

Interviewee – Randy Steck

Interviewer – Becca Gaudreau

The following interview was conducted on behalf of the oral history program of the Century High School. The interviewee is Randy Steck. The interviewer is Becca Gaudreau. The interview took place at Mr. Steck's house on the 20th of May 2002, at 4:15ish.

With that done... let me give you a background on the project that we are doing. Like I said on the phone we are doing a history of Century so far and we are interviewing the planning committee, all the teachers that started out at century and their history and why they came to Century. We just wanted to interview you and get your take on why Century and Intel's perspective on Century. So:

What was your position at Intel?

I was the Vice president and general manger at the Performance microprocessor division.

What exactly does that mean for us non-...

Basically we have about...oh...about 2000 people in the group. We were the group that developed and manufactured the Pentium 2, the Pentium 3, the Pentium 4 microprocessors. At the time Century started here, we were in the middle of the Pentium 3 design.

How much did Intel want to get involved with Century; is it considered a normal project to be involved with a high school?

No...it was...to be involved with High schools and schools in general is pretty much the "norm." Century was a special case because it was really the first high school that had been built in the area since Intel had become a major presence in the area. And it was viewed as an opportunity to get more involved in the community in an area where a lot of Intel employees resided. Participating in the community, contributing to the education, those were all things that Intel wanted to reinforce.

Did you have any special experiences working at the start of Century and when did you hear first about Century?

Well...I first heard about Century from the college or from the education donation office at Intel. They have been approached by the Hillsboro School District to see what we could do to try and make Century a more technologically advance high school than other high schools in the area. New high school, new opportunity. I think that the Mr. Barnekoff at the time had a vision that we wanted to see happen. Knowing that I was, I was both involved with the microprocessor development and resided in the district of Century where our kids would go to Century and I had also been a member on the boundary committee for Century High School. Trying to draw the boundaries in some adequate fashion, which certainly didn't please everybody but worked pretty well. *Laughs*. I was approached and asked to participate in at least an initial meeting with Principal Barnekoff and Mr. Parker.

Where did it go from there?

Well it was interesting because what we did was we...we questioned...and Principle Barnekoff had asked the staff to draw plans for what to be considered strong computer presence at Century.

Technology based.

Technology, computers, networking access, so forth. And they planned out and when we met with them they said this is what they planned we and this is our goal. And what we really wanted to achieve, but there was one problem - we had allocated about \$1million for the system in the school, and this would put us over about 2 ½, 3 times that amount. In the meeting we talked about that and felt that really wasn't enough, Intel shouldn't be donating millions of dollars to a high school that more or less that wouldn't spread it around to other educational institutions. If you set that permanence then you are concerned about that. It was really interesting to try and figure out how to do it. So, we concluded the meeting and I was walking out to the car, when I stopped at turned around and I said you know I know where is another way. I went back and talked to Mr.

Barnekoff and Mr. Parker about another approach which would be to have Intel donate the things they actually make, we don't make, Intel doesn't make the actually PCs. Intel still has to buy the hard drives, the motherboards, some of the motherboards, memory and things of that nature to populate and build the PC. But there are certain parts that Intel does make, some of the most expense parts, such as Intel motherboards and the processors. Intel did not make the hard drives; Intel did not make the monitors. Frankly many of the parts that we did manufacture and had some access to were the most expense part of the system. So as we went through the analysis of that we found that it would be really interesting, the budget would be in half and by donating some of the materials and the processor and motherboards that Intel manufactured we were able to stay within the budget that had be set and provide or donate the materials for 500 or so PCs, which are working right now. Now the problem is that at that time the Pentium is really a hot processor, now it's the Pentium 4, so it is slow.

At that time that Century got the computer were they considered the most advance?

It like one half of a generation away from the most advanced. We had just introduced the Pentium Pro Processor or the Pentium 2, and this is just a step down from that. So it was the high end of the Pentium one, so it was a very popular processor. So our conception was that let Intel donate that stuff and you can buy with your budget the other materials and build these PCS and using a stop around the area or it turns out many students putting them together.

So the students helped Intel?

Well it wasn't Intel; it was the school. Mr. Parker organized a computer lab where they built the PCs, installed the operating system, got them all running and it was fairly inexpensive and pretty reliable. In addition to that, Intel donated some labor and time and network materials to get the network configure the right way and built correctly so that it didn't have overloads or traffic issues and things like that.

It did create an overload, a work overload for you?

No, there was...in big business there has to be time to help out in the community. We had sponsored for many years and I was a speaker. On weekends I would go to universities and give a number of guest lectures and it would be easiest if we didn't do that stuff. Those things where you need to its something that it's a different perspective on those things and to not help out would be criminal

With Y2K these past two years ago did Intel worry about that with century?

I think we may have done some consulting with that but the systems were not very prone to be concerned with Y2K. Most problems were concerned with something called legacy software. Some of the medical information systems and databases that you couldn't directly deal with and could cause some serious damage. For the most part I think that it's fairly easily for Century. To overcome anyway issues that they had because their systems were fairly new.

You said that you were retired on the phone. When the new high school that is being built over on Highway 26, have you heard anything about Intel donating stuff to them?

At the tome I heard nothing about that 6 months ago. Since the time that Century was built a couple of high schools have been built since CHS was completed. And couple of other high schools has been built and donated to; certainly not to the degree that we did with Century. It wasn't a monetary value; I think it was because I think that it was mostly because we found a novel way of dealing with that. It was because Century's willingness to do a little work

After CHS had the donated stuff how was the relationship with Intel and CHS? Did they continue to communicate or stuff?

Well, It was an interesting joint project and afterward there was continued project I would say Hi. I brought what I could with various things and various things were donations. There were some dire needs and we could do that on an as-needed basis. And of course there are a number of Intel employees with children at CHS. You have kids there and more opportunities for speaking, activities, and sponsorship of clubs or activities.

Are there other interesting stories that you would like to tell me before we move on?

Not much. I think that well yeah it was in some way the kind of donation that Intel makes to Century was the sort out of the norm and caused kind of a stir within Intel --- "What they donated 500 computers there!" Nobody really understood that we do computers you know we put computers together. Intel became more responsive to high school and secondary needs and materials. I think it was kind a lasting impact at Intel from that particular activity.

This is the Hilhi versus CHS part. How did you see Hilhi before CHS came?

My perception of Hilhi and the school? **Yeah and their technology.** Oh a little bit behind - Quite a bit behind actually. Hilhi a fairly old school and it turns out that the way schools are built with budget at construction to do a number of things and do them right and you don't get a chance to do them over except in a some of very special circumstances. The budgets not there to update equipment. In terms of the use of computers within the school it's not something that is absolutely required its something that facilitates a need for students to understand the technology for something a job that they are going to get into. A good education can be had without them and a bad education can be had with them too. It's really the way in which the faculty decides to use and to teach as opposed to teach about the technology itself, which is not very useful

When you heard about Century first being open from a personal perspective not work were you excited, overjoyed...?

I was glad. There was a real need. We knew that schools were being overcrowded. I think it was the third time trying for funding for a third high school.

You've heard the statistics for Century HS, that in the next year there's going to be 2,200 students and when the Liberty opens it will drop Century below capacity?

Yeah but at the same time when I was on the boundary committee, it was suggested that CHS would never grow past the boundary. I'm not sure I believe that.

What was your vision of Century? What did you want Century to do for the community, for your kids, for work?

Well being a new HS we had hoped that newer capabilities which I think things such as things that you expect at a newer HS is to really form a sense of community around. Certainly in the arts, they've done well; it's exceeded my expectations in the music area. Choir and band very impressive. I think the sports are coming along. It's sort of viewed as a non-athletic view. Teenagers growing up, I think that sports is really important part of how they grow up. I'm really glad to see some emphasis on a lot of the other cultural aspects of drama. They produced some very interesting plays and you certainly see. So I had anticipated Century being as I said more of a cultural center and facility some of those community bases efforts around the area. I think that's pretty well done that.

You mentioned sports earlier. Your son John - he plays Lacrosse and lacrosse has actually started at Century as a club and he has begin to...

That's not sponsored here by the school district. They only need two or three more teams and that's a very rapidly growing sport. Soccer - we've had 2 girls in soccer. My older daughter Erin was on swim team and ran track and good opportunities in all those areas. I've been very satisfied with the quality of the teaching in all the areas. Of course the Honor and AP courses such as English (Mr. Morton), Mrs. Gardner, Mr. Morton, Physics, several of the sciences, math program.

You've been impressed by the teachers and the way they've handled the courses?

Yes. Now there's good and bad. There's some teachers that we've had a better understanding about. But that is the exception rather than the rule.

Let's take that back to Hilhi again?

Well hill high had a very strong choir program. They'd had a lot of legacy things going on. I always viewed Hilhi as stretching to accomplish those goals. And it seemed like it was at times

too much of a stretch to form that community. Maybe because it was too much of the students ...the wide variety of students...Perhaps its just my lack of knowledge of what they school was doing because my daughter was only sophomore so ... I didn't think it was a bad school I was glad to see CHS give more opportunities.

As a parent how have you supported CHS over the years in its change over the years as it started as a little tiny high school as it has changed into competition?

Okay. As a parent you really aren't able to do very much in that regard. The public relations and the image of the school is not as important as the result that they get. I've bent there and done a few things and been there with the music program and some of the technology areas; they can improve their curriculum and get better results. I did participate in an Intel committee in which we gave internships to CHS students.

And that's still going on?

And that's still going on.

Here's a quick question if you don't mind? What are some of the lasting effects? What do you want CHS to be like in the future generations? Is there anything you see wrong that needs to be fixed?

You say that's there's anything wrong?

Communications always a difficult thing and you can never have too much of it. There's just a need to be constantly on top of communicating issues. CHS has an interesting and has gone to an interesting change with the start of the block schedule I think that the jury is kind of still out because specialist's in the math and science are not a good as reported maybe. Some issues with that and now that the rest of the district is going to try something different, it's something a lot of reconciliation... just a perception.

Hilhi and Glencoe and the rest of the school district is moving to the trimesters and CHS is on the year after that when Whitney is a junior, they will be moving to trimesters. Howe does that make you feel?

Well there's going to be another disruption at least for our kids. A disruption; that's fine as long as there's just reconciled with the district. I'm not sure why it can't be done at the same time. A different theory on the same block scheduling. I'm not so sure. The jury is still out on the CIM and the CAM. This is not something that's necessarily. I mean they're saying it's not clear that its that well organized in the state to revert to a non-diploma system.

As you mentioned the CAM, have any of your kids had problems with that?

It actually appeared that is it just more overheard and to no end. I'm not sure that'd it's very effective in improving education or grounding students. The students aren't any better than what they already have been. They might be targeted at the minimal level as opposed to allowing students to excel to the degree that they can in the more advanced courses. That's primarily my objection. Your enforcing mediocrity before you can provide need for each.

Is there any closing statement, I guess, that you want to share? Any experiences with teachers or the staff that is positive or negative...

I had a lot of positive experiences with many of the staff members...those are kind of expected. I see that they are all doing a pretty good job. Classes because they are going to go to PCC and go to a class there...might be different add something more.

Any closing remarks?

No. That's it.

Thanks for taking the time out of your busy schedule.