

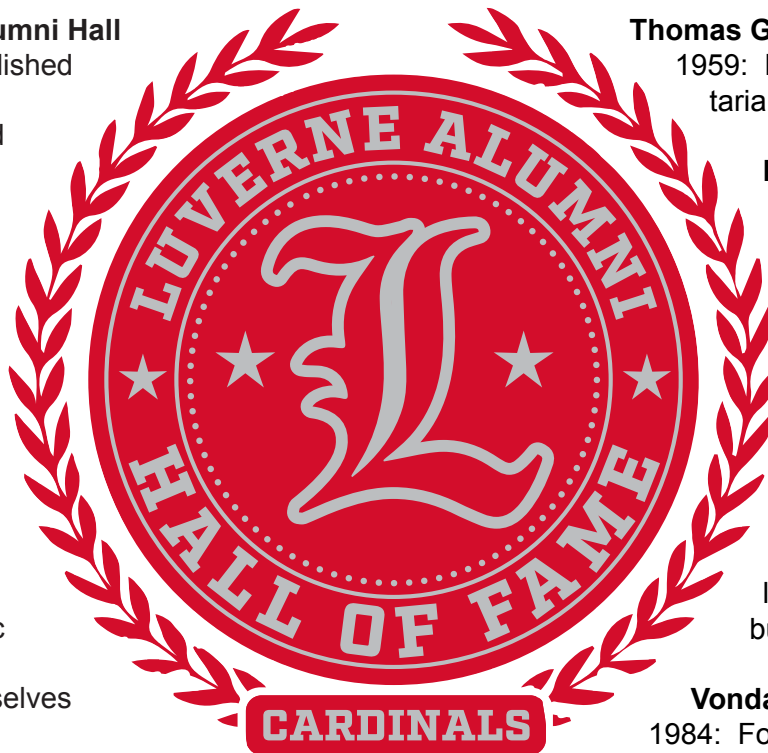
Luverne Public Schools Hall of Fame Committee announces new inductees, establishes ‘Educator Hall of Fame’

The **Luverne Alumni Hall of Fame** was established in 2022 to honor former students and graduates who have distinguished themselves and contributed to the established vision of **District 2184: LEARN, LIVE, LEAD.**

The purpose of the Luverne Alumni Hall of Fame is to recognize students from Luverne Public Schools who have distinguished themselves through:

- Excellence in their profession
- Exceptional service, volunteerism or contributions to community on a local, regional, state, national or international level.
- Excellence in personal endeavors that are recognized on a local, regional, state, national or international level.
- Exceptional contributions to education at a local, regional, state, national or international level.

The Luverne Public Schools Hall of Fame Committee is honored to announce the selection of 5 inductees into the Class of 2024 (in alphabetical order):



Thomas Getman —Class of 1959: For his work on humanitarian causes

Marvin (Whitey) Helling — Class of 1941: For his work in high school sports

Kevin Kessler — Class of 1993: For his work in music education

Gary Papik — Class of 1969: For his leadership in community building

Vonda Viland — Class of 1984: For her work in education

LUVERNE EDUCATOR HALL OF FAME:

The Luverne Public Schools Hall of Fame Committee is pleased to announce the establishment of the Luverne Educator Hall of Fame with the first induction event to coincide with the induction ceremonies of the Luverne Alumni Hall of Fame during Luverne Public Schools Homecoming festivities in the fall of 2024.

The Luverne Public Schools Educator Hall of Fame is organized as a way of maintaining the rich heritage and tradition of successful academic, extra-curricular, and operation of Luverne Public

HALL OF FAME/SEE PAGE 8

Honor Roll of Alumni News contributors

Compiled by Johnna Ahrendt

During this past quarter ending June 30, 2024, the Alumni News received money in the form of memorials, and gifts totaling \$1,240. 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, October 2024, for additional names of Alumni News contributors.

Memorials and contributions may be sent to:

Alumni News
709 N. Kniss Avenue
Luverne, Minnesota 56156

Financial summary

Balance 03/31/24: \$45,844.31

Donations: \$1,240.00

Expenses:

Printing: 912.37

Postage: 2,329.22

Supplies: 1,482.05

Labels: 730.66

Paypal Fees: 9.91

Balance 06/30/24: \$41,620.10

Memorials

Donald Abild '52

Bill & Joyce (Turner) '53
Sexton

Peggy (Schmidt) Anderson '54

Ron & Marilyn (Meyer) Munns
'54

Gary Stamman '55

Wesley '58 & Patti (Kirby) '63
Pierson

James Hamann '56

David Hamann '71
Harland Sievert '52

Russell Pederson '56

Robert Rogness '57

Jeannette (Schmuck)

Flanigan '58

Class of 1958

Phil Bonthius '58

Class of 1958
Stanley Bagbey '58

Jane (VanderKooi)

Hagedorn '62

Darlene (Hitch) Woolsey '62
Verlyn '60 & Susan (Carter)
'62 VanBatavia

Lois (Ossenfort) Nath '62

Alice (Ossenfort) Hansen '65
Carol (Ossenfort) Oltmans '63
Gordon '65 & Joycelyn
(Aanenson) '65 Hansen

Hal '60 & Donna Paulson
Keith & Brenda (Ossenfort)

'73 Staeffler
Linda (Ossenfort) Molden '67
Verlyn '60 & Susan (Carter)

'62 VanBatavia
Wesley '58 & Patti (Kirby) '63
Pierson

David Feauto '66

Class of 1966

Allan Meinerts '67

Linda (Ossenfort) Molden '67

Terry '67 & Diane (Mollberg)
'67 Gonnerman
Verlyn '60 & Susan (Carter)
'62 VanBatavia

Gene Ahrendt '69

Harland Sievert '52

Barb (Mollberg) McClure '71

Terry '67 & Diane
(Mollberg) '67 Gonnerman

Thomas Mollberg '76

Terry '67 & Diane
(Mollberg) '67 Gonnerman

Contributions:

Beth (Gibson) Lilja '82

Dennis McIntyre '60

Gloria (Schlapkohl) Siekmeier '50

Harold Tilstra '69

Keith Loger '69

Remembering our classmates

Compiled by Carol Schumacher Serie

1940 – 1949

Kathleen (Frank) Gibbs

'41 died October 10, 2022, in Rapid City, SD. Kathie attended South Dakota State University in Brookings, graduating in 1945 with a degree in Home Economics. Over the years, she taught in Wagner, SD, Lennox, SD, and Ravina, SD. She married Allen Gibbs on June 9, 1947, residing in Wagner until moving to Rapid City in 1954. Kathie taught some adult education classes and worked several years at the J.C. Penney store, retiring in 1986. She was always a willing volunteer as Scout and 4-H leader, at the hospital, senior center and her church.

Kathie is survived by daughters; Gayle (Dave Forster) Rodcay of Hot Springs, SD, and Susan Craft of Phoenix, AZ; six grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; and special family, Vicki and Brad Cowles of Seattle.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Allen; sons, Tom and Steven; and her only sibling **Dorothy '50** Dorn.

Ellen (Stephen) Small

'41, of Chapel Hill NC, died September 22, 2023. Ellen graduated from the University of Minnesota with a BS in Dental Education. She married Dr. Ernest Small, also a graduate of the University and its dental school. She worked in dental offices and as a teacher. Ellen's husband served for 26 years as a dental officer in the U.S. Navy. The Small family moved frequently, over two

dozen times. She spent many volunteer hours on behalf of Navy Relief. Upon retiring from the Navy, the family made their home in Chapel Hill, NC. Ellen and her husband enjoyed traveling and their vacation homes in the Virginia Blue Ridge and in Florida.

Ellen is survived by children, John (Gayle) Small of Arlington, VA, Stephen (Carol) Small of Fairfax, VA, Sara (George) House of Greensboro, NC, and Janie (Dennis) Dowdy of Blacksburg, VA; 6 grandchildren; and 7 great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Ernest, and siblings, **Margaret '35** Keen and **Alene '38** Dullanty.

Audrey (Jones)

DePauw '47 died June 11, 2024, in Hills, MN. Audrey married Lorain DePauw on April 5, 1947, in Luverne. After their marriage, the couple lived in Luverne. Audrey worked as a cook at the Luverne Elementary School for over twenty years before retiring in 1988. She volunteered at her church in Luverne and was a member of the Luverne VFW Ladies Auxiliary.

Audrey is survived by her three daughters, **Pat '66** (Bruce) Koglin, Duluth; **Cheryl '68** (Alan) Enger, Harrisburg, SD; and **Barb '69** (Gary) Haraldson, Fairbanks, MN; seven grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren; a brother, Gerald Hagen, New York; and two sisters, Judy (Ernie) Niemann, Sioux Falls; and Patricia Niemann, Sioux Falls.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Lorain on May 1, 2015; and six brothers.

Velma (Lensch)

Thedens '48, of Rock Rapids, IA, died May 7, 2024, in George, IA. Velma married Clayton Thedens on March 19, 1950, in Luverne. They lived in Rock Rapids where Velma worked at C.A Peterson Lumber and then Modern Home Gas Company, as bookkeeper and customer service. Velma was active in the community and following her grandchildren and great-grandchildren's activities. She was an avid sports fan and enjoyed many hobbies.

Velma is survived by her son, Lee (Amanda) of Sioux Falls; four grandchildren; eleven great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren; and a special nephew.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Clayton.

1950 – 1959

Donald "Don" Abild '52

died May 6, 2024, in Windom, MN. Don enlisted and served in the US Army from 1954 to 1955. On August 3, 1956, he was united in marriage to **Phyllis '53** Mohr in Luverne. They moved to Windom where Don worked for the State Highway Department until retiring in the early 1990's. He was a member and very active in the American Legion Post #206 and served on the Windom City Council for

REMEMBERING OUR
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several years. Don was very active in the Democratic Party for many years.

Don is survived by his wife, **Phyllis**, of Windom; three children, Bruce of Ortonville, Brenda (Dale) Stanton of Cologne, and Brian of Windom; six grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; sisters-in law, Carol Abild and Virginia Abild; and many other relatives and friends.

He was preceded in death by two brothers, **Gerald '50** and twin **Ronald '52**.

Donna (Stavenger) Schiager '54 died October 3, 2023, in Sioux Falls, SD. Upon graduating, Donna moved to Sioux Falls where she worked administrative jobs. She married Roger Schiager on August 13, 1960. Donna was a stay-at-home mom and later began filling the city administrator assistant positions, as needed during employee vacations.

She was very active in her church, played golf, bridge and mahjong. She was also an avid gardener and loved traveling the country with Roger. The couple spent snowbird time at their home in Gold Canyon, AZ.

Donna is survived by her husband, Roger, of Sioux Falls; sons, Scott and Steve (Janette), all of Sioux Falls; daughter, Sandy Schaiger of Phoenix, AZ; three grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by siblings **Marvin '44**, **John '38**, **Clarence '40**, **Doris '42**, **Vernon '50**, and **Marlene '50**; and grandson Jordan Schiager.

Roger Van Roekel '55, of Rock Rapids, IA, died January 30, 2019. Roger joined the U.S. Navy and served from 1955 to 1959. He was united in marriage to Ruth Schnell in 1960 and attended Augustana College, graduating in 1964. He taught in Omaha before moving to Rock Rapids where he was a substitute teacher for fifty years. In 1976, Ruth passed away. On September 30, 1976, Roger married Barbara Lemke.

Roger was very involved in the Jaycees, serving as President, State Vice President, and was honored with a lifetime Jaycee Senator Status. He also served as president of the Central Lyon Education Association, was active in his church, and was Vice President of the Mural Society of Rock Rapids. His artwork can be found in many private collections throughout the country.

Roger is survived by his wife Barb; his family Lisa (Kris) Davidson of Rock Rapids, Dave Van Roekel of Omaha, NE, Dan (Niki) Van Roekel of Brandon, SD; 8 grandchildren; 2 great-grandchildren; Patti (Mark) Olinyk of Plover, WI, Bob Deeb and family of Minneapolis, Mary (John) Giddings of Sioux Falls, Ted Schnell of Parkston, SD; and other extended family.

He was preceded in death by his first wife, Ruth; daughter, Paula; son, Eric; infant son, Brad; and sister, **Jane '65** Deeb.

Gary Stamman '55 of Rochester, MN, died April 6, 2024. Gary met his future wife, Marion, at the Arkota Ballroom, and the couple was married

on April 23, 1960, in Sioux Falls. After graduating from the University of Minnesota with a degree in geology, Gary also earned a teaching degree from St. Cloud State, and then received his master's degree from the University of South Dakota. He taught math for 32 years at Kellogg Junior High School in Rochester for 32 years. Gary also coached football and baseball.

Gary was father to Tom (Teresa), Debbie Anthony (Mitchell) Terry (Kristen), Brad (Andrea) and Joanna Chadwick (Bryan); grandfather of 20; and great-grandfather of 15.

James A. Hamann '56, of Eden Prairie, MN, died February 18, 2024. Jim attended Mankato State earning his BA in 1960. His career was dedicated to education. First, as a teacher, then, after completing his master's and doctorate programs at the University of Minnesota, as a school administrator. Jim spent 26 years with Edina Public Schools as an assistant principal, principal assistant superintendent/director of finance.

After retirement, he enjoyed winter getaways in Hawaii. Along with his passion for travel, Jim was an avid reader, NYT crossword expert, train enthusiast and baseball lover.

Jim is survived by his wife, Mavis and daughter, Jane Ann, both of Eden Prairie and his brother David (Jackie) of

REMEMBERING OUR CLASSMATES/SEE PAGE 5

Remembering our classmates/continued from page 5

Glendale, AZ, as well as a large extended family and lifelong friends.

Karla (Brummer)

Tildahl, '57 of Fontana, WI, died on April 7, 2024. Karla attended Fairview Hospital School of Nursing for her RN license and the University of Minnesota for her BSN in Nursing Education. She began her nursing career working in doctors' offices and hospitals in the Twin Cities. She married Brent Tildahl on December 22, 1961, in St. Paul. They moved to Fontana in 1970 where Karla worked at Aurora Lakeland Medical Center until her retirement in 2001. She taught nursing at Gateway Technical College and created the Woman's Health Center at Lakeland, tirelessly advocating for women's health. Karla was a certified parish nurse and was one of 10 people to create the Open Arms Free Clinic, where she served as Nurse Manager. Karla was involved with many organizations, served on community boards and received a variety of awards, including a Humanitarian award, Outstanding Educator award and Fontana Citizen of the Year.

Karla is survived by sons Brad (Margaret) and Michael; one grandson and 3 step grandsons; brother Charles (Lois), sister-in-law Mary (Dan); and five nephews and nieces.

Frederick Philip "Phil"

Bonthius '58 of Excelsior, MN, died May 24, 2024. Phil graduated from Mankato State University and had a successful career as a manufacturer's representative in the electrical

industry. He was a Mason for 54 years, belonging to the Excelsior Masonic Lodge.

Phil is survived by his wife Susan; sons Phil (Peggy) and Kevin (Kate); and five grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by sisters Mary Jane and Carolyn.

1960 - 1969

Jane (VanderKooi)

Hagedorn '62, of St Paul, died on April 5, 2024. Jane taught high school history, served as a legal secretary/assistant with the Minnesota attorney general for 20 years, served as a substitute teacher, and devoted herself to her family. In retirement Jane took up picture framing. She framed works of art, prints and photographs for family, friends, and fundraising events. Throughout her adult life, Jane enjoyed the theater and volunteering in a range of capacities, including at St. Paul Reformation Lutheran Church.

Jane is survived by her husband, Michael; her children, Timothy (Hildi), Joseph (Hau), and Mara (Conrado) Badilla; 8 grandchildren; siblings Kathryn Den Houter, **Benjamin '71** VanderKooi, **Ann '73** Vermeer, and **Sue '77** Terhune; and many nieces and nephews.

Lois (Ossenfort)

Nath '62 died April 28, 2024, in Luverne. Lois was united in marriage to Norman Nath in Luverne on June 8, 1963, making their home in Luverne until moving to an acreage near Hardwick in 1973. Through the years, Lois worked as a nurse assistant at the

Hospital and Mary Jane Brown Nursing Home, A.R. Wood Manufacturing, Fey Industries, and then as administrative assistant at Engebretson-Hartquist Funeral Home until 2012. Lois was compassionate to those in need, including her siblings, who came to stay when going through hardships in their lives. In 2000 Norm and Lois moved to Luverne and recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in 2023.

Lois is survived by her husband, Norm; two children, **Michael '87**(Angie) Nath of Littleton, CO, and **Lisa '89** (Toby) Vos of Luverne; four grandchildren; two brothers, **Donald '61** (Barbara) Ossenfort and **Rodger '68** (**Dianne '68**) Ossenfort; six sisters, **Carol '63** Oltmans, **Alice '65** Hansen, **Linda '67** (Gene) Molden, **Debbie '70** Gehrke, **Brenda '73** (Keith) Staeffler, and **Kathy '74** (Keith) Scholten; sister-in-law **Marcia '63** Ossenfort; many nieces and nephews; and a host of friends.

She was preceded in death by two sisters, Marlene (Lyle) Lundgren, and **Judy '68** Reis; four brothers, Lorne (Grace) Ossenfort, David (Linda) Ossenfort, **Larry '65** Ossenfort, and **Dennis '72** (Diane) Ossenfort; and three brothers-in-law, **Virgil '60** Oltmans, **Ron '62** Hansen and Roger Gehrke.

David Feauto '66 of Shellsburg, IA, passed away on March 17, 2024. Dave joined the Army after high school and spent a year at the North Pole as part of a scientific

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expedition. He was deployed to Vietnam where he earned the distinguished Purple Heart through injuries sustained from a landmine, and from providing cover for another soldier until help arrived. Dave was a self-taught skilled mechanic. He worked for Farmland Foods in the truck repair shop then became an over-the-road truck driver, and then retired as a dispatcher.

David is survived by his wife Joy; two sisters, Roxanne Weaver and Renee Feauto; brother Dale Feauto; son Joe (Jamie); daughter Tina (Todd) Nibbe; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his brother **Rodney '68**.

Pamela (Nelson)

Eastman '67 of Los Angeles, CA, died on December 28, 2023. Pam fought lung disease for 17 years. She lived her life for her children and grandchildren. She was selfless and maintained friendships from the various places she lived.

Pam is survived by her three sons, Chad, Shane and Ryan.

Allan Meinerts '67 died April 23, 2024, in Luverne. Allan attended Pipestone VoTech completing the auto mechanics program and then returned to the family farming operation. On August 12, 1977, he married Evonne Smedsrud in Luverne. In addition to farming, Allan accumulated several rental properties, which he maintained. In 2010 the couple moved into

town and in 2014, Allan officially retired.

Allan loved everything about cars, whether it was racing, wrenching, talking about them, attending car shows or just driving around. He enjoyed coffee with the boys and especially spending time with friends and family.

Allan is survived by his wife, Evonne, of Luverne; a daughter, Michelle of Mitchell, SD, a son, Daniel (special friend, Jessi) of Luverne; two grandsons; three siblings, **John '56 (Linda '66)** of Owatonna, **George '58 (Sharon '63)** of Luverne, and **Louise '60** Wylie of Grandbury, TX; sister-in-law, **Martha '53** Meinerts of Lakeville; and other relatives and friends.

He was preceded in death by five siblings, Lowell Meinerts, Enola Kortlever, **Lylamae '50** Vandenberg, **Claryce '54** Phillips and Carl Meinerts

1970 – 1979

John Thomas '71 died suddenly on June 5, 2024, in Tacoma, WA. John graduated from the University of Minnesota with a degree in marketing. After a career in insurance and marketing, he spent the past eight years as a substitute teacher in Tacoma Public Schools. He and his wife, **Kate '74** moved from their longtime Minnesota home in 2014 to be closer to their daughter and her family in Tacoma. He enjoyed playing guitar, golfing with his son Jameson, and spending time with his grandkids.

John is survived by his wife Kate (Petersen), children

Jessie (Spencer) Clark and Jameson; three grandchildren; and siblings **Kathy, Tom '65, Rochelle, and Dan '75**.

He was preceded in death by his sister **Meri '92**.

Joyce McClure '75 died March 15, 2024, in Sioux Falls. Joyce was married to Doug Suhr. After some moves, they settled in Colorado, where Joyce remained after their divorce. In May 1985 she moved to Luverne and years later, to Sioux Falls. She was employed with CNA Surety for 30-plus years as a customer service representative. Joyce was an animal lover, an avid talker, crafter, and proficient gift giver.

Joyce is survived by her sisters, **Linda '74 (Peter '74 Olsen) McClure** of Vining, MN, and **Julie '83 (Todd) McChesney** of Elk River; her nieces, Shelby and Madison; and numerous relatives and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents.

John Frahm '79 of Madison Lake, MN, died on April 21, 2024. John attended school in northern Minnesota for carpentry. He was employed as a skilled carpenter and worked for many years in Mankato and surrounding areas, most recently for RTL Construction Inc.

John is survived by his sisters **Susan '70** Frahm, **Sallie '72 (Chris) Frahm-Smith**, and **Sharon '76 (Paul) Frahm-Schmuck**; his close friend, Monika Mohr; and nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in

REMEMBERING OUR CLASSMATES/SEE PAGE 8

death by siblings **Sandra '74** and James, and brother-in-law **Neal '72** Norton.

1980 – 1989

Daniel Meyer '81 died on May 8, 2024, at his home. Dan enlisted into the US Army after high school and served for three years. Following his service, he worked primarily in the concrete business as a form setter, concrete pourer, and finisher. In recent years, Dan worked at the St. Francis House as a senior housing assistant. St. Francis provides housing and services to those experiencing homelessness or transitions in their lives. His interests were cheering on his children in their activities, and Minnesota sports, including the Vikings and Twins. He was very proud of earning the title as individual state wrestling champion at 185 pounds his senior year of high school.

Dan is survived by his two sons, Alex (Brenda) Meyer, Sioux City, IA, and Cole (Lisa) Barden of Lake Crystal; six siblings, **Cheryl '70** (Tom) McGarthwite of Granite Falls, **Doug '72** (Connie) Meyer of Greeley, KS, **Joanie '74** (Al Stark) Meyer of St. Cloud, **Donald '78** (Lori) Meyer of Sioux Falls, **David '80** (Vicky) Meyer of Luverne, and **Daryl '90** (Shakira) Meyer of Lake Park, IA; and other relatives and friends.

1990 – 1999

Michael Aning '93 of Luverne, died April 15, 2024. Mike worked for Schuur's Concrete and later Buffalo Ridge Concrete. In 2012 Mike began working for the Rock County Highway Department, driving snowplow and working maintenance. Mike was an active member of the Rock County Fair Board and the Masonic Lodge. He enjoyed mud and enduro races and liked to spend time outdoors.

Mike is survived by his life partner, Aimee Schmidt of Sioux Falls and Luverne; two sons, **Christopher '22** and Jesse, both of Luverne; parents, **Jake '68** and Marilyn Aning, Luverne; sister **Melissa '96** (Cory) Rutten, Lincoln, NE; one niece; and many aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Michelle (Leggett) Nath '98 died November 22, 2021, in Emmett, ID. She graduated from Marshalltown University in 2000 and Southeast Technical Institute's accounting program in Sioux Falls in 2009. Michelle spent her career working as a corporate accountant and was passionate about animal rescue.

Michelle is survived by her husband, Joshua; children Caitlynn (Andrew) Sperry, Meridian, ID, Jacalynn Nath, Moscow, ID, and Logan and Alexander of Emmett, ID; one grandson; her mother, Peggy Leggett, Cushing, IA; siblings

Joseph Nelson, Cushing, IA, Dwight (Melissa), Colorado Springs, CO, Valery (Jon) Fuhrman, Cleghorn, IA, Melanie (Michael), Jonestown, PA, Jennifer Leggett (Randall) Douglas, Olympia, WA; and many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her father.

2000 – 2009

Orrie Frahm '05 died June 17, 2024, in Sioux Falls. Orrie enlisted in the Army National Guard on July 26, 2005, and was deployed for two tours overseas. His first deployment was to Iraq for 18 months during Operation Iraqi Freedom. In 2008, Orrie returned to live in Magnolia, Luverne, St. Cloud, and Dawson. He worked for Pipestone Systems and DeNoble CPAs in Rock Rapids, IA. On October 6, 2012, he was united in marriage to Chessa Ossefoort; they would later divorce. On April 25, 2022, Orrie received his honorable discharge from the Army.

Orrie is survived by his parents, James and Rae Frahm of Ellsworth; siblings **Jamie '99** Frahm of Ellsworth, **Paul '02** (Heather) Frahm of Luverne, and **Lucas '08** (Victoria) Frahm of Ellsworth; grandmother Connie Frahm; and many other relatives and friends.

He was preceded in death by his paternal grandfather, his maternal grandparents and his aunt Jann Tritabaugh.

Have you moved lately or changed your email address?
Please email updates to: piersonprp@alliancecom.net. Thank you

What we've heard from classmates

Compiled by Jane Wildung Lanphere

Thank you and the many committee members for all you do for LHS Graduates.

I so appreciate "The Awesome Newsletters" you send to us and all of your work putting everything together!

Many CHEERS to the many people involved. YEA CARDINALS!

**Eleanor Rober Van Guilder,
Class of 1959**

Let us know what you are doing and we'll pass it on to other alumni.

Include your name, year of graduation, address, phone number and email (also let us know if you would like your email in our directory of alumni).

Send your news to:

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

Or email **luvernechamber@co.rock.mn.us**

Luverne Schools Hall of Fame announcements/continued from page 1

Schools and the effect educators have on the community in general.

The Luverne Public Schools Educator Hall of Fame honors the contributions and accomplishments of these individuals who are worthy of recognition as examples for others to emulate.

The following selection criteria for the Luverne Educator Hall of Fame has been established:

- ☐ Nominees must exemplify the highest standards of ethical conduct and moral character.
- ☐ All candidates will be judged on their significant and/or long-term contributions to Luverne Public Schools and the Rock County community.
- ☐ Nominees must have been employed as full-time staff (administrator or educator) within the Luverne Public school system for minimum of 8 years and must have distinguished themselves by demonstrating exceptional leadership, character and achievement during his/her tenure in the Luverne Public School District.
- ☐ The nominee must be retired from or not working for the District for a minimum of 5 years.
- ☐ The inductee may be either living or deceased.

The Luverne Public Schools Hall of Fame Committee is honored to announce the selection of 5 inductees into the Class of 2024 Luverne Educator Hall of Fame:

- ☐ **Harvey Eitreim**
- ☐ **Esther Spease Frakes**
- ☐ **Gordon Gits**
- ☐ **Elmer Menage**
- ☐ **Dolly Talbert**

INDUCTION CEREMONIES:

The Induction Ceremonies for the Luverne Alumni Hall of Fame and the Luverne Educator Hall of Fame will take place on Friday, September 27, 2024 during the Luverne Cardinal Homecoming Festivities.

The public ceremonies will be held at 4 pm in the Performing Arts Center. Following the presentations, inductees and/or their representatives will proceed to the unveiling of the Alumni Hall of Fame wall and the Educator Hall of Fame plaque.

Following the unveiling, all attendees are invited to the Luverne High School-Middle School Commons for a public reception with light refreshments.

For Homecoming 2024 – the Luverne Cardinals will play Blue Earth Area at 7 pm at Cardinal Field. Go Big Red!



Submitted photo

Family representatives from Luverne war heroes Robert Anderson (on left, Jerry and Renae Reu of Luverne) and Quentin Aanenson (on right, Ann Roebuck and Jerry Aanenson of Boyd, Maryland) are featured in the documentary Jim Brandenburg is coordinating about the jeep he is gifting to Luverne. A French interpreter takes the picture.

World War II ‘Willy’ gifted to Luverne

Brandenburg leads film team documenting authentic jeep’s journey for Sept. 7 public unveiling

By Mavis Fodness

For eight months, world-renowned wildlife photographer and Luverne native Jim Brandenburg coordinated the finding and restoration of a 1942 military Ford GPW jeep used 80 years ago in the D-Day invasion at Omaha Beach in Normandy, France.

In September he will formally gift the rare military relic to Luverne for appearances at community celebrations.

“Jeeps are special to me, and Luverne has been so incredibly good to me,” Brandenburg said.

“And I thought, ‘What can I give Luverne — the hometown of war heroes — to show my gratitude?’”

Brandenburg is also coordinating the yet-to-be named documentary of the jeep’s homecoming to

the U.S., where it was originally manufactured.

The film will tell the jeep’s story including how it was found inside a French barn last fall, its restoration by a French master military jeep restorer, and the jeep’s role in the D-Day Invasion as told by two relatives of Luverne’s war heroes who were there, Quentin Aanenson and Robert Anderson.

Anderson’s daughter and son-in-law traveled to France for the June 6 ceremony commemorating the 80th anniversary of the D-Day Invasion.

Renae and Jerry Reu of Luverne were joined by Aanenson’s son, Jerry, and his partner, Ann Roebuck, from Boyds, Maryland.

JEEP WILLY GIFTED TO LUVERNE/SEE PAGE 10



Submitted photo

Jim Brandenburg provided this June 5 picture showing the film crew at the airfield near Omaha Beach where aviator Quentin Aanenson landed and took off during the D-Day Invasion. In the picture is the Ford GPW “Willy” jeep Brandenburg located in France, restored, and has gifted to his hometown of Luverne.

Authentic Jeep Willy gifted to Luverne/continued from page 9

Last week the four filmed portions of the documentary that included driving the jeep on Omaha Beach, one of five invasion sites, and stopping at the airfield where the late Aanenson flew dozens of missions.

A few of the anniversary celebration events are also featured in the documentary.

They include the re-enactment of paratroopers like Robert Anderson landing behind enemy lines as part of the invasion.

“It was an incredible coincidence, and we were incredibly lucky these two events coincided,” Brandenburg said.

He attended the 70th anniversary of the D-Day Invasion that ultimately led to the end of World War II in 1945 and said French citizens readily thanked him for sending soldiers like Anderson

and Aanenson to help liberate their family members from Hitler-German control.

“I’ll never forget it,” he said of the anniversary experience.

Jeep project gets off ground last fall

For the past 20 years, Brandenburg has made regular business trips to Europe, where he’s branched his interest in wildlife photography and environmentalism into filmmaking.

He regularly collaborates with Frenchman and friend Christophe Cocherie.

For decades his photography work relied on modern-day, rugged four-wheel-drive vehicles to reach remote destinations.

JEEP WILLY GIFTED TO LUVERNE/SEE PAGE 11



Jerry Aanenson sees the airfield where his father, Quentin, flew dozens of flights as a fighter pilot during World War II.

Authentic Jeep Willy gifted to Luverne/continued from page 10

“Jeeps are special to me,” he said.

And it led him to seek an authentic military jeep, preferably one involved in the Normandy invasion.

During World War II the jeep came to symbolize American ingenuity and productivity to allies and enemies alike because the jeep could go anywhere and do almost anything.

On D-Day jeeps were used by special air service units to conduct raids behind enemy lines.

Reports indicate 640,000 jeeps were built from 1941 and 1945 in the United States.

However, the average life expectancy of a jeep in combat was 90 days.

“It’s virtually impossible to find an authentic D-Day jeep,” Brandenburg said.

After the war, the U.S. military left the jeeps in Europe because of the high cost of bringing the vehicles home. French farmers would use the jeeps in their operations, often modifying or stripping the vehicles for the metal parts.

Through his network of French friends and acquaintances, Brandenburg learned of the

abandoned 1942 military jeep in a French barn near Omaha Beach.

It was last used by a farmer in 1952 and had been in storage for 72 years.

“It’s amazing what the French have saved,” Brandenburg said. “There is a whole society who restores the World War II artifacts as an acknowledgement to America for its help.”

Because no actual serial numbers were recorded from the jeeps used in the D-Day Invasion, French military enthusiasts deduct from where the jeep was found and the registration numbers on the vehicles when the jeep arrived in Normandy as part of the D-Day Invasion.

The jeep, as found, was inoperable, and the master restorer said it would take a year to bring the vehicle back to drivable condition.

Brandenburg pressed for the work to be done in nine months, in time for the D-Day Invasion anniversary.

“The date was coming up fast and we didn’t

JEEP WILLY GIFTED TO LUVERNE/SEE PAGE 12

Jensen leads Anna Maria Island July 4 parade

U.S. Army retired veteran Rickard Jensen had his vehicle selected to be the Honor Guard vehicle for the Anna Maria Island, Florida, Fourth of July Parade.

Jensen, a 1970 Luverne High School graduate, formed a Military Veteran Dragon Boat Team in 2021 and competes against other teams in Florida and nationwide.

He leads the team NBP Veterans, named for Nathan Benderson Park, Sarasota, Florida, a paddling facility that hosts state, national and international rowing and paddling events.

Jensen, who was named 2023 Manatee County Veteran of the Year, enlisted in 1971 and served in Vietnam, Germany, Alaska, and numerous other locations in his 21-year Army career. He attained the rank of E-8 (1SG) upon retirement in 1992 and is now a



Luverne native Rickard Jensen (center) is pictured with NBP Veterans team members (from left) Ana Dougherty, Noell Hickey, Sherri Vroom and Julia Janowich

permanent disabled veteran.

He is the son of the late Ralph and Jackie Jensen, and his siblings include Randy Jensen, Luverne, Joann Emery, Sioux Falls, and Bob Jensen, Worthington.

Authentic Jeep Willy gifted to Luverne/continued from page 11

know if it was 100 percent finished until a couple of days (before June 6)," Brandenburg said. "It works like new now."

On June 5, the day before the 80th anniversary of D-Day, Jerry Reu made a test drive on the streets of Normandy.

At the D-Day events on June 6, Brandenburg said videographer Cocherie captured French military re-enactors talking with Jerry Aanenson and Renae Reu.

"Thank you for what your fathers did and for coming here," Cocherie said the reenactors told them.

"Some of those French tough guys were crying because of the emotion to meet Jerry and Renae — Unforgettable moment."

Bringing the jeep to the U.S., Luverne

The jeep is expected to reach the United States in August, and local volunteers may personally trailer it from the East Coast to Luverne to ensure

its debut at the "Welcome Home Military Parade" on Saturday, Sept. 7.

The parade begins at 11 a.m. followed by a military vehicle meet and greet from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the courthouse square.

Brandenburg plans to show the completed documentary at the Palace Theatre on Sept. 7.

The jeep project became possible with help from the K.A.H.R. Foundation, Luverne Area Community Foundation, and other local individual and group donors.

The jeep will be community-owned.

The Rock County Commissioners approved \$7,000 from the Veterans Memorial Building exhibit budget toward the jeep project at their April 16 meeting.

County Administrator Kyle Oldre estimated the jeep project's total cost at between \$100,000 and \$110,000.

This story originally appeared in the June 13 Rock County Star Herald.

Luverne Dollars for Scholars ... Did you know?

Here's how students are awarded their Dollars for Scholars

Applicants for a Luverne Dollars for Scholars award are 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 15. 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.

The total amount of scholarships paid out each year varies. The DFS Board uses 4.5 percent of the five-year fair market value of its fund assets as a guide when determining the total to be awarded each year.

Students who receive a scholarship award of \$4,000 or less can use it all in one year, while scholarships greater than \$4,000 are divided out over multiple years, with \$4,000 being the max that can be paid out each year. Scholarship funds are not paid out until after the first semester of college has been completed. In order to receive their scholarship funds, students must maintain a minimum 2.0 GPA. Scholarship checks are paid directly to the school.

Luverne Dollars for Scholars wrapped up its 2024 awards season this May. Seventy one qualifying Luverne High School students from the Class of 2024 were awarded \$546,500. These scholarships ranged from \$3,250 to \$12,750.

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

Call: 507-227-4030 (Johnna Ahrendt)

Or visit: www.luverne.dollarsforscholars.org

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 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...

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Submitted photos

Britton Stratton (left) and Beth Capistran pose with the time capsule materials gathered when the current Luverne Elementary School opened in November 1998. Stratton was a kindergartner 25 years ago and Capistran has been a music teacher until her retirement this year. Most of the materials sealed in a plastic tub and placed in the stone bench were ruined by moisture.

Time capsule fails to preserve 25-year-old Luverne Elementary materials

New capsule will be hidden inside school for next opening in 2049

By Mavis Fodness

Instructions written 25 years ago by the Luverne Elementary School Time Capsule Committee were simple.

“It is our wish from the Time Capsule Committee that this time capsule will help explain what life was like in the year 1998.

“We hope it is a goal of the Luverne School District to include meaningful things depicting the life in 2024 added to the time capsule, and every 25 years thereafter.”

The 1998 capsule was opened by a member of the original time capsule committee, Beth Capistran, and a kindergarten student at the time, Britton Stratton, who is now an employee of the school district.

“They made a big deal about it — conducting a whole pep fest,”

Stratton recalled. “I didn’t know what was in it, and I thought they buried it outside.”

The 1998 time capsule was assembled in November 1998 to honor the completion of the new elementary school at its current location.

The capsule, a plastic storage tub, was placed in the single stone bench just outside the school entrance.

Inside the plastic tote were paper items like the building dedication program, an inch-thick package of before and after construction pictures, newspapers of 1998, blank report cards, lunch menus, student surveys about fads and fashions of 1998, and lyrics to the song, “If These Walls Could Talk,” composed by Capistran,

specifically for the November dedication ceremony.

Non-paper items included VHS videos of the open house ceremony and dedication, a T-shirt, and two Beanie Babies, which were popular 25 years ago. The Beanies included a cardinal and a buffalo to represent Blue Mounds State Park.

The materials were sealed in a single plastic storage tub with the materials sealed in individual Zip-Loc bags.

The tub was placed in the stone bench, whose lid slid into place, sealing the time capsule in a tomb-like area.

However, over the past 25 years, moisture penetrated the bench and individual plastic

TIME CAPSULE/SEE BACK PAGE

REUNIONS IN THE MAKING



CLASS OF 1964 TO CELEBRATE 60 YEARS!

FRIDAY | SEPTEMBER 27

LUVERNE ALUMNI & EDUCATOR HALL OF FAME INDUCTION CEREMONY

Performing Arts Center | 4 pm | Reception to Follow

MEET FOR HAPPY HOUR & DINNER

Location to be Determined

CARDINAL HOMECOMING FOOTBALL GAME

Cardinal Field | 7 pm

SATURDAY | SEPTEMBER 28

73RD TRI-STATE BAND FESTIVAL PARADE | 10 AM | MAIN STREET

Meet at Wildflower's Coffee Boutique before parade

SATURDAY AFTERNOON | ENJOY THE OPTIONS

Golf, History Center, Brandenburg Gallery, Herreid Military Museum,
Tri-State Field Show, Visiting, Shopping & More

SATURDAY EVENING | CLASS REUNION DINNER

Meet at Rob & Sheila's for Happy Hour & Dinner | 5 pm
RSVP Requested | Please bring your own beverages

SUNDAY | SEPTEMBER 29

COFFEE & DONUTS AT SHEILA & ROB'S | 10 AM

OPTIONS FOR LUVERNE GOLF CART TOUR | 10 AM OR NOON

RSVP'S PLEASE BY AUGUST 1, 2024!

TEXT OR EMAIL YOUR NAME AND # ATTENDING:

Sheila Stegenga 507-227-4418 cell/text rssteg64@live.com

Cammy Iverson 715-781-4000 cell/text cammyiverson@gmail.com



To list reunion plans or for help with planning

Contact: **LUVERNE AREA CHAMBER**

louvernechamber@co.rock.mn.us 507-283-4061

The Chamber/CVB offers a **FREE MAILING** with
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Luverne Elementary School time capsule/continued from page 14

bags. As a result, black mold grew unchecked until the capsule was reopened this spring.

“It was a total bust,” said technology integrationist Susan Beers, who video-recorded the unveiling. “Virtually everything had moisture in it and was ruined.”

Beers examined the VCR tape (the elementary school still had players for the dated technology) and the compact disks, but both were too damaged to insert into the players.

Few if any of the 1998 materials will be included in the 2024 time capsule, as the original committee instructed, due to the mold.

What may be included are coins and two metal doors signs — “Principal” and “Toilet” from the old downtown elementary school.

The 2024 time capsule is to be opened during the 2048-49 school year.

Beers and Capistran are assembling the new materials for the 2049 time capsule, which will be stored inside the school and not subjected to outside moisture.

Materials are still to be assembled, but a few decisions have



Black mold is seen inside the Zip-Loc bags used to enclose items that were included in the 1998 Luverne Elementary School time capsule.

been made.

“We’ll give them some of our technology because that changes the most,” she said.

Also included are posters signed by students and staff from each of the six grade levels.

“You’ll have to come back in 25

years and see what we’ve added,” Capistran said.

Beers’ video of the 1998 time capsule opening can be viewed at the Luverne Elementary School social media page.

This story originally appeared in the June 6 Star Herald.