

## New stars and stripes greet students on first day of school

*Local donation funds classroom flags, outdoor flag and new pole*

**By Mavis Fodness**

Sept. 7 marked the first day of the 2021-22 school year for Luverne Public School students.

Waiting for them were gifts from local veterans — American flags for each classroom and a large, new flagpole outside the new entrance to Luverne Middle-High School.

Glen Gust, a U.S. Army Vietnam veteran and retired Luverne business owner, and his wife, Barb, funded the gift of 110 flags for the elementary, middle school and high school classrooms.

They also partnered with the Hardwick and Luverne American Legions and the Rock County Veterans Fund with the Luverne Area Community Foundation.

At a small event Friday afternoon under the new flagpole, the veteran groups and the Gusts were recognized and thanked for their donations. Twenty-five veterans and their spouses attended.

“What a wonderful gift,” said Superintendent Craig Oftedahl, whose grandfathers were both World War II veterans.

“We couldn’t have public schools without your service

**School flags/continued on p. 3**



Mavis Fodness photo/0902 Veterans at School

Local veterans were invited to the Luverne Public Schools campus Sept. 3 where school officials thanked them for the new flag pole installed at the new middle-high school entrance on Dodge Street. Pictured (from left) are Pat Baustian, Wes Pierson, Glenda Schomacher, Jay Mann, LeRoy Schomacher, Wayne Biever, Don Bryan, Fred Cook, Lorna Bryan, Glen Gust, Dave Banck, Jerry Hoff, Jim Klosterbuer, Ed Stearns, Paul Aukes, Patti Pierson, Bruce Wilson, Kyle Oldre and Marv Laackman.

*\*Reprinted from the Rock County Star Herald*

# Honor Roll of Alumni News contributors

Compiled by Johnna Ahrendt

During this past quarter ending Sept. 30, 2021, the Alumni News received money in the form of memorials, and gifts totaling \$ 2,420. In the memorial section below, the individual being memorialized is printed in bold print, followed by the individual or individuals who made the gift. Contributions given by graduates and friends follow the list of memorials. THANK YOU, READERS!

## NOTE:

If you have recently made a contribution to the Alumni News and your name does not appear on this page, please let the staff know. Chances are your contribution was received after this page was compiled. Please watch for the next issue, January 2022, for additional names of Alumni News contributors.

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Memorials and contributions may be sent to:  
*Alumni News*  
709 N. Kniss Avenue  
Luverne, Minnesota 56156

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## Financial summary

Balance 6/30/21	\$3,438.28
Donations:	\$2,420.00
Expenses:	
Printing:	840.00
Postage:	1,851.06
Labels:	494.45
Office Supplies	29.99
Paypal fees:	6.80
Balance 9/30/21	\$2,635.98

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## Memorials

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**Alice (Hoiland) Larson '51**  
Winifred Haggard '50

**Donald Spease '51**  
Ben Cousyn '51

**Philip Refnes '51**  
Ben Cousyn '51

**Grace (Cousyn) Hofstra '52**  
Ben Cousyn '51

**Joel Green '54**  
James Husen '54  
James Klassen '54  
Keith Paulson '54  
Lowell Kayser '54  
Joan (Padilla) Ripley '54

**Alvin Cronberg '55**  
Yvonne (Lind) Halter '55

**Keith Lemke '55**  
Yvonne (Lind) Halter '55

**Lorraine (Dreessen) Crouch '55**  
Dale '68 & Darlene  
Dreessen  
Patti (Kirby) Pierson '63

**Tanya (Thompson)  
Lehmann '55**  
Yvonne (Lind) Halter '55

**John Remme '56**  
Joan (Padilla) Ripley '54

**Sandra Eitreim '58**  
Yvonne (Lind) Halter '55

**Barb (Bullis) Nelson '59**  
Joan (Padilla) Ripley '54

**Virgil Oltmans '60**  
Carol (Ossenfort) Oltmans '63  
Debbie (Ossenfort) Gehrke  
'70  
Edgar '61 & Lila (Beyer) '63  
VerMeer

Kathy (Ossenfort) Scholten  
'74  
Linda (Ossenfort) Molden '67  
Lois (Ossenfort) Nath '62  
Patti (Kirby) Pierson '63  
Rodger '68 & Dianne  
(Lorenzen) '68 Ossenfort  
Twila (Drost) VerSteeg '64

**MEMORIALS/SEE PAGE 4**

## Contributions

Alice (Ossenfort) Hansen '65

Amy (Walgrave) Mino '85

Brenda (Ossenfort) Staeffler '73

Darlene Forrest '58

Dean DeGroot '77

Donald & Lona (Gabrielson) '70

Klosterbuer

Jane Engebretson '69

Judy (Hahn) Bloch '61

Kelley (Tollefson) Hoime '89

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## Thank you for your support

There are expenses incurred with printing, mailing and database support, and these costs are paid for with generous contributions from our alumni and readers.



Newly crowned LHS Homecoming King Casey Sehr (left) poses with his grandfather, Steve Sehr, who was LHS 1971 Homecoming King.

**Right:** In 1971 Steve Sehr (left) receives the Homecoming king crown as he stands next to Homecoming queen, the late Kim (Dougherty) Larson.

Submitted photo



## Luverne High School 2021 Homecoming king crowned 50 years after his grandpa's honor

**By Mavis Fodness**

Fifty years after his grandfather, Steve Sehr, was crowned LHS Homecoming King, his grandson, Casey Sehr, followed in his footsteps Sept. 20 as Casey and Brooklynn VerSteeg were crowned LHS Homecoming King and Queen respectively in the new performing arts center.

Steve said he was crowned homecoming king in the fall of 1971 and the late Kim (Dougherty) Larson was crowned queen.

He considered it quite an honor. "You don't think about it at the time as to what an honor it is," the elder Sehr said. "Hopefully, he has a better football team."

Casey Sehr is the son of Micky

and Heidi (Papik) Sehr.

VerSteeg's parents are Nate and Tonya VerSteeg.

Other royalty members include king candidates Hunter Ahrendt, Trygve Gangestad, Ashton Sandbulte, Luke Thorson; queen candidates Trista Baustian, Billi Connell, Elise Ferrell and Olivia Wieneke.

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### School flags donated by veterans groups/continued from page 1

and your sacrifice."

Prior to the middle-high school remodeling project, each classroom had a flag, some dating back to 1956.

The new 2021 flags were on display Friday in each classroom as the veterans toured the

remodeled facility.

The Gusts said they hope the flags lead to an understanding and the meaning behind being a U.S. citizen.

"We need to teach patriotism," Barb said. "Because freedom isn't free,"

added Glen.

A new flag is also located in the new middle-high school commons.

The Luverne School Board room has two new flags, an American flag and a flag of the state of Minnesota.

# Luverne Dollars for Scholars ... Did you know?

Contributed by Johnna Ahrendt

Scholarship application season is upon us once again! The Luverne High School Class of 2022 is busy working on their scholarship applications.

They will be evaluated on the following criteria: academic performance, scholastic aptitude, work experience, school activity and community involvement.

Students are also required to write an essay describing their future aspirations as well as seek a recommendation from someone, whether a teacher or an adult who has worked with the student. These applications are due each year around February 15th. All applications are submitted through an online student profile application located on the Luverne Dollars for Scholars website.

Once all of the information is compiled, the selection process begins. Each application is assigned a number.

The Luverne High School counselor verifies each students' class rank, GPA and ACT scores. Only the application number, not the applicant

name, is seen throughout the rest of the scoring. Each essay is read and scored by a group of DFS board members.

References, work experience, school activity and community involvement are cross checked against the computerized score assigned each applicant.

Not all applicants receive a scholarship. Applications who do not reach the minimum score do not qualify for a scholarship award. None of the scholarships are based on financial need.

Good luck to the Class of 2022! We look forward to awarding your hard work over the past four years.

If you would like to contribute to, or receive more information, please write:

Luverne Dollars for Scholars  
PO Box 822  
Luverne, MN 56156

Email: [luvernedfs@gmail.com](mailto:luvernedfs@gmail.com)  
Call: 507-227-4030 (Johnna Ahrendt)  
Or visit: [www.luverne.dollarsforscholars.org](http://www.luverne.dollarsforscholars.org)

## Alumni News Memorials/continued from page 2

**Jim Johannsen '61**  
Wesley '58 & Patti  
(Kirby) '63 Pierson

**Ron Friestad '63**  
Dave Gangestad '64

**Roddey Ford '66**  
Class of 1966  
John Beyer '66

**Arlan DeYong '67**  
Jan DeYong

**David Huiskes '67**  
Gary '67 & Barb Golla  
Judith (Steiner) Top '67

**Donald Mitchell '67**  
Donald '71 & Cindy  
Arends

**Ron Arp '75**  
Joan (Aanenson) Berry  
'75  
Joni Petersen '75  
Pam Olson '75

**Vickie Vatland '75**  
Joni Petersen '75

**Karri (Staeffler) Korth '87**  
Anna (DeGroot)  
VanBatavia '60  
Donald '71 & Cindy  
Arends  
Patti (Kirby) Pierson  
'63



The middle school-high school entrance is now on the south side of the campus near the community education office. Doors open into the commons area that has the primary doors for the performing arts center (**below**) on the north side.

## Public open house shows off new school construction, remodel project

**By Mavis Fodness  
Rock County Star Herald**

The Luverne School Board hosted a public open house Sunday, Sept. 19, to showcase the district's completed construction.

"I am extremely proud of the project," said Luverne Superintendent Craig Oftedahl.

"The Board of Education had wonderful vision and did things right. They produced a really classy facility that allows our staff to be extremely functional for the demands of today's educational standards."

**SCHOOL TOUR/SEE PAGE 11**



*\*Reprinted from the Rock County Star Herald*

# Remembering our classmates

Compiled by Carol Schumacher Serie

## 1940 – 1949

**Ramona (Watts) McDowell '48** died on July 30, 2021, in Luverne. Ramona owned the Hardwick Grocery Store for twenty-five years, retiring in September 2007. She moved to Centennial Apartments where she enjoyed many hobbies and volunteering at the Senior Center.

Ramona is survived by her son, Terry '68 (Mary '69) McDowell, Brandon, SD; two grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; sister Connie '56 (Gary) Heldt; brother, Ralph '52 Watts Jr.; and many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by three sisters, LaVonne Gingerich, Beverly Sona and Ruby '49 Dobson; sister-in-law, Lorna '54 Watts; two brothers-in-law, Bernard Dobson, and Bernard Gingerich; and a special friend, Ray Hueser.

**Verna (Swenson) Schmuck '48** died August 24, 2021, in Luverne. She married Wallace Schmuck in Luverne. They lived on the family farm. Verna worked at the Turkey Farm and later Blue Mound Catering. In 1983, she was named head cook at Luverne Senior Dining, where she worked for 17 years. The couple moved into Luverne in 1999 and Verna retired in 2000. She remained busy through RSVP, helping at the public school, and serving as a greeter at the hospital.

Verna is survived by three children, Ronald '67 (Diane), Alexandria, Sandra '68 (Les) Nath, Jasper, and Lonette '75 (Joe) Colwell, Rushmore; ten grandchildren; four step grandchildren; fifteen great-grandchildren; sisters-in-law Jeane (Swenson), Sioux Falls, Marilyn Swenson, Luverne, and Shirley Swenson, Luverne. She was preceded in death by her husband, Wallace; son Todd '87; brothers Dale, Russell, Kenneth (Betty) and Lester.

**Nancy (Juhl) Christianson '48** died September 6, 2021. Nancy attended the University of South Dakota, where she met her future husband, Raydon (Ray) Christianson. They were married on June 17, 1951, in Luverne. She worked for the federal government in Aberdeen, SD, and Minneapolis. She attended Northern State University, graduating with a degree in elementary education. Nancy taught fourth grade at Lincoln Elementary School in Aberdeen until her retirement in 1986. In 1988 Ray and Nancy moved to Pierre, SD.

Nancy is survived by two sons: Mark (Mary Skulborstad), Bollingbrook, IL; Bob (L. Ann Harrington), Pierre, SD; two grandsons; and a great-grandson. She was preceded in death by her husband, sister and two brothers.

## 1950 – 1959

**Grace (Cousyn) Hofstra '52** died August 21, 2021. Grace worked at the Luverne Announcer before marrying Hein Hofstra in 1956 and moving to Bellflower, CA, where they lived their entire married life.

Grace is survived by her daughter Mary and her son Andrew, sister Evelyn '58 Harris; five grandchildren; and brother Ben '51 Cousyn. She was preceded in death by her husband Hein.

**Delores (Staeffler) Schmidt '53** died August 31, 2021, in Pipestone, MN. On June 29, 1957, Delores was married to John Schmidt in Pipestone where they lived on a farm in Sweet Township. During her life, Delores worked at Extension offices in both Luverne and Pipestone before joining the Pipestone Insurance Agency. She also worked in the Key Agency, the Farm Bureau Agency, D's Sanitation, and the Pipestone Vet Clinic.

Delores is survived by her husband, John F. Schmidt, Pipestone; three children, John A. (Joyce) Schmidt, Pipestone, Joan A. (Barry) Kelley, LeRaysville, PA, and Jacqueline J. (Danny) Schaefer, Marshall, MN; six grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her brother, Virgil; her sister-in-law, Marjorie Staeffler; her nephew, Larry Staeffler; and her niece, Sandra Vander Beek.

**Lorraine Anna-Marie (Dreessen) Crouch '55** died August 31, 2021, in Flandreau, SD. On July 10, 1955, Lorraine was united in marriage to Jack Jay Crouch in Luverne. The family called many other communities "home", before ending up in Flandreau. Lorraine held several titles including waitress for some small-town cafes and baker at the Flandreau Bakers, and most importantly, homemaker.

Lorraine is survived by two children: Noreen (Dexter) Jorgensen, Burbank, SD; Alan (Theresa) Crouch, Mapleton MN; daughters-in-law Jacqueline

REMEMBERING OUR CLASSMATES/SEE PAGE 7

## Remembering our classmates/continued from page 6

Crouch, Janesville, MN, and Lori Crouch, Albert Lea, MN; twelve grandchildren; fifteen great-grandchildren; four siblings, Herman '57 (Barb) Dreessen, Oak Harbor, WA, Marvin '60 Dreessen, Port Orchard, WA, Dale '68 (Darlene) Dreessen, Luverne, and Gary '74 (Yvonne) Dreessen, Graham, WA; and many other relatives and friends.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Jack Jay Crouch; two sons, Jason and Michael Crouch; and one sister Dianne '63 (LeRoy '61) Thompson.

**Jeannette (McQuoid) Smith '56**, Clermont, FL, died May 23, 2021. Jeannette began playing piano at a very young age, accompanying singing at the churches in which her father preached. After graduating high school, she attended Bible College in the Twin Cities while also being an accompanist at Fourth Baptist Church, Minneapolis, and while working for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

She spent three years at Temple University, Chattanooga, TN, where she married the organist, J. LaVerne "Verne" Smith, on May 30, 1961; taught piano, and graduated with a degree in piano performance. Verne and Jeannie began their music ministry in Chattanooga, then moved to the Great Lakes area, serving in six churches together. Finally, they moved to Clermont, FL, where they started Smith School of Music and ministered on the piano and organ at First United Methodist Church – Clermont, from 2015 to 2021.

Jeannette is survived by her husband J. LaVerne "Verne" Smith; daughter Pamela M. Smith; son Timothy D. (Lori) Smith; two grandchildren; and brothers William H. and David W. McQuoid.

### 1960 – 1969

**James "Jimmy Jo" Johannsen '61** died on September 22, 2021, in Luverne. Jimmy Jo attended Worthington Technical School, while also playing college football. He bought his first truck in 1962 and started his own trucking business. In 1964, he was hired as a deputy with the local law enforcement, which he held until 1977.

On October 3, 1965, Jim married Bonita '63 Smith in Luverne. In 1998, he began delivering fire trucks full-time for Luverne Truck. Jim moved into the Mary Jane Brown Good Samaritan Home in 2017.

Jim joined the Luverne Fire Department in

1973 and from 1981 to 1997 he proudly served as the Fire Chief. He was an active member of the Minnesota Fire Chief Association and in 1996, he was named "Friend of Education".

Jim is survived by his two children, Mark '92 (Karrie) Johannsen, Parker, CO, and Crystal '00 (Cory) Tiesler, Luverne; four grandchildren; siblings, Daryle '53 (Ester) Schuetts, Sioux Falls, David '54 (Dianne) Schuetts, Des Moines, IA; and special friend, Kathy '79 Siebenahler, Luverne.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Bonnie, and sisters, Beverly '46 Schmuck and Ivalene Schuetts.

**Robert Tomlinson '64** died September 12, 2021, in Luverne. After high school, Robert worked for Jordan Millwork in Sioux Falls, SD. In May 1967, Robert enlisted in the Navy during the Vietnam War. In 1969, after his honorable discharge, he returned to Jordan Millwork, where he remained for many years. On December 12, 1970, Robert married Dianna DeZeeuw in Lake Benton. They lived in Luverne. Robert worked for A.R. Wood as a welder and when the company closed, he worked for Land O' Lakes. After retirement, he went into full-time service helping others.

Robert is survived by his wife, Dianna, Luverne; a daughter, Laura '89 (Rodney '87) Richters, Luverne; four grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by a sister, Donna Loud.

**Guenther Luitjens '64** died on September 8, 2021, in Broken Arrow, OK. Guenther was born in Pulkau, Austria, where he lived until coming to the United States with his parents thirteen years later. After graduation from high school, Guenther enlisted in the U.S. Navy, spending time on both ship and submarine. He was honorably discharged in 1971. Guenther worked most of his life as a Ford car salesman and recently drove shuttle for a local dealership.

Guenther is survived by his wife, Karen; daughter Kimberly (Dave) Medrick; stepdaughter, Tammy (Shawn) Leonard; seven grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his first wife, Patricia Sue, his brother, Roy '65, and his sister-in-law, Rose.

REMEMBERING OUR CLASSMATES/SEE PAGE 8

## Remembering our classmates/continued from page 7

**Sharon (Doeksen) Becker '69** died July 21, 2021, at her home in Sioux Falls, SD. In 1970 Sharon married Daniel Becker; they later divorced. Sharon received her associate degree in dental hygiene from the University of South Dakota, graduating in 1993. After 20-plus years in her profession, she retired.

Sharon is survived by her daughter, Jill (Shawn) Schmidt, Sioux Falls; three grandchildren; brother, Donald Doeksen, St. Paul; sisters Patricia (Garlan) Hulbert, Princeton, Linda '65 (Robert) Christensen, Sioux Falls, Diane (Kevin) Erickson, Rochester, Jodi (Gary) Messerich, Eagan; dear friend Lin (David) Starks, Sioux Falls; and many other friends and relatives. She was preceded in death by her great-niece, Lynn Zimmer and her nephew, Derek Christensen.

### 1970 – 1979

**Ronald C. Arp '75** died August 8, 2021, in Sioux Falls, SD. Ron married Betty Dannenbring on June 7, 1980. He had several jobs including working for Luverne Trucking, Cummins Great Plains Diesel, and he owned and operated a grocery store in Chandler, SD. After some health issues, Ron retired from Miller Loader in Granite, IA.

Ron is survived by his wife, Betty, Sioux Falls; daughter Jamie (Andree) Ertle Diego, CA, Jessica (Kristopher Hanson) Arp; two grandchildren; twin brother Randy '75 (Deb) Arp, Morrison, CO; two sisters, Sandy '70 Smith and Becky '76 (Doug) Eeten, all of Luverne; and many nieces and nephews. Ron's daughter, Jamie, died on August 27, 2021, in San Diego.

**Victoria Vatland '75** died February 16, 2021, in Colorado Springs, CO. Vickie worked as a broker/real estate agent in Colorado Springs for many years. She was also passionate about finding homes for stray cats, having a special fondness for Maine Coon cats.

Vickie is survived by two brothers, Bruce (Natalia) and David '76; sister, Mary (Vaughn) Arnold; and five nieces and nephews.

**Leif Gilbertson '77** died May 22, 2021, in Powell Butte, OR. Leif drove log truck in Oregon. In 1981 he and his brother began driving cattle trucks out of Sioux Falls, SD. He married Dawn Tschantre in Oregon in 1984.

Leif is survived by three children, Sterling,

Dakota and Shayanne; two granddaughters; his parents; and siblings Wynn '76, Chance, Levy and Darcy.

**Thomas J. Mollberg '76**, Sioux Falls, SD, passed away on July 22, 2021, surrounded by family. Thomas was a union electrician and over the years excelled in his trade. He was also a teacher, mentor, father, and loving husband.

Thomas "Rudy" is survived by his wife Carol, Sioux Falls; son Marcus, Sioux Falls; brother David '68 (Linda) Mollberg, Luverne; sisters, Diane '67 (Terry '67) Gonnerman, Luverne; Mary '69 (Terry '68) McDowell, Brandon, SD, Linda '77 (John) Rust, Rock Rapids, IA; and a brother-in-law, Jeff '70 McClure. He was preceded in death by one sister, Barb '71 McClure.

**Margaret Enger '78** died September 15, 2021. Margaret attended the University of Wisconsin LaCrosse and Augustana College in Sioux Falls, before completing her studies at the University of Minnesota. She worked for the University of Minnesota before moving to Chicago in 1989 where she spent thirty-two years in the healthcare field, working for Total Renal Care and DaVita Kidney Care. Her passions included music, animals, birding, nature, and photography.

Margaret is survived by sisters Karoline '74 Enger, San Bruno, CA; Lauri '76 Enger, Edina, MN; and sister Joy '80 (John) Lindgren, Bloomington, MN; one niece and one nephew; aunts and uncles; and numerous cousins and friends. She was preceded in death by her parents.

### 1980 - 1989

**Gloria Ann (Klarenbeek) Vande Hoef '84** died at home on May 11, 2021. Gloria married Cal Vande Hoef in 1985 at Inspiration Hills church camp, where they had met. Gloria earned a degree in vocal performance from Cal State University Dominguez Hills, Carson, CA and performed with One Voice Mixed Chorus for over ten years. She also worked in the group division at Securian Financial and was a passionate traveler and photographer.

Gloria is survived by her husband, Cal, parents Arthur and Johanna Klarenbeek, sisters Jodie '79 (Robert) Van Der Linden and Deborah

REMEMBERING OUR CLASSMATES/SEE PAGE 13





# CARDINAL PRIDE WEEKEND

July 14-17, 2022

## THURSDAY – JULY 14 – 59<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL HOT DOG NITE

Farmers Market at Redbird Field from 4 to 7 pm  
Beer Gardens on Main at Sterling's Café & Grille and Take 16 begin at 5 pm  
Serving begins at 5:30 pm  
Free Inflatables from 5:30 to 8 pm  
FREE Freezie Pops on Main begins at 5:30 pm  
Tae Kwon Do Demonstration on Main begins at 6 pm  
Spotlight Dance Performance on Main begins at 6:30 pm  
Wiener Dog Triathlon begins from the History Center at 7 pm  
Wiener Dog Beauty Pageant begins at 7 pm at Main and Freeman  
Wiener Dog Races begins immediately following pageant at Main & Freeman  
Live Music on Main – begins at 8 pm at the History Center

## FRIDAY – JULY 15

Tours at Luverne High School, scheduled throughout the day  
Luverne LOOP Golf Cart Tours, scheduled throughout the day  
Hinkly House open for tours – 10 am until 4 pm  
Palace Theatre open for tours – 10 am until 4 pm  
History Center open for tours – 10 am until 4 pm  
Brandenburg Gallery & Herreid Military Museum – 8 am until 5 pm  
Block Party on Main – Take 16 – 5 to 11 pm  
Individual class reunions and gatherings

## SATURDAY – JULY 16

Cardinal Pride Parade – 10 am on Main Street  
School open for tours starting at 11:30 am through...  
Cardinal Pride Program – Performing Arts Center – 2 pm  
Party at the Park – *hosted by Luverne Area Community Foundation*  
5:30 until midnight  
Food & beverage garden  
Live music  
Fireworks at 10 pm  
Free admission

## SUNDAY – JULY 17

Worship in Luverne City Park (?) – 10 am  
Community Picnic—11 am to 1 pm  
Rock County Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony—2 pm

### SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS AND IDEAS TO A MEMBER OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE:

Superintendent Craig Oftedah

Pat Baustian

Susan Beers

Jason Berghorst

Cory Bloemendaal

Jeanne Bowron

Chantel Connell

Emily Crabtree

Dave Duffy

Tim Gust

Eric Hartman

Shawn Kinsinger

Don Klosterbuer

Bruce Kurtz

Betty Mann

Marlene Mann

Todd Oye

Phil Paquette

Heidi Sehr

Reva Sehr

Dave Smith

Angela Sneller

Darrel Van Aartsen

Jane Wildung Lanphere

Karen Willers

This weekend event planned for July 2022 will celebrate the past, present and future of Luverne Public Schools and provide the opportunity for ALUMNI to experience the \$30+ million remodeling/renovation/building project completed during the summer of 2021.



Lori Sorenson photo/0930 johannsen flag

## *Rest in peace, Jimmy Jo*

The Sept. 27 funeral procession for James “Jimmy Jo” Johannsen included a Luverne Fire Department escort and an American flag draped from the ladder truck over the Highway 75 and Main Street intersection. Johannsen joined the Luverne Fire Department in 1973, and from 1981 to 1997 he served as the fire chief. He died Sept. 22 at age 78. Above, the ladder truck temporarily blocks the intersection at Main Street and Highway 75 for the line of vehicles traveling to the burial of Johannsen, who had requested the flag be part of his funeral procession. Below, Luverne firefighters Mark (left) and Jonathon Kurtz transport Johannsen’s casket in the antique Luverne Fire Truck.



*\*Reprinted from the Rock County Star Herald*



The media center overlooks the commons below and a giant “L” that is embedded into the floor tiles. The new middle school high school kitchen is adjacent to the commons, relocated from its previous location in the basement.

## New school project public tour/continued from page 5

Some statistics from the project:

- The 65-year-old middle-high school is now larger, growing by 41,170 square feet to a new size of 417,670 square feet.
- The new areas include six additional classrooms in the middle school wing, a new student commons and a new performing arts center (PAC).
- Remodeling encompassed 200,000 square feet, 2,100 gallons of paint, 1,500 electrical receptacles, 66 miles of wire, 30 miles of data cable and fiber and 65 new electrical panels.
- Crews hauled 1,400 loads of rubbish, dirt or fill hauled in or out.

“The new commons and kitchen are spectacular,” Oftedahl added.

“The performing arts center is state of the art and absolutely beautiful. The administration did a nice job creating collaborative space and the use of furniture in helping with 21st Century learning, and the secure entrances and more cameras across the campus will aid in our safety and security protocols.”

### Project sparked by a basement tour

The project began in 2016, when board members reviewed the long-term facility plan that’s filed annually with the state education department outlining upcoming improvement projects.

Oftedahl toured board members through the basement kitchen and cafeteria.

Katie Baustian, Reva Sehr and Eric Hartman are current members still on the seven-member board.

“We all had our eyes opened as far as the needed update,” recalled Baustian, who served as board chairman in 2016.

A new first-floor commons and kitchen led the list of five long-term goals. The other goals included improved safety and security, collaborative learning space, remodel and right-sized rooms to meet 21st century standards and celebrate music and fine arts.

In 2016, the district was within two years of paying off the elementary school, built in 1999. Board members saw an opportunity to continue investing

**SCHOOL TOUR/SEE PAGE 12**



The new middle school-high school media center has updated technology and space for modern student research.

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## **New school project public tour/continued from page 11**

in the district through another possible bond referendum.

“Safety was such a priority,” Sehr said. “Items such as door locks, security camera and an updated intercom system were very much needed. We also needed to get our school’s technical infrastructure updated as well so we could use technology more in the classroom.”

Current Board Chairman Eric Hartman said

conversations centered around the growing list of the number of capital improvements that far outweighed what money the district levies annually for its facilities plan.

“With the (elementary building) bond payoff coming soon, I know my initial thoughts were to roll a number of these capital improvement projects and

**SCHOOL TOUR/SEE PAGE 13**

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## *Help us keep a good thing going; support Alumni News*

The Alumni News is published by volunteers as a free gift for Luverne High School alumni who enjoy the quarterly updates on classmates and their hometown. This publication is the envy of school districts everywhere, as it also maintains a priceless database of our alumni dating back to classes that graduated decades ago. There are expenses incurred with printing, mailing and database support, and these costs are paid for with generous contributions from our alumni and readers.

Today, it’s easier than ever to support our efforts with your donations.

Memorials and contributions may be sent to:

**Alumni News, 709 N. Kniss Avenue, Luverne, Minnesota 56156.**

OR donate online, [www.alumninews.info](http://www.alumninews.info) and click on the **DONATE** button.



Band and choir rooms are located near the performing arts center. The former music area now houses the weight room.

## **New school project public tour/continued from page 12**

upgrades into one major project — funded through a new bond — which would start immediately after the prior one was paid off,” Hartman said.

The board was able to levy \$8 million for infrastructure and HVAC improvements.

Voters approved a \$16 million bond to remodel and add square footage to the middle-high school.

In a second question, voters also approved the proposed \$7 million bond for a performing arts center.

### **Project took 30 months**

After the \$31 million project was rebid, construction began in the former Little Theatre in March 2019.

“The students have been great throughout the process,” Oftedahl said.

“Not only did they assist with the input of the

**SCHOOL TOUR/SEE PAGE 14**

## **Remembering our classmates/continued from page 8**

(Patrick) Miller, mother-in-law Kathleen Vande Hoef and sisters-in-law Renee (Jeff) Ullman and Samantha Vande Hoef, and her nieces and nephews, grand nephews, and numerous dear friends.

She was preceded in death by her nephew Dan Van Der Linden, brother Arlen '80 Klarenbeek, and father-in-law Ron Vande Hoef.

**Karri (Staeffler) Korth '87** died August 28, 2021, in Luverne. Karri attended Mankato State University and Normandale Community College before graduating from Augustana College as a medical technologist in 1992. She lived in Luverne

while working at Pipestone County Medical center, Luverne Community Hospital, and Intervet in Worthington. She continued her career at Avera McKennan Hospital until her health forced her into early retirement. Karri married Bill Korth on August 29, 1998, at Blue Mound State Park.

Karri is survived by her husband, Bill; parents, Gary '66 and Jean '71 Staeffler, Luverne; twin sister, Kammi '87 (Bobby) Biber, Brandon, SD; sister-in-law, Sheryl (Greg) Staeffler, Luverne; seven nieces and nephews; and other family and numerous friends. She was preceded in death by her brother, Kelly '85; uncle Larry Staeffler; and her aunt Sandra VanderBeek.



“Learning pods” reflect modern teaching and learning styles and promote collaborative research study.

## **New school project public tour/continued from page 13**

building, they endured the noise and debris from construction.”

Staff often moved and packed their classrooms several times as the remodeling project progressed through the building.

When the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 forced students and staff to learn at home, construction staff continued to move forward with the remodeling.

A few items remain to be finished including

patching the original terrazzo flooring.

Of the \$31 million budget, \$29,771,784 has been spent.

“My hope is that people walk away from the open house with a high level of satisfaction in knowing we worked hard to spend taxpayer dollars on the right things,” Oftedahl said.

“I want people to be proud of the school, as I feel it is one of the crown jewels of the community.”

### **Are you getting more than one (1) Alumni News at your house?**

*If so, please call Patti Pierson at 507-669-2371 or email her at [piersonprp@alliancecom.net](mailto:piersonprp@alliancecom.net) with the correct postal and email address of your children.*

*Thank you*

### **Attention snowbirds:**

If you are not going to be at the address that you got your July issue during the months of October, January, April issue if you could email me your alternative address I would appreciate it and will change it back and forth according to what month you will be gone so that we can save some money on the “temporary away” returns....thank you...

Patti Pierson [piersonprp@alliancecom.net](mailto:piersonprp@alliancecom.net),  
1-507-920-5186

or 1562 201st ST Hardwick MN 56134

# REUNIONS IN THE MAKING



## LHS CLASS OF 1972

**50th Reunion**

**July 14-17, 2022**

**Reunion Dinner—Friday**

**Luverne Country Club**

***During Cardinal Pride Weekend***

**Info: Paula 612.998.1413**

**[paulajoyce@ymail.com](mailto:paulajoyce@ymail.com)**

## LHS CLASS OF 1976

**45th (+1) Reunion**

**July 14-17, 2022**

**Info: Deone Hemme**

**[dlijhemmes4@gmail.com](mailto:dlijhemmes4@gmail.com)**

**Facebook: Luverne High School Class of 1976**

## LHS CLASS OF 1969

**Informal Gathering  
Cardinal Pride Weekend**

**July 14-16, 2022**

Join Facebook Group for updates:  
Luverne High School Class of 1969

Any questions contact:

Darlene Heckt Gyberg

Janine Jordahl Papik

## LHS CLASS OF 1971

**50th (+1) Reunion**

**July 14-17, 2022**

**Reunion Dinner—Friday**

**Luverne Country Club**

***During Cardinal Pride Weekend***

**Info: Jane 507.920.5197**

**[luvernechamber@co.rock.mn.us](mailto:luvernechamber@co.rock.mn.us)**

## LHS CLASS OF 1985

**“Covid Delayed”**

**37th REUNION**

**July 14-17, 2022**

***During Cardinal Pride Weekend***

**Info: Jeff Hicks 610-513-2056**

**[jdhicks5@gmail.com](mailto:jdhicks5@gmail.com)**

## LHS CLASS OF 1970

**50th (+2) Reunion**

**July 14-17, 2022**

***During the All School Reunion***

**For Info:**

**Lona: [lonaklosterbuer@gmail.com](mailto:lonaklosterbuer@gmail.com)**

**Suane: [susuohome@hotmail.com](mailto:susuohome@hotmail.com)**

**Carol: [Cserie7@gmail.com](mailto:Cserie7@gmail.com)**

## LHS CLASS OF 1962

**60th Reunion**

**Friday—July 15, 2022**

**Cardinal Pride Weekend**

**BRUNCH/LUNCH**

***AT TAKE 16 EVENT CENTER***

**Additional info will come later!**

**Ideas? Questions?**

**Contact: Darlene (Hitch) Woolsey**

**1128 Trenton Circle North**

**Plymouth MN 55441-4959**

**763-595-0314 763-443-5836 ©**

**[DARGW@aol.com](mailto:DARGW@aol.com)**

*ARE YOU PLANNING A CLASS REUNION? Email Patti Pierson at [piersonprp@alliancecom.net](mailto:piersonprp@alliancecom.net) and she will be able to provide you with a class listing and also labels.*

***Alumni News Staff:*** Cindy Arends, Jane Wildung Lanphere, Carol Schumacher Serie,  
Johnna Ahrendt, Patti Kirby Pierson, Rock County Opportunities and Lori Sorenson.

***1304145***

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***Alumni News***  
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