



By Carolyn Lee

The Imperial Republican

When new students walk into fourth grade teacher Vicky Fine's classroom the first day of school at Chase County Schools, they gasp at the number of pizza boxes she has stacked on her shelves.

"Did you eat all of those pizzas?" they ask her.

No. Fine purchased the boxes in which to keep her teaching games. She's collected a lot of them over the 30 and one-half years she's taught at CCS.

Fine is retiring this spring, mainly for health reasons. She recently had back surgery, and said, "It's taking time to get better."

She came to CCS, formerly Imperial Grade School, subbing some, before becoming a first grade teacher in January of 1979. In 1980 she began teaching fourth grade and has stayed there since.

Fine earned her Bachelor of Arts in education with a minor in art crafts in 1972 from Kearney State College. She taught third grade in a country school, Seedling Mile, near Grand Island for two years, then was a fifth grade teacher at Overton Public Schools for three years.

She then taught grades K-8 at Smith Wick, a country school in South Dakota, for one year before moving to Imperial.

The biggest challenge in teaching fourth grade today, Fine said, is testing the math standards every year. Fourth, eighth and eleventh grades are tested for state and national scores.

"It takes up time when you'd rather be teaching than testing," she explained.

Computers and testing online are probably the biggest changes over 30 years, she said. Also, "Compared to what I learned in fourth grade to what I'm teaching now, there's a tremendous difference. We're expecting a lot more of our children," she commented.

The best thing about teaching is "when you have students you've taught grow up and come back and tell you that you made a difference in their life."

She said one former student came back to take a picture of her to put in his "memory box."

"Neat," she smiled.

Retirement plans include getting well, traveling and dabbling in her many hobbies, such as scrapbooking, sewing and gardening.

She and husband Loren have three children and six grandchildren. She plans to devote part of her traveling time to them.