, Oklahoma**  
**Graduated from KHS**

My friend Cliff and I were juniors in high school, and Cliff had this really cool, old Mustang. We decided to double date, but I hardly remember anything about that date it was so traumatic! I don't even remember the girls' names. I don't remember where we took them. I only remember what happened to us. Because Cliff had this really cool, black Mustang, we wanted to drive it around a bit and yes, we were probably showing off a little. We thought Meadowlake Park would be the perfect place to take it for a spin. We drove into the park, and we were tooling around in there when all of a sudden a police officer pulled us over! He talked to Cliff first, and the look on Cliff's face was enough to scare the living daylights out of me. Then Cliff turned to me and said, "He wants to know what we've been drinking." I just wanted to die! I said, "Nothing! Just Dr. Pepper! I promise that is as hard as it gets!"

The police officer was pretty nice to us and explained that the park was closed after 9 p.m. We apologized. Actually Cliff did most of the talking, and I just sat there pale-faced and scared out of my wits. We left the park immediately. We were so shaken up that I don't really remember what happened after that. We just said, "Good bye, girls!" and dropped them off at their houses. We were both trying to decide what we were going to tell people if they asked about what had happened. We were so afraid our parents would find out and be angry, even though we had done nothing wrong. Eventually, we just decided to keep it between the two of us. We figured there was no way anyone would ever find out. We didn't even get a ticket, so we convinced ourselves it was no big deal.

But sure enough, a few days later, we were sitting in Mr. Campbell's science class, and we saw the superintendent's face, (Cliff's dad! of all people) peering through the little diamond shaped window. He pulled Cliff and me out of the classroom, and he was furious! The police officer had just been to Cliff's house because he had forgotten to have Cliff sign the little piece of paper stating that it was just a warning. We got in some trouble over that little stunt. We pleaded that we did nothing wrong, but I guess the lesson here is that you should always tell when something like that happens so your parents don't have to find out from the police.

One of my fondest high school memories is when your mom, Paige (Guthrie) Keithly and I won best actor and actress in the state of Oklahoma. We went all the way to state in a One Act Play competition and won for our leading rolls in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*. Because of this honor, I was awarded a theater scholarship to Webster University, which is a performing arts school in St. Louis. However, part of the obligation of being a theatre major was completing a course in a musical theater class. That involved me taking dance classes wearing dancing tights. Was that why I dropped the idea of acting? I'm not sure, but the outfit probably had something to do with it. I decided to transfer to UCO in Edmond the next year. I eventually earned my degree in education.

I think one of the things I love about Kremlin-Hillsdale, is the sense of togetherness and family that I felt there. I always had the element of "We've got each other." We always felt that our teachers cared about us, and we were never afraid to ask them questions. We didn't feel

shunned or intimidated by them. When I think back on those times, I think, "It really was home." When I left school each day, I wasn't so excited to be away from school, but instead, I couldn't wait to show up for another day. I loved being able to look out the windows in my classrooms and see things happening around Kremlin, like your great-grandma Alice taking her daily walk every morning, for example. The sameness was always very comforting to me. Everyone in the school was so kind and caring. Even the lunch ladies, especially Coleen Day and Mary Lou Pool could make us feel like the only person in the school because they paid so close attention to what we said. Sometimes they would even bake whole pans of cinnamon rolls just because we said we liked them. It was a great place to grow up and be a part of. Our school never missed a beat. We were able to be involved in everything from sports, band, show choir, jazz band, speech and drama and be in every elective; we could truly do it all. It was a wonderful opportunity that kids at larger schools just don't have.

Now that I'm a teacher, I try to bring that same sense of comfort, family, and togetherness that I had at Kremlin-Hillsdale into my classrooms. I want all of my students to feel like they are able to approach me with questions and for help. I know how hard it is for some kids. They don't all like school or want to learn so I do my best to make them feel important and safe in my classes.

Last year, I was a first grade teacher. It was my first year to teach, and it was very interesting. I never quite knew what to expect, but I absolutely loved it. I had a little girl in my class. I'll call her Josie. She was extremely headstrong, cantankerous, perpetually perturbed, and sometimes just plain naughty. She was a force to be reckoned with, that's for sure. Josie had a very special pair of scissors. They were a very distinctive-bright yellow with sunbursts and things like that. They were easily distinguishable. And one day they went missing.

Josie was very upset! She was so angry. She was yelling and banging her desk shouting, "Somebody stole my scissors!" It was complete chaos in the room. Then, out of nowhere, a boy pointed at another girl who I'll call Ellie and said, "She has the scissors!" Sure enough, Ellie, who was as quiet as a church mouse and never made a wave was taking the scissors out of her bag. The room was a complete uproar after that, but I could see how ashamed Ellie was. No one knew how Josie would react. Ellie was so embarrassed that she crawled under her desk, curled up in a ball, and began to cry and hide herself from everyone. We all waited with bated breath to see Josie's next move. I saw Josie walking in the direction of Ellie. Then Josie crawled under the desk where Ellie was curled up, and she lay down with her and held her as she cried and said, "It's okay. I'll be your friend." It was one of the most touching moments I had ever seen. I wanted my students to feel like a family the way we had it at Kremlin-Hillsdale, and I could see that they did.

When I think back on my years at Kremlin-Hillsdale, I have such fond memories that I will cherish forever. I was able to stand out, and I had so many opportunities. It was truly a great experience, and it was such a blessing that I ended up attending that school because I guarantee you that I would not be the person I am without my experiences there. It was my home away from home, the place I always wanted to be. I can't imagine where I would be now if it hadn't been for that wonderful school.

**DEAN VOTH, 59, hopes his audience and JAZZLIN STUBBLEFIELD, 15, like satire**  
**Recorded in Enid, Oklahoma**  
**Graduated from KHS**

Recently, KHS students were asked to interview someone who graduated from KHS over 20 years ago. Evidently, someone took a phone interview from my cousin Tom Voth, who had a strong sense of duty to impress upon this youth how things really were in 1975. He passed his manuscript on to me. I can only hope that I possess an imagination as vivid as his. I'll try.

In 1975, KHS students were usually involved and dedicated with scholastics, 4-H (making the best better), and studying English Literature—*The Complete Works of Shakespeare*. We tried hard to please our teachers by being courteous and respectful at all times. Our extracurricular activities included church youth group, hunting and fishing, family wiener roasts, and church camp. Mainly we focused on being good and minding our own business.

I for one was always considering the responsibilities of being a respectable adult, raising beautiful and intelligent children, being a successful businessmen, and becoming a pillar in our community. My friends were a care-free and gay group not worried with the results of the Cold War and not concerned that conflicts of SE Asia were looming around us every night on the 6 o'clock news during dinner. Not at all! No matter that we might all be drafted into military combat as soon as we graduated, we did not fear.

We loved all of our school mates and looked up to our educators equally as we admired our parents and godparents. We "trick or treated" for UNICEF and drove 55 MPH just because gasoline was in short supply and Richard Nixon had asked us to.

Usually you could find our class working as one picking up litter on public roadways every Saturday. We exhibited model behavior at our class parties even though we had only one at the Mitchell's home. If I recall, it ended with the entire class having to write an apology to JC and Phillis. We were so good, that we never had another class party. We also conducted surveillance on suspected Communists in our area and volunteered for community watch projects in conjunction with the sheriff's department.

I know that the '70s were called the decade of "sex, drugs, and Rock and Roll," but my friends put up a solid stand against this wanton lifestyle. We wanted to keep our minds sharp and our bodies clean in case President Nixon needed us to re-invade Vietnam. We didn't agree with premarital sex and drug abuse. Most kids that did those things went to school at Enid High or Pond Creek.

No Aerosmith, Black Sabbath or Rolling Stones on our 8 tracks, and Janzen Triax stereos either. Mainly Gospel, Roy Acuff, and George Jones were all our delicate ears ever heard. We stayed away from "Rebel" music like Johnny Cash and Hank Williams, Sr. because we knew that they were drug and alcohol abusers.

It just seemed that rural kids were a little better behaved in the 70's era. We had respect for other people's property—we had no clue what "road rage" even meant. We knew better than to hit old people in convenience stores or try to "Bean Ball" our high school baseball coach. We wouldn't even consider working at a bingo hall because we knew that gambling was basically immoral.

At home and in school, we were expected to have high moral standards. Our football team was firmly advised by coaches not to step on opposing players' hands and feet. BRONC basketball players never got a foul called unless the referees were near sighted or totally blind. And certainly they couldn't help that if they couldn't see. Our parents (including Robert Voth and Betty Thurman) never hollered at referees or caused our small town any embarrassment. Furthermore, we never smoked or peed out in the school parking lot. We also picked up cigarette butts on the school grounds that had been tossed by our teachers, and we diligently placed them in trash cans.

I just want to mention that most church members, successful business persons, and community leaders that you hold in high esteem today are probably graduates, like me, of the Class of 1975.

**CHARLES LLOYD, 74, tells about his years at OSU to DONNIE BELL, 13**  
**Recorded by phone**  
**Graduated from Kremlin High School**

While I was attending Oklahoma State University, I was a good friend with one of the football players. He was a really good man who was drafted in the NFL and played for the Rams. Once he came back to visit with me because he wanted to ask me something. He said, "Charles, how do I know where I am with Christ?"

I answered, "I honestly don't know. I've never really thought about that."

Then he left, and as days passed by, I seriously began to think about his question. How does one know?

Later I was invited to attend a church camp for the summer with a youth group. On the last night that I was there, the preacher asked for anyone who hadn't accepted Christ into his life to step forward and do it that night. I decided to accept this opportunity. After that, I gathered some of my friends in my dorm and asked them to pray with me. That night, after we had prayed, we promised each other that we would gather every night.

One night after we had finished praying, a man pulled me over and asked me what we were doing, and I explained that we were praying, and then we talked a little more before he asked if he could join us. Of course, I invited him in, and we all prayed every night until I graduated. Those years at OSU were defining times for me that lead me into the ministry.

**SCOTT CROUCH, 41, interviewed by JORDAN YOUNG, 12**  
**Recorded in Enid, Oklahoma**  
**Graduated from KHS**

When I attended school at Kremlin-Hillsdale, I was probably the kid who held the record for most swats. I was in trouble a lot before I even started high school. The first time I had a spanking was when I was in kindergarten. Mrs. Bailey gave it to me. I was swatted all the way through elementary. I even had some more in junior high. I was probably a mess as a kid. The school threw parties called the Good Kids Club; I never made it to a single one of those. I turned out good so that's a good thing.

You might say I was the funny kid in my class. I didn't play sports or band, but I was in AG (agriculture) Class. I welded and built things, and I enjoyed that. My favorite teachers who are still teaching today are Mr. Campbell and Mr. Gossen. I always thought those guys were super smart and cool. I had a really good education at Kremlin.

I never really had any funny memories at school; I usually was in detention for being the funny one. I guess other people were laughing at my antics. But a wonderful memory for me while I was there was due to the cooks. They were always so nice, and they made great homemade food. When I graduated, they baked the biggest cinnamon rolls that were the size of Frisbees. They were at least three inches thick, and that was pretty cool for the cooks to do that for our class. They were always so good to us kids.

I graduated from Oklahoma State Tech School where I studied Air Conditioning, and I accepted a job where I have been with the same company for all these years.

PETER VOTH 33 interviewed by JAMON CALEB 16

Recorded in Kremlin, Oklahoma

Graduated from Kremlin-Hillsdale in 2001

**What is your greatest memory at KHS?**

I grew up on a farm north of Kremlin till I was in high school. The summer of my 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grade year we moved to another farm my family owned just south of Kremlin so I lived five miles away from Kremlin all my life and it was pretty awesome. Growing up on the farm, we were always jealous of the town kids, that's what we called those that lived in this little town of Kremlin because they were always at the swimming pool in the summer, and we didn't get the chance to come to Kremlin and hangout unless we were with one of our friends. When I was a little kid, we farmed quite a bit and I wouldn't change it for a thing.

My dad Dean Voth graduated from Kremlin-Hillsdale in 1975 and he went to school here since he was in kindergarten, as did my grandpa. He grew up in the house I moved into when I was in high school. He is a farmer and does construction work. My parents come from very different backgrounds, my mom grew up in a town and my dad grew up on a farm. I still see both of them, I see my dad every day and I see my mom about once a week, and I still get in trouble like I did when I was a little kid. I got in trouble the other night when we went out to eat at the ballgame because I was getting in a fight with my little sister.

I think that the invention of the cell phone changed the way people hang out. They used to do more outside of school activities. You see kids in their car in Enid. I don't think many kids drove to Enid when I was in school. I think academic-wise we are still one of the number one schools. There are teachers that are here when I was going to school. Now I see the school as the one that I never knew. I mean there are physical changes too. There have been three generations that have attended this school. I can remember when I was in first grade I would look out the window and see dirt work for the building we are in now, and now I have a daughter in first grade and she can look out the window and see the dirt work for the new building. There is a 26 year difference between me and my daughter, and it's neat that here she is doing the same thing I was doing when I was in first grade. My dad even got to see them building the elementary school.

My greatest memory in baseball is when I first hit a homerun. Playing the people around here when I was in high school was really cool. Our team was good. We won two district championships when I was in high school. I think at one time we had a bunch of my family on the field so it was pretty cool. Pretty much everyone on the team I had grown up with and known since pre-k. There are a lot of differences that I saw since I've been here. Jamon if you're going to be part of our family, you're just going to be part of it. I remember when you first came, you were not a huge fan of it and you may still not be, but anyone here would do anything for you, and I've always felt like Kremlin has always been that way.



**ALANNA HART, 48, tells her experiences at school to RILEY JUNG, 15**  
**Recorded in Kremlin**  
**Graduated from Kremlin-Hillsdale in 1985**

What do you remember from high school at Kremlin Hillsdale?

I graduated from KHS in 1985! My favorite teachers were Ann Watkins, typing, Richard Daly-history and civics, David Campbell, Biology and Chemistry and Roger Gossen; he started teaching at KHS when I was a Junior I think.

I guess my favorite activity was playing basketball. Girls still played 6 on 6 back then. I think it was a much more entertaining way to play, but I never played 5 on 5 so what do I know? Ask Mr. Gossen about 6 on 6 girls' basketball if you curious. He was announcing and running the clock back then too.

One of my favorite memories of KHS was our graduating class had 16 kid in it. Eight of us went to school from kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The last "new kids" joined us in 7<sup>th</sup> grade so we were a pretty tight knit group. A big group of us would get together and go to the \$2 movie on Tuesday nights at the Oakwood mall. That was always fun. We would also cruise down Van Buren on Friday and Saturday night. We would stop at McDonalds and hang out with our friends in the parking lot.

These are a few of the memories I have from my years at KHS. Thank you for asking. This has made me think about people I haven't thought about in a while and brought some happy memories back.

**PEGGY HARRIS, 71, discusses beauty school with AUSTIN DASILVA, 17**  
**Recorded in Peggy's home in Kremlin, Oklahoma at 4:47 p.m. 2/24/16**  
**Graduated from Kremlin High School**

Consequences always follow good and bad actions, but often it takes years and years before the whole shebang is settled. I'll give you an example.

"It'll be fun," my friend Ginger said. And it was! In the summer of 1960, I had just completed my sophomore year at Kremlin, and she talked me into attending Beaches' Beauty College in Enid, Oklahoma. I always liked school, and this would be a new adventure although I had little interest in hair styling and no idea what I'd like to do after high school graduation. Mother and Daddy were all for the idea because, as my mother used to say, "You never know what the future might bring, and it's good to prepare for what may happen." To acquire a license as a cosmetologist, I had to take 1500 hours of schooling, and pass the State Board of Cosmetology. I could do all that in a couple of years by attending classes during summers and then nearly every Saturday during the school years. By the time I graduated from Kremlin, I was a licensed beautician.

But I was almost expelled because of a shenanigan that involved me. You'd think that by age 17, I'd be smart enough to know right from wrong and stay out of trouble, but I wasn't. Here's what happened. A girl on the second floor of the school thought it would be funny to squirt a slimy, liquidy, sticky hair gel out the window at people who were walking below on the sidewalk. The plan was that they would never see who did it because she would duck down right after the glob was launched. It worked, except for the last part. One of the targets turned out to be Dr. Buvinger, the ear, nose, and throat doctor in town, and he didn't really care that he couldn't see the culprit; he just didn't like it that he was soaked by the goop. He marched in and reported the malefaction to the authorities, one being Lois Record, an instructor that I admired greatly. I don't remember much else about the episode that day, but I do remember being very afraid that I would be expelled. Expelled from Beauty School! Just like in the movie Grease, but worse. I wouldn't be a beauty school dropout; I would be kicked out! Mother and Daddy would punish me for being such a jerk! I could hear it all, "What were you thinking?" and I'd have no answer so I'd just sit there with shoulders hunched-over and my head hanging down. Even worse, they would never trust me again, and after that, I'd have to pay back the tuition and I didn't have a job and I didn't have any money. All would be awful!

I'd like to say that I was just a "watcher" and not a "squirter," but I really can't remember, and it really doesn't matter to this story because I knew I was wrong. I could have at least left that room if I'd had any good sense at all...but I didn't.

Anyway, that's what happened. But that's not the point of this story.

I always remembered the incident, and from time to time, I thought about stopping in the beauty school to apologize to the staff. However, as Robert Frost noted in "The Road Not Taken," "Way leads on to way." The owners died, the school sold and moved, and I never made

it back in there. Still, I always felt a twinge of guilt even when I told the story to others. (It's been my experience that guilt works that way: It grows worse, not better, with time.)

Well, about five years ago, I stopped by my friend Shelly's house in Enid, and her neighbor lady happened to be working in the front yard. Shelly introduced her as Lois Record's daughter, and Bam! There it was again! Remember, Lois had been an instructor at Beaches Beauty College on the infamous day of the "Squirting." Not only that, but when I mentioned the story, the neighbor said, "My mom was telling me about that just the other day." I was mortified. That had been over 50 years ago, and if she still remembered and was repeating it, and I was still feeling guilty, then I knew right then and there that I needed to march myself into her business and apologize for my stupidity once and for all.

The next day, I drove to the college, now located behind K-Mart. I walked in and asked to see the now-owner, Lois Record. The receptionist asked me if I was selling something. "No," I answered, "but I'd like to talk to her for a minute. She won't remember my name, I hope, but she might like to hear from me. I'm just one of her past students."

In a few minutes, Mrs. Record appeared, and I related the whole saga and the fact that I had been regretful for these many years. She recalled many details that I never knew. She explained to me that on that day, she was young and relatively new on the job, and the Beaches were away and had left her in charge of everything. Then this debacle happened. We had brought her trouble. That made me feel even worse because it has never been my intention to cause grief to people on purpose. But I did, and I was remorseful.

Mrs. Record was gracious, and I hope that she forgave me, but one never knows.

Remember that I said there are consequences to actions? Well, here's how that worked in my case. I was teaching at Enid High School in 2012, and a young man named Corey was in my class. It turns out that he was Mrs. Record's daughter's grandson. So now it was four generations later, and she was in my life once again via a great-grandson. I always had a special affinity for Cory, but I never told him this story nor our connection until after he graduated. He was, let's say, an active student who was usually seated near me at the front of the room. He probably thought that I was picking on him, but even though he was ornery, I enjoyed him because he reminded me of my earlier teenage years. Every day that I saw Corey in class, I thought about that incident 50+ years ago and wished that I could have changed my conduct on that day back then. Without ever knowing his importance in my life, he helped lead me back to beauty school to take care of business and apologize for my silly youth and bad behavior.

So that's the end of this story.....maybe.

SAYLER GALLAWAY, 12, interviewed LESLIE BROWN, 36

Recorded by phone conversation

Graduated from KHS

I have many school memories, but perhaps one of the most memorable is when we had pep rallies. I was a cheerleader so it was fun to get Mr. Gossen to wear a big band hat and make predictions from his envelopes. He would pretend to be a mind reader; he would read the answers first, and then inside the envelopes would be the question. He knew everything! He even knew the answers to questions that hadn't been asked yet. An example might be something like this: Mr. Gossen putting the envelope near his brain and telling the answer: "Big Ben, The Bronc Quarterback, A candidate's campaign promises." Then he would open the envelope and read the question to us. "What is a clock, a jock, and a crock?" Everyone would laugh, and it just affirmed to all of us how smart he really was.

We would also get the boys, moms, and dads to dress up like cheerleaders from the opposing teams. They weren't nearly as good as the Bronc cheerleaders, of course, so we could make fun. Again, everyone would laugh.

Another memorable moment for me was on April Fools' Day. Everyone in my class told Coach McClain that there was a fight between two boys in the bathroom; he took off running down the hallway only to discover nobody was fighting.

When you asked me about the most influential person in my life, I immediately thought of my best friend Angela. She and I had gone through a lot of the same struggles, and I watched her keep her cool and show up to work every day as a single mother. She really helped me get through my day.

I think of many stories when I think of the shelter. First off, I worked there for five years so I experienced a lot. For example, we had to train on how to react if kids were fighting. I had to restrain a child twice while I worked there. Another thing that happened while I worked there that was quite scary was a young boy who took the keys to the medication cabinet. After a while, he owned up to it and gave back the key. Another time a 16 year old girl came in with her baby, and it was very rewarding to know that we were the reason she got to keep it. My experience of working there was very good, and I loved it. I still talk to some of the kids who were living there at that time, and I am so thankful that I could help them.

**MONTY HAYES, 44, interviewed by LILLIE LONG, 14**  
**Recorded in Lillie's home on February 11, 2016**  
**Graduate of Kremlin-Hillsdale School, 1990**

Right now I am currently farming and ranching. I farm up near the Hillsdale area and I run cattle back at Fairview, where I live. Before I took over the farming and cattle operation from my dad, I had been teaching and coaching at the high school level. I coached and taught at Enid and in Hennessy and at Fairview, which was my last job and where I met my wife. We currently still live in Fairview. I have been farming and ranching now for about seven years. I have been out of the coaching business for five. I really have enjoyed that, being able to spend more time with my family. Before that, I was coaching 24/7. The only time I would really get to spend time with them was in the summer. But then again, I was also coaching baseball in the summer too. I was teaching math like Mr. Gossen and then coaching sports. I coached football and basketball, but I was just an assistant coach in those sports. I was head coach in baseball. But that was pretty much my life, and we just did that year round. So then when I got out I was able to spend a lot more time with my family, and we were able to take our kids to see their grandma and grandpa up here in Hillsdale and enjoy them. It was a nice change of pace for me. I have been farming. I farm wheat and milo and run a cow calf operation in Fairview.

This last year I received a phone call from the principal of our high school in Fairview, and he had asked me if I would be interested in helping with their baseball program again. He asked me to take that program over and start coaching again. After talking with my wife, Kristi, and seeing what she thought, and after a lot of prayer and going back and forth, I decided that I could probably juggle that with the farming operation so I went ahead and accepted the coaching position. I think the main reason I got back into coaching was the kids. I still help with the youth at our church, and I can see just a lot of need there for kids to have a positive influence in their lives, and I think that was a major reason I got back into coaching, so I could help young people, and maybe make a difference in their lives. So I did get back into coaching, just some of the things in the past coaching, what I have enjoyed, you know; I really enjoyed coaching football and working with young men. I had some really good football years that I coached at Fairview. We made it to the quarter finals and to state. That was a huge success because we were the smallest school in 2A and we were able to compete at the highest level with schools that produce a lot of division one athletes. I really enjoyed that, and I also helped coach girls and boys basketball. There was a lot of one-on-one work with them that I really enjoyed.

I just really enjoyed sports when I was growing up, and I played sports in high school. We had a lot of success in high school in football, basketball, and even baseball. It was something that I enjoyed, and I thought I would be good at, and that's why I went that route. I really liked math and in order to get a good job in coaching I had probably be a math teacher or English teacher or science teacher. I didn't work super hard in school; I was a slacker for sure. I definitely studied more in high school than I did in college. I just did enough to get by, but math came easy to me. That's why I chose that subject. I graduated from Kremlin-Hillsdale in 1990, when I was 18.

I remember one time when I was coaching high school baseball, we were at practice and I had told the boys that we were going to try Rolling Two. One of my players who was on the field for that specific play was a freshmen so it was his first year. I had quickly gone over the play saying that you were to pick up the ball and throw it to second base where it would then be thrown back to first in order to get two people out in one play. Well, when he picked up the ball he rolled it to second base like a bowling ball. After realizing that he was “rolling” two, we all started laughing and never finished the play. What I learned from this was that not everyone always know what you are talking about, and sometimes you need to explain things to those who don't understand so that the plays are clear.

**BEN MESSENGER, 14, hears a story from his dad, SCOTT MESSENGER, 40**  
**Recorded in Hillsdale, Oklahoma**  
**Graduated from KHS**

I remember one time when I was at Kremlin. I used to get up at six in the morning to go to the school and practice basketball in the gym. During my 7<sup>th</sup> hour, I started feeling tired and not able to stay awake so I fell asleep in class. When I did, some of the kids in my class tied my shoelaces to my desk. Then they took me outside and positioned me. When they had me right where they wanted me, a guy pulled his truck up right outside and honked his Dixie Horn super loud while I was sleeping out there. I jumped out of my desk and started to drag my desk with me trying to get away.

Another time at Kremlin in band, we won the Sweepstakes and got to compete with big schools at the Oklahoma State Marching Band Masters Association contest. We went to Port Catoosa, Oklahoma. We marched at Catoosa with bands that had hundreds of people. We also went to march at Oklahoma State University and at the football field there. We had a solid drum line and an amazing band.

When I was in Elementary school, we did skits and pep rallies with kids in my class. We would all gather in the mornings and act out and play instruments and boost everyone's spirit.

Another fun time was when I was on the academic team. We competed with many schools, and we had some hard matches. We ended up going to State one year, but we didn't win while I was there. We had a really good academic team with our coach Roger Gossen.



**JOHN STOVALL, 38, visits with GAVIN MCKEE, 15**  
**Interviewed in Enid**  
**Graduated from KHS**

I was born in Modesto, California. I was an active kid who moved back and forth from California to Oklahoma. I liked it and thought it was nice. In school I was one of those kids who didn't really pay much attention in class. But I had a teacher named Mr. Topper McLain. He made me pay more attention and stop talking in class. Most kids knew me as the class clown. I always joked and played, and I would say funny things after the teacher or someone said something. When I graduated in 1996, I weighed only 100 pounds.

After school, I started going to church a lot more than usual. I decided to be a Christian and attended the Church of Christ. But for a few months, I haven't gone. About five years ago, I married my beautiful wife. About three years later, we adopted a child who has been the best part of our lives. I was going to college and wanted to be an engineer. When I graduated from college, I went to work as a project monitor for Enviro-tech. I love my job to this day. I wouldn't change my life for anything.

RITA SHARKEY BODE, 63, shares a story of her life with ANDY LOCHART, 11

Recorded by email

Graduated from KHS in 1971

I was a young entrepreneur and didn't know it at the time. I lived on a farm around Hillsdale that was several miles from any town. I was in charge of taking care of the chickens and any other animal that needed attention. But the chickens laid eggs, and people would pay for them. So I carefully picked them up daily and made sure they were clean and put in cartons. I rode a bus to school so the cartons of eggs and my school books rode to my place of learning and earning. School teachers would buy them for 50 cents a dozen. I also went to grocery stores in towns nearby and sold them there. Rain or shine, cold freezing weather or blistering heat, the chickens needed daily care. They needed fresh water, feed, oyster shale so their eggs shells would be strong, and grit to help them digest their food. They were free range chickens so they supplemented their diet with bugs and greens. They would even come when I called and threw out scraps over the back fence. I would run out at dark and shut them up in their chicken house to keep them safe from marauding predators. I would turn on the light in the chicken house if it was already dark to make sure there wasn't an unwanted varmint in there, which happened a few times. This involved getting my Dad and the appropriate weapon to take care of the unwanted intruder.

While gathering their eggs out of their nests, I learned to be careful. I would place clean straw in their nests so they were nice, soft places to keep their eggs from breaking or chipping while being laid by the hen. But this also made a fine bed for other critters like possums and skunks and even a snake or two. Sometimes a hen would think she needed to incubate the eggs and would sit on several eggs. I could always tell she was what we called a "sitting hen" by her nasty disposition when I'd try to remove the eggs out from under her. She would try to peck me. I would put her in a small crate called a brooder coup with food and water for a few days; that would break her sitting habit.

In earlier years, we actually had roosters and sent the eggs to be incubated for baby chicks. These roosters could be mean, and I have scars on my legs to prove it. My dad told me to give them a good kick if they were trying to spar with me. Sometimes the rooster would jump on my back while I was gathering eggs or just out and about on the farm so I had to be aware of a possible flogging by the bully roosters. One time my parents were gone to a nearby farm to move equipment around, and a neighbor drove up and witnessed me kicking the sap out of a mean rooster that was picking on me. I was probably just seven or eight years old. The neighbor got the idea that I could take care of myself.

Sometimes there were baby calves that were orphaned or were a twin and the mama cow only accepted one calf so I became the caretaker. This meant preparing formula and putting it in a big bottle with a large nipple, and I would feed the calves twice a day. While I was out doing chores in the morning, I could see the school bus coming for a mile or two away. I would finish

my chores and run and grab my books that I had laid out on the front porch and sprint for the bus.

These were some of the ways I could make money when I wasn't legal to drive and everything was so far away from our home.

**JOE BOWEN, 55, tells MORGAN MILLER, 15, about his high school days**

**Recorded by phone conversation**

**Graduate of KHS**

I knew that high school was supposed to be the best time of my life. Anyhow, that's what people told me, but for me it was stressful. My favorite year was my sophomore year; nobody expected much out of us, the seniors were through picking on us, the freshmen were there so we could taunt them a little, and in general, it was just better not to be the youngest in high school. Still, I was always questioning my place in this life.

For example, I have lots of memories about football practice. Coach Harris liked us running so that we wouldn't be out-conditioned during a game. However, it was really hard with that new swimming pool right next to the football field. All the boys who didn't go out for football had to take PE class, and that entailed swimming for the first part of the school year at the exact time that we were practicing. I'd be throwing up and sweating buckets in the 100 degree heat, and I'd look over there at all those other guys splashing around and playing in the water, and they seemed to be having lots of fun. I wasn't so sure that I was even half-smart, but I was pretty sure, at least at that moment, that they had made a better choice.

At the end of every practice, the football team would end the day with a three lap run around the football field and the baseball field and the swimming pool. For some reason I always felt that I had something to prove to myself so I did my best, but not so much with some of my teammates. A few slackers would stop after the first round and wait behind the pool building until the rest of us were on our third lap. Then they would join in and finish the final sprint with us.

At that time, the general thought was that water wasn't good for a body during practice so we didn't drink much at all. I recall Coach finally telling the manager to bring us some ice. He marched out to the field with a shoe box full of ice. A Shoe Box! And that was to be enough for the entire team. The seniors lined up first, then the juniors, next the sophomores, and finally the freshmen. Not only that, but I must have been the last one in line of the entire freshman class. By my turn, there was one tiny ice chip at the bottom of the dry cardboard box. I popped it in my mouth, and it tasted just like the leather shoe that must have been housed in there. I wondered where the manager found the box.

Another pressure I felt was that I was always about to be late...to something. I'm not quite sure what the deadline was, but before I could drive, I had to depend on someone else to be on time. That was unsettling since not everyone was in a hurry like I was, or maybe people were busy and had other chores to take care of. Now that I'm older, I see that being a parent isn't all that easy, but at the time, I thought that my activities were of utmost importance. They were to me! For a couple of years, Sid Lakin, who was two years older than I was, ran a shuttle service. He charged me and the other guys he hauled around a total of \$20 a week to take us to and from school. I think that we made his car payments and paid for his gas. I remember he had an 8-track player, and he owned only one cartridge. I knew the obscure rock group, Canned Heat,

by memory. I was happy when I finally had my own transportation so I didn't have to rely on anybody else.

Mr. Dwayne Janzen was my favorite teacher. He taught welding, power mechanics, and mechanical drawing. I remember Jeff Hoffsommer and I were all signed up for welding, but then Jeff changed his mind and enrolled in Home Economics instead. Jeff knew he was going to be a doctor so maybe he needed to know how to sew stitches; I don't know. He always told us that he wanted to be a gynecologist; I think he said that just to make the rest of us envious. I know I was. Mr. Janzen told us welders that we needed to wear coveralls so we wouldn't burn holes in our good clothes. At the same time, Jeff was painting t-shirts in Home Ec so he took my coveralls and decorated them for me. My new work clothes had an outline of a woman painted on the back. Above the lady Jeff printed "Joe's Body Shop." Mr. Janzen didn't like it, but he allowed me to wear them anyway; maybe that's why he was my favorite teacher. I'll have to think about that one.

One last humiliation that I suffered was when two new sisters came to Kremlin during my sophomore year. The Ediger girls, Catherine and Carolyn, arrived, and thus began the KHS track team. Mr. Dan Bivins volunteered to coach the girls. He bet me that I could not beat Carolyn in the quarter mile. Like a fool, I took him up on the wager because I was not about to let a girl out run me. This was going to be a cake walk for me. We headed out to the pasture located where the baseball field/park is now. The track was laid out in an oval and marked with Bell Telephone line markers. Mr. Bivins yelled, "GO!" and we took off. I was determined to show them what a great athlete I was. I started out fast knowing that if I could put a lot of distance between us, this race would be a walk in the park. At the first turn, I glanced over my shoulder to the inside expecting to be ahead by five strides. To my surprise, she was not there. Then I heard her. She was starting to pass me on the outside. I panicked and stepped up my pace expecting her to fall behind. Instead, she stuck right with me, stride for stride, all the way around the track. I kept shoving her to the outside, and somehow, I won by only one stride. I don't remember acting cool; in fact, I know I wasn't feeling good about it at all. I was on my knees throwing up while she was jogging around me.

I always suffered from self-imposed pressure. I threw up before every football game. I don't remember many of the wins, but I dwelled on the losses. I suspect that is a metaphor for life. We tend to remember the failures or the "what-ifs" far more than we do our successes. Don't get me wrong. I have been blessed in many ways. For one, I did fulfill a dream that many high school football players have. I was awarded a scholarship to play college ball at NWOSU in Alva. I was a starter for three years, and although those days are long gone, I remember them as great times. Yet, they provided me with many more chances of embarrassment since I certainly was not as dominant there as I had been at KHS. Yes, life is certainly humbling.

TOM VOTH, 58, shares his nightmares that never go away with TAYLOR SINCLAIR, 16  
Recorded via e-mail  
Graduated from KHS

Homework sucks, doesn't it, Taylor? Here I sit with the fourth season of *House of Cards* just released yesterday, and instead of being entertained by Kevin Spacey's character, Frank Underwood, I'm having to write a paper for my high school English/Speech/Swimming teacher and you. Peggy Harris and you, Taylor, gave me this assignment a week ago, but I'm a world class procrastinator. Normally this would be the lamentations of a high school student but, NO, I'm closer to 60 than to 18, and I'm still sweating a time line for a high school project on a Sunday afternoon. Brings back memories of high school.

What to write. I can't be that detailed for two reasons: my poor memory doesn't allow that to happen and where my memory is good, what is remembered may cause discomfort for people I care about, or more importantly may cause discomfort for me.

So again, what to write. I'll start off with what I remember of my freshman year. Initiation. Dressing as babies, sucking our thumbs (mandatory), wearing diapers, (mandatory), carrying baby bottles filled with a concoction of persimmon juice/hot sauce (mandatory), and of course at the end of the week getting eggs, chocolate, and all other sorts of other nastiness smeared in our hair and across our bodies. Lots of fun. It did prepare me for fraternity hazing in college.

Homecoming. We were so smart. My class spent several nights preparing a wonderful float for the homecoming parade in my parents' house on 5th street in Kremlin. Design, labor, pumping (sticking tissue paper into chicken wire). The float looked beautiful, the parade was about to start, and we pulled the float out of the garage in to the Oklahoma weather....yep, it was windy and yep, we weren't smart enough to have glued the tissue paper into the chicken wire. Yep, all the tissue paper ended up at Zaloudek's tractor dealership, and the freshman class had a float of a flatbed trailer and bare chicken wire. But we did have fun.

Sophomore year. Drivers Ed. Coach/teacher Jerry Long had an infernal contraption (also known as a "teaching aid") that sat on the dashboard. It constituted a golf tee and a golf ball. The purpose was to drive from Kremlin to Enid and back with the ball staying on the tee. (Please keep in mind Hwy 81 was smooth back then). Never did it. Not aware of anyone that did accomplish that exercise. However, I do remember one of Jerry's comments to one of my driving partners. A rather large bug splashed the windshield during the drive, and Jerry commented, "I bet he doesn't have guts enough to do that again!" Anyway, I thought it funny. My kids hate that joke, because I use it all the time, even now.

Junior year. This was the way it was all during high school. Dress code. Hair above the collar (had to wear collared shirts) and off or above the ears. Jack Gordon, Jim Harris and the coaches were hair police. Dippity Do (a now extinct hair treatment...a nasty gel that kept one's hair in place) was used by most of the male high school students who didn't wear cowboy hats. It slicked back one's hair behind his ears and allowed those that were rebels to look at least

“cool” when going out on Friday and Saturday nights. It was a game for both sides. No one won.

Senior year. We were sooooo ready to go out make our mark on the world. Go out and show “them” how it was done. Whoever “them” was probably didn’t even know they were being shown. Their loss because I KNOW we showed them. I hope they remember. I don’t.

Homework sucks. This has been my life. I procrastinate. All my life. That’s another story I’ll tell.....tomorrow. Yeah, right.

**HEATHER CARSON, 43, interviewed by REBECCA WASSON, 17**

**Recorded in her classroom**

**Graduate of Kremlin-Hillsdale in 1991**

If you were in 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade, you played in the high school band and field marched. We were really good and we won a lot of contests. All during fall we attended contests. It was so cool because the football players and cheerleaders would all go out and march during the half time of all the home games. We usually made the finals as an exhibition because we didn't get in any of the categories. We were just as good as all the bigger bands, but small enough that we didn't have to compete with them. We also marched in several parades. The band never went on big trips but we were always in State at Catoosa. We marched in parades at Oklahoma State and Tulsa. One time when we went to OSU to march, one of our band members adopted a dog and my mom drove the puppy all the way back to Kremlin. I played the clarinet but during field marching I was a flag girl. From about sophomore year until I graduated, I never really played my own instrument.

It was such a big deal to be in band when I was in high school. Almost every Saturday we were gone for band. Everyone was in it so when the band was gone, there were only like five or six people left at school. Riding the bus to contests was so fun because I could sit by whomever I wanted to and just have a great time. We blasted cassette tapes and sang along with all the songs. We played card games, took naps, ate, and read books. Now, times are a little different. We didn't have cell phones so we enjoyed the company of all our friends. We knew the rules and followed them because we didn't want to face the consequences. There are so many memories I have from band, it is hard to choose just one. It was a way of life for all of us. We helped each other out through thick and thin. Sometimes we fought, but when it came down to it, we were one big family.



I've learned not to judge a book by its cover. I never know if someone is experiencing difficulties I don't know about. I now work at Kremlin-Hillsdale teaching 5<sup>th</sup> grade. I have two kids and am happily married. I am most proud that one of my daughters graduated from the same school as I did and the other is still attending. I regret not studying more or trying harder in high school, but I've changed since then. I want to be remembered as someone who gave everything I had and never give up.

**ELDON TOEWS, 63, tells MAKAYLA RAUSCHENBERG, 15, some history of the home they have both shared**

**Recorded by e-mail on February 26, 2016**

**Graduate of Kremlin-Hillsdale**

As early as the 1930's and 40's era and thereafter, there would have been few people in the Kremlin community who didn't know Bill and Helena Toews and the location of their home place five miles south of Kremlin. Dad was farming wheat and raising cattle south and west of Kremlin. He was active in Co-op and Lions Club. Mom had become a well-known educator in the Kremlin School system, and would serve for decades. She was also a long time member of Kremlin ladies Home Culture Club.

Several other Toews families called the Kremlin community their home, as well as other German Mennonite farm families including the Voths, Regiers, Janzens, and Thesmans. Mom (Helena Janzen) grew up as a child on their family farm home place located two miles west of Kremlin, within walking distance of school during her early elementary years. Horses and wagons would still be used somewhat during her childhood.

So, how would I, a 60-something baby boomer, recall growing up as a farm boy in such a setting as the Kremlin farm community? Would 160 acres be a big enough playground for me and my older brothers and sister? All the right elements were present — a loving family, cats and dogs, wildlife, livestock, wheat crops, tractors, and fresh fruit and vegetable gardens. It looks pretty good for starters.

With a Mom whose cooking skills were next to none, our family ate extremely well. As a little kid, I recall trips to the chicken house to gather fresh eggs for breakfast. If fried chicken was on the menu for dinner, I would help Dad shuffle all the chickens in a corner, and he would slide a 6 ft. stiff wire along the ground with a hook on one end to grab a claw. Dad would windmill the chicken's neck between two fingers, and Mom would soon come out with a kettle of hot water and a sharp knife to take care of feathers, breasts, legs, and thighs. Saturday mornings in our home always meant the smell of fresh bread, cinnamon rolls, and dinner rolls in the oven. Through the years, Mom's wheat bread won grand champion at the Garfield County fair, and was a standard by others to be judged.

Our 160 acre home place sure seemed big to a little kid, but eventually I covered every acre several times over. In the very center of the farm was the top of a hill, with a broad flat plain extending south, an abrupt drop off to a shale pit northwest, and a depression bowl to the northeast. The view from the hill is the highest elevation point in Garfield County, and second only to Nine-Mile Canyon, located several miles northwest. From here, grain elevators could be spotted for 30 miles or more in the distance to the north and east. During summer and fall months, bonfire wiener roasts in our shale pit were attended by other Toews, Thesman, and Janzen families. Plenty of homemade ice cream and cold watermelon were always present. These are among the best of family gathering memories.

With three older siblings, the kid in the family had to learn the universal law of patience -- all things come to he who waits. When two brothers have BB guns, a cap pistol will have to work for me. When they have .22's, I finally get my BB gun. Of course, my own bicycle significantly expanded my world by however many miles I could ride in a day. If I had a quarter, I could get a pocket full of candy after a 45 minute ride to Rathmel's grocery store in Kremlin. The Co-Op had the coldest pop in town. Cousin Rick and I could easily bike 10 to 15 miles a day. Things got really interesting when Rick and Larry showed up with a new red Honda

90 motorcycle. Then Daryl Toews had one, then John Mitchell. How long would it take for Mom and Dad to catch on? Of course the first car wasn't far off by then, and our Moms and Dads had one more kid behind the wheel to pray for and worry about. Such is parenthood.

How could any caring parent underestimate the importance of a child's education and school life? In a community like Kremlin, most kids were classmates for 12 years, and many became friends for life. Actually, many classmates' entire families became an extension of our own. Kremlin School teaching staff included some of the best teachers any student could hope for, and many played significant and impactful roles in my life. Of these, Mr. Dwayne Janzen was one of my favorites. His skills in wood and metal shop, mechanics, drafting, common sense, humor, and just being an all-round great guy made him a stand out role model for anyone, either for a student or a community member.

During 12 years of Kremlin School education, I never considered myself a troublemaker, but rather always being a student in the pursuit of humorous circumstances. Of course my ideas of humor didn't always adjust well with others, but I was OK with that. For instance, Bruce Meyer and I enjoyed a school night sleepover with the Mitchell family, and John and Bruce and I were busy on a bedroom phone that evening. A month or so earlier, each student in Mrs. Stephenson's American History class had entered an essay contest to win a trip to our nation's capitol. That night at John's house, we disguised our voices on the phone and called several female classmates to inform them of being the big winner of the essay contest and a free trip to DC. If I recall, Goldie knew John's voice right away and called him out, Ruth Ann smelled a skunk but played along, and Nancy swallowed the hook, line, and rod 'n reel. The next morning school seemed a bit quieter than usual, and it didn't take long for all three of us to face Mr. Jack Gordon in the office. We were scolded, of course, but I do believe Jack and Merlin Rogers, our principal, smiled and admired our creativity after the teeth gnashing was over.

So, how could I, a non-troublemaker, accomplish 12 swat-free years of Kremlin School education, only to receive a dozen whacks at the hand of Mr. Gordon during my senior year? Not without effort, of course, and empowerment from seeing light at the end of a 12 year tunnel. A broken typewriter from a scuffle with Byron in the business classroom started the year with three licks. The end of my senior year topped off with a special school board meeting before high school graduation to determine my punishment for a minor obscene gesture toward a female faculty member. Such an uproar! I'll take the swats, please. Physical pain and humiliation are fleeting. Only about five years ago, Matt Mitchell asked me, "Did you really do what people said you did back then?" Of course I did, Matt --- it's my legacy, my legend.

I have fond memories of growing up where you now live. Our farm, Makayla, has been marked as part of the Chisholm Trail, and my appreciation and love for a piece of land called our "Home Place" is personal. Many people won't understand, but some certainly will. For me, the farm and community where I grew up qualifies to be considered sacred ground. I'm happy that you are sharing this special home with our family.

SHARI (HOLLAND) MOORE, 45 interviewed by MIGUEL RODRIGUEZ, 14  
Recorded in Enid  
Graduated from Kremlin-Hillsdale

My graduating class had 18 students. I was in the first class to graduate in the new gymnasium.

I played volleyball, basketball, and track. Volleyball was new again to our school. My junior year our football team went to State. In middle school, our high school girls' basketball team went to State. Our basketball boys went to State my freshman year so you can see the importance of sports during my tenure there.

Our middle school was in Hillsdale. I won the Safety Fair in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. My slogan was, "Smoking Kills, so don't do it." My drawing had a guy in a recliner with a cigarette in his hand. The carpet around him was starting to catch on fire.

My 8<sup>th</sup> grade year I moved into the high school building that we just tore down, and then they finished our new elementary school.

**ROBBIE GRAY, 39, interviewed by his son BRADIE GRAY, 14**  
**Recorded in their living room March 9, 2016**  
**Graduate of KSH**

On April 19, 1995, I had gotten my assignment done in Mr. Gossen's class, and he let me go to the library to finish a different assignment. That morning, the Murrah Federal Building had been bombed, and many teachers, the principal, and I were watching the news on television in the library. Apparently, other students saw us in there and didn't realize that the tragedy had occurred. In my next class, the teacher asked me why I had stayed in the library and was late to class. Perplexed, I responded, "Why wouldn't I stay?" He told me that he thought that I had been expelled from the library earlier. I then explained to him and the rest of the class that I had been watching the aftermath of the bombing.

**BAILEY CRAIG, 23, tells ANNIE PEKRUL, 13, about a college experience**  
**Recorded at Kremlin-Hillsdale School**  
**Graduate of KHS**

I started my freshman year of college at Northwestern Oklahoma State University in the fall of 2011. I lived in the dorm my entire freshman year, and that's where I met my best friend and roommate Staci. Life in a dorm is interesting. You live in these little rooms with another person and have to get used to being in a small contained area. You're only allowed a mini fridge, microwave, and a TV. No hot plates or little convection ovens are allowed so your kitchen is a microwave. Anything and everything you cook must be made by using a microwave.

One evening my roommate and I decided we really wanted strawberry pie. We hopped in the car and headed to Walmart to buy all the ingredients we needed: the graham cracker crust, sugar, Jell-O, cornstarch, and of course, the strawberries. But we also needed utensils and bowls to cook in.

We drove back to the dorm and started mixing the Jell-O, sugar, water and cornstarch. Then we kind of ran into a problem; we needed a table. The closest thing resembling any kind of counter was an ironing board. It was a very wobbly one at that. Actually, it was a hand-me-down from my roommate's grandmother. We set it up, put the bowl of mixture in the microwave, hit the "cook" button, and waited for it to warm up. The first few minutes that the mixture heated, it really did not do anything. We stirred it and put it back in. The next thing we knew, the mixture started foaming and growing taller. It was spilling over the top of the bowl and all over the microwave. We pulled it out quickly, and the liquid settled back down into the bowl. But the mixture still was not thick enough to add in the strawberries. We put it back in and watched it very closely.

Once the liquid was thick enough, we took it out and set it on the make-shift table. The Jell-O was in a glass bowl, which was so hot that we could barely touch it. Staci tossed the strawberries in and I started stirring. It was our bad luck entirely when one end of the ironing board decided to give out, and the bowl fell and spilled the pink strawberry mixture all over the white rug we had in our room. Staci and I just stared at each other in disbelief of what had just happen. Next, we started laughing and could not stop as we tried to clean up the very sticky mess. It was just one of those moments we had to laugh at ourselves because we knew from the start that this attempt would most likely fail somewhere along the way.

We did not eat any strawberry pie, unfortunately, and our rug was permanently stained with a lovely pink splatter. Through three more moves during college together, Staci and I kept the rug, and every time we saw the stain, we relived the memory of our attempting to cook during our freshman year in the dorm.

**NICHOLE MADDOX, 41, interviewed by her son ISALAH NORWOOD, 17**  
**Recorded in Kremlin, Oklahoma**  
**Graduate of Kremlin-Hillsdale in 1992**

One of my better memories while attending school at Kremlin was the year the football team won state in 1987. That season was one of the biggest ones for the team and really for the entire town of Kremlin. The coach was Mark Sisco, and he was only 25 years old at the time. The football players were a very talented and athletic group of guys. They were able to bring the school its first state championship in football. I didn't originally film for the team and Coach Sisco asked me to do it once, and from there on I filmed for the rest of the season. In the playoffs they beat Wakita 27-6, Balko 54-28, Forgan 16-6, and finally Ryan 27-7 to win the state title. The Forgan game might have been one of the coldest games I have ever been too in my entire life. The snow was coming down so heavy; it was almost like a blizzard. We could barely see anything and that game was arguably one of the worst games I have been to weather-wise. The state championship game was relocated for some reason and was played in Crooked Oak, in Oklahoma City, which was really a super nice place for us to play. It was run down and razor wire was surrounding the equipment room. The press box was old and looked like the floor was about to fall right out from underneath it. Even though the place was old and run down, our fans were still there to cheer on the team. One of the best things about that year was the school spirit. It was better than it ever had been. The town used to line up and caravan from Kremlin to the games. They would leave Kremlin at 5 o'clock and come into town honking their horns and waving their flags. We painted the roads to show our school spirit and had big bonfires. The whole town was really active. Everyone came out to support the boys and it was really great to be a part of. Being around them made me feel like I was part of the team, which was special since I was in eighth grade at the time. The boys ended the season with a 12-2 record and a state championship. It just felt really good to represent Kremlin and be a part of their exciting season.

**RUSTY ZALOUDEK, 51, explains his job in college to TIA PHILLIPS, 17**

**Recorded at Rusty's home**

**Graduate of KHS in 1983**

Remember those banners that you used to see flying over football stadiums on a Saturday afternoon in Stillwater at an OSU football game? Or maybe you've been at the beaches in Florida and seen airplanes pulling banners that advertise car dealerships, political candidates, or marriage proposals. Somebody had to pilot the planes that pulled those banners, and I was one of those people.

When I was in college at OSU, I joined the Flying Aggies, a group of people who were interested in flying and supported the OSU aviation team. It was through that organization that I met an old pilot who towed banners around the OSU stadium. When he retired, I purchased all of his equipment and set out to make his business my business. He told me that he charged his clients \$1200 a job, and that entailed pulling a banner four laps around the stadium. I don't know how that sounds to you, Tia, but for me that was a lot of money for a day's work.

I already owned my own tail dragger plane, but I needed to add a tow hook that had to be approved by an FAA inspector from Oklahoma City. I purchased that and installed it on the rear of my plane, and then I met with the inspector to show him that I could take off, drop a 30 foot tow rope with a grapple hook out the side window, and then fly around and hook a heavy banner that was stretched out on the ground. I had to maneuver through two poles that were 8 feet high and 15 feet apart at 85 knots airspeed. My problem was that I had to swoop down at a very low altitude and grab that hook with my tow rope, and then gain altitude as the banner was pulled off the ground and into the air. The trick was to not crash. Was it dangerous? I'm pretty sure it was, but I thought it was fun; I was too young to know that I could die if I missed any part of this exercise. After that, I had to fly all of the rigmarole around my pattern then drop it in my designated banner drop zone—tow, hook, banner, and all. It would drop like a rock. I was lucky! I accomplished all of this on my first try even though I had zero experience.

After being certified by the FAA, I visited businesses to try to find those who might be interested in advertising by air. Unfortunately, I found out that about the only people who could afford the cost of aerial advertising were presidential candidates, Happy Birthday wishers, and men who were trying to talk some ladies to marrying them. I could sell two or three different banners for each home football game so I figured I could make a lot of money fast. Unfortunately, most people didn't want to spend that kind of money for a one day ad, and I had to lower my fees to \$400 for one lap. Already, I could see the payoff wasn't as great as I had first thought.

The easy part was flying around; the hard part was putting the banners together. Each letter was five feet tall, and each letter had eight straps with loops that could connect different letters together by slipping in a fiberglass rod between the loops on the letters. I could spell anything as long as I had the correct letters and enough of them. The problem was that if I had two or three banners to construct, I would often lack one S or one T, or something like that. Consequently, it was difficult to make all the banners before the job started. I had a ground crew which consisted of my girlfriend and my dad. They were in charge of changing the lead pole from the banner that I had just dropped to the one that I would pick up. Often I would have to drop one, remove a letter or two, move them to another banner, and set it up on the eight foot



poles. This took time, and they had only about 10 minutes before I was ready to pick up the new banner.

I found out why others charged \$1200 to do this stunt. One time in Cushing, Oklahoma, I did not tow the banner with my grapple hook. Instead, I snagged it by mistake with the tail wheel on my plane during pickup. The guys back at the airport had told me to always carry a big sharp knife in the cockpit just in case I hooked the tow rope on the main landing wheel, which is located right outside my window. Then I could just reach out the window and cut the banner loose if I ever got into trouble. I had the knife; however, this banner was hooked at the back of the plane, and I couldn't move to the rear. There was no way I could reach clear back there and cut that rope. So I flew around the airport close to the tower as I talked to the control tower operator. He could see my problem and tell me how bad the situation was. He informed me that there was no way to drop the banner prior to landing. I had to make a very steep approach to a grass runway in hopes of landing quickly enough before the banner would drag on the ground. Lucky for me, I was successful. That's where I give credit to the Flying Aggies. We had practiced takes offs and landings more times that I could count. I don't remember being scared; I do remember that I was determined not to crash my plane.

My final job of this one year adventure took place in Norman, Oklahoma, at an OU football game. I was flying over Memorial Stadium when I observed that my engine's oil temperature gauge was rising more than normal. I could not gain elevation so I towed the banner at an extremely low altitude. I was certainly not in compliance with FAA regulations as I headed back to the nearest airport in Goldsby, Oklahoma. There, I dropped my banner, loaded everything in my plane, and flew back to Stillwater. I noticed that my oil temperature continued to rise, and soon oil was spattering on the outside of my window. I knew that wasn't good and that I needed to get on the ground ASAP while I still had control of the plane. Soon it would be too late. I did land safely, but the next day when the mechanic pulled the dip stick out of the engine, no oil even registered.

The entire one year's experience was not a money maker; whatever I did earn, I spent on repairs. I had a lot of fun, and I found out that there is no easy way to make money. Certainly, there are less dangerous ways to make a living, so now I am a farmer.

**DIANE VOTH FOSMIRE, 55, interviewed by her Godson, JOE KEITHLY, 17**  
**Recorded in Diane's home near Kremlin, Oklahoma**  
**Graduated from Kremlin High School**

I grew up on a farm here in Kremlin, and I think I always had an attraction to adventure. One of the things I remember my dad doing was taking us to watch the circus train as it came through Kremlin. He must have heard about it at the Co-op because he always knew about a day before that the train was on its way. That was really cool. There were a lot of trains that went through here, but the circus train was very different with all the cars painted differently depending on what circus animals or circus supplies they were carrying. Sometimes you could even see the animals in the cars. I don't remember feeling like I wanted to escape from Kremlin, but I do remember thinking about what skills I might need if I were to join the circus. When I was in elementary school, things I requested for Christmas often had something to do with circus tricks. Once I got stilts, and I quickly learned how to walk all over the farm with them. I also asked for a unicycle one year, amazingly, one showed up. After much trying, I conquered riding the unicycle forward, but not backward. I never made it to the circus as an employee.

In high school, I didn't have a lot of adventure. My job was driving a tractor. If that was an adventure at all, it was a slow moving one. After college, I was interested in the field of mental health as it applies to Occupational Therapy. I was 23 years old and looking for jobs all over the country, and I took a job in New York. That was a bit of an adventure. I flew up there for the job interview by myself and rented a car that turned out to be a standard shift. I had a paper map that showed me where the hotel was from the airport. This was all at night in the winter, and before GPS and cell phones. I'm not sure to this day how I made to my destination, but I did. I was hired, moved there, and found a place to live all by myself. I was far away from any friends or family.

My next big adventure was marriage. No one has any idea what an adventure that is until he's experienced it! Have you ever noticed at weddings how people cry? It is not because it is sweet and sentimental; it's because those folks realize after 10 or 12 years of marriage that the people up there at the altar have absolutely no idea what they are getting into. And it's not all easy and sweet.

Having children is also an adventure, and adopting a child made us feel especially anxious because for us it involved some travel to a new and different place. We had to rely on the good will of our interpreter and guides to make sure that everything was proceeding smoothly.

Another adventure related to that is when I traveled with your mom to help bring you home from China, Joe. That to me was one of the most delightful adventures so far in my life. I was there as the staff assistant for your mom. It wasn't a paid position, and it involved a lot of prayerful consideration as to whether or not I should make the trip or not. It involved leaving my

husband Andy at home with three school-aged children. Our family has always run like a team effort, but with half the coaching staff absent, it could have been a little difficult. However, we decided I should take the opportunity to back your mom because she needed me, and we knew your mom would need help since your dad had babies here at home to take care of. Your mom and I knew that with guidance from the Holy Spirit, we could make this happen. My job was to serve as your sister Alice's tutor and your mother's tea servant. And I took a lot of pictures. One of my favorite memories from that trip is that first morning you were with us in the hotel room. Your mom was brushing her teeth, and Alice was awake and be-bopping around, and before long you woke up. I watched you. You were wearing your super cool Superman PJs that your mom brought for you. You sat up in bed and you opened your eyes, and your eyes gandered from left to right, and then your whole head shook from side to side. It was like you realized where you were, and a huge smile spread across your face. You starting running around the room with your Superman cape. It was really cool, because you could have been very scared when you woke up, but you just had a big grin on your face. It was like you were saying with your body language that you were ready for this big adventure. And I knew then that everything was going to be alright. Just that moment of seeing you wake up and be so happy and ready to take on this new life was something I'll never forget.

I started a new business, my own Occupational Therapy clinic, and that was certainly one of the most anxiety filled times of my life. It took a full three years before I was able to even think about my clinic without having an anxious feelings inside. Starting your own business is risky, and I could certainly fail at it, but I'd never know until I tried. But the biggest, ongoing adventure by far has been parenthood. The thousand little times you send them out the door as they are growing up doesn't prepare you for sending them out into the world on their own. From what I hear from older folks, that adventure, the adventure of being a parent, never ends.

**DIAN SALISBURY, 57, interviewed by her daughter CARLEE SALISBURY, 17**  
**Recorded in the living room of their home**  
**Graduate of Kremlin-Hillsdale 1977**

When interviewing my mom I asked if she had a story to tell. She began to talk and I listened intently. My mom said, "I have many fond memories of 'sleep overs' at my friend Cindy's home. As most girls do, we all ate junk food and stayed up late giggling. These sleepovers were great memories of my elementary school years at Kremlin-Hillsdale.

Allow me to describe my friend Cindy. She was blonde, beautiful, very smart, and athletic. I considered her one of my best friends all through elementary, junior high, and high school. She had four brothers and a mom who absolutely loved all athletic events! Cindy was an outstanding forward and was as short and little as me. Cindy and I were also cheerleaders together and took several advanced math classes where we were the only ones enrolled.

During our Junior year, Cindy began dating a boy from Oklahoma Bible Academy, which was then located in Meno, Oklahoma. As to be expected, our group of friends began seeing less of Cindy on weekends. I believe it was toward the end of our junior year that Cindy "ran away" with her boyfriend. I do remember that day very well! The principal pulled me from class numerous times questioning me about her whereabouts. I honestly had no idea. Cindy had kept me in the dark, to protect me from being involved.

Of course, it was a turbulent time for her family. Many details of those next months are foggy. However, Cindy ended up graduating from Kingfisher High School where her boyfriends' parents lived. My good friend, Janet and I went to Kingfisher and saw her several times our senior year.

Upon graduation from Kremlin-Hillsdale High school, I attended Oklahoma State University, Janet attended Northwestern in Alva, and Cindy and her husband attended college in Talequah, Oklahoma. She excelled in college and raised a baby boy, Jonathon. Janet and I traveled to see her several times at their home in Talequah.

Fast forward through some college years for Janet, Cindy and myself to age twenty one. I got married after my Junior year as did Janet. Janet was a Home Economics major, I was a music major and received my private pilots license. Cindy, being extremely smart, applied to OU Med school.

Cindy's birthday is on March 25<sup>th</sup>. Janet and I traveled to Talequah to visit her on her birthday our Senior year in college. She lived down many winding, narrow roads in a ranch type home. That trip would be the last time we saw Cindy. I vividly remember Cindy standing in front of her kitchen window and the sun light was cast around her. I was sitting at her table and the sun blinded me from seeing her face clearly. That is my last memory of Cindy. To this day, I cannot stand to see someone stand with the sunlight behind them blurring my vision of them.

The next weekend Cindy found out she was indeed accepted to OU Med school! During the week after that she, her husband, and her son were traveling down those long winding roads near Talequah and had a terrible wreck. Cindy was thrown from the car and transported to St. Francis in Tulsa. She had multiple injuries – too many to name. She never regained consciousness.

At the time, I was living in Stillwater and student teaching in Ponca City. I remember the phone call from my mom about Cindy's accident. I said 'Cindy who?' After all, I had just seen her, she was on the way to becoming a doctor and we were young. It just couldn't be true. I had to go to her in Tulsa to see for myself.

When I walked in her room, she was in ICU, connected to so many tubes and her mother was by her side. It was traumatic to for me to see as this was the first person, let alone friend, I ever witnessed in this condition. As I said, I was student teaching in Ponca City and as Cindy's condition worsened, I begged my supervising teacher to allow me to miss a day to see her. She declined.

During the next ten days, Cindy's brain stem swelled so much that she had to be taken off of life support. It was extremely hard, as you can imagine for her mom and her family. Remember, I was living life! I was at the end of my college career, I had my pilot's license, and I found out I was expecting my first child, Cory.

Then came the funeral. It was around Easter and was just surreal for everyone. I remember crying so hard at the cemetery. A little boy lost his mother, a husband lost his wife, a mother and father lost her daughter, boys lost their sister and friends lost their classmate.

**JAMIE MADDOX, 31, interview with her nephew ELIJAH NORWOOD, 16,  
Interviewed in the town of Kremlin, Oklahoma  
Graduate from Kremlin-Hillsdale High School in 2003**

Elijah: you said you had a story you would like to tell; I'd be more than happy to hear it.

Jamie: In 2001, when I was a sophomore, my class was going to have a fundraiser for the school and it was going to be a talent show; so four girls and I decided to be the Spice Girls. We would be dancing to one of their songs. I was Scary Spice because I had curly hair. Now, we took this very seriously, we'd go to someone's house and we'd practice. We had sleepovers and watched Spice World, we had choreographed the dance and we practiced at school for around two weeks. We had it down and, it was going to be amazing. We were even going to act out the Spice Girls breaking up on stage. So we have our amazing choreography, we had practiced, we had our dance down, and in the middle of it we we're to yell "Stop, stop!" in British accents, and we get into it on the stage, and Ginger Spice, which was Chelsea, she was supposed to leave, so we were going to do one more part of the dance. After she was going to come back out and throw glitter everywhere, and it was going to be amazing; it was going to look awesome. Anyways, we start to get into our dance on stage, and we're about to repeat it again, and I see one of the girls walk to the middle of the stage, thinking we were done with the dance and she goes "Oh crap!" She realized she screwed up the entire dance and all I was thinking was, "What are you doing!" It was awful. She just turned around and shook her butt, for the whole rest of the dance; it was pretty great. Then it was done and that's it.

Elijah: This was on stage in the old gym?

Jamie: Yep, on the stage in the old gym.

Elijah: Did you win?

Jamie: I don't think we did.

Elijah: Wow, that's a great story, Jamie

**TERESA HELM, 46 interviewed by EMILY FELBER, 17**  
**Recorded in Enid, Oklahoma**  
**Graduate of KHS in 1989**

Karene and I have been best friends since birth; we were born only three weeks apart. It all started back with our great grandfathers, who were neighbors. After them was our grandmothers, who were best friends, and our mothers who were best friends as well. It's almost a family tradition to be friends, but Karene didn't have children so I guess it'll stop with us. We grew together and have been best friends through high school and still through today.

Karene lived on a farm, and unlike now days, if your friend was doing chores, so were you. I would walk over and hangout at the farm on Sundays before and after church. We would do whatever chores we were assigned. Then we would take showers and clean up for church. I remember one time after we took our showers, we walked outside and there was a truck full of wheat. We jumped into the pile of wheat and when we finally got discovered, we were covered in white. Her mom was so angry! To make matters worse, we didn't have any clean clothes to change into. Once we egged their barn. We went out and collected eggs like we were told to do, but for some reason we decided not to take the eggs inside and put them up. I remember we threw the eggs at the side of their barn instead.

We used to play outside in the mud all the time. We mostly made mud pies, though. I recall we made her little sister eat one once. We told her, "Oh, it's ok, it's a real pie! It's a chocolate pie. Just try it!" Her mom and sister were so mad at us. Groundings didn't apply to us. We would see each other at church on Sunday and talk her mom into letting me come over. We would never have any clean clothes and would always be playing in the mud. We went almost everywhere together, but we didn't attend the same school. I was treated like one of the family. I did chores, ate with them, and we even had sleepovers.



If my friend's school let out sooner than ours, I could bring her with me to school but only on the last few weeks of school on days when we weren't testing. Karene came with me about three days of the last week.

Once after I was engaged, she and I went cruising, and some guy was bothering her and staying right next to us. I let her borrow my engagement ring, and after a bit she turned and said, "You see this ring?! I'm engaged!" If she wouldn't have done that, I don't think she would still be single. During high school my husband worked on Karene's farm, and they would have dirt fights on the tractors.

I moved to Texas for a while in elementary school. Keeping in touch was difficult. We would write each other letters, but they took forever getting there. After I moved back, we became close again. One of my Texas friends came to visit once and felt jealous of how close Karene and I were.

We still go to the same church that we attended growing up, but our friendship has evolved to fit our lifestyles. She doesn't have a family and I do. She loves hanging out with my daughter Kristin. She'll take her shopping and pick her up from school and sometimes take her to church for me. I'm glad our friendship has lasted.

**MAKAYLA RATZLAFF, 14, interviews HOLLY JOHNSON, 37**

**Recorded in Kremlin**

**Graduated from KHS**

I lived on a dirt road that is not paved, but at the time I grew up, there were only eleven houses around me. Now there are a lot of homes. It was a quiet place and hardly any traffic passed by. I could always ride my bike anywhere I wanted. My parents lived in two different towns in Oklahoma.

My nickname was "D." I got that from my middle name. My best friends during school were Lori Bundy, Shelly Smith, Shara Norse, and Stephany Stones. One of my favorite memories was when my friends and I were at Lori's house making spaghetti. A friend said that she heard that if you throw spaghetti at a refrigerator and it sticks, that meant it was cooked completely. We spent a long time throwing spaghetti at the refrigerator seeing if it was done even though we knew it was. We did it because it was fun.

I was a student that was not the best and did not apply myself. I work as an administrative assistant, and I like it most of the time. I regret not attending college and not taking school seriously. One of my favorite stories during school was when Mr. McLain would yell at everyone in the hallway for not being in class on time. I should have paid more attention to him.

My first serious relationship was when I was twenty. But my first real love was my three year old daughter. I found out I'd be a parent when I was 20 years old. I was really scared. When I saw both of my children for the first time, I was emotional, joyful, and blessed. A little advice I would give to a young couple is not to get in a hurry to settle down.

I would like to be remembered as fun and loving.

MARANDA SHARP, 11, interviews KEVIN HELM, 42  
Recorded in Kremlin  
Graduated from Kremlin-Hillsdale

When I was young, I loved shop class, and I loved dodge ball. I also loved welding class. I loved lunchtime so I could talk to my friends. I ran track, but that was the only sport I did. My nickname was Helmet because of my last name. I loved to play outdoors with my friends. When I was younger, I was really tall.

I love riding bikes with my kids. I ride mountain bikes for fun. I did a lot of camping when I was little. I also love to hike for fun. My family is the most important thing to me. I have three girls and one boy. My happiest time of my life was when my son was born.

My favorite relative was my grandma. I learned a lesson in life: I must never give up.

**TINA LUNDAY, 37, interviewed by her son's friend CHLOE AGUILAR, 15**

**Recorded at home**

**Graduate of KHS**

I first attended Kremlin in my second grade year in 1986; it was my eighth move that year. I was so tired of traipsing from school to school; I even attended some schools twice in one year. Growing up in a single parent household in poverty is never easy, but adding several moves a year meant, sadly, never making friends. I was so used to preparing for the next move that I never bothered to talk to my classmates and make friends because it was painful to have to leave them.

But when I arrived at Kremlin, a girl named Kristie took me under her wing and became my best friend. Becoming friends with Kristie gave me a sense of belonging, which at the time was the most important thing in the world for me. She's the first person I ever really learned to trust.

In my childhood, if it didn't happen in Kremlin, it probably wasn't a good moment. I'm not bashing my mother because she was amazing and did her best, but sometimes life isn't fair and we get dealt a very bad hand. I remember always wanting to be at school because I felt safe there even when I wasn't safe at home. I never let my home life interfere in any way with my grades, though.

In fifth grade, I joined band. I used a hand-me-down clarinet, and being in band was awesome! In seventh grade we started marching, playing at games, and participating in band competitions. I loved band and now my kids are following in my footsteps.

In eighth grade, a boy in my computer class started throwing paper wads into my hair; it was so annoying. So we started hanging out, and now we have been married for 19 years, and he still won't leave me alone! We have a pretty great group of kids together who all attend

Kremlin-Hillsdale. Being in a small school is not just about a good education; it's also about meeting people you will most likely know for the rest of your life. I know my children are gaining more than just an education here at Kremlin and that's why we decided to send them there many years ago.

**BRAD WIGGINS interviewed by DRADEN STALLINGS, 14**  
**Recorded in Draden's kitchen, Kremlin, OK**  
**Graduate of Kremlin-Hillsdale 1996**

On a Tuesday, during my 1994-95 football season, I was fullback on offense in a 30 blast play. One guy tackled me from behind and rolled my right ankle. First thing the coaches did was stick me in an ice bath for eight minutes. It seemed like HOURS!! The ice bath didn't fix it!!

For the next 3 days, sounds crazy, but I carried around a 5 gallon bucket full of water, plus an electronic device used to repair muscle injuries. There were two pads with electrodes inside and a dial for different settings, lower to higher. I placed those pads in the water with my foot and BAM shocked the #@!% out of me! The electrodes helped much better than the insanely freezing bath!

Friday was GAME DAY against Balko on their home turf. Game time arrived, I was feeling good, and my ankle felt strong. During the first quarter, my ankle felt good. We played a strong quarter, tied up. Second quarter started, ankle still feels good. It was a hard quarter. Lots of back and forth. Towards the end of the quarter, I broke for a 40 yard run. One of the defenders tackled me from behind AGAIN! On the same ankle.... Took me out of the game.

We didn't come out on top that evening, but we played hard and left nothing on that field. I'll never forget having to sit out of that game, and when it was over, every player and coach from Balko came over and shook my hand saying "good game".

Sportsmanship. That's what it's all about!!!

**SUZY HORVATH, 64, interviewed by KATELYN MARTIN, 16**  
**Recorded over the phone**  
**Graduated from Kremlin-Hillsdale in 1969**

When I was 17 Kremlin and Hillsdale became Kremlin-Hillsdale. Moving to a bigger school like Kremlin was scary because I was so use to tiny Hillsdale, but I ended up making a great new bunch of friends in the relatively short nine months I was there. One of my favorite memories is our senior trip to Galveston, Texas. I remember playing on the beach all day. We rode air mattresses on the waves. One night all the senior girls we went out on the beach in our pajamas without our sponsors! It was so much fun at the time but now I can't believe we were so dumb! I got so sunburnt the chaperones made me take a bath in vinegar.

**TYLER ELLIS, 36, tells his daughter TAYLOR ELLIS, 13, about school  
Recorded at their home February 25, 2016 at 5:00  
Graduate of KHS**

I am the son of James "Hank" Ellis and the late Kathy Messenger. I have one sibling Nathan Ellis who attended Kremlin-Hillsdale as well. I graduated in May, 1998 with 26 kids in my class.

When I was able to start school, I attended Hillsdale Christian School until the third grade. My class was one of the first classes to start at Hillsdale School after it was established. One of my worst days there was when I was in P.E. Class playing basketball. I ran into the wall and all of a sudden, I had severe back pain. I found that I had been nailed to the ground! It took a couple of teachers to help me up so they could pick the nail out that was jabbed into my back. I still have a nice scar as a reminder of that incident.

I started at Kremlin-Hillsdale at the beginning of my fourth grade year due to my mom having a job there teaching 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading. I do recall that I didn't like elementary school very much because it was very boring to me, but I did enjoy having my mom there as a teacher because she was near when I needed her. She was always willing to lend me a helping hand.

When junior high rolled around, school was starting to be a little fun because I enjoyed switching teachers for different subjects. Plus, it felt like we had a little more freedom. But High school were the years where the fun really began. I remember hiding under the stage in the old gym with some of the other guys when we didn't want to attend class. After the bell would ring to let us know it was time to move to the next class, we would try to sneak out of the gym without anyone seeing us and head for the next class.

My sophomore year was not fun. I remember football starting, and everyone was pumped up for the season. One Monday after school, all of us boys were practicing for Friday night's game, and while I was on the field, I felt sick all of a sudden. Coach kept telling me I was just nervous for the game, but I didn't feel like that. I kept practicing and attending school for the rest of the week even though I still was feeling terrible. By Friday the team was all ready for the game, but not me. I played that night, but I knew something was wrong. My stomach was hurting me so much that I just didn't know what to do. After the game ended, I headed home with my dad since my parents were divorced; plus that, my mom was taking chemo, and I didn't want to expose her to any illness. Dad and my step-mom took me into the ER per my request to see what was causing my pain, and after one test, I found that my appendix had ruptured. All week I had been to school and had played a football game with a ruptured appendix. My stomach was split wide open due to gangrene. Needless to say, football season for me that year was finished.

One of my favorite classes in high school was history; I still love that subject today. That's probably why I had the nickname "Paul Harvey" because I could always tell you "the rest of the story." Mr. Topper McClain was one of my favorite teachers. He taught history very well



and made it fun and interesting. As a class, we loved to get Mr. McClain sidetracked and talk about something else so that he would forget to assign us homework.

I sure hope you and Taryn make and cherish all the memories that you can while you are here at KHS, and for sure, I want each of you to make the best out of your lives.

**MARY CRAIG, 70, interviewed by granddaughter, MAHAYLA MITCHELL, 16**  
**Recorded in Kremlin, Oklahoma**  
**Graduated from Kremlin-Hillsdale High School in 1963**

Right after your grandfather and I had gotten married, we lived out on the farm with my mom until Jim bought us a trailer. We stayed there on the property, and one evening, we were riding home from a show. What show it was I cannot remember, but it must have been around ten o'clock. We had just turned off the corner Breckinridge and 78<sup>th</sup>. About a quarter of a mile down the road a bright light shot down on top of us.

The light moved down close to the car, and then it flew straight up. The whole family came out to watch it. We all stood outside for about thirty minutes as it bounced around jumping up and down. We were starrng up at it wondering what it could be. We were concerned that it might have been a plane going haywire in the sky so we called Vance Air Force Base. They checked all their records and confirmed that they had no known planes in the area. So we stood and watched some more, and after the call we thought it could only have been a UFO.

I have had a few terrible experiences with doctors. Once, I was in labor all night long and I didn't even know it. The doctor told me it would be another week before I would give birth to Donna, but I ended up having her that evening sometime after four. Doctors don't know everything, so don't let them tell you that they do. I don't like doctors, never have liked them.

I just don't have much faith in them. Back when we lived in Colorado, when I was a young girl, a dentist tried pulling my teeth, which isn't bad, but he had his hand cut off and replaced with a hook, which is not okay.

Later on, when my family moved here (to Kremlin), when I was about twelve years old, my mom and dad took care of the Kremlin Cemetery. I was running around through the graves where I should not have been after it had been pouring one evening. A tomb stone lost its stability in the slushy soil, and fell on me. My parents drove me to the hospital in the back of an old car. I'm positive my legs were smashed, but they didn't exactly have the same technology as they do today, so they never healed correctly. I'm sure my tendons are damaged, and now I have a crease in my leg from the incident.

**JOHN ROSE, 13, visits with his grandpa, FRANK HENKE , 72**  
**Recorded in Kremlin, Oklahoma**  
**Graduated from Kremlin High School**

I was part of the 1961 graduating class, and later I became and your mother's daddy And later your grandfather. But you are probably more interested in my life as a kid back at Kremlin. Mostly my days were filled with farming and hard work. We didn't have the TV or video games like you do. Ever since I was old enough, I was baling hay and alfalfa. When I was younger, I was paid half a cent per bale, and then when I grew up a little more, I was paid a whole cent per bale! I always hated hauling my father's bales because they were so heavy. I could hardly lift them.

A long line of our relation attended Kremlin School so we have a history in this place.

**DAVI PORTER, 37, interviewed by student GRACIE VANDIVER, 13**  
**Recorded in Kremlin, Oklahoma**  
**Graduated from KHS**

You're going to laugh. Apparently I felt the need to write a book! But I'm telling you that going to school at KHS was such an amazing, wonderful, and one-of-a-kind experience that it will be hard to pick just a few great memories. When we first moved to Kremlin, I thought my life had ended because we were moving to "the middle of nowhere." But it didn't take long to figure out that it is by far, one of THE best things that our parents did for our family. The experiences, connections, teachers, our education and friends that became family can never be duplicated in a big city or a large school....The whole package is priceless.

When I was in high school and had to "deliver" a message to someone in the other building, I would just "happen" to pass through the cafeteria to say hi to Debbie, Goldie, and Jackie, and they would feed me. I could always count on a fresh cookie or roll, a piece of Stromboli, or a slice of Victory Cake. They'd love to visit, but they knew how long to keep me, feed me, and then send me on my way before anyone was sent to find me.

I loved the fact that no matter what year it was, we always had "The Old Gym" and "The New Gym." We also had the Suburban that we called "The Burban." Actually, we had the New Suburban and the old Suburban even when the New Suburban wasn't new anymore. No matter the age, the names never changed.

I loved school so much that I could literally talk on for days. When we were younger, there were always older kids to help stick up for me, and they did it without being told to by a teacher. When I needed to learn the dance to the school song for pep rallies, Monica Gossen worked and worked with me in my parents' garage until I learned it. Heather Myers Carson,

Nikki Stubblefield, Nichole Maddox and Kennette Ronck Craig all helped me prepare for cheerleading tryouts, and Jamy Zaloudek Perdue taught our cheerleading camp in junior high. When it came to the teachers, it honestly didn't matter what I needed or whether or not it was their subject. They were always there for me.

My favorite activities were cheerleading and making posters to decorate lockers for the following week, marching to the New Gym for assemblies. (The steel drum player was the coolest!) I loved listening to Mr. Campbell sing (or occasionally dance while writing on the board) in chemistry. FCA game days and "Meet You at the Pole" were great, and the final special thing...leaving high school hating spaghetti!

**LAUREN BONINE, 16, interviews her family friend and neighbor, SID LAKIN, 58**

**Recorded in the living room of Sid's home in Hillsdale, Oklahoma**

**Graduated from Kremlin Hillsdale**

My classmates should remember me as, polite and sincere. For example, I remember this girl in my class who would get made fun of by the boys because of her weight. Not knowing she would remember it 20 years later, I signed her yearbook at the end of the year and said, "I'm proud of you for the way you stood up to the teasing." Her husband came up to me at a football game and said, "I read what you wrote in my wife's yearbook. You were the only one who wrote something nice."

One of my favorite stories from my experiences at Kremlin was one day during a baseball game while I was pitching, a guy hit a homerun over the fence toward the left field. The fence was chain length so it wasn't very tall so the guy playing left field tried to jump for the ball and when he did, he fell over the fence and got his pants caught on the fence. He was hanging upside down with his bottom showing for everyone to see. That was probably the funniest thing. It was worth the homerun watching him get stuck like that.

The happiest moment of my life was the birth of my girls. You know you're so worried about if they are going to be normal. Count their fingers, count their toes...they were both perfectly healthy. The moment was indescribable.

I remember a story during the birth of my first child. We were in the operating room, and my wife was having a C-section, I was sitting by Linda with a camera in my hands. I was ready to take a picture, but the lens cover never came off so I stood up and looked, I don't think I was supposed to stand up. The doctors were making the incision and the placenta was in front of Bobbi, my daughter, so she couldn't come out. Then my wife blew and blood sprayed everywhere, on the ceiling, in the doctor's faces, on the lights. Linda was looking at me trying to get a reading from what was going on. I gave her a wide eyed nervous look. Then the doctors put her back together. So I had quite the amount of emotions when I saw my daughter for the first time.

I met my wife through a girlfriend's friend. One of my favorite stories about her was when, Tomi's (my youngest daughter) boyfriend, now husband, came over and ate breakfast with us and my wife made syrup. When she pulled the container out of the freezer, she thought it was peaches, but it was cantaloupe. So we had the nastiest cantaloupe syrup on German pancakes. It wasn't edible.

One classic family story is when my wife tried to shoot a skunk and she didn't hit him. My wife called me up while I was at a basketball game, and she said there was a skunk in the henhouse. I told her to get the 22 and shoot him. She returned and called me again and she said, "I think I got him. He was limping when he left." When I got back home, I went to see where she said it had been (on the bottom shelf), and I saw holes above the second shelf. So unless he was up on the shelf, she'd hit nothing. He limped away because he was laughing.

I remember one of the worst things I did in grade school when I got in trouble. It was after school and two older kids had a friend of mine down on the ground, and they were beating him up. I had a metal lunchbox that was heavy. This kid was sitting on top of my friend and had him pinned in with his knees, slapping him around, I hit him in the back of the head with that lunchbox. That was probably the worst. My siblings and I were also always getting into trouble; we were always wild. But not as wild as Jeff Hoffsommer. The reason we were bad was because we hung around with Jeff Hoffsommer.

Many people as they get older don't think their life would turn out the way that it did, including me. Well, I thought to make it to the year 2000 was just ridiculous. That was like the future. When you're younger you don't think your ever gonna reach. 50 seems like an old man. But it's really not. I had no idea that being a carpenter was what I was going to be doing. That was probably one of my hardest choices that I had to make in my life. I prayed about that for a long time.. my dad told me "son, what's wrong? why you praying all night for so long?" "It's nothing, Dad. I'm just trying to find out guidance." Then I thought, Jesus was a carpenter. I'll be a carpenter. I really enjoy what I'm doing. One of my favorite stories from my work life was when We were working on a duplex, and Tomi and I were watching this puppy..there was a chain linked fence right behind this duplex but not much of a backyard, and so I made noises with my mouth at the do. We were standing right there in the window and Tomi said, "Dad, here it comes!" I could see the dog coming to us. We were going to, you know, pet the puppy, but she yelled, "No dad, the owner!" and I mumbled "Oh, no!" and I hid back behind the wall. The owner walked up and picked up his dog... he probably saw us. It scared me to death... yeah that wasn't very funny.

Another time when we were eating lunch and a bull snake was outside my truck beside me, so I got a two by four and hit it. I put it in the back of this concrete guy's truck, which was full of garden hoses. Come to find out, that guy was deathly afraid of snakes, and when he saw it, he jumped off the back of his truck and landed on his rear. Yeah, that was probably the best one.

Lauren, I remember when we used to live right beside each other, and I put up a bird feeder between our two houses and you would sit and look outside your bedroom window all day watching tons of birds come back and forth.

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I'm glad he brought that memory up because it reminded me of all the good times we had living so close to each other. Mr. Lakin has had a big impact on my life, and my family's as well. He's taught me many things and has been a great influence on me and my siblings.

**LOGAN BAKER, 13, listens to TODD SELLERS.**  
**Recorded in Kremlin**  
**Graduated from KHS**

I won "most spirited" all four years in high school. I'm still proud to call Kremlin my home. As I grew up, I don't remember necessarily liking my teachers, but as I aged, I really began to understand that not only did I like them, but I really admired them. I believe my teachers and community made me a good man.

When I was young, my friends and I would ride bikes all day until the street lights came on. We'd spend hours at our town pool or playing in creeks. I recall many times going to ballgames with or even without my mom, and she knew I was safe because the community was like family. Kremlin wasn't just a place to live, but it was and still is my life.

My wife Katie and I built our house in Kremlin so our son Lawson can have the small town upbringing. Lawson will one day attend our new high school that his Papa (Alvin Myers) helped build.



**TRACE HENRY, 12, listens to his father CHRIS HENRY**  
**Recorded in Kremlin**  
**Graduated from KHS**

One day the new band teacher who had been at Kremlin for only one year tried to make the football team run more in practice. The reason was that we had moved her car from the parking lot to a giant curb by the gym. She had a small Volkswagen Beetle, and the team just lifted it up and moved it. Then we continued on to practice. I guess she didn't like it so she wanted us to run more for punishment. Coach McLain got a phone call about the car, and we had to remove the car off the curb, but we didn't have to run more or get yelled at by Coach McLain. She was the only one angry, but we all just kind of laughed.

**JAMES WUERFLEIN, 57, tells KYLER VIVEIROS, 14, about his life**  
**Recorded in Kremlin**  
**Graduate of KHS**

Life is interesting, Kyler. When I was in high school, I was so afraid of having to give a speech that I wouldn't take a public speaking class because I didn't want to stand up in front of a crowd. My senior year, I had the choice of Speech I or English IV, which was British Literature. I chose to read Shakespeare, Milton, Chaucer and all the rest of that really difficult literature instead of having to organize my thoughts into an oral presentation of any kind. However, while I was a student at Oklahoma State University, I couldn't escape the dreaded speech class. I was forced to face my fears. I found out that I was pretty good at it. What's really odd about it is that since I graduated from college, I have been in many professional organizations and on numerous boards that require me to make presentations! I can't even tell you how many speeches I have given in my life. It all turned out fine.

In my growing up days, I lived with my family in the country a little south and east of Kremlin, but I rode the bus to Hillsdale for school. Back then I wanted to be a Paleontologist. About all I knew of that subject was that I would be looking for dinosaurs, and that sounded exciting. I don't know what I was thinking because when it was time for college, I chose OSU, a university that didn't even have a major in that field. I switched to Forestry for a year until calculus worked me over. After that I changed to Wild Life Ecology. I wanted to be a game warden until I sat in a class with about 100 students enrolled and found out that we were all wanting the same one or two jobs that might come open in a year or two. I finally graduated with a Science Education major with a minor in History. I always liked history thanks to Dick Barr, a very talented teacher who inspired me. After graduation, I did substitute teach for a year

while I was living near Imo, Oklahoma. However, I never worked at a full-time teaching position.

All of this time when I was trying to find my place in the world, the one profession I knew I didn't want to pursue was farming! I had driven a tractor during my younger day, and I saw it as a lot of traveling that didn't go anywhere but back and forth or around and around. Farmers didn't make much money, and it involved a lot of work. However, now that I look back, I see that I always wanted to be outside, and farming allowed me that luxury. Better and bigger equipment has made life easier, and the farms have been good to my family. When my dad died and my mom moved to Enid, my family returned to the home place that my grandpa had built, and I have been happy here ever since. I've been pleased to raise my family right here where I lived during my childhood.

**ROSS MCCARTNEY, 36, visits with TARYN RHODES, 11**  
**Recorded in Kremlin**  
**Graduated from Kremlin Hillsdale**

After graduation in 1998, I went to work for Triangle Industries, and later I moved to the oilfield for Riteway Construction. I learned the ropes of the oilfield by building tank batteries and drilling rigs as well as welding gas pipelines. After eight and a half years with Riteway, I decided there was a better way of life for me. I wanted to build my own business as an owner. I did it because I wanted to provide more for my family, and I did. In 2007 I built a business by the name of McCartney Welding and Roustabout in Lahoma, Oklahoma. I do about everything in the oilfield except drill the wells and complete them. I have had up to 45 employees at one time. That's not bad for a small business.

When I was 16 years old, I became involved with auto racing. I started out as a pitman for Darren Hacker, who was a professional IMCA modified driver. Then at the age of 18, I started driving my own cars with the help of my father Big Ross. While pursuing checkered flags at Enid Speedway, I met the love of my life, Stacie Nightingale McCartney. We now have three beautiful daughters.

I started my own racing team by bringing in some professional drivers. My daughter Courtney, Kenny Morris, Ryan Gustin, Janae Gustin, Brandon Gemmil and I have done well. I won the 2014 Track Championship at Longdale Speedway, and Kenny won the 2015 Track Championship at Longdale Speedway. Along with many honors, we have had feature wins at numerous tracks.

I've always had a love to be competitive in everything I have done. From football to State weightlifting champs, and from racing to being the best boss and company owner, I try my

best. I believe we should never underestimate ourselves; if I want it, I must work for it! I have had a lot of success in many ways. I credit great family, friends, and customers for having faith in me and supporting me in life.

**KELLEY DITTMAYER, 33, interviewed by DESTINEE BELL, 14**  
**Recorded in Enid, Oklahoma**  
**Graduate of KHS**

I have always loved my family. They are always there for me, and I have grown up with them side by side. I was a good student, and I maintained a 4.0 GPA, and that's really good. When we were about to head off to practice and games, I was the best because I was doing something that I loved and knew how to do. With only 15 kids in my class, there wasn't really a crowd to run with, and we all liked each other pretty well.

One time, I threw a rock out of a bus window, and it hit a car's windshield. I did not want to tell my parents because I was so scared. The school called my mom to come get me, but she was at work so I had to sit in the office until school was over. When I got home, she was waiting by the door and asked me, "Is there anything you would like to share." Then I spilled out the whole event, and it felt good to get it off my chest.

When I would just hang out at games, I would ride around in my car, and it made me feel like "I'm the Man!" When I look back, I must have looked pretty silly, but still it was fun.

I always had a passion for money and math. Mr. Gossen was the best part of school, and his class was great because he had a way of teaching so I could understand what we were doing. He is a man of faith, and he helped others and often taught at other places, as well, to help people with their worth. Today, I am a treasury accountant at OG&E. Mr. Gossen has helped me get to this position.

Probably the worst thing I ever did to someone was to break up with my girlfriend on her birthday. I don't know what I was thinking. I don't regret it because I learned from that mistake, and mistakes are what made me grow up. Yes, I learned from it, and dating taught me that it's

better to find a girl that shares the same values in religion, family, and friends. Sometimes two people, no matter how much they like each other, find they are not compatible, and that's ok.

I have a great family, I still keep up with friends that I made in school. We still have plenty to talk about even if we don't see each other every day like we used to. Graduating from Kremlin-Hillsdale was awesome! Kremlin is a good neighborhood with good people.

**CARLA YELL ESTES tells some of her memories to MATTHEW WHEELER**

**Recorded by email**

**Graduate of KHS**

One of my favorite memories from Kremlin is being the Bronc mascot. It was so much fun mocking the referees. I didn't make the cheerleading squad, but as the mascot, I did learn some of their routines with them, and I performed in the Bronc suit! Loads of fun.

The only down side was when anybody would try to see me inside the big red head, they would pull down on the nose holes, which was the only way that I could see, and that would rub the hard inside of it on my nose! Not only that, but I was often hot in there. It was like being wrapped in a blanket all the time. Football wasn't so bad, but Basketball season was often very warm in side that outfit. But so much fun!

I also enjoyed making the movie in Mrs. Harris' class too. We were gangsters, and the girls dressed up in flapper dresses. We did some of the filming at Willie's Store. I don't remember if we were supposed to be robbing it or what, but Mr. Rathmel put up with us, and we probably bought a lot of candy and pop in there that day.

I also remember the walk-out over the firing of Mr. Jerry Long. We all loved him and didn't want him to go so we staged a walk-out in protest. The worst part of it was that our parents were called, and I was told by my parents that I was the ringleader! Getting old has an effect on the memory! I don't remember whose idea it was, but we were all in agreement!

One of my other favorite memories was when we won the State Championship in Volleyball. We were a great team and Mr. Harris drove us to be great players. I was one of the spikers, and loved that I was one of the tall ones. The team had great setters for us spikers too!

Does anyone remember why the Ides of March is important?

Loved my years at Kremlin and loved each and every one of the teachers.



**JACKIE BOWEN, 28, tells a story to TREVIN KING, 12**

**Recorded in Kremlin**

**Attended KHS**

It was a big Tuesday for me. I had been writing a poem for the school program, and today was the day everybody would hear it. When I arrived at school, I rehearsed my lines over and over at least a thousand times because I was so nervous. My teacher Mrs. Kathy Messenger walked in and asked, "Are you ready for today?"

I said, "Yes," even though I knew I wasn't at all.

She said, "Good. Now, the program will start in fifteen minutes so be ready."

I kept practicing and my best friend came and said, "Are you ready?"

"I guess; let's go then."

It was time and my parents and pretty much the whole world were there. At least that's what it felt like. I was so nervous. I was thinking about saying my stomach hurt just so I could leave, but, Mrs. Messenger walked in, and I told her I was really almost sick. She told me that I had to believe in myself because I was way too talented to give up and quit. I thanked her, and after that I settled down and wasn't so panicky anymore.

Ever since that day, I have not been so scared to talk to a big crowd of people. Now I am a teacher, and I to stand in front of at least 20 kids every day. That past experience a long time ago on that particular day really helped me for the rest of my life.

**KELLY MOFFETT, 40, interviewed by Kremlin-Hillsdale student TATUM HORNING,  
15**

**Recorded in Kremlin-Hillsdale cafeteria  
Graduate of Kremlin-Hillsdale 1994**

Knowing that my husband has never gone to Wrestle Mania, I've wanted to buy us tickets. It just so happened to work out that the date that Wrestle Mania fell on also fell on my husband's and my honeymoon. We married the Friday before and also used this trip to Huston, Texas, to visit my husband's son and my stepson, Keyshawn.

As my husband arrived home from work, I'm running around the house like a chicken with its head cut off trying to get the kids and myself ready. The car had to be packed for the weekend to come. It was the Friday of my wedding and it was a good thing that the church was in walking distance because of the hassle I was going through trying to get everything ready and packed. After my wedding and the reception was over, we all hopped in the car and headed to Huston, Texas, for the weekend.

After about eight to nine hours of driving, we arrived to Huntsville, and there I decided to check the car's oil. I decided to fill up the oil tank with more oil, and little did I remember to put the cap back on. My husband, Joe, started smelling something odd like burning oil so he pulled over, looked under the car, and realized that it was our car that had the smell of burnt oil. We then finished out our trip to Huston.

When we finally arrive in Huston, Joe and I dropped my girls off at their father's house, and we decided to finish out the night with slumber at the hotel. Since we are where my stepson Keyshawn lives, we gave his mother a call to see if he could spend the day with us. When he arrives at the hotel, he was jumping off the walls with excitement, so much that he hurt his head jumping into a wall. Keyshawn went home later on that day, and I spent the rest of the day with my loving husband.

That Sunday morning we headed to check the wrestling arena and saw tens of hundreds of people already lined up to be the first ones in the arena which confused me because these people had already bought tickets. This wasn't a first come first serve situation; it was you buy a ticket and get an assigned seat situation. These people had been sleeping outside for about three days, and they smelt so bad that after we picked up my kids, went inside the arena, sat in our assigned nosebleed seats, we could still smell the odor from the guy in the front row. I hoped that someone would somehow push the button to make the top of the arena open to let the smell out, but nothing happened. It only made it worse when the fire explosions from the wrestler's entrees went off because those two things don't mix, though overall it was a great experience.

The girls stayed with us that Monday night at our hotel, and Tuesday we packed up and headed home. We ate at JR's restaurant that's no longer there anymore and thought back on the memories on our way home. My honeymoon was based mostly on wrestling but I loved it.

**JACQUE VOTH, 54, interviewed by MIKAYLA HORNING, 16**  
**Recorded in Enid, Oklahoma**  
**Graduate of Kremlin-Hillsdale, 1980**

I went to Kremlin Hillsdale my whole life. I was born in Seminole, Oklahoma, in 1962 and then later moved to Kremlin where my father Jack Gorden became the superintendent of the school. I have a brother and a sister. I graduated in 1980 with my best friends. My favorite thing to do in school was play ball and if I wasn't playing ball, then I was working or babysitting. I was never a reckless teenager like the others were.

My favorite memory was from my childhood when my father built us a go-cart, and we loved that go-cart. I loved when my family came over for Thanksgiving or just family get-togethers, and all the kids would hop onto the go-cart. We could fit four in the front and four in the back. I always loved being around my friends too. Growing up in Kremlin, we all rode our bikes everywhere. Every single day we went to the pool to have fun with our friends. No matter what my friends and I were doing we were either riding bikes or swimming at the pool.

I am now married to Dean Voth and have three kids, six altogether because my husband has three others from a previous marriage that I call my own. I met Dean at a funeral and I asked who that guy was over there. I thought he was handsome. I have now been married to him for 23, years and we are raising our kids in Kremlin where we grew up.

**MIKE SHULTZ, 63, tells about his time in high school to IAN FRANKLIN, 15**

**Recorded in his home**

**Graduated from KHS in 1970**

Me-Do you have any stories from the days you were in high school at Kremlin-Hillsdale?

The first thing I remember about Kremlin coming from Hillsdale is spring football practice. You see, I was there when kremlin and Hillsdale consolidated, and all the guys back then played all the sports they could. It was my first time playing football on a team, and I went from not knowing any of the rules of the game to starting as an offensive and defensive end. I had no clue how to play or the rules of the game and just played how Coach Harris told us to. That same year we consolidated we had played football well enough to win and make it to playoffs to be cut short by Jet/Nash.

The next thing I remember is that the school had a fundraiser. It was a car bash that cost a dollar to hit an old car with a sledge hammer, and at the end of it Cuck Byrd and I were supposed to haul the car off to the dump and come back to the school. It took longer than it should have of course, so we were in trouble for skipping the whole day, and we made the mistake of going back to the school for basketball practice and got in trouble for skipping school. The thing that will stick with me the most is the pride we had in our school and the pride in the way we looked doing that. Now looking back on it I see the friendships I made while playing sports not just within my team, but the teams from other schools a lot of the friendships have lasted to this very day, and friendships were a big part of the reason we played so well.

Me- do you remember any of your classes that you took?

Yes, the classes I remember that best part of my day were typing. I was terrible at it. Another thing I remember is how good lunch was, it was home cooked meals. Nothing like that heat-up-and-serve stuff you guys have today. Ours was home cooked and if we won a football game or basketball game, Coleen would make red velvet cake in our honor. That was the start of the tradition you know today, Ian.

Our basketball coach Mr. Jerry Long, who gave us the guidance to play as a team and come together as a team. We were sort of a family and things were structured back then. We had a strict dress code back then. We were required to wear a suit and tie, and we had pride doing it.

One other thing I recall is that shop class was probably the most important one I took in school.

It taught me how to weld and work on engines and how to do basic repairs on mechanical things.

Our teacher in that class was the most conservative man I have ever known in my life. He could tell I was washing my hands, how much each pump of soap cost, which, I guess had an effect on me. Probably that's why I am conservative to this day.

I never saw what the sports and the classes and the friends meant at the time, but the older I am, the more I realize how much all of that shaped me into the person I am today. Years after being out of high school and being on the school board for a time and watching my three sons go through the same school, I understand more and more what a good school Kremlin-Hillsdale was and still is.

RUSSELL LLOYD, interviewed by KALLI RUNDLE, 17  
Recorded in Kremlin, Oklahoma on February 23, 2016  
Graduating class of 1969

We had twenty plus students come to Kremlin from North Enid while I was still in high school and with all the new students, the school got more money. So we fixed up our school and some of us boys decided we wanted to play football. So we started a program which means we bought new football equipment, bleachers, concession stands, and of course, a football field. We were pretty good that year. But with all that money we still had, we also got more classes. One of these classes was Spanish, and of course, we had a Spanish teacher. Somewhere along the way we performed Spanish plays including *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* and I'm sure there was another one, but the one I remember most was *Little Red Riding Hood*... because I was Red Riding Hood. Mike Wiggins, one of my buddies, played the Big Bad Wolf and we fixed him up with a gray sweat suit and a gray wolf mask made out of paper mache, he looked more like a Wile E Coyote with that long nose. Somehow we put together a short skirted outfit with a red cape for me, and I think I also wore a white t-shirt, a wig, and white athletic socks. So, anyways the whole story began when I walked on the stage because everyone broke out laughing and for about twenty minutes I couldn't say my lines. The little kids in the front two rows finally stopped laughing and I could then introduce myself as Red Riding Hood in Spanish, but I couldn't tell you how that goes now. Little did that matter because none of the little kids in the audience could speak Spanish anyhow, and it didn't matter because they thought we were funny. I will say this; after consolidation and we got all of these new students, one girl from Hillsdale caught my eye the first day of consolidation and I got to know her more as the days went on. We started dating more and I can now say I married my high school sweetheart, Harriet Lloyd. After 10 years of working the railroad, we had our kids and all of them attend Kremlin-Hillsdale.

**DONNA RANEY, 53, interviewed by KAITLY WOODS, 16**  
**Recorded in Kremlin**  
**Graduated in Kremlin**

I asked Donna Raney what was one of the most special moments she has had in life and she simply replied with the following story.

February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 I took my granddaughter Kaelin to her second Thunder basketball game. (Oklahoma City Thunder vs. Orlando Magic.) My husband bought the tickets for me, and I decided to take my granddaughter so that she and I could have a special night out. Kaelin was asked to be honorary captain and participate in the pre ceremony events. Both of us were taken to sit in court side seats and we also had suite seats. I'm glad I got to share that night with my wonderful granddaughter. She also received a signed basketball by Kevin Durant and also got to meet him, it was a fun and exciting experience for both she and I. Kevin Durant is one of the OKC Thunder basketball players; he is number 35 on the basketball team. It was definitely a night I would never forget, and definitely the best memory for us together. I'm glad I could spend time with her and take her to the Thunder game that night. My husband and I are huge Thunder fans.

**DAYLA ANDERSEN, 14, interviews her bus driver, GALE MESSENGER, 64,  
Recorded in the gymnasium at Kremlin-Hillsdale High School  
Graduate of Kremlin-Hillsdale, 1969**

“Much like today schools are looking for ways to save money. Back during my high school years discussions centered around merging Kremlin and Hillsdale. Some people thought it would be a fantabulous idea and others thought it to be the worst idea in the world. It still miraculously passed with the objects of several people.

I was the first class to graduate, in 1969, after the consolidation of kremlin and Hillsdale schools. I remember that there was this lady, I won't mention her name, which would jump in the middle of you if you just said Kremlin athletics, Kremlin School, or if you just said Kremlin and left Hillsdale out. I remember one time at a sporting event one of the teachers at Kremlin-Hillsdale just mentioned Kremlin, and she chewed her up one side and down the other about how it was Kremlin-Hillsdale Public Schools not just Kremlin Schools and not just Hillsdale Schools. She made this gigantic scene about it still chewing this teacher out. Everybody quit watching the game and started to watch her tear this poor teacher to shreds. It went on for about five minutes until some bystanders had to break them up.

There is still quite a bit of tension between the two towns, but it has gone down tremendously since that first year which Kremlin and Hillsdale consolidated. There is still animosity between Kremlin and Hillsdale people. I still live around Hillsdale and work at the



school as a maintenance man and a bus driver, and I still see it first hand as I did that year I graduated.”

**BETTY JO KIRKPATRICK TENNANT, 74, tells about the killer Chinese goose to NOAH GARVIN, 17**

**Recorded by letter from Betty Jo  
Graduated from Kremlin High School**

While living in Bartlesville, I would go the park to write letters. I always sat at a picnic table with my feet crossed back under the seat. I was busy writing to my brother who was in the Army and stationed in Europe when something bit at my leg. I turned around to see a big Chinese goose coming after me. I jumped up and grabbed him around the neck. (This breed of goose is about four feet tall and they BITE! I could see his teeth!) My only defense was to grab him by his neck hold him away from me while I looked around for some of help. No one was there. I did see a tree limb about 10 feet away. I decided I could defend myself with it if I could reach it so there we were with the goose flogging me with its wings and screaming at me. I tossed the bird away and ran for the limb, but he flew at me again with those wings flopping and flailing at me.

I was fending him off best I could when the thought crossed my mind that if someone saw this spectacle, they would call it "goose abuse." About that time a police car pulled into the parking lot. I thought for sure that someone had complained. By this time, the goose had given up and left maybe because he saw that he was outnumbered. The policeman, trying to keep a straight face, walked over to me and calmly asked, "Are you the lady who was attacked by a goose?"

"Yes," I answered as I tried to gather my wits about me.

Then he asked, "Can you identify the goose?"

"I certainly can. He was big and white and had a large orange beak!"

The policeman was still trying not to laugh, but he continued, "Could you pick him out of a line-up or from that gaggle of geese over there on the lake? I have a can of corn in the car, and maybe we can catch him with the feed if you can tell me which one he is."

I was still flustered, but he walked back to this patrol car, and I heard him on his radio asking if someone could come by the park and help him. He had locked himself out of his car. Well, by the time he finally brought the corn, the geese had all moved over to the far side of the lake.

I did find out later that the authorities had caught all of the Chinese geese and moved them to a lake out in the country because they had attacked other people also. My family has laughed at me for a long time as they have me share my experience with all their friends. I always end the story with a warning: "Be very careful around Chinese geese!"

**TINA LUNDAY, 37, interviewed by her second cousin, MEGAN CLARK, 15**

**Recorded in Enid, Oklahoma  
Graduated Kremlin-Hillsdale, 1996**

"How many children do you have?" I always stop and think when someone asks me that questions. I find it one of the hardest questions for me to answer. Mostly it's hard to answer because the answer is constantly changing. My husband and I married in 1997. We had our first child in 1999. Even though we knew we wanted more children, we had already started talking about adopting as early as 2001. After many discussions we decided that we wanted to adopt children from foster care. For us it wasn't about getting that perfect newborn through private adoption. We figured that there were already many children in foster care that needed loving homes. We felt that God was calling us into this mission field and who are we to question Him? We didn't start our journey until years later, but we had a path set for us.

Over the past several years we have welcomed more than twenty-five children into our home. They have ranged from birth up to fourteen years old. Whenever we get the call for another child, we ask as many questions as possible before we agree to take the placement. We know that we are not the best home for every child, and we want what is best for the child, not for us. So we ask a lot of questions and decide what's best for everyone before we say yes or no.

When we do take a child or children in to our home we try to make the first day or two all about them. We want them to know that they are safe. Many of these children come into foster care scared and feeling uneasy. The younger ones need lots of hugs and kisses (if they will let me do that anyway) while the older ones just need words of encouragement and someone to talk to. Each child is different and each one has different needs. It is up to me to try to navigate through the trauma that they have come from and figure out what they need the most in order for them to feel at ease in our home. Food, their favorite meal or snack, is usually a great start for most children.

The thing that I hear the most when people talk to me about foster care is, "I don't think that I could give them back." I usually just smile or say something like, "Oh, you would be surprised." The reality is that question makes me mad. I really dislike that excuse. Foster care is not for everyone, and I understand that, but these children do not ask to be put into this position. We open our homes and our hearts for them even if it's only to give them safety and love for a day. If all we are granted is a short time with them, then we must trust that God has other plans and that we were only a small part of that child's story.

My prayer is that each time a child leaves our home that they will know what love is and know that none of what is happening to them is their fault. I pray for their safety and that they will have peace in their life. Each day is a learning process. The system is always changing to try to make a thing better, which doesn't always work out, but we are all trying to do what's best for the kids. I personally have learned to be more patient and understanding with each child. I have learned more about psychological disorders than I ever dreamed I would. I have been to more doctors and specialists than I ever thought I would. I have become a true "mama bear" when it comes to advocating for the children in my life.

Foster care is a calling. It's not for everyone but everyone can help a foster child in some way. Most children come into foster care with nothing but the clothes on their back. If they do have clothes, they are in trash bags. There are some groups that have donated luggage bags to foster children. There are teen students who have organized shoe drives and coat drives for foster children. All can help out; they just need to ask foster families what is needed and then get organized and act. I think if other people wanted to find out what being a foster family was like, then they could ask to do respite care for a foster family. Being a respite family is basically babysitting over night or for long periods of time to give the foster family a break. Again, not everyone can be a foster family, but everyone can do something to help our children in need.

The statistics for foster care are astounding. There are over 11,000 children in foster care in Oklahoma currently. Approximately 30,000 children age out of foster care each year in America. Out of those that age, out half will drop out of school, over 25% will become homeless and around 30% will be arrested by age 21. It is estimated that 80% of death row inmates have been in foster care as children. At some point we will all need to step out of our comfort zones and help our children. We need to stop thinking of this as someone else's problem and realize that it is up to us to make a change. I think too many people are scared that they can't do it for one reason or another. To that I would say, stop thinking about how you feel and start thinking about how these children feel. Anyway, that's just part of my little soapbox.

There are plenty of times that I want to throw in the towel and live a "normal" life. We have even tried a time or two. We have closed down our home twice in the past ten years. Each time we were closed for about a year, but we keep getting pulled back in to this mission field. Our heart strings keep getting pulled into this journey. All we know is that it's a God thing and we are just doing our part.

So how many kids do I have? Today I have six; tomorrow that could change. Some are biological, some adopted, and some are foster children. I don't differentiate between them. We don't all look alike, and our skin color doesn't all match, but we are all family. They are all my babies no matter how they came into my life and no matter how long they stay. Often times they have a much greater impact on my life than I do on theirs. Even if I only get to hold them for a little while, they will always have a special place in my heart, and I will always say that this journey is worth it.

**KELSIE BRINSON, 13, hears the story of SHELLY DULINSKY, 38**  
**Recorded in Kremlin, Oklahoma**  
**Graduate of KHS**

My favorite memories were my five best friends. We did everything together, from playing softball to hanging out at each other's houses. We would hang out on dirt roads, look at the stars, listen to music, and dance on the dirt road. Twenty years after graduating we are all still pretty good friends. We help look after each other for anything.

I will never forget during my junior year of high school when all the teachers started to round up all the classes. We moved to the library and watched the Oklahoma City bombing for the rest of the day. It was the saddest day.

Its funny 20 years later how my own kids are wearing the same style that I wore in high school. The only difference is the brand names have changed. My favorite brand of shoes was Dexter shoes. My favorite t-shirt brand was Mossimo.

After high school I got married had 2 kids, eleven years later I divorced and married a wonderful man. His daughter, who is 14, I raise as my own. I am a very proud momma of three girls. I work as an analyst for an oilfield company. Love my job. My girls are all pretty active in sports, and they all play basketball, softball, track and soccer. Yes, they stay busy and keep us pretty busy also.

I attended Kremlin my junior and senior year. I never dreamed I would be living in Kremlin raising my kids. When I was growing up, I moved from different school to different school, and didn't want my kids to have to move around. This was the only school that I enjoyed, and I met some of my best friends here. It is nice that my kids are in my old school and are friends with some of my old high school classmates' kids.

CHERI GANNON, 42, interviewed by her daughter REBEKAH GANNON, 18  
Recorded in Enid, Oklahoma  
Graduate of Kremlin-Hillsdale, Class of 1991

(Rebekah): "What was the most exciting memory you can remember from elementary school at Kremlin?"

(Cheri): "I remember when I was in second grade being so excited about moving into our new classroom in the brand new elementary building. My classmates and I carried our little orange chairs in a single file line from the high school building to the new elementary building. When we saw the pit for the first time we thought it was the coolest thing we had ever seen. We not only got a new elementary building, but we also got a brand new playground.

(Rebekah): "What is something from your junior high years that you'll always remember?"

(Cheri): "The one thing that I'll never forget is my seventh grade year being so chaotic. I remember our homeroom teacher always being absent from class, and if I remember right, we had seven different substitute teachers that year. Since each teacher had his or her own teaching style, it felt like we were learning the same material over and over again, but in a different way each time. By the end of the year, my class and I were scared that we were going to fail and have to repeat the seventh grade. That was a stressful year!"

(Rebekah): "What was your favorite moment(s) in your high school career?"

(Cheri): "One of my two favorite moments of my senior year was when my Spanish II class was paired up and assigned an elementary class to teach basic Spanish once a week. Mike Hamm and I taught Kathy Messenger's third grade class. I enjoyed her class so much that I included them on my senior page in the yearbook. My other favorite moment was petitioning and getting a softball team for Kremlin high school girls. The most memorable game was against Cherokee High School. They were such a good team, who would be hard to beat. That game ended by one run in for them and a black eye for Dawn from a pop fly lost in the sun.

(Cheri): "I'm so proud to be a Kremlin-Hillsdale alumna that I moved back to Kremlin so that my children were able to attend this school. My son Bryce and daughter Rebekah are part of the 12 Year Club just like myself. We will be a three generation Kremlin-Hillsdale Alumni."

**ARCHIE SIEBERT, 60, interviewed by his neighbor ETHAN HAGGARD, 12**

**Recorded in a field south of Kremlin, Oklahoma**

**Graduate of Kremlin-Hillsdale**

I am the youngest of four boys born to Orlando & Eva (Rempel) Siebert. I grew up on a family farm south of Kremlin, OK. My wife Amy and I live on the same place where I grew up. We have two children, Katie and Matt. I am a 1974 graduate of Kremlin-Hillsdale Public School. I started school at Kremlin Public Schools in 1962. Kremlin and Hillsdale consolidated to become Kremlin-Hillsdale Public Schools the summer before I started 7<sup>th</sup> Grade, in 1968. I am pretty sure that the teachers all thought I was ornery, but maybe not as ornery as my brothers, Floyd, Karl and Roger.

Around the same time the two schools consolidated, the Lions Club of Kremlin started sponsoring the rural summer baseball league. This was a great benefit to the community. I was on one of the first teams for Kremlin-Hillsdale. Back then it was very different. We played several of the larger schools around that are now consolidated with each other: Hunter, Nash, Jet, Pond Creek, Lamont, Medford, Deer Creek, Billings, Bramen, Blackwell, and Tonkawa. We had several tournaments throughout the season, but the one I remember the most was at Tonkawa.

My first coach was Al West. Coach West lived in Kremlin and worked for the Rock Island Railroad. Although he was the coach, he did not have a boy that played baseball. He, along with Damen Myers, somehow got volunteered to coach the boys. They both loved baseball. The team would practice every night. I didn't have a way into Kremlin for practice, so Coach West would pick me up on his way home from work. We would practice at the baseball field, where the elementary now stands. After practice Coach West would take me home. There were about 16 boys on the team. Tom Burke was the left handed pitcher who could throw hard strikes. Needless to say, we didn't lose many games. The older Tom got, the harder he threw the ball. Lots of miles were driven by the coaches to all those games and tournaments, as back then our parents didn't have the opportunity to follow us to everything. Most parents were at some of the home games. I'm not sure how they did it; I always tried to be at all activities my children participated in. Just a sign of how things have really changed over the years.

Kremlin-Hillsdale had dropped baseball in the school system in the late 1960s for a year or two. There were five or six of the guys I played rural league with that wanted to play baseball in school. Baseball was started back up in the school in 1971. We had to use all the old stuff from before when the school team was started back up. The school only bought us a couple of wooden bats to start with. If we happened to break a bat, not only were we going to be in trouble, but we were afraid we would have to replace it. Baseball has been a sport presence at Kremlin-Hillsdale School since. Our team was bare bones, but we had a good time. We made it to the playoffs most years. One year we almost made it to state, but lost that game in the rain.

During baseball season, I would ride my bicycle to school so that I could stay for practice. When I was a freshman, I drove an old Volkswagen back and forth to school. The



Principal wasn't happy about it since I didn't have a license, but it was the only way I could play sports. I was only allowed to go to the school, home and the CO-OP for gas. A good thing about going to the CO-OP was that I could stop at the little store across the street for a cold soda pop. Mr. Willie Rathmel was the retired postmaster, and he operated the store. He kept sodas cold and in the winter he kept a coal potbellied stove going so it was hot in there. He always had the stub of a cigar in his mouth, but he never smoked in his store. After his death, his wife ran the store for a few months until she realized the store was losing money. Mr. Willie had kept the store for something to do and to be able to visit with people.

I really like school and missed being there when it was out. In grade school the classes were combined, first and second grade in the same room, third and fourth grade together and fifth and sixth together. The teacher would teach one class while the other class worked on their assignments. The teacher would then switch and teach the other class while the first worked on their assignments. Once the schools consolidated, there were enough students for each grade to be its own class. I recall getting in trouble once in first grade. I seemed to have a problem looking out the large windows instead of doing my assignment. The teacher placed me and my desk in the large walk thru coat closet for about half of the day. I did finish all of my work only because the teacher kept coming in and checking on me.

My favorite subject throughout school was History. Some of the teachers I remember are Dwayne Janzen, Peggy Harris and Coach Jim Harris. I know that lots of kids thought Coach Harris was a little rough. Coach Harris had been in the Marine Corps. We ran the whole practice, not necessarily for punishment. His philosophy was, "We may get beat, but we're not going to be out-conditioned!" We ran drills and never stood around. Coach Harris hated to see us standing around. We didn't always have enough players to practice as two teams. One year we only had ten players left on the team at the end of the season. I learned a valuable lesson in learning not to talk back to the coach. If someone could make you run, why would you upset him?

One memory I have of school at Kremlin-Hillsdale involves the community pool. Mr. and Mrs. Jim Stewart, couple in the community, had left a large amount of money to the school. The pool was built from that gift. When the pool was first built, it was covered by a dome that was an inflated one held up by large fans. The kids all loved it because it allowed everyone to swim year round. One winter during a storm, the power to the fans was lost and the dome collapsed. Before the back power was able to inflate the dome again, the wind picked it up and ripped it.

Another memory from high school is that Halloween was celebrated a lot more back then. I remember a time that the bicycle rack was placed on the roof of the school and all the kids' bicycles were placed in it. The next morning the high school boys were on the roof of the school handing down bicycles and the rack. Some regular Halloween pranks were to turn on the lights of all the tractors at Zaloudek's and to place the tires and stock tanks from the CO-OP around town. Usually the day after Halloween, all the boys in high school were going around cleaning up the town. The administrators were not sure who was responsible, but that way they were sure to get the ones involved.

**ROY MESSENGER, 70, talks to KARTER DEHDEZI, 13**  
**Recorded in Hillsdale**  
**Graduated from Hillsdale**

One thing I can tell you about myself is that I sure do love my job for Garfield County as a road grader. I level out potholes and deep ruts on dirt roads. I am keeping roads clear when several inches of snow blows in, which makes driving a little safer for drivers.

But one day I was out during a terrible snow blowing blizzard. I got stuck in my road grader. What an experience! It gave me a lot to think about. I just kept the motor running to keep myself warm. I was hoping not to freeze to death.

As I was waiting for help to come, I sat and watched the thick snow blanket itself over my grader and the trees. I was never so happy to see the faces of my rescuers. After the tow truck pulled me out of the snow, I was ready to go home. After a little rest and a little warm up, my grader and I went back out to clear more snow off the roads.

**WES SHARKEY, 30, is interviewed by ELLEN BENTON, 15**  
**Recorded 2-27-16 by phone conversation**  
**Graduated from KHS**

In 2002, I had a conversation that helped me decided what I was going to do for life.

When I was a sophomore, I decided to become a welder. I learned how to weld in AG from my teacher Jon Buller.

One day in class, I was talking to Mr. Buller about how I liked to weld. He said, "Wes, you should do what you enjoy." And right then and there, I decided to become a welder. When I was in that class, I welded many things for the school and for myself. One of my projects that you might still see is the back-stops for the baseball field. My own personal venture was to design and make a rack for my four wheelers.

Today I work at a welding and fabrication shop.

**MARK ZALOUDEK, 53, shares story about growing up with NATE SNODGRASS, 15**  
**Recorded at Mark's farm**  
**Graduate of KHS in 1980**

Growing up on a farm provides many opportunities to encounter lots of critters. Starting when I was three years old, my dad would catch baby raccoons before they had their eyes open. My mom would bottle feed the raccoons the same time that she was giving my sister Kelly a bottle, and all the babies, Kelly and critters, would thrive.

I can remember being in grade school and attending football games with our Rocky. He wore a collar and was very tame. Fans liked to see him sit in the stands and eat popcorn out of a sack, hand the sack to someone, and take a Coke and drink it like a person would. Many times Rocky would run on the field and stop the game until I would chase him or catch him. He became the whole town's pet, and everyone fed him pop and popcorn so he loved them as well.

About the time the coons turned one year old, my dad would take their collars off, and they would go back to the wild. In the spring Dad would look for another pet or two.

Another memory I have is of the monster that used to haunt Kremlin. Most people never realized that we had Big Foot Sightings that were prevalent during the fall of 1974-1975. Strangely enough Big Foot only came out during home football games. At the games either my dad Jim Zaloudek or JC Mitchell would sit in the stands and start talking about the several recent sightings of Big Foot around the Kremlin area. I don't know if anyone ever noticed, but it was strange to me that Jim and JC were never seen together at the same time.

After the game, a group of at least 50 high school kids and some adults would drive to the spot of the "Last Sighting." Sure enough, Big Foot would be spotted in the distance, and then mysteriously disappear. After 20 to 30 minutes of searching, Jim or JC would suddenly appear. The two of them would get together and continue to add fuel to the flames so the search party would stay interested.

The sightings continued for the fall of 1975, and suddenly they came to an abrupt end! People were determined to capture Big Foot dead or alive! When some men brought their shot guns to the event, Big Foot suddenly vanished for good.

So who was Big Foot? No one ever told, but years later, I did see a costume at my house that looked a lot like that hairy creature.

I also recall being a star student in physiology class one day. The class of 1980 was probably one that Kerry Evans, our physiology teacher will not forget. We had dissected many animals in class so we were quite confident in our dissecting skills. As a class we decided to expand our experiences and share our science skills with a few select underclassmen. Our last project for dissection was a monkey. We were under "strict instruction" from Mr. Evans to "behave" while he had to step out of the room on business. The moment he left the room, we grabbed our monkeys and took off. We placed the monkeys in various positions in five different underclassmen girls' lockers!

Imagine the commotion in the hall with screaming girls and dead monkeys.

I take full responsibility for the last physiology experiment gone-wrong. We were testing various solutions to determine the pH. On this particular day, we were all to bring a urine sample in a baby food jar. I decided to take two samples. One I placed on the lab table, and the other I hid under my chair. Mr. Evans told us to take the lids off and begin the experiment. I did exactly as I was instructed. Once Mr. Evans was looking directly at me, I DRANK my sample. The girls screamed, and Mr. Evans looked at me and said, "Holly Sh! Did you really just do that?" I gagged a little and put on a little show, but then I pulled the one from under my chair and placed it on the table. The sample I drank was apple juice. Mr. Evans laughed, and I was not punished.

One last prank had a strange ending. My friends and I set up a living area under the stage to make it look like someone was living there. We planted a little table, a fishing pole, some open cans of food, and maps of Oklahoma and the United States. We were hoping that someone would find it and conclude that someone was hiding out. Nobody ever did.

The funny thing was that 31 years later, in 2011 my son Ty found the niche under the stage, and he and his friends thought someone was living in there and up-to-no-good. I had forgotten all about it. The point is, sometimes it takes a long time for a joke to conclude.

Just as a final note, I apologize to all classes after the Class of 1980. We are probably the reason that our school doesn't support Senior Trips any longer. We had a great 10 day trip in Florida, and most of us are thankful that we didn't have camera phones back then.

**IDA HAMM, 69, interviewed by her granddaughter HAILEY HICKS, 16**

**Recorded in Enid, Oklahoma**

**Graduated from Kremlin- Hillsdale High School**

***HOW DID YOU MEET MY GRANDPA?***

The first time I ever saw him was on May 8, 1965. It was the Saturday of the Tristate Parade. He had just got back to town from riding in the Cherokee Strip Parade in Cushing, Oklahoma. Our church was having a cook out and hay ride for all of the kids that were 13 years and older. We didn't really pay much attention to each other, and to be quite honest I wasn't really impressed with him. When I first saw him I thought he was scrungy, dirty, and smelled like a horse. But the one thing about him that caught my eye was his vibrant red shirt that had the prettiest black and white roses on the yolk. Without his shirt he would've been just another boy that attended church. The next time I saw him was on May 13, 1965. It was my graduation and he had ridden out with my brother Lee and his wife Marian. After my graduation we swung by the Navajo to grab something to eat for dinner. After I had ordered and walked up to pay, I felt him grab my hand and he quickly paid for my food before I could react. It was in that moment that I realized that I was wrong; he wasn't just an ordinary boy that I'd seen around church, but instead he was cute, funny and most importantly he was a total gentleman. After that night we started seeing each other more, and we later married on January 13, 1966. Together we had five beautiful children who have blessed us with many grandchildren. I am proud to say that most of them have graduated from Kremlin, and I hope that more continue to do so.

**JEFF FOX, 48, talks about his life with his wife Jennie to ZOE HAWKINS, 15**  
**Recorded at Chick-fil-a in Enid, Oklahoma on March 7th, 2016**  
**Graduated from KHS 1987**

Jennie's brother and I were good friends in high school, and we would run around together. I was in 7th grade and he was a junior or senior. I mostly hung out with people that were five or six years older than I was. Jennie and I were friends. Her brother would have to pick her up and take her places, and I would ride with them and sit in the back seat with her, and he would put something in between us. I never realized that she and I were almost the same age. I always had her brother over and I never thought about dating his sister. Later on, we saw each other here in Enid and started dating. Then, we married each other. We have been married for seventeen years. I decided to propose to her when we were at home, and I just asked her to marry me. It was kind of a bad deal, because she wasn't having a good day. It was her birthday and she was sick. However, she did say yes, and I put the ring inside her birthday card.

I gave Jennie a surprised birthday party for her 40th birthday, but she wasn't too happy about that and was sort of mad at me. All her friends and family said, "Oh, you should have a surprise birthday for her!" So I did. They helped me with the cake, cookies, and everything else. We had it at the Community Building, but when we were in church, a guy named Mike said, "Oh, yeah, I almost forgot, there's a surprise party for Jennie over at the Community Building. You guys are welcomed to come." Then Jennie looked over at me shocked. She was surprised but not happy about it. So since then, I haven't thrown her any surprise parties.

Jennie and I now have 2 kids and are very happy with our lives in Enid, Oklahoma.

**TRILBY LONG SCHMIDT, 47, interviewed by KOBY VIVEIROS, 12**  
**Recorded at Five80 Coffee house, Enid, Oklahoma**  
**Graduate of Kremlin-Hillsdale in 1987**

My dad grew up in rural Oklahoma in a place called Cheyenne Valley. My parents moved to the state of Washington, and he found us a place to live in the country. When I was about seven, we lived in a house that had a pond behind it. It warmed up enough for us to swim so I jumped in, and when I came out, I was covered with leaches all over me. Mortified, I ran to the house! But no way did it keep me out of the water!! I wanted to swim! I learned to just pick the leaches off of me. Also, when we lived on that farm, each one of us kids had a bottle calf. Mine was named Blackie. I would sit out in an old empty bathtub, Blackie would come up to me, and I would love on him while he licked me all over. I got ringworm from that! I had it on my arms and on my face. Still, I remember that sweet calf and all the fun we had growing up out in the country.

One Sunday morning in May of 1980, we woke up for church. It was my brother's 10<sup>th</sup> birthday. We were getting ready to leave for church, and we could hear muffled sounds. Soon, we recognized an ambulance, police sirens, helicopters, and general mass chaos. Mount St. Helens had erupted. Even though officials had warned that an eruption was going to happen, no one knew exactly when it would be. It turned out to be much bigger than had been predicted. We lived 25 miles from Mount St. Helens, on the opposite side of where the eruption occurred. It blew away from us toward Spokane, Washington. But still there was a lot of flooding and mud slides that stopped about two miles from our house. Dad was at work, and we were so scared that he wouldn't be able to come home to us, but he was fine.

The destruction was devastating! Two story homes were filled to the top with mud. We and everything else were covered in ash and pumas rock. Everything was burnt from the hot lava. The tragedy turned into a bit of an adventure for my brothers and me. It was the beginning of *summer break* so my parents bought us some zip lock bags. My brothers and I collected ashes and pumas rock in those sacks and sold them to tourists from all over the world. I don't know how many pictures are out there in photo albums around the states and other countries of me posing next to tourists who visited Mount St. Helens. We sold the bags for 50 cents apiece, and we thought we were rich. We were rich! We sold a lot of bags of ash during that entire summer! It was really fun, and I have great memories.

My dad passed away suddenly when I was 11. There were five of us kids, and my mom had a difficult time taking care of us. Eventually, I found myself living in a series of foster homes. My aunt Vicki Bergner, who is my dad's sister, lived in Kremlin, and she did not like that I was living in foster homes. She sat down with my uncle Robert and my cousin JD, their only child, and told them about my situation and asked what JD thought about my coming to live with them. JD said he didn't think anybody should have to live the way I was living. And so that is how I came to live in Kremlin. It was 1984, and I was beginning my sophomore year of high



school. My aunt drove to pick me up, and soon I was enrolling in a brand new school. Aunt Vicki was adamant that I be involved in a lot of activities. She strongly encouraged me to join the band. Even though I had never played an instrument in my life, she assured me that the band director would find something for me to do. I ended up playing the Cow Bell. I am sure I was the first and mostly likely the last Cow Bell player in Kremlin-Hillsdale band history. I am so thankful to my aunt for pushing me to join the group because that is where I made many friends very quickly. I did attempt to learn the clarinet, but I never really mastered it. I still love band to this day even though I can't play an instrument.

I was the Bronc mascot for one year, and that was so much fun. When I was the Bronc, every single kid in that school knew me. I was very popular with the grade schoolers. My number one fan was Kennette Ronck. She loved me so much as the Bronc that she went home and asked her mom if I could babysit her and her little brother Johnny. That led to a great job during high school and a wonderful lifelong friendship.

I was also involved in Drama and won All State actress my senior year. Mr. Martin was the best and funniest drama coach and English teacher ever. I remember that he walked in the room and yelled, "Set your dangling participles down in your chair, and let's start class." He taught us so much, and I laughed the entire year.

JD passed away just nine months ago. Of all of the wonderful things that happened to me while I was at Kremlin-Hillsdale, I have always been so especially grateful for JD. He allowed me to move into his home and share his parents with him. He took me right in and included me. JD was always full of life and ideas. He marched to the beat of his own drum, as Henry David Thoreau would say. I remember at night on the weekends, he and I would stay up and have two and three hour discussions. He was a great conversationalist. He could talk about anything. He loved to lean in the doorway between the kitchen and the living room and talk to me and his parents. Every time I return home to Kremlin, I still see him leaning in that doorway chatting. He was very kind to me at a time in my life when I needed kindness and stability and a home. JD started out as my cousin, but a few years ago we were somewhere together, and when he introduced me, he said, "This is my...my... my...sister cousin." And I echoed, "Yeah! This is my brother cousin." And it just kind of stuck because I definitely feel like he was my brother.

About two years ago, my husband Daniel and our four children moved back to Enid after being away almost 18 years. I have been pleasantly surprised to find myself enjoying coffee dates with Paige Guthrie Keithly, a band friend, and currently living six miles from my best friend from high school, Shannon Holden Meyer. I love the lifelong friends that I began at Kremlin-Hillsdale. H.T. Holden once told his daughter, Shannon, "If you meet one lifelong friend, consider yourself blessed." Indeed I have been blessed. With all the tragedies and triumphs that have happened to me in my life, I have always had this innate faith that God would work it all out. I have known that if I'm just kind and treat people with kindness and do what I think is right, then goodness will return to me. And it has. Ten fold.

**MALIA VOTH, 13, talks to her aunt LISA GORDON, 55**

**Recorded at my home**

**Graduated from Kremlin**

My experience at Kremlin was great. I was privileged to have a lot of "Firsts" during my time there. For example, my class was first to use the new swimming pool. I loved the pool in the summer. I swam there almost every day. My friends and I would play Marco Polo and Pool Tag.

I was also first to see Kindergarten at Kremlin. Before that, kids started school in first grade when they were six years old.

Another first that my class had was band. Dad thought that since we had football, we ought to have a band to march and play at games, and since he was our superintendent, he was happy to organize and implement it.

I was very involved in many school activities: 4-H, band, vocal music, volleyball, basketball, and softball. These organizations taught me teamwork and how to interact with many people. Music and band also taught me how to read music, which is also like learning to read a foreign language.

Kremlin also taught me that I had a belonging in this world. When I left for college, I had the values of a close-knit community, and I could be myself when I grew older.

My experience since Kremlin has been awesome. I have a great job as a nurse, and I love that. I've traveled lots. If I could visit anywhere in the world, I would see Australia, and maybe I will some day.

But along with all these ups were also some downs. One of the hardest things I've ever had to do was take away the keys to my dad's car. This was so hard for me because I knew that this was the beginning of the ending of my dad's freedom. Another dream that I didn't fulfill was not getting to make my mom a grandma. But, Malia, your mom helped make that happen for her so that was good.

But out of all these experiences, I would say that spending good quality time with friends and family are my favorite things to do. I love dinners or just watching movies in my pjs. As long as I'm with family, it doesn't matter what I'm doing.

**JAYDEN GERHARD, 11, hears a story about a cruise from JENIFER LUPER, 32**  
**Recorded in Kremlin**  
**Graduated from KHS**

I took a cruise on a Disney ship called the “The Dream.” About 12 of us were in our group. I had a lot of family were with me. First, we signed into our rooms and got our bracelets that told us where we were supposed to run to in case the ship had trouble. We also had to get a cards to get into our rooms. The bracelets were also our passes into the game rooms and places that watched the kids while we adults did stuff by ourselves. Children would stay there for half of the day, and then we adults would pick up our kids and hang out with them. At 8 o’clock we would have dinner with the whole family.

Next, we had a day that we did nothing but stay in the water for the entire time. We had a lot of fun that day. The first thing we did was play in a pool for a while. Then we hopped in the hot tub for a while. Next, my kids rode a little water slide. Finally, my family rode a really big water slide that stretched all the way around the ship. It was really fun.

Last, we went to Castaway Cay. A lot of slides and a water park were there for the little ones. I think they had a lot of fun. Then we shopped and bought a lot of stuff. When my husband left the ship to visit Castaway Cay, he scraped the top of his head. He said it hurt. Then we returned to our ship to leave for our hotel so we could put away all the stuff we had bought. We then drove to meet our plane for the flight home.

I think my family had a really good time. I hope we can do it again soon.

**DAVID HOOVER, 12, listens to FLOYD SISSOM, 61, tell about the student walkout.  
Recorded in Kremlin  
Graduate of KHS**

It was the spring of 1973. I was enrolled in Kremlin High School. I had a science teacher named Jerry Long. He was tall and dark-haired. He coached both sports and people. Coach Long was well liked by the students. He would sit down with us and discuss our problems whether they be with grades in the classroom or troubles at home. He was very good-natured. If I was injured, he would help me up and ask if I was okay. He was a very friendly teacher. He was my favorite teacher that I've ever had.

One day, the school board decided they would not hire him back the following year. Everyone was upset by the fact that one of our favorite teachers would be fired. The day after it was decided they would have to let him go, a few kids sat in the gym and wouldn't go to class. Then a few more people began to join in. Soon many students in the school were sitting in the gym and refused to attend class unless the board changed its decision. I bet we were there for a good two or three hours, maybe half the day. The local newspaper got wind and interviewed some of the students. The principal and other teachers told us to return to class or we would be suspended. We would not budge. Soon after, Mr. Long walked in and told us it was best that he was leaving. We all walked back to class, and he didn't come back to teach. I was sad about that. I will always remember Mr. Long and our standoff.

**JAY MESSENGER, 66, speaks with EVERETT BONINE, 13**  
**Recorded in Jay's garage on February 22, 2016**  
**Graduated from Hillsdale**

After listening to my sister's interview, I realized that Jay was a man of few words, but he laughed a lot; that's what I like about him most.----- Everett

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I met my wife Eileen by her brother-in-law. He knew me, and he thought we might make a decent couple. So he got us together and a few years later, in October of 1983, we married.

The story I want to tell you about is when Eileen and I went to Keystone, Colorado. I went with her and her family. Her brother let me take his old red Ford truck. I rode by myself so I had a lot of time to think and drive. While I was there, Eileen and I went skiing, and we had a great time. We, or more Eileen than I, liked to ski. She just seemed to ski circles around me. All I was doing was falling over. I did a little bit of skiing, but I was definitely falling more than I was skiing. On the way back, Eileen and I got to ride together after convincing her parents I was safe. So on the way home, we, you know, held hands and chatted for a long time during the even longer drive. We really learned a lot about each other during that drive back from the trip. That was in March of '83. Also, like what I said earlier, we married in October of that year so it was a pretty short courtship. That's about all I have to say about that.

GRANT HUKLE, 48, shares memories of his friend JD Bergner with KADENCE STEWART,  
12

**Recorded in Mantachie, Mississippi**  
**Grant is a 1985 graduate of Kremlin-Hillsdale**

I was privileged to be friends with JD Bergner for 35 years – our time together was a definite part of making me who I am today, although it may not be fair to blame him for that now!

JD and Gary Siebert and I were our own group. I think we were outsiders although we didn't realize it at the time due to the richness of our friendship. When fitting in was everything, we didn't fit in to the established groups. All that time we spent together was effortless and natural; it was like having brothers. JD's mother Vickie started calling me her #2 son because I was there so often. She was our mother in Kremlin; my mother Shirley lived in Enid and was our mom in town. We kept each other sane through the ups and downs of high school, adolescence and beyond - sane being a relative term and subject to perspective, of course.

I remember listening to albums (and I mean albums or cassettes, not those newfangled CDs or MP3s), making mix tapes, creating playlists for parties, and making those interviews using parts of songs that were popular at the time. We always talked about music, it was and is a big part of our lives. I still hear songs and think of JD and Gary and those times. Those songs are on the oldies station now, and I can't understand any of the words to that new music.

There were band practices and band trips – marching, concert, and jazz band. Over the years we went from underclassmen to “being in charge,” together all the way. JD and I did a saxophone duet for Tri-State one year and discovered we weren't Gary, who was the rock star drummer of our group. I recall the three of us playing our own version of the song “Wipe Out” which got good enough reviews that we were asked to do it at football games. It USUALLY worked out OK. JD organized a “Working in a Coal Mine” dance that the whole band did after performing at band events because JD was a Devo fan. The rules got a little flexible at times . . .

I remember JD's first car, which he called “The Silver Slug.” I remember pushing JD's first car. I remember Robert working on JD's first car. Then I remember JD's second car, “The Missing Lynx.” I had a black '66 Mustang that my dad Bruce and I had fixed up. I remember working on stereos with power boosters and graphic equalizers and Jensen speakers and turning the music up until we could barely understand it – everything from Phil Collins to Prince to Night Ranger to hard rock and heavy metal like Def Leppard, one of JD's favorites. Of course, JD also liked Weird Al Yankovic – he was a complex guy . . .

JD and I watched wrestling all the time and discussed performers, federations, and moves. That paid off when our teacher Mr. Gossen had a contest to see who could predict the results of a big wrestling event. Yeah, that's it – we were doing research. We discovered that if we wanted to try a body slam, carpet doesn't give much and pillows help a lot. We even went to a few live events, where we had more fun watching the crowd than the show. Then we'd have to try to fit in, of course. I think we were successful.

On Friday and Saturday nights, we cruised Van Buren in one vehicle or another – mostly JD's car or my Mustang or our friend Clyde Pool's pickup. When not driving, we'd park at the “hang out” spot behind McDonalds. We were pretty tame, but we did have a few colorful encounters during our tenure. Maybe I should keep those to myself until I'm sure the statute of limitations is



There were the trips to Kaw Lake, being sunburned, listening to music, hanging out with friends on the beach, and having a blast. We had to put a stereo in the boat, of course. I taught JD and Gary to water ski and that went well . . . OK, not so much . . . but failure was not a problem without anyone there to judge us. We reveled in our successes together.

We had parties, where people didn't have to be "cool" to attend—made the playlists, configured the sound systems, and agonized over the invitation list — we each had to have the right girl and the correct number of slow songs! We made a huge tower of speakers once at my mother's house, which was a cool idea until one of the kitchen cabinets fell off the wall the next day! It MUST have been a coincidence, but my mother still brings it up from time to time — hey, that was 1985; Mom.

There were Hawaiian shirts that we wore; our own dress code worked because we did it together. I still have that shirt (it has shrunk some!), as well as the photos of the three of us.

Playing Trivial Pursuit with friends made us laugh at how clueless we were. Don't get me started on John the Baptist trivia.

I remember each of us pining over this girl or that one and even realizing how clueless we were about THAT as well, passing messages through friends of the intended because we could NEVER talk to the girl directly without some scouting from friends. We had to see if "my" girl could be friends with the other guys' girls, assuming we ever actually got the nerve up to ask her out! At some point Trilby, JD's sister cousin would usually let us know if she thought we had chosen poorly.

JD was the athlete of our little group. He was disappointed to JUST miss winning the state finals of the hurdles one year. He even had some success on the basketball court in spite of a coach that couldn't remember his name — my friend, "B.J. Bergman." We all went to the games but JD was the most vocal supporter when he wasn't playing. If our team was leading late in the game we all waited for JD's yell — "GO START THE BUS!"

I have memories of JD educating me on comic books — explaining the artists and writers and backstories with real knowledge and passion. JD created his own cartoon characters based on our group and people he knew and would do drawings and comic strips called *Irving and the Ijits*. Fortunately Irving and Rip and Simon were much cooler than JD and Gary and Grant were. In retrospect, calling each other by the character names in school may have contributed to that.

JD was the best man at my wedding. The rehearsal was very jovial, and I remember us clowning around while rehearsing, somewhat to the chagrin of the minister . . . our friend Gary. Sorry, Gary. My wife Delena (Lang) NEVER brings THAT up, but she was part of our group in high school too so she knew what she was getting into with this bunch.

JD was there for me in high school and college. When I graduated from college (in Indiana) he was there. When each of us married, the others were there. I watched JD go to college, become a professional, marry, grow into fatherhood with three sons that were his life, rediscover his passion for theater, and go through the ups and downs of life. Later in life I came to treasure our time together as I more fully recognized what my time with JD and Gary had done for me.

I am still absorbing the gifts that JD gave me. It is clear to me that I am a better person for our friendship, and I hope he received some of the same from me. He left much too soon, and I am disappointed that I won't be able to see all that he could accomplish in the future. Twenty five years ago my father moved just down the street from Robert and Vicki, and I wonder if I will ever stop looking for JD's car at their home when I drive **5M14** will miss him always.

**KAY BEAVER PUTNEY, 72, tells MARY KEITHLY, 13, about seeing the butterflies travel through Kremlin**

**Recorded by phone conversation from Dallas, Texas  
Graduated from Kremlin in 1962**

My parents, Roy and Faye Beaver, lived in Kremlin from 1946 to 1951. Our family made a few moves and ended up in Colorado for a number of years. We returned to Kremlin in 1962 where Mother and Daddy remained until their deaths in 2006 and 2008. For this reason, Kremlin has always been home for me and later for my children, Jeff and Jennifer Randolph. We all have so many wonderful memories of this perfect small town life.

The children of Kremlin will remember Mother's popcorn balls at Halloween. The adults will remember her peach cobblers, pies, and legendary noodles that were always shared with everyone in town. Daddy, on the other hand, will always be remembered for his stories which were told in his Texas Panhandle drawl so slowly that we often forgot the beginning before he reached the end.

One day during the first week of October when I was visiting my parents many years ago, I saw a massive dirt cloud rolling down Main Street. I was out in the front yard watching when I noticed that behind the cloud were thousands of Monarch butterflies. I'd never seen anything like it. They landed on us as well as anything around us that wasn't moving. I yelled at Mother to come look. When she came out, she said that she had seen them in other years. "They will spend the night on the Cedar trees out back," she told me. Sure enough, as twilight approached, we found hundreds of them stacked one on the other on the back side of the trees. They were clinging to each other and looked like clusters of orange and black grapes hanging from vines on the branches of the trees. It was one of the most breathtaking sights I have ever witnessed.



When I returned to my home in Dallas, I did some research on the migratory path of the Monarchs. Their journey begins in Canada and continues until they reach Mexico. I found that Kremlin is on the path of their migration. The reason there were so many of them on that particular day was because they were there to impress me. Actually, I didn't read that, but still, I want to remember the story that way. I did find that they ride the wind currents, which on that day were behind that cloud. What a lucky happenstance that I was there to observe the absolute beauty of nature.

**ALFRED BULLER, 69, interviewed by JOSHUA REIMER, 16**  
**Interviewed at his farm, west of Kremlin**  
**Graduated from Hillsdale High School 1964**

My family lived on a farm west of Kremlin. I was the youngest of eight siblings. We grew almost all of our food ourselves and raised chickens, pigs, sheep, and cows. We didn't have running water. That meant we had to use an outhouse and hand pump our water from the well. Before we left for school each morning, we all had to milk a cow and most times cook our own breakfast. We would put our eggs in the frying pan full of pig lard where the egg proceeded to jump around in the boiling fat. I first drove a tractor when I was around 4 or 5 years old and rode on the tractor every chance I got. Every Saturday, we would clean the chicken coop. We sold cream and eggs for money so we could buy groceries.

We owned an orchard as well as a garden, where we grew potatoes and other foods. The potato crop usually yielded around 100 pounds of potatoes each year. Some of the sheep, cows, and pigs would be butchered for food as well and the sheep would be sheared once a year to sell the wool. I had an orphaned lamb that we kept in a pen in the yard. I would hop the fence to get out and one day he jumped out behind me. I had to chop wood to fuel the wood stove that we used for cooking and heat during the winter. There was no heater or insulation so it was very cold during the winter. We sometimes warmed bricks, wrapped them in towels, and put them at the end of our beds to keep warm at night.

My favorite sport is baseball. I used to practice by throwing the baseball over the barn and seeing how far away from it I could get before I couldn't throw it over any more. I started playing baseball in sixth grade on the junior high team because they didn't have enough players and kept playing through high school. A lot of things have changed since I was younger, but I still have fond memories of growing up on the farm.

**DORI BENTON, 12, visits with her grandpa, BRUCE JAMES, 64**  
**Recorded in his home**  
**Graduated from Hillsdale in 1968**

Since I can remember, I always had an interest in flying. While I was growing up, I liked to watch the jets from Vance Air Force Base fly over the fields. When I was in grade school my brother was stationed at Vance. He was a big influence on me.

I would visit Vance and the airfield in Stillwater to see air shows. I saw the Thunderbirds at a show in Stillwater. I enjoyed watching the jets perform acrobatic moves in the sky. I also saw different aircraft. My favorite plane was the 5100 fighter jet.

After I graduated high school, I attended Oklahoma State University. I was part of the Reserve Officers Training Corps. I graduated with a Bachelor's degree in geology in 1972.

After graduation, I joined the Air Force. I was stationed at Williams AFB in Mesa, Az. I was a pilot instructor.

HARRIET (RANSOM) LLOYD, interviewed by HANNAH RUNDLE, 14  
Recorded in Kremlin, Oklahoma  
Graduate of Kremlin-Hillsdale 1971

Mrs. Harris was my English teacher, and I had her for speech when I was a junior. In her class that year, I had to give a humorous demonstrative speech. I'm pretty sure she had made the assignment just that day, because I wouldn't be one to procrastinate. I came home from my basketball game about midnight that night, and I remember saying to myself, "What am I going to write about?" I had no clue.

I finally decided I was going to write about how to hitchhike. I don't know why I thought of that because I had no experience in hitchhiking, but there are many different ways to do that. I thought the story could be funny, but I questioned if people would laugh at me or with me. The way you hold your thumb, your walk, how long it took people to stop and give you a ride, and how to dress, presented countless examples. I thought it was the dumbest speech I was ever going to give. I was afraid no one would think it was funny or laugh. But that's all I had, you know?

I was so wrong. As soon as I heard the first laughs, I knew I had picked a good topic. Then I noticed Mrs. Harris was laughing, maybe more than most. She couldn't even write comments on the score sheet because she was laughing so hard. Everyone cracked up, and she

gave me an A+. She says I earned the A and made me present it to every one of her English classes.

I ran into her several years later while she was teaching at Enid High and she said, "Oh, we still use your idea. I had one of the cheerleaders use that for a skit here." I said "Oh, I guess they don't know me so it doesn't matter." I thought that was the end of the story there in Kremlin, but I guess not. So, you see, Hannah, you never know what will last or what people will remember. Maybe that idea of hitchhiking will be used over and over even today.

**SHAYLA CLINE, 14 listens to CAROL (WUERFLEIN) GARRETT, 60**  
**Recorded on February 21, 2016**  
**Graduated from KHS**

I attended 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades in Hillsdale which called for a long bus ride in the mornings and evenings for me since I lived east of Kremlin. During high school, I played volleyball, softball, and basketball all the way till I was in an accident and suffered from a severe head injury. During my sophomore year, I fell off the back of a car, and that resulted in a skull fracture and a brain aneurism. After that, I did recover, but I couldn't take a chance of playing sports any longer. When I was in chemistry lab, a couple of people in my class knew how to mix and combine chemicals that stunk up the whole school.

When I was there, Colleen Day and her staff cooked all of the food from scratch, and meals were wonderful. On game days, they always baked red velvet cake for lunch since that was our school colors.

The summer before my senior year, a fire broke out in the gym, and a lot of damage was caused to some classrooms. I remember that we had to move some of our classes into the gym until the rooms were repaired.

My family has a long history with the Kremlin school system. Let me explain. At least one member of my family was attending school there for generations. I went to school there from first through twelfth grades, and all the way until 1978 when my brother graduated, there was a Wuerflein in school. That was 70 years straight of my family having somebody enrolled in school. We were very proud of that association.

**JACE KUCERA, 34, is interviewed by KELLIE MCKEE, 13**  
**Recorded in his office at Enviortech Engineering and Consulting, Inc.**  
**Graduated from KHS**

If it hadn't been for basketball in high school, I would have dropped out of school or not made the grades. I had lots of encouragement from my basketball coach/principal, Mr. Wichert, who was tutoring me. But my biggest supporter was my mom. She drove a school bus just so at the end of the day she could go to all my classes and ask what homework I had and then go to my locker to bring home my books. She would get home and ask if I had homework or tests. I'd say no. She then would pull out my school books and say, "That's funny. This teacher says you have tests in this or homework in that." I'd get it done or study it for her so I could play basketball.

**JIM HERMANSKI, 67, reports on his talent to CADEN RUSSELL, 12**

**Recorded near Kremlin, Oklahoma**

**Graduated from Kremlin High School 1967**

My favorite memory was during my senior year at Kremlin. It was about a week before graduation, and the girls in my class wanted an arch-way to walk through before we received our diplomas. Of course, my best friend Brady and I were happy to leave school to find an arch-way. Any arch-way would be fun to find.

When we returned to the school house on Saturday, the janitor had left the back door unlocked so we walked in and left the arch-way on the stage. The school was empty so we decided to look here and there. At that time we were bored so we walked around the school. If you look for trouble, you can usually find it, and sure enough, we did.

All of the classrooms were unlocked so that was no fun. Later we found out that the principal's and superintendent's offices were both locked, and Brady and I were both very good lock-pickers! Then, of course, the challenge was on. In a few minutes, we were in the principal's office. Nothing was there but just plain stuff. Next, we unlocked the superintendent's office. In there we found the bell timer! How much fun would that be if we could set the timer to ring ten minutes early for lunch? We thought about it, and sure enough, we agreed it would be a lot of fun. So, it was done, and in a few minutes, we were out of there.

Next Monday, the bell shot off ten minutes early for lunch just as planned. Usually, the students would have been packing up their books and things and be standing by the door to pass to lunch, but on this day, when the bell rang early, people weren't ready and papers went flying everywhere!

The teachers were panicking at the time because they weren't ready either. The students were making a commotion! Finally, teachers turned us all loose to run to lunch. Just as we thought, it was fun watching all of this.

That afternoon Brady and I were called to the office. Coach Harris asked us if we knew anything about the strange bell. We said we didn't so then he said, "Jim, we know it was you. You're the only kid who can pick a lock." Drats! My talent had worked against me!

Usually the seniors got out of school a week early just because they were seniors. However, Brady and I spent the last week there for punishment.

Coach Harris was in the office, and he said the funny thing was that all teachers hurried in to reset their clocks to the new time. They probably liked an early lunch too.

That's my favorite school memory.



**EMILY RODRIGUEZ, 11, visits with JAMY ZALOUDEK PERDUE, 44**  
**Recorded in Kremlin**  
**Graduate of KHS**

I was born on June 26, 1972, and I graduated in 1990. I liked to play basketball, run track, and be a cheerleader. One of my favorite teachers would have to be Mrs. Watkins, and she taught typing and yearbook.

When I was in high school, I won Homecoming Queen two years in a row. The first was when I was Basketball Queen my junior year, and the second time was Football Queen as a senior. My high school sweetheart was named Lance Lance. I know it's a little weird, but that's his real name.

I've been married for 17 years now, and I have three children. I met my husband on a blind date that my friends set up for me.

One of my favorite stories from school was when we were in home economics. We all had to sew a stuffed animal, but one of the boys got into some trouble for something, and he was taken to another room. The teacher took away his skunk so we all made signs that read, "Free the Skunk." Another day in that class, I made almond cookies. However, we were out of almonds so our teacher said, "Just use almond extract." So we did. I used ¼ cup of extract and they tasted awful!

When I was little, I always wanted to be a teacher. Many people don't know that I have a degree in education. I now teach 3<sup>rd</sup> grade at St. Joseph's Catholic School.

When I meet God, I will say, "Thanks for letting me in the pearly gates."

LARK SHULTZ, 61, interviewed by ZOEY WEBBER,16

Recorded in Hillsdale, Oklahoma

Graduate of Kremlin-Hillsdale School 1971

Mike, my husband, is a farmer and I being a city girl had a lot to learn about living in the country. Before we put in our main drive way in, we had to wind our way to the road in front of our house and manually open a gate to get in and out. The first thing I learned quickly was when you took the wire off the gate, put it back on the gate or hang onto it because if you threw it down it was very hard to find. Our gate took a lot of muscle to open so if the cattle were not down in that area we could leave it open. I had observed that when the weather was bad our cattle usually came down under the cliffs in our pasture.

One day when I was over at Mike's parents' house and I had started to snow. After a few moments later, I had remembered that I had left the gate open. I quickly left and when I arrived home, I had noticed that all of our cattle were headed straight for the neighbors' wheat field! I drove up to our house and told my three year old son, looking out the window, to watch mommy herd the cattle back into the pasture. I couldn't believe that I was able to get them out and back out of the road and able to get the cattle back into our pasture! I was feeling so triumphant that I just thought they needed to go a little faster. I had made them start running and I just could not understand why they ran right past the open gate! Lesson learned and to top that off I had to call my father-in-law to come help the stampede down our road!

One beautiful day when the two older boys were in school, my four year old son and I decided to venture down into the canyons, where we still to this day rent a gorgeous piece of land; it is just like being in Colorado, in my mind. We had a small pond where we enjoyed going fishing. We had taken in a rescue dog from one of our neighbors and when I had discovered that I had forgotten something back at our house, I started to back the car up and ran over our new rescue dog. I was very upset and when I got out of the car sure enough the little dog was dead. I told our son to stay in the car thinking it would be awful to see this, but he jumped out and said, "Yup, you killed him, mom." I was crying and I marveled how well a four year old was taking all of this in.

So we went back up to the house and got a box and shovel with the intent to bury him in this beautiful area we were going. When we arrived at the perfect spot, I could not dig a hole; the ground was too hard. We went down by the creek, and I still wasn't able to dig a hole. It had gotten to the point here my four year old even wanted to try. We finally drove to a gopher hole and stuck him there in our frustration thinking we would have daddy come back and give him a proper burial. In driving to the gopher hole, I had somehow gotten high centered in the pasture, and we could not move backward or forwards. Now you know why I drive a pick-up to this day!

So we decided to walk to our neighbor's house to seek help in getting back home. I took

my hatchet and my four year old took his Barlow knife. We started walking down the road; we must have looked pretty dangerous! We arrived at the neighbor's house and knocked on their door; it sounded like someone was home but no one came to the door. My husband told me later he probably wouldn't have opened the door if he saw a woman holding a hatchet either! I was getting worried about the older boys arriving home from school, and I would not be there. When we saw the bus coming down the road, I knew we were saved! The bus driver stopped and I asked him if we could ride the bus to our house, and he replied saying he did know for sure if he should let a woman with a hatchet on the bus. I was so glad he knew us and was joking! Our oldest son was so embarrassed to see me walking down the road that he came to the door of the bus and said, "Mother, what are you doing?" At the end of the day that little rescue dog received the proper burial, and the kids had enough embarrassment for one day.

**MRS. TABITHA (CHESSER) BULLER, 30, tells about her decision to major in her chosen field to KAYLYNN BROWNELL, 12.**

**Recorded at Kaylynn's home in Quail Meadows North on February 21, 2016  
Graduated from KHS**

I am where I am in life because of a teacher. Teachers have an amazing impact on our lives whether we realize it at the time or not. I had no idea that my English teacher would, with one statement, help me figure out what to do with my life.

Here it is, my senior year of high school. I have had a great time at Kremlin-Hillsdale High School; I played sports (even won a medal at state track), involved myself in student government, played in the band, earned good grades, and made some of the best friends a girl could ask for. Just one thing was missing...I had no idea what I was going to do after high school!

Mrs. Carpenter was my English teacher and yearbook advisor during my senior year. I had always liked her in that way that students like teachers, but I had no idea that she would be the person who would give me a push in the direction that my life has taken. One afternoon during yearbook, Mrs. Carpenter asked the class, "What are you going to do after high school?" When it was my turn, my only answer was, "I don't know!" Mrs. Carpenter looked at me and said, "I think you would enjoy Public Relations." I was puzzled by that statement and asked her what she meant. Mrs. Carpenter then proceeded to tell me that her sister had recently obtained her degree in Public Relations, managing the flow of information between an individual or an organization and the public. In other words, it is convincing people to feel the way you want them to about a product, company, or event. Mrs. Carpenter had been witness to me convincing classmates of one thing or another and felt that this would be a perfect fit. I was doubtful but intrigued. Did Mrs. Carpenter really know what she was talking about? I then spent the next several weeks researching this field. The more research I did, the more excited I became. This could really be something for me.

After graduation I went on to attend the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond to pursue a degree in Public Relations with a minor in marketing. I now have the opportunity to not just support my family, but to also have a passion and true love for what I do. I don't think a lot of people get to say that. And I owe it all to a teacher!

**KELLY KLIEWER, 49, is interviewed by her co-worker's daughter JOSIE LARSEN, 13**  
**Recorded on February 21, 2016**  
**Graduate of KHS**

I experienced many happy moments at Kremlin-Hillsdale when I was younger. I loved being with my best friends Sherri Newman, Jeff Kliewer, Rick Lunday, and Eldon Johnson. I especially loved being one of the best Bronc Mascot's this school has ever seen.

I didn't grow up in Kremlin like most of my fellow classmates. My family and I moved to Kremlin in 1980, my 9<sup>th</sup> grade year. I wasn't at all used to a small school, but it was a lot better than how I imagined a smaller school.

I also really enjoyed some of my teachers. One of my favorites was Mrs. Watkins, who taught psychology and typing. This woman, bless her, was wonderful with a room of rowdy teens. Like my amazing mother, she always kept us in line even when there were moments, I know, when she would have gladly passed us off to someone else. Then there was Mr. Dally, who seemed to make history fun while teaching us so much!

I hurt my knee in the beginning of my sophomore year so sadly basketball and track were both out of the question. Even though I couldn't play those sports, I wanted to stay involved in another way. I had the pleasure of being the school mascot for three years. Talk about fun; just be the Bronc! It was not work, but I really enjoyed being involved with the cheer squad and the crowd. We were kept very busy with events such as football and basketball games, summer camps, and fundraisers.

I graduated and married my high school sweetheart Jeff Kliewer in 1984. Jeff and I have been married for 32 wonderful years. We have two children and four grandchildren.

The old school will be missed, but change happens, and with change brings excitement for the future Kremlin graduates and everyone in the new school!

LYNDA LIZAR, 68, tells about her childhood to MADISON ROBERTS, 17  
Recorded over the phone  
Graduate of Hillsdale, 1965

I remember a lot of different stories from my childhood, but only a few really make me look back. When I was around six years old, I was always right by my mom's side doing whatever she needed me to do. One thing I remember that I was always helping her do was cooking. Living on the farm, I always remember having to cook lunch or dinner for my brothers JC and JL, and my dad who were always working in the field. One day my mother and I were cooking up dinner when I heard a loud screaming noise, which didn't sound quite like it was coming from a human. I ran outside to see my brothers trying to tag a baby calf, and I didn't really know what was going on. All I knew is that I wanted them to leave the poor calf alone. At the age of six, of course, I didn't know what to do, so I just started yelling and crying for them to just let it be. I ran inside to try and get help from my mom, but she didn't seem quite as worried as I was. Sooner or later my mom finally settled me down and we continued to finish cooking. It was about 10 minutes later and in walked my brothers and dad. I'll never forget the smirks they had glued to their faces when they saw me still red eyed from all the crying. I knew good and well I was in for a teasing, and boy was I right. There I was 10 years later, and I was still getting teased for it, but hey, what are brothers for?

Because I was younger than my brothers, they didn't really let me hangout with them. It seemed like they were always off doing "big kid" stuff, you know, all the fun stuff I definitely wasn't allowed to join. So when this happened, I really had no choice but to spend most of my free time with my mother. She was always good about taking my mind off of not getting to hang out with my brothers JC and JL. It really didn't bother me because she and I really had a passion for cooking. I'll never forget making dessert with my mom. We usually cooked brownies or cookies of some sort. Although the actual cooking part was fun, my favorite part of it all was getting to lick the spoon. My mom was really good about letting me lick the bowl and the batter off of the spoon. This made me think I was pretty special because this was one thing my brothers never got to do. Of course, this usually turned into a huge chocolate mess all over my mouth and clothes. I'm thankful for the time I spent by my mom's side helping her cook because at the end of the day, I know we both enjoyed the time together.

**BREANNA EASLEY, 31, interviewed by CARLEN LAZCANO, 14**  
**Recorded in Enid, Oklahoma**  
**Graduate of Kremlin-Hillsdale 2003**

I met a guy named Bobby Joe Easley, at The Cyber Café at North Western Oklahoma State University in Alva, Oklahoma, while attending the University. We exchanged numbers, and have been together ever since. After we started dating, I became pregnant with Laila, who was named after an MTV personality. Eight years after Laila was born, my husband took me to a restaurant in the Penn Square Mall. My heart did flips like an acrobat at a circus as he bent down on one knee and proposed marriage. It was totally unexpected and if he was looking for the world's biggest reaction, he got it that night. Soon after I became pregnant with an another amazing child named Laker. He was named after the famous LA Lakers. Our wedding was postponed due to the recent setbacks with the baby on the way.

Being a parent has changed me. It definitely taught me how to be more patient, and it reminded me of what my mother went through and how hard it was. Kids teach us patience, because you can't just react; you have to think first because you are teaching them through your actions.

My dreams for my children when they grow up are that they don't have to be rich or famous as long as that they are happy and comfortable of with themselves. I'm most proud of my beautiful children.

**ROY SANDERS, 72, tells a story to HUNTER MILLER, 12**  
**Recorded by phone conversation**  
**Graduated from Kremlin in 1962**

I attended Kremlin School for 12 years and graduated in 1962. I was active in all sports that our school offered and as healthy as could be. After graduation, for the next 3 ½ years I studied at Phillips University, which was right here in Enid. In fact, the campus that you know as NOC was PU when I was younger. I joined the Air Force and served as an airborne radar technician, and I was one of the first people to study the AWAC system that is currently assigned to Tinker AFB in Oklahoma City.

Then about 27 years after HS graduation, everything changed for me. I suffered my first heart attack in 1989. Shortly following that event, I had triple bypass surgery that took four months for me to recuperate. Over the next 18 years, I suffered several minor heart attacks, received four pacemakers, and a defibrillator. The last attack was caused by a heart virus which destroyed 55% of my heart muscle. The output of my heart dropped down to 12%. At that time my doctor, Dr. Mel Clark in OKC, suggested a heart transplant. Although this was a drastic measure, I really had little choice. He warned me that without a new heart, I would probably live only six months. He referred me to Dr. David Nelson at Integris Zudhi Transplant Center. I was put on the transplant list on November 6, 2007. Because of my blood type (AB Positive), three hearts became available within 22 hours. (Normal waiting time can be from days to years.) All I was told about my potential donors is that one was a 14 year old boy, another was an 18 year old male, and the third was a 29 year old woman. I have no idea which heart I was given, but I have speculated many times just out of curiosity. My wife Shirley (Wuerflein) and I had little time to ponder the situation, and probably that was good. We quickly decided to "let the adventure begin!"

Transplant surgery was performed November 7, 2007, by the transplant team at Integris Hospital in OKC. Recovery went extremely well. I left the hospital eight days later even though the heart doctors had told us to be prepared to stay in the Oklahoma City area for two months so I could be monitored just in case I had trouble. In fact, I did so well, that my doctor later told me that I was his only patient that did not even have to have a blood transfusion. I was able to use my own blood during the entire operation. One effect, however, was that since we had so little time to prepare, the donor's heart had not been tested for potential diseases. Later we realized that at one time, the heart had been infected with CMV, a virus that causes Chicken Pox. Had I caught Chicken Pox, I possibly could have died so for the next two years, I had to take infusions to prevent my catching the disease. Finally, I am now immune to that pesky illness that most kids suffered for probably just a few days.

The average life expectancy for a person with a heart transplant is five years, and the biggest problems that occur are diabetes and kidney failure. Most people die of cancer as there is no longer immunity to diseases due to the medications needed so the heart will not reject. In



other words, since my heart is a gift from someone else, my body would like to reject it, and the medications I take prevent the rejection, but it also reduces my entire immune system. Another odd thing is that doctors were unable to remove one of the pacemaker leads that had attached to an artery so I can never have an MRI. The lucky part is that I have lived for eight years and four months with my new heart, and I am doing fine. I will have to take rejection drugs for the rest of my life. But considering everything, my life has been very normal.

You might think that this entire procedure is something like changing a tire: you take one off and put another one on. But it's not. I know that I have been blessed, and I am thankful that my body reacted so well during the whole process. I am extremely grateful to the person who donated the heart, and I request that anyone who is able to add his or her name to the transplant list please do so. It is truly a gift of life! As a result of one generous person, I have lived many good years, and I have been able to see my latest grandchild (Avery) be born. She is now six years old.

**BRENDA HOFFSOMMER, 63 confirms her love for basketball to KENNA LAM, 14**

**Recorded by e-mail**

**Graduated from KHS**

My favorite thing about high school was playing basketball. It was so exciting to be nervous before the games and then go out and play. Even though practices were sometimes brutal (pre-season exercising, running bleachers forever, suicides) it was worth it to get to play the game. After the season, it was fun to participate in the spring fundraiser playing on a basketball team or coaching an elementary team when I was a junior. I don't remember if the team I coached won much, but I enjoyed the thrill of it all.

When my two girls outgrew their toddler years, I began keeping the scorebook at games Steve was coaching. Being right there on the bench with the team were some really exhilarating times during those years. Several years the teams made it to Regional and Area Tournaments. It was so exciting to play close games and come out winners. We were fortunate enough to make it all the way to the State Tournament three years. In 1988 we were at Bluejacket High School and the team had made it to the Area Finals and was scheduled to play Moss who held a 27-0 record. We had had a good season but had lost four or five games. The girls played well against Moss, but we were behind the entire game until the end of the fourth quarter. A well-timed three-point shot and free throws allowed our team to take the lead and win! It was so loud in the gym I could hardly hear anything. Wow! We were on our way to our first State Tournament title. Unfortunately, we only played one game there.

The second trip to the State Tournament was also with the Bluejacket team in 1990. Our oldest daughter, Jenifer, was a freshman that year, and she had knee surgery in the fall of 1989 so the excitement was even higher to watch her play. We played the finals of the Area Tournament at Northern Oklahoma College in Tonkawa against Dover. We had lost the night before so this was our last opportunity to make it to the State Tournament. The score was close the entire game, but we won – after five overtimes! It was so thrilling and nerve-wracking at the same time. In the first game in Oklahoma City, we beat Schuller, but lost to Arnett in the semi-finals.

Our last attempt to bring home the gold ball was in 1996 when our second daughter, Jill, was a senior at Wakita High School. The final game at Woodward in the Area Tournament ended in an exciting win over Texhoma. The first game in the State Tournament was against Buffalo Valley, who was a tough opponent, but the Wakita girls played really well and won. Jill was 10 for 10 from the free throw line. It was exciting to see all of her hard work pay off. Unfortunately, we lost the next day in the semi-finals to New Lima.

My basketball experience continues as I am now keeping the scorebook at the Hillsdale Christian School basketball games, where my grandson, Jack, is playing. I have enjoyed being able to stay involved for many years. Basketball never gets old!

**ROCCO MANER, 13, interviewed his uncle CHAD JOHNS, 50**  
**Recorded in the home**  
**Graduated from KHS**

I met your Aunt Becky at the Enid Speedway, and I saw her right ahead of me. I walked up to talk to her, and eventually after talking to her, I got her phone number. After calling and calling, I eventually talked her in to going out on a date.

We were very close and almost inseparable. We spent a lot of time together. I took her out on a date about a year later and asked her to marry me. She said yes, and we got married.

The three other happiest memories were when my kids were born. Colby, Jake, and Caleb are special to me. I couldn't choose which memory is the happiest. It really was a happily-ever-after for me.

**CHRISTIE (MENDENHALL) NEAL, 36, tells about how she met her husband to  
JORDAN HARRIS, 17**

**Recorded in Kremlin, Oklahoma on February 21, 2016**

**Graduated from KHS**

I first met Travis, my husband, in Alva at college. I had just returned from basic training after joining the army. Our backyards met up, and my best friend lived right across the street from him so I would trek through his yard to meet up with my friend at her house. I would always see him outside, and he was always with my mutual friends. We kept crossing paths so we just figured we ought to start dating.

Travis didn't exactly propose to me. We did shop for an engagement ring at Edgar's in Enid. The NFL draft was happening that day, however, so as I looked at rings, he was pretty much glued to the TV. "Pick out the one you want," he told me as he watched the drama on ESPN. I found "the one" and we left. We walked out to the car, and he asked, "Aren't you going to put your ring on?"

I responded, "You didn't ask me to marry you!"

"Well, why did we buy you a ring if you're not going to marry me?"

He's romantic like that! Once he bought me a Christmas present that I won't forget. He's a horrible gift-giver, but I had seen the credit card statement, and it read, "An Evening Surprise." "Oh, my gosh!" I thought. "He's finally doing something romantic. I was all excited. In my head I was thinking, "limo-ride, date out in the city, something fantastic!" Finally, we were at his grandma's house opening gifts, and I picked up what I thought would be my awesome surprise. You couldn't guess what it was in a hundred tries; it was a framed picture of a combine cutting a corn field and pheasants were flying up into the sky to escape. The artist had properly named it, "An Evening Surprise."

Still, I knew that Travis was the one for me because things were definitely different with him. I had picked a lot of wrong ones earlier, but it was just completely different with Travis. It was a different respect, love, and friendship than all the others before him. I felt secure with him by my side. I knew that he had my back and supported me.

We've had a lot of good times before and throughout our marriage, but the hardest time was when we had been married for only four months. I received a call that I would be traveling to Iraq. I moved to Lawton for six long months, and I had to quit nursing school while he stayed in college and worked. Luckily, I was not deployed to the war, and I returned home. It was a rough start, but we survived.

Our best stories and memories are with our kids at their softball tournaments. We're always there as a family, and we have a lot of fun. We did visit Cancun with some friends this past summer for our little-bit-late ten year anniversary. We had a lot of fun relaxing and hanging out with some of our favorite people. It was nice to get away for a while.

RICHARD GRAY, 70, interviewed by NICHOLAS SNODGRASS, 13  
Recorded in Kremlin, Oklahoma  
Graduated from Kremlin High School

(Initially Richard wanted to share a story from his wedding day, but he was unable to recall any particular story of that event.)

I do recall being in chemistry class with my classmates. My chemistry teacher was Mr. Merlin Rodgers, and he assigned us to work in groups to mix chemicals together in an attempt to make a foam. I was in a group with another kid named Ronnie Lizar. We were being normal boys and not paying attention to what chemicals we were actually supposed to be mixing together, and we mixed a bunch of stuff that ended up making the biggest pile of foam one can imagine despite the fact that we did not use the correct ingredients. Mr. Rodgers was very impressed and even bragged to everybody about how huge our gob of foam turned out. He even gave us an A+ for the project. I never told Mr. Rodgers that we had not been paying attention, but I was thankful that we did not blow up the school.

We were pretty good science students. My friend Danny Zaloudek and I figured out how to cross-wire a car. I remember our history teacher and basketball coach Mr. Spanner. We rewired his car so that every time he hit his breaks, his horn honked. I think Mr. Spanner left after that one year. He had better places to see where better behaved kids lived.

I'm now retired, and my wife Lois and I still live about a mile west of Midway. Life has been good.

**BRITTANY HILL, 14, interviews LINDSEY ROBINO SWART, 37**  
**Recorded in Kremlin**  
**Graduated from KHS**

It was fall and kind of chilly outside. We cheerleaders and the football team decided to continue a tradition that has been going on since way before I entered high school. We borrowed one of a football boy's truck and packed all the big guys into the bed of this little pickup. All of us cheerleaders climbed inside, and I was the driver. We would be playing Pond Creek the following Friday night in football, and we wanted to paint the streets with black and red sayings that read "Go Broncs," and "Go KHS," or whatever came to mind. Our intent was to show support for our school and team.

We were just painting "art works" all over the streets. But then we saw the sheriff driving in to town so we took off as fast as that little truck would go. My heart was beating really hard. Since I was driving, I was really scared. We were speeding so fast that all the passengers were holding on to anything they could. We were just flying down the road like crazy. Running from the cops and hiding anywhere, we were hoping we would not get in trouble. I was moving from place to place and even left town trying to avoid the cop so he couldn't find us, arrest us, and throw us in jail. Now that I think of it, he probably wasn't even looking for us, but at the time, I was terrified.

My heart was racing right then; however, we soon headed back to town. By the time we returned to school, he was gone, and all we could do was laugh.

HAROLD BULLER, 73, interviewed by his great niece RACHEL REIMER, 13  
Recorded in Enid, Oklahoma  
Graduated from Hillsdale High School

I attended Hillsdale Public School for 12 years and graduated in 1960. I started first grade in the fall of 1948. They did not have Pre-k or Kindergarten back then.

One morning in first grade I didn't wake up early enough to do my chores. I only had time for a bowl of Cheerios before rushing to the bus. On the way to school I developed motion sickness. I thought it was a good idea to try to hold my vomit in so I cupped my hand over my mouth. My throw up, instead of staying in, just flew through my fingers, and on to the high school girls who were sitting in front of me. Then the bus driver stopped the bus at a farmhouse and cleaned the up the mess. After that I had to sit in the front of the bus for the rest of the year, and the bus driver brought a big can on board to use if an event like this should ever occur again. I wasn't sent home that day, and I enjoyed the rest of my day at school. I never ate Cheerios again.

One day in music class, the kids were in a circle doing a folk dance. One of my buddies and I were sitting on the floor trying to trip the other kids. We got caught and had to sit outside the door. A high school teacher saw us sitting in the hall and took us to high school study hall. It was very scary.

I was a good student, enjoyed school, and thought studying was fun. During a high school science class, I taught myself how to wiggle my ears. I could wiggle my ears without moving my eyebrows, and I still had better grades than my sister, who was in the same science class.

Every summer I had a job that had something to do with agriculture. At one point in high school, I worked for my third and fourth grade teacher's husband and ended up becoming good friends with my former teacher. Her name was Mrs. Dittner, and she inspired me to become a teacher.

I'm not a morning person. So every morning when Mom would yell at Alfred, my little brother, and me to wake up, we just stayed in bed and let our older siblings do all the chores. Mom walked back outside to finish her chores, so she wasn't inside to yell at us again. Usually we just woke up in time to eat breakfast and to get on the bus. I'm not lazy any more.



**HUNTER STROUD, 13, hears from TOM VOTH, 58**

**Recorded by e-mail from Houston, TX**

**Graduated from KHS**

What fun we had!! The weekend day trips to the Northwestern Oklahoma State University at Alva, would always start early on a Saturday morning, at the school. There were never enough of us competing to justify the expense of a school bus. So, we did the next best thing. We car pooled before carpooling was cool. We'd pile in Peggy Harris's green Mercury Cougar, the coolest car in Kremlin at the time, and one other car and take off.

Now, Peggy would always make sure that we were well rehearsed on the skits we were to perform at the competitions. We had the debate team, which I don't think ever competed. Now it wasn't their fault. They studied, practiced, fought (well isn't that what debate really is---polite fighting), and then just a few days before their first event, there was a fire in the gym, and all the debate reference cards were ruined by water damage! Back in the Stone Age (the 1970s) there were no computers, no iPads, no back-ups; everything was on paper, and the cost and time to replace the reference cards were more than the school budget could support. So, the debate team was undefeated!!!! GO BRONC'S!!!

The rest of us did dramatic interpretation, humorous interpretation, humorous duets (that's with another person), extemporaneous speaking, and I'm sure there were other categories, I just don't remember them because I didn't compete in them. I do know we did quite well representing the school, and we had lots of fun on the trips.

Besides the speech contests, we made movies. I don't know whose camera we used, but the cast of characters were... well, us. The seniors that year made a gangster movie that had Terry Thesman, and Doug Lowe dressed up as gangsters and hanging out at Rathmal's Candy store/Post Office. (Rathmal's was the ultimate store in the burg of Kremlin in the '70s and before. The Kremlin post office used to be housed there; it was a general store as well. It had wooden floors that were so worn there were gaps in between the boards. A big candy display case and the coldest soda you could find were there). Oops, I regressed... back to the movie making... I remember the editing of the film could've been better as when the final version came out, the cigarettes being smoked (not really being smoked, "just" props), were of many varying lengths within the same scene. Rookie mistakes. The movie our class (the sophomores) put together was an Evel Knievel type show with Scott Kelso being Knievel who jumped the washed out bridge just south of Kremlin. Again fun to do, but poor entertainment for anyone who was forced to watch the film.

And finally, plays. We did plays. Fun plays. *Our Town*, *The Fantastic*, *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, and *The Remarkable Incident at Carson's Corner*. All of the plays we performed were student productions except the last one mentioned. Someone thought it would be a great idea to involve the entire community. Wow. Auditions were held, and the cast set. All the evening practices were fun. The students got to interact with the adults in a way we wouldn't have been able to without the play. And it was fun even when we'd take Ken Uhrig's keys out of his pocket and drive his '57 MG Spider around town while he was on stage. I don't know if he ever figured out why his car was parked in a different spot most nights when he came out of practice.

**TINA LUNDAY, 37, tells he son MAGWIRE LUNDAY, 13, about his place in the family  
Recorded at their home  
Graduated from Kremlin-Hillsdale**

*How did you feel when you first saw me?*

We found out two weeks before Christmas of 1998 that we were going to be parents. On August 26, 1999 Corbin, our first child, was born. Then in October 2001, we found out that we were soon to be parents again. About a month later, Mark McGwire announced his retirement from baseball. Your dad decided that no matter what, our new baby would be named McGwire. I didn't like the spelling because I didn't want it to be spelled like a last name. So I made a slight change and decided that our new baby would be named Magwire Kye Matthew.

A few months later we had a 3D ultrasound, and that was the first time that I got to "see" your face. From the ultrasound, we knew exactly what you would look like and you looked just like Corbin, your older brother. Since you were our second child, we got to pick your birthday. We were told we could pick any day after June 11<sup>th</sup>. My birthday is June 13<sup>th</sup> so I picked June 14<sup>th</sup> for you to be born. Sure enough, you arrived on Friday, June 14, 2002 at 7:31 a.m.

The first time I saw you, I fell in love with you and your tiny little face. You were a perfect little baby. You always had a great disposition and a great sleeping pattern. That all changed when you became a toddler. You turned into a rowdy little boy who pestered Corbin all the time. When you were potty training, you peed in everything but the toilet including your big brother's shoes. Once when Corbin was using the bathroom, you took your dad's beard shaver and took out a chunk of Corbin's hair and ran off. You were always the life of the party in everything you did as you were growing up.

Your mischievous ways transformed in 2007 when you became a big brother to little sister Riane. You changed to an awesome big brother who always looked out for his new sister. And now that you are a little older, you both love to pester each other.

The only thing that I have ever wanted for my children is for them to know the Lord and to be happy. I don't measure success on the kind of car that you drive or the size of your house or you bank account. Success should be measured for the happiness one has in their life.

The thing that I'm most proud of with you children is that you have been so accepting to foster children in our home over the years. You have been wonderful throughout our foster journey. Without your love and support, we couldn't do what we do, and I hope we are making a positive difference for other children.

**CAROL HERMANSKI MULBERY, 75, tells AUNDREA BRATCHER, 14, about her aunt Velma**

**Recorded at Aundrea's home**

**Graduated from Kremlin High School**

When your Aunt Velma was young, she was into everything. She found her mother's old purse. Inside it was a bottle of tablets. She gave a couple of pills to your Uncle Jimmy. Oh, was she in trouble, but to Mom's relief, they were just aspirin. By the time Mom was finished with her, Velma was hoping the pain reliever could have been used for her bottom.

Velma was busy. She cooked some awesome dirt cake with the day's fresh eggs. This wasn't the tastiest treat she ever made. She didn't like doing chores. She and I were in charge of washing dishes, but neither of us were very interested, and we were far too busy to mess with them. We would piddle around, and when the boys were finished with their outside chores, we would still have a sink full of dirty dishes. The neglect landed us in hot water followed by dish water. Once she wanted to help me wrap presents, but I didn't want her around. Velma found scissors and started in cutting. When she finished, she found she had cut Mother's tablecloth clear into.

Family was important and one of Velma's favorite relatives was Uncle Albert. He was always fun and willing to pay attention to us. He taught us how to catch fish and frogs. Uncle Albert was a smoker, and he rolled his own cigarettes. Velma and Jimmy wanted to do something nice for Uncle Albert. Since he rolled his own, there was not filter, and this left a lot of unsmoked tobacco. Velma and Jimmy gathered all of the old smoked cigs lying around. They carefully unrolled each of them and dumped the unsmoked tobacco back into his tin. His cig wasn't the only thing smokin' when Uncle Albert found out what they had done.

Velma started school on her birthday in Kremlin. Not only did she excel in class, but she was a great athlete. When she was 10, she had a yearlong hop in her step. Earlier, she had been running through the pasture barefooted and stepped on a broom-weed stob. I pulled it out of her foot, and we returned to the house. She ended up having three surgeries before the wound healed a year later. Velma didn't use crutches; she chose to hop. This was a small hiccup in her sports career at Kremlin. She loved basketball and volleyball. She lettered all four years at Kremlin.

She graduated Valedictorian of her class in 1965 and then she was accepted into the nursing program at the University of Oklahoma. Velma practiced nursing for 37 years before retiring.

In 2015 Velma returned to Kremlin for her class's 50<sup>th</sup> reunion and for the last gathering before the old school was torn down. She enjoyed seeing classmates and revisiting her old stomping grounds.

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Velma passed away on December 10, 2015, from a yearlong battle of pancreatic cancer. In spite of her illness, she always maintained that beautiful Velma smile.

**KATIE BRAINARD MCCANTS, 34.** is interviewed by her friend **TRISTIN LOCKHART,**  
13

**Recorded in Enid**  
**Graduate of KHS**

I grew up north of Enid on a dairy farm so I had a very unique childhood, and with siblings it made it all worthwhile. Having four siblings named Angie, Jacie, Taylor, and Walker was like having a team; we had to work together and fill our parts. Believe me, on a dairy farm there are plenty of parts to fill.

With all the work, school was like an escape. Plus, I could see all my friends and play sports. Some of the lessons that I learned I still use to this day. I learned that never quitting and hard work always pay off. Of course, I can never forget how to work and play well with others because jobs are like school. I still have to get along with my co-workers, and it will be a lot smoother if we do.

Some of my most fun moments of school were playing and watching sports. My senior year, we were playing Billings at the first round of District. Now, let me explain. We had only won a handful of games, and Billings was one of the top teams around; college scouts were even there, but not to watch us. Those other girls were really good. But you know, we won! You just don't know what might happen on any given day, that's why we play the game instead of just giving up. In that game, the team that lost was finished for the season, but we lived to see another game.

One more fun memory was my senior football homecoming. It was raining, and the game was almost cancelled, but right before the coronation, the rain let up. When we took pictures, the weather was gorgeous! The night was a fun one.

An additional big event was my junior year when Brandi Welker Schieber, Rachel Wuerflein Flavin, and I participated in the national meat judging contest in Denver, Colorado. We had studied long and hard, and it paid off. We won the whole thing!

I met Jessie McCants on a White Water weight lifting trip, but I didn't know he would be my future husband till a while later. I did notice him, though. I love my husband and my kids because they are the biggest parts of my life. All I could want for them is to be as pleased as I was growing up at Kremlin. I hope they make long-lasting friendships and do what makes them happy just as I have.

HOLLY JOHNSON MINNICK, 36, tells a childhood memory to BAYLEE SMITH, 18.  
Recorded in Enid, Oklahoma  
Graduate of Kremlin Hillsdale High School in 1997

One morning before school, my mom drove to work. My sister, Angela and I were to meet the bus as we were told to do like we did every day, however about 10 minutes before the bus arrived, she decided that she did not want to go to school that day. She was trying to talk me into skipping school too! At that age I really liked school so I really wanted see all my friends. She finally bribed me, and told me that she would do my chores for two weeks if I would stay home with her!! Of course, I gave in and shut the door so the bus driver would know we were not coming and would drive right by our house. All was well; Angela even called mom and told her that we got out of school early because a water line had broken. (Back then it happened all the time.) My mom had a lunch break around noon that day and decided to come home to check on us and, of course, we were fine but just a little on edge that she was home. As she was getting ready to return back to work, she gave us hugs and kisses and right then, the phone rang... it was the school that was calling to check on my sister. She had had surgery just a week or two before, and someone was worried that she was sick since she hadn't showed up to school. BUSTED!! She hadn't thought that someone should call the school and tell them that we were sick, and she definitely didn't think about them calling while Mom was on lunch break. Then Angela didn't even take ALL the blame like she should have since it was HER idea. She tried to say that I wanted to skip too, and that I agreed with her completely when she brought it up! Either way, she DID NOT do my chores as she agreed to do because we both had A LOT more!!

**TONY BELL, 14, talks to AMBER DUHON, 30**  
**Recorded at her father's house in Enid**  
**Graduated from Kremlin-Hillsdale**

I love my job in the mental health unit at St. Mary's. It's the same field I always wanted to work in, but I'm not in as high as a position as I had hoped. When I was in school, I looked forward to growing up so I could get married, but that's not really living if you don't take it day by day. You have to persevere and keep going with life even when you don't like what is happening.

I remember one time that I was taking a semester test in Mr. Campbell's class. I asked another student for an answer, and I didn't agree with her so we discussed our different opinions until finally we were accused of cheating because of our arguing. Mrs. Chesser and Mrs. Tolle were my favorite teachers because they helped make class fun and easy for me to learn the material that I needed.

I loved hanging around out at football games, and when we played a fifth quarter in basketball, it was my time to play. I had the worst time when I got in trouble at cheer practice. Our cheer coach was a former military person who made us run if we didn't behave.

The lesson I learned from relationships is that I shouldn't listen to what people have to say unless they are also in relationships. That is what tears people apart and ruins the relationship. I grew up with good friends and family who most always were there for me. I grew up in church; I am a non-denominational Christian.

**JODY HELM, 45, tells KRISTIN HELM, 12, about his job**

**Recorded in Enid**

**Graduated from KHS**

My father wanted me to join the military when I was younger. I thought about it and decided that it wasn't for me. So, then my father suggested that I take up law enforcement, his occupation, and we didn't exactly see eye to eye on that so I said no.

When my father was still alive, I had a change of heart and decided that I might want to give law enforcement a try. I started with the Garber Police Department as part of their reserve program. One day I was on patrol, and I found a kid doing donuts in the School Zone. I wrote him a reckless driving ticket. I later found that the person was a friend of a city council member, and I was pressured to drop the ticket; I refused. Soon after, the council decided to cancel the reserve program before the young man's court date, and they ended up getting their way. I decided that wasn't right, and that gave me the push I needed to start fighting for what is right.

After the Garber police Department, I worked for Oasis RV as a technician. I enjoyed working on campers. My boss was a cool guy to work for until I started noticing some shady stuff. I then decided to quit this job and started to work for Garfield County Jail. I just seemed to be pulled back into law enforcement all the time.

I stayed there for about a year and a half, and I learned a lot about the law enforcement. That's when I decided to enter the Garfield County Reserve program. As part of this program, I had to drive to Fairview two days a week for six weeks of training. After that I returned to the jail and participated in some field training with another deputy before going out on my own. After working as a reserve for a while, I was asked to join the Sherriff, the Under Sherriff, and a lieutenant in a meeting. When I walked into the room, they did not look very happy so I closed the door behind me and sat down. In this gathering, however, the Sherriff offered me a full time position, and I was honored to take the job.

Just like with the reserve program, I had to take more training, but this time it was more in depth in the four months of classes. After school ended, I was on my own and out on the road. I started on the night shift by making arrests and taking calls. After spending a lot of time in the department, I was given a sergeant position. This is third in line behind the Sherriff and the Under Sherriff.

While on the job, I have met many different people. I have taken good people to jail, and I have taken a lot of bad people to jail. This job is rather complicate at times, but I do my best to do it well.



**DIANE VOTH FOSMIRE, 55, explains the differences between school in her time and his to DAVID SCHRADER, 14**

**Recorded at Diane's home  
Graduate of Kremlin High School**

When Coach Vore came to town, he introduced track to our school. He had coached at his old school before he came to Kremlin. 1977 was the year of our first track team, and nobody really knew what he she was doing. We did not even have matching uniforms so we just wore shorts and t-shirts. Because of our lack of experience, we competed in whatever the coach recommended, and we listened closely to his advice. The first track meet was disheartening, as we lost, but after that we won every other meet including State. I ran the half-mile relay, the one-mile relay, and the 880. I placed in the 880 at State.

Girls' basketball was very different than it is now. The court was split in two sections at the half court line. One side was offense with three people, and the other side was defense with three people. The authorities-that-be didn't think that girls were strong enough to run up and down the court like boys could so we were "protected" from hurting ourselves or passing out or whatever. That way we could rest when the ball was at the other end from us. Just silly, isn't it? I played guard my freshman year, and I thought I was extraordinary at my job. My sophomore through senior year, I played both guard and forward. As a guard my job was to move the ball from the defensive side to the offensive side without crossing the half court line. As a forward, I was expected to score points. Another interesting difference was that every time there was a jump ball, the two players involved would jump for the ball at the free throw line. Also a jump ball started each quarter. Both boys and girls played with the same size ball, and it was the size as the modern day men's basketball. There was no three point shot back then. If a person made 30 points in a game, it was all from 2 pointers or 1 point free throws.

I was quite the athlete as I also played volleyball my freshman year and was coached by the old math teacher, but before my freshman year, the volleyball team was coached by the infamous Coach Harris. He had a very successful run as coach, and we were not just state contenders, but State Champions. Better yet, at that time there were no class divisions in volleyball, so we were the best of all the schools in the state of Oklahoma, not just the little schools.

My junior year of high school was the year that I was enlightened and drawn into the medical field. I started volunteering at Bass Hospital with my cousin. While working there, I came across a questionnaire seeking to find out what I liked in the medical field; that is where I found my calling for therapy. I looked at different colleges including Tabor and Tulsa, and I chose to attend The University of Tulsa because it had a strong science program. Besides, some of my family had gone there before me. At college is where I discovered my calling in working to help little children with physical disabilities.

I attended Kremlin-Hillsdale from Kindergarten all the way through graduation in 1979. I loved school and have many fond memories of my time there. I hope that my children will be able to have as many as I do.

**SAMMY ROMERO, 11, interviews his new friend CHRISTY TARRANT BAKER, 34**  
**Recorded at Bennie's Barn**  
**Graduate of Kremlin-Hillsdale**

When I was in high school, I had a truck that my dad called "Buckets" because he said I cried buckets the day he gave it to me. "Buckets" was reliable enough to get me from Point A to Point A1/2, but not necessarily to point B. This truck had no working radio. Instead, there was a Garth Brooks cassette tape stuck in it. I knew every note, every breath, every pitch, every word to the *Thunder Rolls* sound track as it was all I listened to for two years. To coax the truck to back up, I had to put the car in drive, slam on the gas, and then throw it into reverse. So, everyone at school knew not to park near me. However, one time, when I was filling up with gas at Midway, I left the truck running, which I know you shouldn't do, but that's what I did. I walked around to the passenger side to roll up the window, and mysteriously "Buckets" put herself into reverse and started rolling backward toward the Kremlin blacktop. The truck, which normally wouldn't slide into reverse without a huge to-do, was barreling toward the road. Luckily, it hit the sign before it careened into the road. That was a \$600 gas bill because it pulled the hose out of the pump.

Another feature of my truck was that whenever the steering wheel was turned, the horn honked. When I was 16, my best friend Amy Hill Jordan and I decided to drive to Kaw Lake to meet some friends. It was May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1999, and it seemed to us like an ordinary spring day. But anyone from Oklahoma knows that it was a day of deadly tornadoes. We blissfully headed out from Kremlin to Kaw Lake thinking it odd that no one else was out on the road. We wandered all around the large lake searching for our friends. That area has a lot of hills and curves so there we were driving up and down and around and around hills, and all the while my horn was honking on each curve. The horn would honk as we wound our way up the hill and then honk all the way back down. We did this over and over, and we never found our friends because, of course, they had taken cover. But someone did call the police on us for "disturbing the peace" with all of the honking going on. When the policeman pulled us over, he asked us to explain why we were driving around honking. I tried to demonstrate that my horn automatically honked when the steering wheel turned. And that is when I discovered it doesn't work while the truck is in park. The policeman thought we were crazy, and he was worried about our safety because of the storms, so he required that we drive to the jail and wait out the storm there. That was my first, and only, time in a jail.

After high school, I attended Oklahoma State University and then was hired as the marketing director for the company that created both Guitar Hero and Barney. I was cool and geeky all at the same time. Things took a turn when my dad became very ill with leukemia. At that same time, the company I worked for suddenly went bankrupt, and I found myself unemployed. My husband and I decided to move back to Enid, not intending to stay permanently, but wanting to be there for my dad during his illness. Bennie Mullins hired me to

work at Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). Bennie was a rescuer. She rescued animals of all species. She rescued horses, she rescued pigs, and she rescued deer, donkeys, squirrels, and birds of every kind. And she rescued people too. She passed away a few years ago, and we asked ourselves how we could honor her and continue her work at the same time. At Bennie's Barn we rescue horses from neglect or abuse or even from the slaughterhouse. Then the horses help people. Sometimes the people have a different physical ability than others and sometimes they have a different mental ability. We don't call it a disability, but a different ability. It is not really important why a person is out here at our horse therapy ranch. What is important is that person and that horse. Their story matters little from before. What matters is from today moving forward, and that's super awesome.

One of my favorite horses is Shiloh. He arrived at Bennie's Barn from the slaughterhouse and has put on 300 pounds so far. He stayed at the kill shelter for about 10 years because he never gained enough weight to be sent for slaughter. His hooves were 18 inches long and he was extremely thin, so we know he had been neglected for a long time. When he arrived to us, I just couldn't believe the condition he was in. I sat down in a round pen that he was in, and I swore to him and I promised him that he would have a good life from now on. And he lay down and put his head in my lap. That has never happened to me before, and that is why he is very special to me.

I have learned that kindness is what matters. It all comes down to being kind, whether it's how we treat a kid, or an animal or a senior citizen, or anyone. It's in kindness that we find more of a blessing and a reward within ourselves. Being kind, even when it is difficult, is so very important. Also, I've learned that we choose our thoughts, and thoughts become things. When we choose to find what's good in the world, there is so much. It is so important to always look for what is good. We must look for what is good and positive. And always be kind. That is what matters. People remember when we are kind.

**SAMMY ROMERO, 11, reads a heart-warming story from CHRISTY TARRANT BAKER, 34**

**Recorded by e-mail**

**Graduate of Kremlin-Hillsdale**

**(Christy sent this story to Sammy after he interviewed her at Bennie's Barn)**

You ask me what I remember most about high school. At the time, I was making memories and not ever realizing how it would later shape my life. My high school days consisted of both happiness and misery. Happiness in that I had wonderful friends, I played sports, I worked part time, I had my own vehicle, I made good grades, and I had a lot of fun and success in high school. I was also a daughter of a man who was diagnosed with Leukemia when I was only 17. It was told to me in Mrs. Watkin's 2<sup>nd</sup> hour Yearbook class. I remember the day like it was yesterday. Mrs. Simmons opened the door and called to me, "Your Dad has anywhere between 4 hours and 2 days to live; you need to drive to Baylor and see him." I dropped my books, I couldn't think straight, I couldn't walk straight, I couldn't even stand—it turned out. It was with the help of Mrs. Watkins, Mrs. Chesser, Mrs. Toelle, and Kelli Youngblood (Schovanec) that my books were gathered up, my locker cleaned out, my truck packed up, and in an instant I was barreling down 1-35 on my four hour trek to Dallas, TX, to say goodbye to my father.

Along the way, I picked up a hitchhiker for company, not realizing, in hindsight, how horribly that could have turned out. Nevertheless, there I finally stood, right before a gigantic hospital with helicopters hovering overhead. All I could think was that at least those patients in those choppers had a fighting chance of survival. Not my Dad. He would never see my high school graduation, see my college years, play catch with me anymore, walk me down the aisle, or become Grandpa. Misery. That's all I could feel. What happened? Life had been so normal and typical, and now here I was standing, having to make a decision to keep my Dad on life support or let him go! My brother Mike Tarrant and I made the impossible decision. We met with the doctors, and it was their opinion, too, that it was best to remove life support. Decision was made. We were set to let my father receive his heavenly wings at nine o'clock the next morning. That night, Mike and I sat on the balcony of the apartment that my Dad had rented across from Baylor Hospital. We stared into the sky, reminisced, laughed, cried, shouted, said nothing at all; we just waited for the final goodbye with only hours to spare. We cried more, we laughed more, we thanked God for him, we yelled at God for taking him; lots of things flash through your mind and your heart when you are tasked with a decision like this. No re-do's on this! -- or so we thought!

Nine a.m. came with a fire storm of emotions. There we stood, right in front of him. He was weak and frail, and his lips and fingernails were black from the chemo and the thousand other meds he was on. He looked like the shell of the man we once knew as "Dad" since the last six months he had been in a coma. Tubes and needles and breathing machines and blankets and the horrid smell of the hospital, pee cups, slide-away desks with trays of cafeteria food and Styrofoam cups with straws.... You just take inventory of the room so as not to stare too hard because, in case that actually worked, you could scan the room again and find that if you prayed enough, we would witness our "Dad" again. Not so. It was at that time Mike and I grabbed his hands, kissed him goodbye, and personnel led us from the room. The doctors pulled the plug.

We wept and lost control of ourselves as we left the hospital. We trudged back to the apartment to gather our things and head back to Kremlin. Only, when we arrived at the

apartment, the phone rang. The Doctor spoke to me, "Well, I'm not terribly certain how to tell you this, but your Dad woke up!"

What!? "Like he woke up and is not dead!?" was my actual question.

The Doctor simply replied, "Yes."

"MMMMIIKKKKKEEEEE!!!!!! You are never EVER going to guess what has happened. Dad is awake!!!"

"Did they pull the right plug? What do they mean, 'He is awake'? He has been in a coma for the past six months; the doctors confirmed he would never wake again, but on the very minuet chance that if he did, he would never walk again or talk, or function outside of being a vegetable."

"WHO Cares!! Right now all we know is that he is awake!" As we sprinted back over to the hospital, we were now hurrying as official "Attempted Murderers," in our opinion! We saw the whites of his eyes for the first time in what seemed to be forever, and we asked him ever so cautiously, "Dad, were you aware Mike and I just tried to kill you!?" He gently squeezed my hand and gave us that old Tarrant grin. He remained a patient of that hospital for another three long years, but he made it! He grew strong enough to be "Dad" again and he fought his battle for another eight years.

I truly know in my heart that in my 17 year old prayer, in my concern that he would never see these things that worried me as a 17 year old, he kept pushing on to make sure I would always be ok. He held on until he knew that I was married, that I had graduated college, and that I had become professionally sound; and when he left us forever, it was in a much less dramatic fashion than the circus at the hospital.

He didn't get to watch my high school graduation, but he was there when I graduated college. He was able to know my now husband Chip Baker, who he loved with all his heart! He wasn't able to make it to my wedding or be there for the arrival of my son, but my brother blessed him with two precious boys who call him Grandpa. Life is a really funny thing. In the middle of so much worry and hurt, I look back and find the good things. John Tarrant was a fine man, an awesome father, ridiculously funny, a bit witty, and absolutely the biggest part of my life. When I was growing up, and he would tell me "no," I would be so angry and for as long as I could recall, he would say, "Wait until you're a parent; then you'll understand." Shaking my head, rolling my eyes, thrusting myself down the hallway, I'd scream, "You just don't understand! You're soooo unfair!!" Well, Funny Man, turns out I have an exact replica of myself in my four year old son, Cash Baker.

I feel like Dad is still around, mostly in times of Cash's tantrums or not listening, or being obviously defiant. It's those times that I also realize Dad was always there for my life's milestones... he was just observing from a different place. Currently, he's giggling in Heaven while he listens to me talking to Cash, "No, you cannot shoot a real gun without your Dad" and watching Cash thrust his body away from me saying, "You're so unfair" to which I reply, "Wait until you're a parent!" Life! what a tragically, awesome, amazing, funny, crazy, wild, wouldn't-change-a-thing-about-it kind of ride! In all of life's journeys and the path set before us, it is a great one. Blessed are we!

**ROYCE LLOYD, 34, interviewed by DAKOTA WILSON, 15,  
Recorded in Hillsdale, Oklahoma  
Class of 2000 Kremlin-Hillsdale**

In the year 2000, I was a senior. I have always loved playing sports, but I didn't participate in all the sports offered when I was in school. During my time in school, Kremlin always had a track team, but it never seemed to get as many participants as the other sports. My senior year, the students participating in track decided they wanted to make the team more competitive. This ended up being a very exciting turn of events for my last year of high school.

I did not actually want to be a part of a track team, at first. However, after some convincing from my friends, I decided to join. It was my senior year and I figured I didn't have much to lose. I was a bit nervous at first, mainly because I hadn't participated in track recently. More people than usual ended up going out for track that year. Once I was committed to the team, I had to decide what event I was going to participate in. The coaches decided that I should try high jump because I was tall. Once my event had been finalized, I now had a second issue. There was nowhere for me to practice my high jumping. The school had an old high jump mat in the bus barn that I could use, but the floor of the barn was too slippery for me to practice very effectively in there. A third difficulty I had was finding the time to practice. I usually couldn't practice with everyone else because I was also part of the baseball team and had baseball practice after school. I did try to practice whenever I could, however.

Even though I didn't have time to practice that much, I actually ended up doing pretty well at the track meets. I was nervous at first, but it got exciting after being at a few meets and facing some competition. I ended up winning 1<sup>st</sup> place in a regional track competition that May. Not long after my victory in the regional competitions, I traveled to participate at the state track meet. At state, I won 4<sup>th</sup> place in the high jump event and for a first timer, I would say that I did pretty well.

**KAYA HACKWORTH, 13, interviews STEVE STUBBLEFIELD, 64**

**Recorded in Kremlin**

**Graduated from Kremlin-Hillsdale**

I live out in the country, and I love horses. I bought my first horse when I was a junior at Kremlin-Hillsdale. He was a Thoroughbred racing horse named Doc Fast. I'd enter him in the Bush Track Races, which was a circuit that included Woodward, Alva, and several towns in Kansas. Once we won the Feature Race in Anthony Kansas, and I won \$185. That was a lot of money for me. The problem was that it cost a lot of money to keep the horse, make the trips, and pay the entry fees. I doubt if I ever made any real money, but it sure was fun.

I recall a couple of my friends and me slipping out of class to eat fresh homemade cinnamon rolls. We sneaked into the cafeteria to steal them. Everything was going as planned until Jack Gordon, the superintendent, walked in. We had heard him unlocking the door so we jumped in the freezer and sealed ourselves in. We hopped in hoping he would leave, but he didn't. He knew good and well that we were in there, and he just piddled around waiting to see how long we would last before coming out. We waited forty five minutes freezing our butts off! Finally, he left. Miserable and cold, we climbed out. Of course, we had to visit him to pick up a tardy slip, and that's when he gave us detention. I don't think he ever asked where we had been or even mentioned that he had been in the cafeteria with us, but we knew that he knew.

Football game days were the best! I remember on Friday nights my dad would bring fireworks to home games. Every time we would score a touchdown, he would shoot one off. Once, one misfired and flew about 10 feet over the heads of our bench and players and landed right in the middle of the field. That scared him, and I think he was asked to not bring them again. For whatever reason, that was the end of the fireworks forever.

TARA PORTER YARBROUGH, 39, is interviewed by ABBY VANDIVER, 11  
Recorded in Kremlin, Ok on February 23, 2016  
Graduate of Kremlin-Hillsdale

We moved to Kremlin when I was in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, and I truly thought my life and ended FOREVER! We drove from Edmond to Kremlin....BIG to small! However, it was the best thing my parents could have ever done for us!

One of the best things about a small school is being able to participate in everything I wanted to. One of my favorite activities was filming the football games! I traveled to all the games on the bus with the guys. There were a few places that I would have to climb the light towers at the fields and sit on some little perch to film. Some of those towers were pretty dang tall, and often it was windy and cold up there. This was no job for a sissy!

We were always playing jokes on each other. One time during my junior year, a few of the guys stole the keys to my Mustang and moved it to the other side of the concession stand! I couldn't see it or find it, and it took me a few minutes to figure out that I hadn't misplaced it, nor had it been stolen.

One of the best things about winning Friday night games was when Monday rolled around, Debbie Wiggins baked us a "Victory Cake." It was always a red velvet cake, and this had been a tradition long before our group ever arrived at KHS.

I loved being on the academic bowl team with Mr. Gossen as coach! I definitely wasn't the genius on the team, but I added the female touch. One of my favorite teachers was Mr. Campbell. He had such a love for everything science. I remember in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, he came and pulled me out of English to let me watch the seniors dissect a shark. It was so amazing! I also



loved Mr. McClain [AKA “Big Top Babe” as some people would call him]. He was very passionate about history and made sure I understood it.

Life in a small town was great! School in a small town was even better! I graduated with the class of 1995, and I wouldn't have changed a thing! I'm so glad that I met people I did and was able to have great experiences. Small town life suited me, and the memories made at our little school are ones that I will treasure forever.

**MARISSA ROBERTS, 14, hears stories about growing up from NANCY HAYES, 75**  
**Recorded by interview and mail**  
**Graduated from Hillsdale High School in 1959**

Small town life in rural Oklahoma was my experience in the early '40s. In fact, I was born June 8, and my father was harvesting when my mother went into labor. Life was much different then than it is today. Combines were pulled by tractors. We had no cabs with air conditioners on them. Harvest seemed to last forever! We usually made a trip to Enid weekly for supplies. It was a special treat when we would drive to the picture show at Pond Creek. I first saw and loved *Black Beauty* there. My sister Lois and I always had a dog for a pet, and a horse and bicycles to ride so we found plenty to keep us occupied.

As a six year old, I climbed on the school bus and headed down a dusty road to Hillsdale. I was very nervous about that first day of school. First and second graders were welcomed by Mrs. Brown, and she was a very special teacher. All my fears went away and I loved school. I learned to read from the *Dick and Jane and Sally* series.

Grade school was fun, and I remember making May baskets to deliver in Hillsdale. We would also wind the Maypole every year. In the spring, we joined other small schools for a county track meet. Kremlin and Carrier were our biggest rivals. In September we always dismissed school for the Cherokee Strip Celebration. Indians set up tepees on the Court House lawn in Enid, and there was Indian dancing. Sidewalks were crowded for the big parade. Our fifth grade class had permission to leave school and watch the World Series game on a little 13 inch screen TV at a classmate's home. He was one of the first to have a television in our area.

High school years always began with a freshman initiation. Seniors had their hands full with our class! We had to wear gunny sacks and onion necklaces. Lot of tears and stinky classrooms were around on that day, and the poor teachers had to endure all that commotion, but they had a good time too. It all ended with a party that evening, and after many challenges, we were finally officially high schoolers!

Poodle skirts were popular as well as starched can-cans, saddle oxfords, and penny loafers. Summertime and skating at the Hillsdale gym on Saturday evenings was a big thing as kids from other towns joined in the fun—not always skating!

In 1958 our junior and senior classes traveled by train to Washington D.C. It was an eight day trip, leaving from OK City. Highlights of those days were visiting Graceland, Elvis Presley's home. We were hoping to see him there, but we didn't. That evening we boarded the Student Educational Tour Train via Southern Railways. Arriving in D.C. we toured the city for three days as well as Annapolis and Mount Vernon. Page Belcher, our Representative, joined us at the Capitol. At the National Gallery of Arts we were greeted by the curator of the museum, Lloyd Hayes, who had graduated from Hillsdale in 1935. Evening of the sixth day, we boarded the train and headed back to Oklahoma. You can see, Marissa, how important that trip was to me. I remember a lot of detail from long ago.

After graduation, where did I end up? Back on a farm in the Hillsdale community. I married a '58 graduate, Dale Hayes, and we have four children. All of them graduated from KHS. Years have changed farm life and rural Oklahoma, and it is still a wonderful place to raise a family.

**LELAND STRECK, 52, was interviewed by his daughter, CARISSA STRECK, 16. Recorded in their living room in Hillsdale, Oklahoma.**

**Graduate of Kremlin-Hillsdale High School in 1981.**

I was born in Kingfisher, Oklahoma on September 27, 1963. When I was three, my family moved to Hillsdale where we reside to this day. I am a 1981 graduate of Kremlin-Hillsdale High. After graduation, I attended Northwestern Oklahoma State University where I received a Bachelor's Degree in Industrial Education. After a few years working in construction, I then attended Dallas Theological Seminary, where I earned a Master's of Arts in Christian Education.

My class was the first of the consolidated Kremlin-Hillsdale Public Schools (starting Kindergarten in the 1968-1969 school year). While in my senior year, the Hillsdale Middle School was closed permanently and at that point all the students began attending classes at Kremlin. That was a disappointment because I thought that having a separate middle school gave the students an autonomy that was lost when everyone was on the same campus.

As a small child and even today, I enjoy watching and playing baseball. Part of this is because my first little league baseball coach, Bob Voth, was such an influence on me (the same Bob "Rookie" Voth the present day baseball field in Kremlin is named in honor of).

When I decided to play on Coach Voth's team, it was made apparent that transportation to and from practices was a problem. My parents simply were not able to take me to and from practices and games. This would prevent me from playing, and it was a huge disappointment.

That's when Bob Voth stepped up. In an effort to allow me to play on the team, he offered to drive from his home south of Kremlin to Hillsdale and pick me up for practices and games, which was an incredible offer. As big as that was, he went even further. Knowing that I would need a ride home, he told them that he would be willing to return me home after those events. And that's what he did for practically every practice and game I ever took part in...for the entire five or six years I played on Coach Voth's teams.

The highlight of those teams, which is the subject of my story, came in 1972 when we qualified for the Little League Oklahoma state tournament. After winning most of our games, some of which came against the "bigger" schools in the area, we were able to win the district championship held at the old Pep Park in Enid (which was located near where the present day soccer complex is). After winning that tournament the players on the team received an individual trophy which was, for many, our first trophy of our young lives. That actual trophy still stands on display on a special shelf in the guest room of our house and is one of my prized possessions.

For the state tournament, the team traveled to Sand Springs, Oklahoma. I laugh today at the things about that trip that I still remember and those I have forgotten. I vividly remember and cherish the closeness of the team and the life-long friendships that were a result of that weekend.

Another important event was that while we were there, our accommodations were in a “real live” hotel in downtown Tulsa. This was special to many of the players because we had never been in a high-rise hotel before. With the fanciness of it all, we felt like major league baseball players even though several of us had our weekend clothes in paper grocery bags and not in suitcases.

One other item that I remember about that weekend took place during one of the breaks between games. Because the complex was located along the Arkansas River, some of us walked down to the river and began playing along the banks and in the shallow water along its edge.

While there, we came upon a freshly deceased alligator gar fish that was almost three feet long. None of us had ever seen anything like it and we thought we had found something extremely rare (and worth getting an adult to see). We were highly excited and eager to see what the dad chosen to help us would tell us about this find (and we expected him to be as excited about our scientific discovery as we were).

When the parent arrived and sorted through the various theories of what we had found, I recall the dad simply and plainly stating, “That’s a gar. They’re everywhere around here. Get back up to the diamond.” My friends and I looked at each other with a mutually disappointed glance and began our trek back to the fields to prepare for our next game.

Now that years have passed I chuckle because in all the things I can remember about that trip the one thing I can’t recall is how we even did in the tournament (though I know we didn’t win it). I can remember some of the games we played and who beat us out, but most of the details have “faded into the recesses of my mind.”

Playing baseball on that team and later for Kremlin-Hillsdale High and Northwestern were some of my proudest and most memorable moments in my earlier years.

My baseball playing days are over but I can still play some softball, and I enjoy any of the times that I can be on a diamond... either playing the game or watching it from the stands.

**JANIS STUBBLEFIELD JORDAHL, 58, shares her acting experiences with her cousin  
MICHELYN STEVENS, 14**

**Recorded by e-mail from Yukon  
Graduated from KHS**

One of my favorite memories of school was being involved with speech and drama. Our teacher Peggy Harris was amazing and totally trusted her students to deliver on the assignment that was given. Shea Myers and I were given a skit to perform for competition. The cutting was from the play *Plaza Suite* by Neil Simon. In this skit Shea and I were husband and wife. It took a little getting used to, but Shea and I delivered! Yes, we did! The plot involved our daughter, Mimsey getting married, and we as parents had spent a lot of money on this wedding! On her special day, Mimsey had locked herself in the bathroom and refused to come out! One crazy drama after another happened to both of the parents during the whole ordeal as they tried every way from pleading to threatening her to come out. Shea was perfect for his part; he played the role right on, and I was so excited to be a part of this assignment with him. The thing about acting is that if your partner is not shy and really puts his ego out there on the line, then it is easy for a partner like me to act too. It was hard for me not to laugh at him because he was so funny, but I held my character because I knew he was counting on me. Our big day took place at Deer Creek of Edmond. I couldn't tell you how well we scored, but it didn't really matter because we were having so much fun with the piece. I would give anything to have a recording of that skit! I hope I didn't let him down. A really neat thing that just happened on my birthday last week was that Shea, who I haven't seen maybe since graduation, found me on Facebook and reminded me of that acting experience. I was happy that he remembered it too, and I laughed again out loud as I thought about it. Such Fun!

Kremlin-Hillsdale had a great Speech/Drama department. I had the chance to perform in a community play called the *The Remarkable Incident at Carson's Corner*. A bunch of people from the community and a lot of students were in involved in that project. The entire performance brought students and members of the community together, much like this writing project is doing. I hope you are having fun with this one.

Thanks to Shea Myers for being my on-stage husband; it was an unforgettable experience! Thanks to Peggy Harris for believing in us!

**SHELLI MYERS-MINNICK, 46, tells about her school years at Kremlin-Hillsdale to  
BAILEY HOELTZEL, 13.**

**Recorded in the living room of Shelli's home in Kremlin, Oklahoma  
Graduated from KHS**

I am Shelli Myers-Minnick, the daughter of Alvin and Margaret Myers. I'm the oldest of three children. My siblings are Heather Myers Carson and Jason Myers. They also attended and graduated from Kremlin-Hillsdale. I am married to Tony Minnick. I attended Kremlin-Hillsdale from August 1976 until I graduated in May of 1987. That year Kremlin-Hillsdale graduated twenty-one seniors. Mine and Tony's children Todd, Shelby and Kendra attended school at Kremlin-Hillsdale also.

I came to Kremlin-Hillsdale in the fall of 1976 when I was in the second grade. Mrs. Judy Vore was my teacher. When I started school here, there was only one school building here at Kremlin-Hillsdale. Kindergarten through fourth grade and ninth through twelfth grade attended classes in Kremlin; while fifth through eighth grade attend classes in Hillsdale. I could not wait until the fifth grade so I could ride the bus to Hillsdale. We would leave home on the bus, get to Kremlin and climb on another bus and head to Hillsdale. The ride wasn't bad as long as none of us forgot their music boxes. We were able to listen to music on the way to school at Hillsdale.

The cafeteria at Hillsdale was in the basement. The music room was across the street, and the gymnasium was next door. One of my memories is that in the spring, the gym would be given to another school to use as its "hotel" during the Tri-State Music Festival. There were cot mattresses laid out everywhere for others to spend the night before the big parade on Saturday.

Christmas break during my sixth grade year in 1980 was a busy one. I remember that we threw our desks out the back door, packed up all the books, and moved to Kremlin. We moved into the "New" school. This building was for kindergarten through sixth grade. It is now what



we call the elementary school. The other school building became the middle school and high school combined. This school building would house seventh grade through twelfth grade. Sometime later the new gymnasium was built on our football field, and the new larger football field with track was built to the east of the old one.

The next year in my seventh grade year, we lost our teacher due to an unforeseen accident. We had a substitute for the rest of the year. I remember that my class was a little rowdy at times, and by the end of the year, we had been told that we were the worst class ever.

One of my high school memories was when I was in yearbook. I remember working in the dark room developing pictures from school events that Mrs. Watkins had photographed. Another memory I have is of Drama class that was taught by Mr. Martin. Productions on stage were like miniature shows on Broadway, Kremlin-Hillsdale style. We performed Macbeth and the show was amazing.

I am looking forward to seeing what this new high school /middle school will look like. I have witnessed the building of a new elementary building, new gym, and football field. I hope that future generations are able to make some fun memories likes I did here at Kremlin-Hillsdale.

**KENNETTE RONCK CRAIG, 41, interviewed by her Goddaughter MARY KEITHLY, 13  
Recorded in Kennette's kitchen in Piedmont, Oklahoma  
Graduate of KHS**

I have had experiences in my life that were very difficult to face. But now that I have survived them, I can see God's hands there holding me, and I feel like things happened just as they were meant to be.

One example was when I was 25 years old and pregnant with my second child. It was June, and I was only 26 weeks along, but I started having serious contractions. Even though I was on a medication called Magnesium Sulfate, the doctors could not make my contractions stop. Because the medication wasn't working, the doctors thought our baby would be born the next day. At that time in the state of Oklahoma, there had not been a male survive who was born at or before 26 weeks. Consequently, we knew the odds were not in our favor for our son to live.

At that time, I was a practicing Catholic so my husband Bryant and I called the priest. He came to the hospital, and he took my hand and my husband's hand. I remember that all of our hands were on my belly. I was crying, and Bryant was crying, and we just really wanted a blessing for the baby. The priest asked Bryant what name we were giving to the child. Bryant told him that we were planning to use the name William, but we hadn't decided if that would be a first or middle name. And the priest said, "Then this is God's Will, and God's Will he shall be called." And so that is how he got his name.

Later that night I coded and quit breathing. I don't have a lot of memories, but I remember lights and a lot of people being around my bed. The next morning, my doctor came in and told me how bad it had been. Both baby Will and I had coded because of the high doses of Magnesium Sulfate so he reduced it. The doctor said that he had no explanation, but after we coded and he decreased the medicine, the contractions slowed down from 4 minutes apart to 14 minutes apart. I did return home from the hospital after that.

The rest of the summer, I was back in and out of the hospital a few more times, and Will was finally born on September 1st. He is very healthy now.

In high school, I was diagnosed with hypoglycemia, low blood sugar. I remember passing out one time during basketball practice. But the second time I passed out coincided with the first time I met my future in-laws. I had gone home with my boyfriend to meet his parents and stay the night. I woke up the next morning and climbed into the shower. I passed out, and the next thing I remember is waking up with my boyfriend and his mom and his dad hovering over me as I was lying naked wrapped in a shower curtain. And Bryant said to his parents, "Oh, yeah. I forgot to tell you. She is hypoglycemic and has to eat first thing in the morning." Every time after that when I stayed at their house, there was always a full breakfast on a tray waiting for me outside my bedroom door when I woke up!

I earned a degree in Nutrition Sciences at Oklahoma State and became a dietitian. A large part of my career involved my counseling diabetic patients and helping them learn to manage their diet. One day when I was 36 years old, I was meeting a dietitian friend of mine for

lunch. I felt really rotten that day, and because of how I felt, what I'd eaten that morning, and my activity level that day, my friend was suspicious that maybe my blood sugar was high, not low. She asked me to buy a blood sugar monitor and just test it an hour after I ate. So, I did go buy a monitor, and later that night when we drove to pick up my son from basketball camp, I checked it right there in the parking lot. My blood sugar was 286. I thought "Oh, my gosh!" and then I thought, "There must be something wrong with this monitor." So I tested again. And it was 282. Normal would be 140 after a heavy meal. I was still in shock so I called my dad, who is a physician, and I told him my predicament. He was the first one to say, "You have diabetes." And he told me if my blood sugar didn't go down, I needed to drive to the hospital. Two hours later, my blood sugar was still over 200 so I knew that was technically the diagnosis. But I still couldn't believe it; I bought another monitor. The results were the same. I made an appointment with a great doctor named Laurie Orme, whom I used to work with, and I told her the situation. She said, "Honey, I'm sorry to be the one to tell you this, but you have diabetes." I proceeded to tell her all the reasons why that just could not be: I ate healthy, I have always been very thin, I am the healthiest one in my family, no one in my family has diabetes, and I exercise regularly. After my ranting, she said, "Honey, I'm going to write it here on your chart. 'Patient having trouble accepting diagnosis.'" After that, I was very angry at my circumstances. That week I started eating very unhealthy stuff, and I fluctuated between denial and anger all week. I had to stop working with patients for a time because it just wasn't good for me to see patients with the same disease as mine because I was so angry.

After about a year and a lot of prayer plus a lifestyle change, things turned for the better. I did try a medication that would help me not absorb carbohydrates, but because of the side effects, it wasn't very pleasant. I tried to recall everything I had learned in school and everything I had been teaching my patients for years about carb counting and exercise, and I thought, "What the heck! I might as well try it!" I followed my own advice, and it is working great.

I started seeing patients again, and I realized then that this was all meant to be. I was sitting across the table from people who had the same disease as I did, and as soon as I told them that I had diabetes too, I could just see them relax, and I would see a whole new response from them. I am way more successful as a dietitian now because my knowledge is deeper. Now I see patients on Wednesdays at a free clinic through our church. We cry together. We laugh together. We have friendly competitions to see whose A1C counts are lower. We exercise together, and we inspire each other. I really feel like my having this disease was part of a bigger plan for me that I could never have understood until I was forced to accept it.

**SARA MENDENHALL GORMAN, 38, tells about meeting a bear to her son GARRETT GORMAN, 12**

**Recorded in Enid, Oklahoma  
Graduated from KHS**

We take our fifth wheel camper every year during the summer and spend time in Red River, New Mexico. We love breathing the cool mountain air and spending time in nature. We have an old Toyota Land Cruiser that we pull out and drive on trails in the mountains. We have seen deer and eagle and lots of other critters while there.

There is on trip in particular that I remember well. My parents Denny and Martha Mendenhall, Mike and Pam Henry, and our family had spent the week there. It was the night before we were to head home, and we had enjoyed a nice dinner of steak and fried potatoes. The camper, of course, still smelled of fried taters and onions. I put you and your sister Kinsey to bed for the night. You shared the pull out couch-bed, which was located right as you walked in the door of the camper. The rest of us were all sitting around the campfire for one last evening of discussion. It was a fairly warm night, and because of the smell of the food in the camper, I left the door open and only closed the screen door.

Around 10 o'clock I decided to call it a night since we would be leaving early the next morning for the long drive home. I gathered up my lawn chair and wished a good night to the others. As I rounded the front of the camper, I heard clawing sounds. I looked up and a bear was right outside our camper door! It jumped in a tree when it saw me. It scared me so badly, and I think I shocked it just as much! I had forgotten that we aren't supposed to make any sudden movements. I still had my big reclining lawn chair, and I turned to run back to the others yelling and screaming, "There's a bear! There's a Bear! There's a Bear!"

Your dad Matt and my dad ran my way to see if they could see the bear while Pam rushed up the steps to her camper to avoid it altogether. We were quite comical! The bear wound up looping around the back of the camper, along the creek, and across a walking bridge to escape. Luckily, no harm was done.

I can't help but think about what might have happened if I wouldn't have left the group when I did and walked around to meet the creature at the front door. Would it have tried to climb through the screen to find the fried taters only to run into my snoozing kiddos? Of course, I couldn't sleep much at all for the rest of the night at that point due to all the excitement. Even to this day, this is a story we continue to talk and laugh about while we are sitting around the campfires.

**JIM HERMANSKI, 67, tells his first grandchild AUNDREA BRATCHER, 14, about growing up**

**Recorded at home**

**Graduated from Kremlin High School**

Jake Thesman drove the school bus. The country roads were less than desirable when it rained. It was my job to walk to a tractor and pull it out if we were stuck, so every day when I climbed on the bus, I would give Jake the "OK" to get stuck. This would make Jake so mad. One day, we were bogged down so much that the bus slid deep into the ditch. The doors were against the ditch bank, but this wasn't the only thing keeping the children from exiting the front doors. The driver's seat wasn't bolted down and was sitting against the door. Everyone had to jump out the back door. Richard Pralle had worn dress shoes, and when he jumped out, his feet sunk six inches into the mud. He pulled out his feet, and dug down to find his shoes. The insides were fairly clean so Richard turned his muddy socks inside-out and put his shoes back on.

Rides home were never boring. Darrell Pralle got into trouble and was kicked off the bus at Wanda Jenkins' house; he had to walk home. There were many stops before they came to the Pralle's house. To Jake's surprise, Darrell was already sitting on the front porch rocking in the chair. Jake couldn't believe that Darrell had beaten the bus home. The truth was that Mom had seen Darrell walking so she picked him up and took him home. The bus did run slow, and once I made a comment, "I can walk home faster than this bus is moving." Jake stopped and let me off. It was about at Jenkins' house again so I ran cross country for two miles. The bus had to make about four more stops from where I was dropped off, and I almost beat it home. The next day, the kids all told me that the bus had been flying through the stops after it had dropped me off. I had worn new boots, and the two mile sprint had left some big blisters on my feet.

In 8<sup>th</sup> grade, Bobby Thesman and I were the main basketball players. I was tall, but Bobby could play. He was voted most valuable player, and I was angry because I thought I should have the honor because I was older. Like it really mattered! The only game we won was against Hayward. No one on their team even showed up for the game; the school was even locked. We won by forfeit. After that year, I didn't go out for sports anymore. There were only two of us to graduate from 8<sup>th</sup> grade. I was salutatorian.

High school brought in 20 more students from North Enid. I enjoyed fun with my buddies. We were not out to harm anyone or anything. After games, my brother Roy, Billy Hole, Howard Gault and I would drive to the Co-op elevator to buy a 10 cent Coke. Once we came up with the idea to shoot M80 firecrackers up between the elevators with a sling shot. We were able to launch them half way up the elevators before they would explode. This made a noise that echoed through the whole town. We also were accused of shooting the water tower with a high powered rifle. We were innocent.

However, on one adventure, Eddie George, Tim Briggs and I went skunk hunting. Someone told us that if we could get a skunk's front feet off the ground, it could not spray. I'm not sure why we decided to hunt skunk in the middle of the day, or how we were even able to

find one. Eddie walked up and grabbed the skunk by the tail, and the skunk waited till Eddie got his back end turned to his face and then let him have it. The skunk escaped and Eddie let Tim and me have it. He rubbed us down with the spray. Mom wouldn't allow us in the house when we returned home.

I took an interest in mechanics at an early age and really enjoyed shop class. I worked with Dad on the farm. Roy's 1959 Ford had transmission problems so he hired John Rickabaugh to put a standard transmission in. No one in our family smoked so Roy didn't think anything about putting his M80 firecrackers in the ash tray. I enjoyed helping John work on the Ford. He was a cigar smoker, and he was lying on the floor board working on the transmission. He reached over his head and placed the cigar in the ash tray. When the M80 went off, John nearly killed himself getting out of the Ford. It really didn't do much to the dash since it was made of heavy metal. The ash tray took a little damage, but it certainly took John by surprise.

My senior year I had only three classes so I spent the rest of the day in shop class. Grady Johnson and I built the football bleachers. This was the first year for Kremlin to have a football team. We were not able to finish them before the end of the year, but the frame work was almost complete. There was always something to keep us busy in shop class. Coach Harris drove a 1950 Chevy, and Grady and I wired it with turning signals.

After Kremlin, I was accepted to Oklahoma State Tech in Okmulgee. I studied diesel mechanics, and I graduated on Dean's Honor Roll.

**DOUG RATZLAFF, 40, talks to his neighbor HARRIS KEITHLY, 12**  
**Recorded in Harris' living room near Kremlin, Oklahoma**  
**Graduate of KHS**

Growing up on a farm in rural Oklahoma gave me a lot of opportunities to learn life lessons. One time when I was in high school, we were harvesting wheat about six miles from our house. My job was to drive the tractor with the grain cart. It was the middle of the afternoon, and all of a sudden, a thunder storm blew in, and so were all hurrying around trying to unload all the wheat from the combine and the grain cart into the wheat truck. It was kind of chaotic with everyone rushing around. We all jumped in trucks to leave and someone said something on the two-way radio that I didn't quite understand about "go south." I proceeded to head north, the way we always drove. I did notice in my rearview mirror that everyone else was heading the other way, but I figured they were driving into town to take the wheat to the elevator, and if they didn't want me to travel the way I was heading, they would let me know. With the heavy rains, the road was really slimy and mucky. I was slithering up and down hills and starting to fishtail. Suddenly, I was sliding down a hill right toward a little wooden bridge and just by the grace of God I didn't slip off the side. I managed to keep moving, and I was pretty sure there was a rock road somewhere up ahead, but before I could reach it, I got stuck. Everyone else was at home, so I called my dad on the two-way radio. Dad tried to rescue me and pull me out, but he soon was bogged down too. We ended up having to trudge three miles back to the field to find the tractor. The situation didn't improve; on our way back to our trucks, we ran across two other trapped people, and were able to pull them out. We dragged out our two trucks and finally arrived back home at 11 p.m. Six hours had passed since I first became stuck. My dad's original plan was to take us into town to eat pizza, but instead we'd spent six hours in this muck and mess. Every inch of the pickups were caked full of mud, so my job on Monday was to clean the trucks. My dad was frustrated, but he was never angry. I was so afraid he would be mad, but he wasn't. He didn't need to tell me I had made a mistake; I already knew it. The lesson I learned there was if I'm not sure about something, I should ask. Now that I'm a dad myself, there is another lesson too. I know I don't always need to vent my frustration at my son, Wade, when he's made a mistake. He knows when he has messed up, just like I did the day I caused chaos.



Another time, when I was in 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> grade we bought some calves to feed. There were four of them, and my chore was to feed them every day so I spent some time learning to know them. One day, I concocted the great idea that I should try to ride one. My thought was that as the calf was eating I would just crawl from the fence onto his back and sit there while he ate. Well, I climbed up the fence and everything went fine when my first leg went over his back. But when the second leg swung around, the calf's instinct kicked in and he reared back. I hadn't figured a solution to that until it was too late, and there was nothing for me to hang on to. I catapulted into the air and landed on my back right in the middle of the pen. Luckily, I wasn't hurt too badly. The lesson there was that just because something looks fun doesn't always mean I should try it.

Another time, my sister Cindy and I were home alone because my parents had gone out to eat with Robert Dale and Linda Gray. I went to bed, but my sister crawled in to my room and woke me up because there was a suspicious vehicle just sitting in our driveway. We didn't have any neighbors close by, and we were scared. Our hearts started to pound, and our minds began to race and dream up horrible thoughts, so we sneaked downstairs and decided to call Bob Russell. He was my dad's friend, and he seemed brave enough to handle this, and he lived just a few miles away. Bob rushed to our aid, and I'm sure it only took him a few minutes, but to us it seemed like hours! When he arrived, we all discovered that the intruders were only our parents and their friends, the Grays, sitting in their van chatting! The lesson there was to always have a plan. I don't know how formal of a plan we had, but I do recall always thinking if I ever needed something, I could call Bob. Even though we were scared that night, it felt good to have a strategy.

I learned many valuable lessons growing up on a farm. Some were gained through painful experiences, and some came with laughter, but I am grateful for all of them. I enjoyed growing up on a farm, and these experiences made me the man I am today.

**ELIZABETH HILL, 57, interviewed by her niece GABRIELLE MORRIS, 18**  
**Recorded in Enid, Oklahoma**  
**Graduate of Kremlin School 1976**

I was working at St. Mary's Hospital in 1985 as a nurse's aide. At this time nursing aides were earning about ten dollars an hour, which wasn't a whole lot of money back then. One day we were notified that those of us who had been working there less than five years would have to be let go. I had started in June of 1980, and it was about two weeks from the time I was let off.

I had been really jealous of the girls that were enrolled into nursing school because they were in nursing school and I wasn't. I had looked into enrolling into Philips University, which cost \$330 an hour, and Tonkawa offered the same education at the cost of \$13.50 an hour. I realized I could take a whole semester at Tonkawa for less. What I did was I took my pre-requisites in the fall of 1985. I took the test to qualify for nursing school. I didn't think I was so smart to ace the math test, but I did.

My kids were three, four, and five at the time that I started attending nursing school. Grandpa Steele, your great grandpa, had watched them some, and Ladonna up at Nanny's Nursery helped watch the kids a lot. She let me pay her every semester. Also the guy we were paying rent to allowed us to pay as we went.

I graduated from nursing school on May 14, 1988. By then my kids were five, six, and seven. One of my fondest memories as I was going through nursing school was that my kids would sit at the table and study with me. Jerry's mom would walk the kids back and forth between school and home.

After I had finished nursing school, I worked at Enid Memorial Hospital for four years. Around this time Grandpa, my dad, started getting sick, and I took off several times to help him. That's when my boss told me that I basically had to choose between my dad and my job.

I figured I could find another job, but I wouldn't be able to be there when my dad was so sick. So I ended up quitting and staying home for a couple of months with the kids. Then I saw one of Jerry's older nephews while I was out paying bills, and he told me to go out to Enid state school because that's what it was called at the time.

I took his advice, went through orientation, and I thought if I could make it through a year, I would be okay. That was 25 years ago before I helped close the facility. When I had first started the job, I didn't like it, but I soon began to love it. On November 17, 2014, I closed the doors at the facility for the last time.

After that I worked as an agency nurse on and off, which required working at different hospitals. I discovered that I had liked Bass Hospital. So when Bass said they didn't want agency nurses, but instead they wanted their own super flex nurses, I took the job. This coming April will be the tenth year since I started working at Bass as a super flex nurse, and I wouldn't have changed a thing through my career.

ANDREW WHEELER interviewed TARA (LLOYD) WADDLE, 29

Recorded by e-mail

Graduate of Kremlin-Hillsdale 2005

Both my husband Tyler and I are huge music fans, and we love seeing bands perform live. When we first became a couple, he had shared a particular musician named David Ford with me. It was (and still is) his favorite musician and artist of all time. However, David Ford is a British musician who lives and primarily performs in the UK. I remember Tyler often saying how he wished he could see David Ford in concert someday, but that would be unlikely.

Then, out of the blue the following year, David Ford's management announced that he would be posting tour dates in the USA! He hadn't toured in the USA in years so this was pretty big news for his American fans. Tyler and I waited and hoped for a concert to be posted for somewhere in Texas, Kansas, or any of the surrounding states that maybe we could go to. Unfortunately, there were no dates posted, and our excitement was pretty short lived. Tyler pointed out to me that the closest tour date was in Atlanta, Georgia.

My motto on life events and adventures is to do what you can to make opportunities happen for you. Since Tyler and I were starting one of the most important life adventures together (marriage), sharing my philosophy on this with him was very important to our relationship. So, I asked him, "Why don't we go to Atlanta?"

Once I convinced Tyler that this was doable, we were both able to get off work and arranged the details last minute to go. We drove overnight to get there, and made it to Atlanta the evening before the day of the show.

The venue for the concert was a little restaurant and bar, and a lot of the seating was at tables around a small stage. We made sure to get there early so we could find a seat (with table) right near the stage. When we arrived at the restaurant, I will never forget Tyler's response to seeing David Ford in person for the first time. David was standing by a merchandise table with his CDs and such, and he was speaking with fans. I told Tyler that we should go talk to him, but at first, Tyler got nervous and didn't want to come over with me. I eventually convinced him to join me, and we got to meet David for the first time. You could tell that David was a genuinely nice guy, and that he truly enjoyed meeting his fans; it really made the whole experience and concert that much better, being able to speak with him. The concert was great, we had a blast, and I even got David to perform Tyler's favorite song!

Tyler was SO happy for the experience, and we started making the joke that any time he is ever upset with me, he'll just remember how I convinced him to go to Atlanta with me to meet his favorite musician. :)

The year of our wedding, Tyler and I were fortunate enough to attend yet another concert of David's in Dallas, Texas. David and his manager actually remembered us from the Atlanta concert because we had told them how far we drove to see and meet David then. Before the concert, Tyler and I had joked about the idea of having David perform at our wedding. Our

reception was going to be in a ballroom, and live music would have been an extra special touch. In the same spirit I took with Atlanta before, I suggested that we just simply ask David and see what happens. So after the concert, when speaking with David, I asked him if he was interested. His answer? A definite yes!

After multiple discussions and arrangements through email with David and his manager, we were actually able to set things up so that David could play at our wedding. Since there were important moments in Tyler's and my relationship that involved David's music, this was truly a very special thing to incorporate into our wedding and reception. Also, our guests really loved his music, and everyone had a great time!

Tyler and I were making a stop in London on our honeymoon in Europe, and with it being our first time out of the country, David, his bandmate, and manager were able to give us some very helpful tips and suggestions for our travels, which was extra nice.

Since the wedding, Tyler and I have been to two more of David's concerts. We have also kept in touch on social media and email with David, his manager, and bandmate. Every time we see him in person, he expresses how glad he is to see us, and he now considers us as some of his American friends. It's crazy to think that someone whom Tyler once admired, a musician from England, has somehow become a friend. None of this would have happened had Tyler and I not taken those opportunities presented to us; because we did, many awesome things happened as a result!!

**PAIGE KEITHLY, 45, and SHARON BIBY RONCK, 65, discuss with JD FELBER, 12,  
how they became speech pathologists**

**Recorded in Paige's home**

**Graduated from Kremlin (1989) and Wakita (1969)**

**(Sharon was a former school board member at KHS)**

**(Paige is a graduate of KHS)**

**Sharon:** When I was in 5<sup>th</sup> grade in the early 1960s, my family lived near Wakita, and we kids attended Gore school. My little brother Dave saw a speech therapist in Enid because our school didn't provide one. We didn't have a lot of money, but we made the long drive as a family to take Dave to Hedges Speech Clinic twice a week. During Dave's therapy sessions, I would sit outside the door during his therapy and listen in so I would know what to do to practice with Dave at home. His first therapist was Mrs. Hayes, and then a man named Dewayne took over. Dewayne noticed that I was interested, and that I would sneak back in the hallway to listen to the therapy session and what Dave was learning. I loved Dewayne, and he was always so nice. Sometimes Dewayne would even talk to me after Dave's session and show me what I could do at home to practice with my brother. Eventually, Dave's speech problem was corrected so we stopped going to the clinic, and I mostly forgot all about it. After my 8<sup>th</sup> grade, we transferred to Wakita School. During high school, I discovered I was good at math. I even attended some math competitions and did very well. By the time I reached my senior year of high school, I had decided to attend college and major in accounting.

One day in the spring, in senior English class, I was called to the office. I walked into the office, and there stood Dewayne. I hadn't seen him or talked to him for years. He told me that he was moving to Arizona to take a new job there, and as he was driving out of Enid, he saw the road sign for Wakita and happened to remember Dave and me. On a whim, he decided to stop by Wakita high school and see if we were still there. It was just a random, last minute choice to see us. He spoke with Dave first. And then he spoke words to me that would change my life forever. He told me that he remembered how interested I had been in Dave's speech therapy, and that he thought I would make a great speech therapist. He asked me to consider taking one, just one, class, in speech pathology. He said if I didn't like it, that was OK. But he asked me to

try one class. I promised him I would. That next fall, I took one class in that field, and that was it! I had chosen my life's work!

**Paige:** I became a speech pathologist because I grew up around Sharon Ronck and because of the influence she had on me. I always admired her and looked up to her as a mentor. About 10 years ago, Sharon told me about the story of Dave and Dewayne so I decided to try find the person that influenced her so. I contacted Merle Phillips, who was also a graduate of Kremlin High School long before I was even born. He had been successful at the speech and hearing center in Enid for years and years. Merle remembered Dewayne, and most importantly his last name, right away even though it had probably been 40 years since he had seen him. I then looked on the national website for speech pathologists and found Dewayne's phone number so Sharon could contact him.

When Sharon spoke to Dewayne on the phone, he had nothing but a vague recollection of meeting Sharon in the past. He certainly had no idea of the impact he had on her life. That's when I learned the lesson that little tiny things we do and words we say (good or bad) can have a huge rippling effect on people. When Dewayne turned off the highway to visit Sharon that day on his long journey to Arizona, he inadvertently created the ripple that caused me to become a speech therapist. Who knows how many others he influenced, or if Sharon or you, JD, or I have also made a difference in some way? Maybe we'll never know. But I do know that our words and actions matter. The poet Anne Sexton wrote, "Put your ear down close to your soul, and listen hard." I also know that listening to that still, small voice inside our heart is very important. Thank you, Dewayne and Sharon, for helping me learn those lessons and for your influence in the choosing of my career. It's a profession that I love very much.

**DAVE STRECK, 33, tells about his move to Kremlin to his cousin SOPHIE FOSMIRE, 14  
Recorded February 2016 in Kremlin, Oklahoma  
Graduated from KHS**

I vividly recall moving from Alva, Oklahoma, to the small town of Kremlin. It feels like it was just last year, and somehow it's been over eighteen years. For my family of seven, Mom and Dad along with my four younger brothers, our crazy and energetic Boston Terrier named Rosie, and me, moving from Alva was no small feat. It felt more like a small pilgrimage than anything else.

During my freshman and sophomore years, I spent my summers with my grandparents, John and Mary Ann Voth. I came down to help on the farm. However, I was able to participate in offseason sports training with Kremlin-Hillsdale School. In offseason I spent most of my time weightlifting and working out as well as making friends with the local high school boys.

Grandpa Voth was needing some help on the farm. In response to that need, my family decided it would be a good idea to pull up our roots in Alva and move back to my Mom's hometown of Kremlin. Upon hearing this news and after spending a few summers in Kremlin, I couldn't wait to begin packing and move out of Alva. The rest of my family was excited as well, but of course, there were also small regrets from everyone.

My family and I had lived in the same house for fifteen years in Alva. Surprisingly, it only took a couple months of careful packing and diligent planning to be ready for the big move. We were able to bring just about everything. Anything we had to leave must not have been very important because no one put up a fight. It was strange to look at the house I'd lived in for over ten years all packed in boxes with labels. It almost seemed like a weird dream.

We began to move from Alva to Kremlin on a brutally hot day in late July of the summer between my sophomore and junior year in high school. Being the oldest of the five brothers, I had to help load all of the heaviest items. I thought we would never get it all loaded, especially the stuff out of the basement. My arms were on fire by the end, but we got it all loaded.

We had at least seven various vehicles from extended family members. Friends and family also donated their time and strength, helping us move. Cars, vans, pickups with trailers attached, and a U-Haul truck were all fully loaded with boxes, clothes, games, furniture, and the rest of the belongings of the fifteen years spent in Alva.

Then the caravan began. With all of the people and vehicles, not only did it look like a pilgrimage, but it felt like one too. That day was not laid-back in the least, but not so much structured either; people were just focused on the task at hand. I had the extreme joy and pleasure of hauling Rosie to Kremlin. Not only did she fight flies most of the way, there was no air conditioner in my truck. Therefore, we rode with windows down the whole way.



About one mile after passing the Midway on Highway 81, the caravan turned south into the driveway of our new home. The first half of the move ended, but the second half of the move was just beginning. Carefully and meticulously we began unloading the boxes, clothes, games, furniture, and the rest of the belongings of fifteen years. That night, the first night of my family's residency in Kremlin, Oklahoma, I slept soundly a mile down the road at Grandma and Grandpa's house.

When my junior year started at Kremlin-Hillsdale High School, I immediately felt at home and loved the small school atmosphere. Within two days of high school at Kremlin-Hillsdale, I developed closer friendships than I had in two years of high school in Alva. Throughout my last two years in high school, I was involved in football, weightlifting, and 4-H through Kremlin-Hillsdale. My team and I were state runner-up both my junior and senior years in eight man weightlifting.

I graduated in the Class of 2000 from Kremlin-Hillsdale High School. I then made the trip between Kremlin and Alva many times because I attended college at Northwestern Oklahoma University in Alva. I graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness. After graduating I moved back to Kremlin, where I am still residing. I am now married to my wonderful wife Bronwyn and have one energetic son, Isaac.

**AUNDREA BRATCHER, 14, hears stories about her aunt CAROL HERMANSKI  
MULBERRY, 75**

**Recorded in Aundrea's home  
Graduate of Kremlin High School**

First grade was not smooth sailing. Growing up in the plains of Oklahoma, I saw few rainy days. One day it started raining, and I was so excited to feel the cool wetness. I felt refreshed. My mom had talked about how the rain brought life to the land so when it started pouring, I ran outside to stand on the north porch of the school to watch it fall from the sky. My teacher, Miss Carolyn Rathmel came outside, swatted my bottom, and said, "Don't you have enough sense to get out of the rain?" I thought water was stimulating, and wished I could have stayed out side longer.

Speaking of life that rain brought, Miss Rathmel had a beautiful plant. She warned us not to touch it because it was hot. I didn't understand a hot plant, and this one was so appealing. I learned really quickly the meaning of a plant being hot. I touched the pretty red peppers on it, and that set my eyes on fire. I recovered from that incident, but I walked right into another. Lee Steele bumped into me and bloodied my nose. I was glad to see first grade come to an end.

After one year under my belt, I began to soar. I was top of my class. My dad, Bernard, was on the school board, and he developed a plan to help limited income families and the school's cafeteria staffing crisis all at once. He created a plan so children could work in the cafeteria for their lunch. At that time it was 25 cents a meal. Kitchen staffing continued to be a top issue so Dad volunteered me to help in the kitchen. This became my first paying job since Dad paid me 25 cents a day to work there. I worked in the school kitchen for five years.

In 5<sup>th</sup> grade Mrs. Velma Devery truly inspired me. She was so nice and helpful. She was an all-around amazing teacher. I wanted to become a teacher and inspire children just like she did. Mr. Bill Stout, or should I say Coach, was a great inspiration as well. I lettered all four

years in basketball, and I enjoyed softball and volleyball. At my time, girls' basketball was played ½ court, offense and defense. In grade school, I played guard, but in high school, I played forward and post. In one game I scored 33 points for Kremlin, and that was before the three point shot was even in anyone's dream. When I look back and ask myself what my classmates remember of me, I think they would probably say, "Tall." I am six foot tall, to be precise.

This is a really neat ending, Aundrea. After graduating, I attended Northwestern State College in Alva. As part of my studies, I had to monitor a teacher in the classroom setting. I was happy to find that the teacher who inspired me to follow this degree was now right there in Alva teaching junior high English. I was thrilled to be able to watch her in her classroom and visit with Mrs. Velma Devery once again.

**JIM HARRIS, 75, recalls his first snow skiing trip to MATTHEW PRITCHETT, 13  
Recorded in the school cafeteria in Kremlin, Oklahoma  
Coach and teacher at KHS**

In 1966 I was a first year teacher here at Kremlin High School. My salary was \$6,000, and I coached football, boys' basketball, girls' basketball, and girls' volleyball. I also taught grade school PE and some science classes. I tell you this because I was working long hours for not very much money. That's why when some of my friends were talking about snow skiing, it sounded like a lot of fun, but I didn't see how I could ever find time or money to take a four day vacation. All of the couples that I ran around with were in the same situation, so after pondering and planning, we all agreed to splurge and make a trip to Angle Fire, New Mexico. We researched a little and found that a brand new ski "resort" had just been built, and it was only nine hours from here. If we left at 9 p.m. on a Thursday, we could drive all night and arrive at Angle Fire at 7 a.m. on Friday, check into a motel, dump our luggage off, and be on the slope by 8 o'clock for a full day of fun in the snow. It all sounded so adventurous to me, a country bumpkin who had absolutely no experience in the snow on a mountain.

We asked John and Shirley Collins, who were very savvy travelers, what we needed for this trip. Skiing was a very new sport for most people around here so there were no places in Oklahoma to buy even the simplest clothing or equipment. "What do we wear?" someone asked.

Shirley replied, "We just buy new jeans, and we Scotch Guard them so they will stay dry. Just layer with a few shirts and sweaters and take some kind of a jacket. You'll be fine."

"Do the men need to take a sport coat and slacks if we eat out at night?" one of the ladies asked.

I should have paid attention to Shirley as she fluttered her eyes for a few seconds and grinned. "I don't think you'll be needing any dress clothes. John, do you think they'll need dress clothes?"

"Nope, they won't be wanting to dress up on this trip," he said with a straight face.

When we packed, we each took a couple pairs of jeans, a few shirts, light weight wind breakers, some insulated socks and underwear, gloves and hat, and we were ready for the mountains. We threw a coffee pot, a hotplate, an ice chest full of snacks in the trunk, and we were ready for what-may-follow!

Six of us piled into an Oldsmobile so we were packed pretty close together, but we were excited, and everyone was happy. There was a little trouble because the guys, who were stuffed in the front seat, were nearest the heater controls and we were always hot; the girls, who were cramped in the back, were complaining about being cold. I guess they really were because one of them had a wig that froze to the back window. But, remember, we were young so it was fun, and we laughed all the way to New Mexico.

I think we had made a reservation for only one room in a dumpy motel, but we all figured we could sleep on the couch, the floor, or the one old mattress. We were there to ski so what did it matter where we spent the next two nights. After all, I had been camping out in Vietnam the year before so this looked better than the tent I'd lived in over there. We unloaded, and by 8 O'clock, we were off to the slopes.

Angle Fire was very new. In fact we were about the only customers so the staff were very nice to us. We rented our equipment right there. At that time, ski length was measured a lot differently than it is today. I stood up and raised my right hand as high as I could, and the

guy fitting the skis for me left for the storeroom and returned with a pair of boots and two skis measuring 230cm each. They were longer than the car we were driving. What did I know?

We decided that we all needed a lesson before we took off to the top of the mountain. There we were in our summer pants that had been sprayed with Scotch Guard, our lightweight jackets, some work gloves, and stocking caps. Right off the bat, one of our ladies slid off the side of a hill so she spent the entire lesson attempting to pick herself up and climb back to the rest of the group. Every once in a while, the instructor would peer over the ledge and yell, "Are you doing ok down there?" She would nod and continue trying to stand up, but the problem was that every time she stood, she would skid further away from us. When I think about it, she never made it back to us; she spent the whole morning at the bottom of the hill. It was no wonder she was through for the day by the time we finally were reunited with her for lunch.

The rest of us learned how to snow plow by pointing the tips of our skis together and pushing forward really hard so that we would hopefully stop before bailing off the side of a mountain or hitting a tree. It was just so hard, and I thought that I was a pretty good athlete. My instructor described my form as the "Mid-Western Outhouse Squat." Picture that! It might have been a better image than the "Egg-Beater" he used to describe my fall. One thing I could see was that we would all end up down the mountain whether we wanted to or not, because as a science teacher, I knew that gravity takes us downhill one way or another. Hopefully, I would be on top of my skis. When we actually took off by ourselves, one of our ladies barreled through a group of people, who had about as much skill as we did, and she came out with three ski poles--her two plus one that she had somehow grabbed from a stranger on her way through the jam. She left it poked in the snow. With any luck, the victim found it on her way out of the heap.

By the end of the day, I had wallowed around in the snow so much that I was soaked to the skin. Yes, the Scotch Guard had failed me! I was wet, cold, and miserable, but I was better off than one of the other guys. I was at the bottom of the lift waiting for him. I looked up and saw someone walking down the mountain and carrying his skis. Something was waving behind him. The closer he trudged, the more I could see. Finally, I could make out that the whole seat of his pants were flapping in the wind. He had ripped out the seams of his jeans and was walking home rather than trying to ski the trail. I'm glad I hadn't witnessed the crash he must have had.

We all hobbled back into the lodge, and the staff could see we'd had a rough day. They suggested that we leave our skis there so we stacked them right there over the floor heaters and headed home for a rest. I understood why we wouldn't be needing dress clothes; nobody wanted dinner, and I don't remember even visiting with anybody. The thought of the next day was a nightmare. I was already sore and stiff beyond belief. So we slept somewhere.

We recovered by the next morning, and we rushed to the lodge, picked up our skis, and hiked to ride the lift. What nobody realized was that those skis had been right over that heater in the lodge all night, and they were hot. The result wasn't good; we rode the lift higher and higher, but the second it dumped us off at the top of the mountain, the hot skis froze to the cold snow, and we were glued. We fell one right after another until all six of us were piled up in a huge lump of people. Nobody behind us could exit; the operator had to stop the lift, walk out and shove us off to the side before he could start the machine again.

For those three days, I'm sure we put on quite a show for all who could actually ski. We left at five p.m. on Sunday and drove home in time for work on Monday morning, but what I like to remember most is the fun we had. I've been on many ski trips since then, but that was the one I will never forget.

**DEMI SUITOR, 14, interviews KELLI (YOUNGBLOOD) SCHOVANEC, 33**  
**Recorded in Kremlin**  
**Graduated from Kremlin-Hillsdale**

In fifth grade, Katie (Brainard) McCants and I were elected President and Vice President of the elementary in a mock election at our school. I remember that we had to make campaign videos, speeches, and everything. Many years later I was elected president of Student Council. I was also involved with National Honor Society, band, and basketball.

After lunch almost all the years from ninth grade through twelfth grade, we walked to the Old Gym to hang out on the loft. I had a lot of fun in there. Many shenanigans happened there.

My sophomore year Mrs. Carpenter, my English teacher, took a bunch of other kids and me on a trip to Scotland, England, and France. We visited Edinburgh and toured some castles. We went to Stratford on Avon and saw Shakespeare's birthplace. We toured Oxford College and went to London and saw Buckingham Palace and Kensington Palace. We also went to Parliament and to Canterbury Cathedral. We took a ferry across the English Channel and saw the White Cliffs of Dover. Then we drove to Paris and saw the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame Cathedral, the Louvre, Arc de Triumph and the Palace of Versailles. This trip opened my eyes to the rest of the world, and I knew then that everything wasn't just like little Kremlin. It was a fun experience.

I was in band from my junior high years all the way through my senior year. I played the saxophone. Mrs. Tolle, who is still the band teacher today, was my teacher when I was in band.

In 2000, my senior year, we didn't have a very good girls' basketball team. However, in February in the first round of district play-offs, we played Billings, who was ranked third in the state and were favored to win the state championship in our class. We beat them with a three

point buzzer beater. Since the first round of district was single elimination, they were out of the play-offs. They had only lost one or two games all season before that loss. It was a huge upset for the Lady Bulldogs and their fans, but it was a huge victory for our team. We were very excited to beat them.

**JIMMY CRAIG, 48, interviewed by SETH SCHRADER, 16**  
**Recorded in Kremlin, Oklahoma**  
**Graduate of KHS 1987**

My life was pretty exciting and tough in some cases. I was always a very rowdy kid and gave my teachers a hard time. As a matter of fact my first set of swats was given at Kremlin-Hillsdale Elementary School because I thought it would be an awesome idea to hit a pencil off the edge of my desk and send it flying across the room. To execute my plan, I chose to wait until the teacher left the room; I thought she wouldn't catch me performing this deviously brilliant plan. She finally exited the room, and my pencil was launched into the air. Flying at a high speed across the room it was heading right for the window, where it struck the window with so much force that it shattered it, and left my pencil hanging there as evidence. She walked back into the room furious at the sight of the shattered window, and she was on a mission to find out who was the pencil-slinging culprit. My teacher couldn't figure out at first who the perpetrator was until a girl in my class blurted out "It was Jimmy." Right then I knew I was done for. I was sent to the office to receive my first, but definitely not last, set of swats in my life. Just like I got swats for playing dodge ball with erasers, making spit balls with my friend out of our tests, bull dozing people with Rodney Casera on my back through the hall way, and filling Miss Moore's coffee cup up with muddy water, and then having her take a sip. The naughty list could probably go on, but there is no point in leaking all the brilliant schemes of my life.

There have been a few times when I thought my life was going to end right then and there. One of them was when my buddy and I were out exploring. We walked up on a baby calf that we thought was abandoned by its mother. My buddy and I were horribly



mistaken. The over protective mother came charging at us, intent on saving her calf's life, since she thought it was in grave danger. I must have looked to her to be the most threatening intruder, and she turned and rammed me, knocked me down, and started to trample me. I could not escape this predicament. Someone or something had to help me. My loyal Australian shepherd dog named Dutchess came running to save my life. Dutchess took on this full-grown mamma cow on for me. The cow turned her attention to my dog, and left me there on the ground. Dutchess taunted the cow and drove her about half to three quarters of a mile away from me in the field.

Another time that I thought that I was going to die was when my friends and I decided to take a quick joy ride in another friend's Chevy Trail Blazer. My buddy decided to make it interesting by swerving a little. The next thing I knew, we were flipping down the road. There was a spare tire in the back where I was sitting that was flinging around. It hit me so hard that between the flipping and the spare tire slamming into me, I started bleeding internally and ending up making a hospital visit. After I healed up, I was back to the adventurous me. Somehow trouble always seemed to find me on my great adventures. A buddy and I were out exploring on someone else's land when out of the blue, we heard and saw bullets flying at us. Being the smart ones, we hid behind a tree and then made a break for it through a little forest of trees, and then jumped and cleared a fence to safety.

These are a just a few of the stories that the walls of Kremlin-Hillsdale hold about the life of Jimmy Craig. May the many other untold stories stay hidden in that sacred place.

DATONA RATZLAFF, 12, interviews ZAC CROUCH, 32  
Recorded in Kremlin  
Graduated from KHS in 2002

One time my brothers and I went fishing on a nice sunny day. We all got our fishing gear out and baited our hooks. Then we spaced out and cast out our lines into the water. We waited a short time, and then on my line I hooked a fish. When I yanked up on the line, it snapped back and hooked my finger. My brothers tried everything they could think of to get the hook out; they even used pliers. They thought they were going to have to take me to the hospital! This took so long that my brothers started making jokes. Then someone decided to cut the barb off the hook, and we were able to pull the hook out backwards. It hurt pretty badly, but we went back to fishing.

**DALTON MCALISTER, 14, talks to JOHNEY WELMAN, 47**

**Recorded at home**

**Graduated from KHS**

I went to Kremlin from pre-k until I graduated from high school. I am married to Sherry Wellman and she and I have a child together. Hunter is 10 years old. I believe that family is the most important thing in life. I love my wife and child more than anything in the world.

I played all sports except basketball throughout junior high and high school. I remember when I was playing outfield in baseball and a fly ball was hit past me. As I was running backward to catch the ball, I tripped and hit the fence. I had to get stitches right above my eye.

After high school, I went into the military. Now I am a police officer for military bases. I always try to think positive because we only have one life. I try to love while I'm still able to play with Hunter. I'm just thankful for everything I have.

**JOLITA (JODI) (THESMAN) GOSSEN, 63, talks with ZEB HAWKINS, 17**

**Recorded in Kremlin**

**Graduated from KHS**

I come from a long line of Kremlin graduates. Both my parents, Jake and Leora Thesman, graduated from Kremlin in the '40s, all of my siblings graduated from Kremlin, and all three of my children attended Kremlin from kindergarten through high school. That's three generations of Kremlin graduates. Only my husband Roger did not attend Kremlin, but even he is now in his 33<sup>rd</sup> year of teaching high school math and computer science here so he has actually been here far longer than any of the rest of us (Roger is VERY much looking forward to teaching in a brand new school!).

Thinking back to a number of years ago shortly after we moved back to Kremlin, we reflected on a story involving the birth of our youngest child, Drew. Roger and I, with our daughters settled in the back seat of the car, raced toward the nearest hospital in Enid, where my mom was going to meet us to take the girls home with her. My heart beat was quick and my nerves were on edge. This was somewhat new to me. I had already birthed two beautiful daughters, but Monica had been three weeks late and Alyssa was one week late. This one, our last one, decided to come early. As we frantically drove, Monica and Alyssa argued about names for their soon-to-be sibling.

Both daughters assumed we might be having another girl. Roger and I thought it would be fitting if we played a simple joke on them. We made a bet with them on our way to the hospital. The girls, thinking we didn't know the gender of our child, made a bet that if the unborn was a girl, they could name her. We delightfully agreed to that arrangement since we already knew that we were having a boy named Drew. So, as we drove, they discussed possible names. They finally settled on Valerie Suzanne Gossen, a very pretty name, don't you think?

We arrived in town, sent the girls home with Grandma, and proceeded to the hospital. Following a few hours of labor, I delivered our hunky 9 pound 9 ¼ ounce baby boy. The girls were disappointed, but even they knew that Valerie just didn't fit. When the girls heard the news, they realized that they had lost their gamble. None the less, they welcomed their new baby brother Andrew Neal with open arms.

It was years later before they found out that we had known long before his birth date that we were having a boy.

**JEFF HOFFSOMMER, 56, visits with CONNOR SNAPP, 18, about his past**

**Recorded by e-mail**

**Graduate of KHS**

This is a collection of some random memories of mine from my days at Kremlin-Hillsdale High School. I think the scouting report on me was probably "Good kid, decent student, but keep an eye on him."

My freshman year, our basketball team was pretty weak. One night Lomega was putting it on us. Their starters had dominated our starters, and their subs were dominating our subs, including me. When they hit 90 points, suddenly everyone was interested because few high school teams ever scored 100 points. All of the fans, including ours, were hoping to see it happen. The Lomega subs were playing like it was a state championship game. With about a minute left and the score 98-31, Coach Larry Stallsworth called a timeout. With great passion he told us that "No team scores 100 points against a team that I am coaching!" We were instructed to hold the ball, not shoot, and run out the clock. Of course, Lomega was pressing us and trapping us and doing everything they could to get the ball back. With about 10 seconds left the inevitable happened, and we committed a turnover. Lomega's last guy to get a suit was heading for the basket on a fast break with Kremlin's last guy to get a suit (me) trying to stop him. He scored the 99<sup>th</sup> and 100<sup>th</sup> points over my outstretched fingers. Everyone in that gym was cheering except for us 12 Broncs and, of course, Coach Stallsworth.

My freshman year in football, there were only 14 guys on our team. When Sid Lakin, our junior starting end, was injured in a practice horseplay incident, I became the starting end for the next three games. At that time our record was 0-2. We promptly won our next three games. Apparently Coach Harris had the "you can't lose your position due to injury" policy, because Sid got his position back when his injury had healed. We went 1-3-1 the rest of the season. With me as the starting end, we were 3-0, but with Sid Lakin as the starter, we were 1-5-1. You can look it up. I like to remind Sid of that statistic, but he assures me that our wins had to do with those three games being the soft portion of our schedule. I'd like to think winning was because of me.

My junior year in football, our star quarterback and one of my best friends, Randy Chelf, speared me in practice and broke some of my ribs. I missed the first two games of the season. The *Enid News and Eagle* would include me in all of their articles, e.g. "The Broncs will be without their starting end, Jeff Hoffsommer." I learned that the best and probably only way for an offensive lineman to get his name in the paper was to get hurt and not even make it to the game.

My sophomore year, our basketball team was mediocre at best. When we played Medford, an eventual state tournament team, Coach Stallsworth wanted to slow the game way down to try to keep things close. He explicitly told the starters not to shoot for the first two minutes. We got the tip and Sid Lakin promptly shot the ball about 15 seconds into the game. He made it, putting us up 2-0. I remember thinking Coach would chew him out, but actually he did a fist pump. I guess being ahead of Medford, if only for a time, was better than sticking to the game plan.

Some of my teachers were disciplinarians (Earl Vore, Danny Bivins) and some were not. One who was not was Raymond Hoffman, who only survived one semester as the Kremlin High School history teacher. Some of my classmates would blatantly cheat during exams by

discussing their answers. Rather than addressing it, he chose to create several versions of the next test with the questions in different orders in hopes of thwarting the cheaters. They figured it out and simply got up and moved next to someone who had their version. I don't remember there ever being any disciplinary action. One thing Mr. Hoffman could do that was really cool was clasp the fingers of his right and left hands together and step through them, then pull them up around over his head without ever letting go. I think he had to dislocate one or both shoulders accomplish that feat. That impressed me.

Some of the pranks we pulled in high school, in retrospect, were probably felonies. One of our favorite things to do on Saturday nights was to order a pizza from Pizza Inn to be delivered to the back of an apartment complex. (Caller ID has ended this prank.) The pizza delivery guy would deliver several pizzas at a time so while he was walking the pizza to the back of the complex, we would run up and take his other pizzas from his oven. We would park about a half block away in the shadows and eat the pizza while watching the show. The beleaguered delivery guy would come back to his truck, already frustrated that he had tried to deliver a pizza to someone who hadn't ordered it, only to find the rest of his pizzas missing. It happened so many times that I'm surprised Pizza Inn didn't hire a posse to put us out of business, like the Union Pacific Railroad did to Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.

Chemistry class and pyromaniacs don't mix. We learned quickly of that wonderful substance called acetone. It was readily available in plastic bottles as it was used to clean the glassware. It was extremely volatile, could be ignited with the Bunsen burner strikers, flame a few seconds and then go out, leaving only a fruity smell in the air. Mr. Blakely could smell it, but he could never track it back to us. We also found the recipe for nitroglycerin and tried to make it many times without success. The ingredients were all clear, but when the mixture started to turn yellow, we knew that it had gone exothermic and was about to spew everywhere. My mom never did know what destroyed the curtains in my bedroom.

Dwayne Janzen has to be one of the best teachers of all time. I learned so much from him in Power Mechanics, Woodshop, and Mechanical Drawing. I still think of him often and can actually hear his voice when I'm working with wood, drawing something, tinkering on my lawnmower, or whatever. Another time that I think of him is when I am northbound on Highway 81 going over the overpass. In Drivers Ed he would always instruct Eric Lunday and me to get into the left lane. I just trusted him that it was the right thing to do but never ever understood why. I thought it had something to do with the bank of the overpass or centrifugal force or something like that. Years after high school, it dawned on me that it was a courtesy due to merging traffic from 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Oh brother!

I can still remember Joe Bowen's speech to the student body when he was running for a Student Council position. He borrowed it from Monty Python. "I think all right thinking people in this country are sick and tired of being told that ordinary decent people in this country are fed up with being sick and tired. I'm certainly not. And I'm sick and tired of being told that I am." For my speech I pretended to be a ventriloquist, and Joe was my dummy. He sat on my knee and gave my speech. I just smiled and moved my lips a little bit and pretended to be working the controls in his back. We both won. Style over substance. It worked then and it works now.

**MATTHEW WATTS, 13, visits with J.C. BOWEN, 78, about his hobby**

**Recorded by phone conversation  
Graduate of Hillsdale High School**

I have been pitching horseshoes since I was a kid, and I found that I liked it for a number of reasons. It was better than bowling because it was outdoors, cheaper, and I could play against people who had similar abilities to mine. I became a charter member of the Enid Area Horseshoe Pitcher's Club which started in 1987, and I helped build the courts at Meadowlake Park in Enid. That was the year that I began pitching league and entering tournaments around the state. I've pitched in every State Singles Tournament since then, and I usually place or win in my class almost every year. In 2011 I was State Elder's Champion. But back to my story... I met my wife Charlotte (Waggoner) when I was working at the grain elevator here in Hillsdale. A secretary who worked here told me that she knew a cute girl from Nash that she thought I might like. Sure enough, she was right. We met and later married in 1989. Charlotte could see how much I enjoyed the sport so she decided that she might as well take up pitching too so we could spend more time together.

I was the one who first liked the sport, but she turned out to be a very good competitor. I remember once when we went to Wichita to compete. I was ranked in a higher class than she was; I was a 45% pitcher (45 ringers out of 100 shoes) and she was a 10% pitcher. The problem was that I was scheduled to pitch first, and she was slated much later. She decided that she didn't want to be the reason for our leaving Wichita so late on a Saturday evening and have to drive home at night so instead of entering in her division, she entered in the same one that I was in. That all sounded good to me until SHE BEAT ME! Her win forced me into a playoff for first and I lost winning second instead. All I could tell her was, "It's going to be a long walk home for you." That was just a bluff, though. She knew I wouldn't leave her up there.

Actually, anyone who knows anything about pitching knows that the game works that way. Some days are on and other days are off. Maybe we pitch all day, and then everything is decided in the last pitch. It's win or lose with that last toss. Some days the horseshoes fall on, and some days they fall off. I guess I've had enough success that I keep wanting to come back for another day.

My son Joe asked me, "Dad, why do you like it so much?"

I thought about that and told him, "It's the only thing I can do better now than I could when I was younger." It's true. I can't play basketball or baseball anymore, but I can still pitch horseshoes. This is a lifelong sport that is fiercely competitive, and I enjoy competition. Every pitcher who gets beat will say, "If I practice a little more, I'll get better." And it doesn't matter the age; we all say that.

Charlotte was the one who really was a pioneer in promoting the sport. In fact, she had the honor of pitching with a six year old girl who later became a world champion in the field. She was coaching her when the girl was only 13 and became the Junior Girls' World Champion. She has since grown up, married, and now lives in Florida. While she no longer participates in the sport, her family from Sand Springs still shows interest.

Charlotte never improved a lot more so she decided to stop competing and instead be active in running tournaments. She has held many state offices. In the past she ran two horseshoe pitching leagues and conducted five tournaments every year right here in the Enid area. After becoming state secretary/treasurer she gave up league direction and only runs



tournament play. For all the work she has done in running tournaments and developing leagues and promoting the game, she was inducted into the Oklahoma Horseshoe Pitcher's Hall of Fame in 2006. I was too in 2014, but I tell everyone, "She was selected first; my only claim to fame is that I married Charlotte." I still run a competition at the Hillsdale 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration, and you may have seen a float or two at the Cherokee Strip Parade that I was responsible for. We also go to Guthrie each April to hold a tournament for individuals who have survived brain injury. I'd do about anything to help promote my favorite sport.

Charlotte no longer pitches, but she has fond memories of the years when she did. I'm still competing, and I plan on attending the 2016 World Tournament in Montgomery, Alabama at the end of July. Wish me luck. Win or lose, we have both found that we can meet the nicest and most interesting people all over the place through pitching competitions. Horseshoe competition has been good for us. We'd be interested in helping anybody learn the sport so let us know if we can help you in a new hobby. It's a game for a lifetime.

**DAYLAN DULINSKY, 14, visits with LORI CONRADY, 38**  
**Recorded in Kremlin, Oklahoma**  
**Graduated from Kremlin Hillsdale 1997**

I grew up with my friends. It seemed as if we lived at each other's houses. We were inseparable. My friends were always my voice of reason or gave me words of encouragement when I began to doubt myself. They wiped away my tears when life was a little too hard. They always stood up for me or threatened to beat up any boy who was a jerk or any girl that looked at me wrong. There wasn't a large group of us; in fact there was just a handful of us. We were known as the reckless bunch. High school would not have been the crazy time it was without these friends. We spent many nights on an old dirt road "star gazing" no matter what temperature it was. When we all went star gazing, we talked about boys, life at home, and we gossiped about other people a lot. Anything that we had on our minds, we would talk about.

We were always up for an adventure. One that is most memorable was my "Senior Skip Day." We laughed, we cried, we almost killed each other. I learned a lot that day about the others. I learned about life and responsibilities and also to never do those things again!

I've learned that life takes us in different directions, and I had to find my place in this world. I have my friends and memories, and I'm glad that I made them when I did because they will be with me for the rest of my life.

**DATONA RATZLAFF, 12, interviews ZAC CROUCH, 32**  
**Recorded in Kremlin**  
**Graduated from KHS in 2002**

One time my brothers and I went fishing on a nice sunny day. We all got our fishing gear out and baited our hooks. Then we spaced out and cast out our lines into the water. We waited a short time, and then on my line I hooked a fish. When I yanked up on the line, it snapped back and hooked my finger. My brothers tried everything they could think of to get the hook out; they even used pliers. They thought they were going to have to take me to the hospital! This took so long that my brothers started making jokes. Then someone decided to cut the barb off the hook, and we were able to pull the hook out backwards. It hurt pretty badly, but we went back to fishing.

**ZACH ROBINO, 32, interviewed by NICOLE MORSE, 16**  
**Recorded in Enid, Oklahoma**  
**Graduated from Kremlin-Hillsdale in 2002**

It was summer, and I was in Driver's Ed with my two friends, Kelley Dittmeyer and Ryan Weddel. Our Driver's Ed instructor was Mr. Norton. The Driver's Ed car was an old Grand Marquis that smelled like dead fish and a nursing home. One day as I was driving I tried to stop at a stop sign, and I stopped in the middle of the intersection instead. Mr. Norton told me, "You know you have to stop behind the stop sign." I told Mr. Norton the brakes suck. I traded spots with Kelley, and he started driving down the highway going the speed limit, and we came up on the I-35 on ramp. Mr. Norton yelled, "Slow down!" but Kelley screamed, "I can't!" The brakes failed, and we hit the I-35 on ramp going 55 MPH. The tires were squealing and the car was bouncing. After we finally stopped, we took the car to the shop, and we waited for the brakes to get fixed. Once the car was repaired, Ryan started driving, and we pulled up to a stop sign. We started rolling into the street, and an 18 wheeler was headed towards us. Ryan was stomping on the brakes, but they failed again. We then had to take the car back to the shop. We spent most of our time in that car shop. But I passed the class learning how to drive without brakes.

**TERI HICKS, 52, interviewed by JOSH STRECK, 17**

**Recorded in Enid, Oklahoma**

**Graduated: Kremlin-Hillsdale, 1981**

Teri Hicks started attending Kremlin-Hillsdale High School when she was in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. She enjoyed going to school at Kremlin. She played basketball and she also did track. She was a good student, and her favorite teacher was Mr. Janzen, because he had a fun class and he was really nice. One of her favorite memories that she has of high school is one day when she walked out of the school and she found that her car, a MG Midget, had been turned sideways in between two other cars.

**DALTON MCALISTER, 14, talks to JOHNEY WELMAN, 47**

**Recorded at home**

**Graduated from KHS**

I went to Kremlin from pre-k until I graduated from high school. I am married to Sherry Wellman and she and I have a child together. Hunter is 10 years old. I believe that family is the most important thing in life. I love my wife and child more than anything in the world.

I played all sports except basketball throughout junior high and high school. I remember when I was playing outfield in baseball and a fly ball was hit past me. As I was running backward to catch the ball, I tripped and hit the fence. I had to get stitches right above my eye.

After high school, I went into the military. Now I am a police officer for military bases. I always try to think positive because we only have one life. I try to love while I'm still able to play with Hunter. I'm just thankful for everything I have.