

GRIZZLY CHRONICLES



The newsletter for and about alumni of Skyline High School

Aging Skyline building needs renovation

Leaky roof, security, plumbing seen as critical priorities

Many SGAA participants remember Skyline with shiny new floors and the smell of fresh paint. Now, 55 years after students first entered the building, it's not the same. The floor in one of the bathrooms is stained from repeated sewage back-ups and the smell is ... well, not fresh paint.

Even well-built schools eventually need renovation. At 40 years old, most roofs need replacement and other systems begin rapid deterioration. Skyline is no exception. A visitor to the school will notice missing ceiling tiles, exposed pipes, a trash can collecting water from the leaky roof, and a bathroom closed on a weekly basis because of that backed-up drain.

Routine structural aging isn't the only problem. Educational technology and security needs have changed since the 1960s. Speaking of the electrical system, former District 91 Superintendent George Boland explained to a local reporter, "In 1968 there wasn't a whole lot to plug in."

Neither classrooms nor administrative spaces have enough outlets. Many Skyline classrooms now rely on power strips to allow students to keep their devices charged, and plugging in a laptop sometimes overloads a circuit.

In addition, school violence has forced new thinking about security. Dozens of entry points seemed convenient in 1968; now they make it impossible for administrators reliably to manage access to the building.

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Worthy grads are missing from Skyline's Hall of Fame

To provide inspiration to students and recent graduates, a Skyline Hall of Fame was created in 2008 to spotlight alumni who have made distinguished contributions to the school, to their communities, or to their career field. Despite our school's 57-year history, the Hall of Fame currently includes only 23 people.

The two most recent inductees were Courtney Morgan, '69, a former Skyline English and journalism teacher, and Greg Carr, '77, an entrepreneur and philanthropist. Morgan's work as a teacher earned her honors such as "Idaho Journalism Teacher of the Year" from a professional organization and "Teacher Who Puts in Most Hours on Campus" from the Skyline student body. Her community contributions included service with the Idaho Falls Community Outreach Center, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the Idaho Student Journalism Association.

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About the SGAA

The SGAA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation created by graduates of Skyline High School in Idaho Falls, Idaho.

SGAA Mission Statement

To recruit and organize the talents and resources of thousands of Skyline alumni to serve students, alumni, faculty, and administrators of Skyline High School and Idaho Falls itself. We work with the school, District 91, alumni, and others to identify projects that will enhance the success of the students, support the interests of alumni, and strengthen the community.

The Board of Directors will work always to carry out SGAA functions with transparency and accountability to members and donors, in a manner consistent with the highest standards for nonprofit charitable organizations.

SGAA Board of Directors

Bob Schoch, '70, President
Steve Smith, '70, Vice President
Garth Blanchard, '71, Treasurer
Kari McKim, '70, Secretary
George Groberg, '70, At large

Thanks for guidance and help with this issue: Margaret Wimborne, District 91 Foundation and Heather Martin, WestSide Story advisor.

Grizzly Chronicles

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SGAA projects and activities

SHS Entry Sign

The SGAA board in September approved a fundraising campaign to finance the purchase of new signage at the main entrance of Skyline High School, near the administrative office.

In its efforts to improve school security, District 91 recently installed a secure vestibule at the main entrance that requires people to check in before entering the school. However, the location of the main entrance is not obvious. The proposed sign will direct visitors to it. The sign also will display messages related to school events.

Skyline staff, a vendor, and the SGAA are working together to develop a design and cost estimate. Information on the fundraising campaign will be circulated soon.

Mentoring

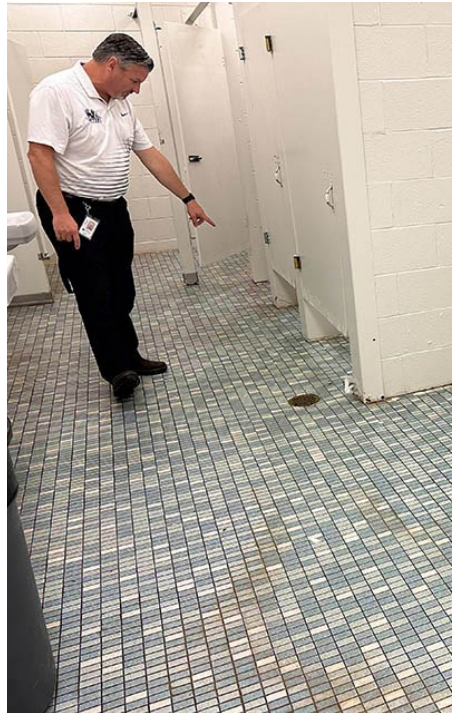
Alumni associations can provide valuable mentoring opportunities for students and recent graduates. For example, using this newsletter, Skyline alumnus Dan Neal, '70, a retired journalist, is working with WestSide Story advisor and English teacher Heather Martin to help build students' writing and reporting skills.

With more volunteers, the SGAA mentoring program could offer speakers for classroom instruction, assemblies, or interest groups and internship opportunities.

The SGAA has begun to interview alumni about their careers and how high school experiences, both instructional and extra-curricular, shaped them. These interviews will be archived and searchable so that students can view these inspirational stories.

If you are interested in being interviewed, please send an email to Bob Schoch at bobschoch@comcast.net.

You can also tell us about your experience, skills, and interests by using the SGAA form at <https://s.surveypalnet.com/f7xbhqml>.



Above: Principal Joshua Newell indicates a faulty drain; Below, a power strip in the Skyline office.
Photos: Andrea Olson, EastIdahoNew.com; Garth Blanchard, '71

Skyline Building Condition

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Problems at Idaho Falls High School, built in 1952, are even worse. That building also lacks enough electrical outlets, and thick walls inhibit wi-fi reception. While Skyline enrollment stands at 118% of the building's capacity, IFHS enrollment tops 140%. In an emergency, this could prevent speedy evacuation of overstuffed classrooms.

To correct those problems and others, the school district has proposed an entirely new building for IFHS, and an 80% remodel for Skyline. However, three bond referenda have failed—in 2017, for \$110 million; in 2018, a split proposal for \$86.2 million and \$13.3 million; and in 2022, a comprehensive proposal, including work on elementary schools, for \$250 million.

One reason for the referenda failures is simple. Although 58 percent of Idaho Falls

voters supported each, Idaho state law requires school-bond referenda to receive twice as many 'yes' as 'no' votes, a 66.67 percent supermajority.

Other reasons are more complex. Although the referenda's opponents acknowledge the need to remediate the buildings' problems, they have questioned projections of the bonds' effect on future property tax bills; the process for selecting and contracting with architectural and construction firms and, predictably, which expenses are necessary and which are optional.

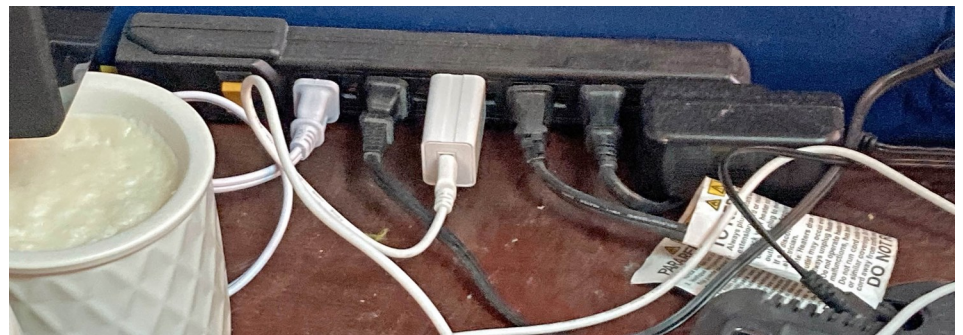
Next steps for the high school buildings are not yet clear. District spokesperson Margaret Wimborne said the Board of Trustees constantly evaluates short-term and long-term priorities. She identified plumbing repair and correcting designed-in structural issues with the roof to be among the "critical short-term priorities for Skyline."

"Safety is certainly a priority," she continued. "This summer we implemented an access control system, but there are a number of other issues we need to address."

These include the lack of a prominent front entrance, which causes confused visitors to use several different entrances, complicating access management. To help with this, the SGAA Board of Directors plans to raise funds to buy a programmable marquee, which would direct visitors to the entrance and enable administrators to post announcements.

The long-term priorities for the administration – which were reflected in the bond proposal – are focused on renovating, upgrading, and updating the school "so it can provide a 21st Century learning environment for all our students," Wimborne said.

One thing is clear: the problems will get worse and more expensive to remediate as time passes. In 2017, renovation of Skyline was budgeted at \$41 million; five years later in 2022, worsening problems and rising construction costs had pushed the price tag to \$71.5 million.



Principal's message: Great goals produce great students

As Skyline High School continues to foster excellence in education and personal growth, I am delighted to spotlight one of our outstanding students. Nelah Roberts, an excellent student, this year became Cross Country State Champion for the fourth time, a feat that has never been duplicated in Idaho.

Nelah is a shining example of our commitment to both athletic and academic excellence and has made us all exceptionally proud. Her dedication and perseverance not only earned her the coveted title of a four-time Cross Country State Champion, but also demonstrated the character and spirit of our school.

In addition, Skyline remains dedicated to academic prowess. Our current students continue to achieve remarkable academic milestones and to garner accolades in various fields.

Our environment of achievement, character, and lifelong learning remains as strong as ever, thanks in part to the legacy and support of our dedicated alumni. Your ongoing engagement with Skyline can empower future generations of students with the tools they need to succeed. Stay connected, stay involved, and continue to be a vital part of the Skyline family. Together, we can keep the spirit of excellence alive and inspire the leaders of tomorrow.

Warm regards, Joshua D. Newell, Skyline High School Principal



Nelah Roberts in action
Photo: Paul Lambert, Post Register Sports

Students report from the halls of Skyline: Halloween Homecoming

By Geny Shaw | Editor-in-Chief, WestSide Story

Every year, Homecoming Week welcomes back Skyline's alumni for multiple festivities capped by a football game and the Homecoming dance.

This year Skyline's Homecoming Week ran Oct. 9-14. Halloween wasn't too far away and for a spooky twist, the theme this year was "All Things Halloween." Each day brought a different theme, all tied with Halloween. For example, one day students pulled off their craziest hairstyles and hats; on another, students dressed up like a teacher.

On Friday, Skyline held its parade followed by the football game where Skyline took down Bonneville. The Grizzlies stole the spotlight with epic skills and the strong companionship of the team. Skyline lead throughout the game, winning 43-21.

At halftime, the Royal Pairs were welcomed onto the field. Lord and Lady, Duke and Duchess, Prince and Princess, and the King and Queen all stood in the middle of the field to get their moment in the spotlight. Homecoming Royalty serve as role models for the school's diverse student body. The Royalty Pairs were chosen as those who best define leadership, academic achievement, and campus involvement.

Halloween Homecoming concluded with the Homecoming dance Saturday night. The dance brings students together to show their support for their school and their community. The dance celebrates the victory everyone has made in their school life from the newbies to the graduates.

... and more SGAA projects and activities

Homecoming—October 2024

The SGAA is looking forward to joining in Skyline's homecoming festivities next year. Alumni could participate in the Homecoming Parade, attend the football game, or organize gatherings for football players, cheerleaders, marching band members, and/or clubs from past classes.

Planning has just begun. If you have ideas for activities or would like to help organize these social events, please use [the contact page on the SGAA website](#), or send an email to SkylineGrizzliesAlums@gmail.com.

Ski Targhee with the SGAA

Join Bob Schoch, '70, and other alumni on a ski trip to Grand Targhee the first week of March. Arrangements will include discounted lift tickets, a group lunch, and an apres ski event. Please encourage your alumni friends, whether skiers or simply enthusiasts of winter in the Tetons, to attend. Watch for more information on the SGAA website's activities page. If you are interested in helping Bob organize this trip, send an email to SkylineGrizzliesAlums@gmail.com.

SGAA Board meetings

SGAA Board meetings in January and June are open to all alumni who want to participate or just to observe. The meetings are held by Zoom on the second Tuesday of the month at 7:30 PM Mountain Time. The Zoom invitations usually are sent two days before the meeting. Let us know if you'd like to receive one by emailing us at SkylineGrizzliesAlums@gmail.com.

Editor's message

Once a Grizzly, always a Grizzly!

At age 57, Skyline itself is well into middle age. But this alumni association is still a toddler, not yet three. As an organization, SGAA is growing well. We're finding our place in the Skyline community.

Active participants are finding delight in renewing old friendships and making new ones by working with people we didn't know before. It's satisfying to know the organization we're building will provide years of service and support to Skyline long after we're gone.

But the SGAA could do so much more. Just a few examples: This newsletter isn't yet able to report some information we'd like to, such as individuals' milestones or a complete schedule of upcoming reunions. We'd like to make SGAA a routine presence at school events, but most of our current active members live far from Idaho Falls. A point person from each graduating class could help to recruit members from their class. A volunteer with solid social-media skills could elevate our presence on Facebook and Instagram. And more ...

Please consider volunteering with the SGAA. We're still young and small enough so that every volunteer carves out a role unique to their skills and interests. Whatever you're good at, we can likely use you, and your participation will pay off for years to come. If this sounds good to you, email us at SkylineGrizzliesAlums@gmail.com to let us know your interests and how you'd like to participate.

--- Dan Neal, Editor, '70

Hall of Fame

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Carr's success as a technology entrepreneur allowed him to become a philanthropist and a community builder. His contributions were key to the establishment of the Museum of Idaho in Idaho Falls and his efforts continue to improve humanitarian and environmental conditions in Mozambique, Africa. Other Hall of Fame honorees are coaches, business leaders, public officials, and community activists.

The SGAA and the Skyline Booster Club, with a committee coordinated by SGAA Board member George Groberg, '70, are working to select the Spring 2024 inductees. Among your friends or relatives who graduated from Skyline, do you know someone whose story might inspire current students? Whose work brings honor to our school community? Please let us know about them!

Alumni honored in this way do not need to be present in Idaho Falls for the ceremony. Please submit nominations before March 31, 2024 to [the SGAA website](http://theSGAAwebsite) or by email to SkylineGrizzliesAlums@gmail.com.

Nominations also can be made by letter to Skyline Grizzlies Alumni Association, c/o Skyline High School, 1767 Blue Sky Drive, Idaho Falls, Idaho, 82402

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