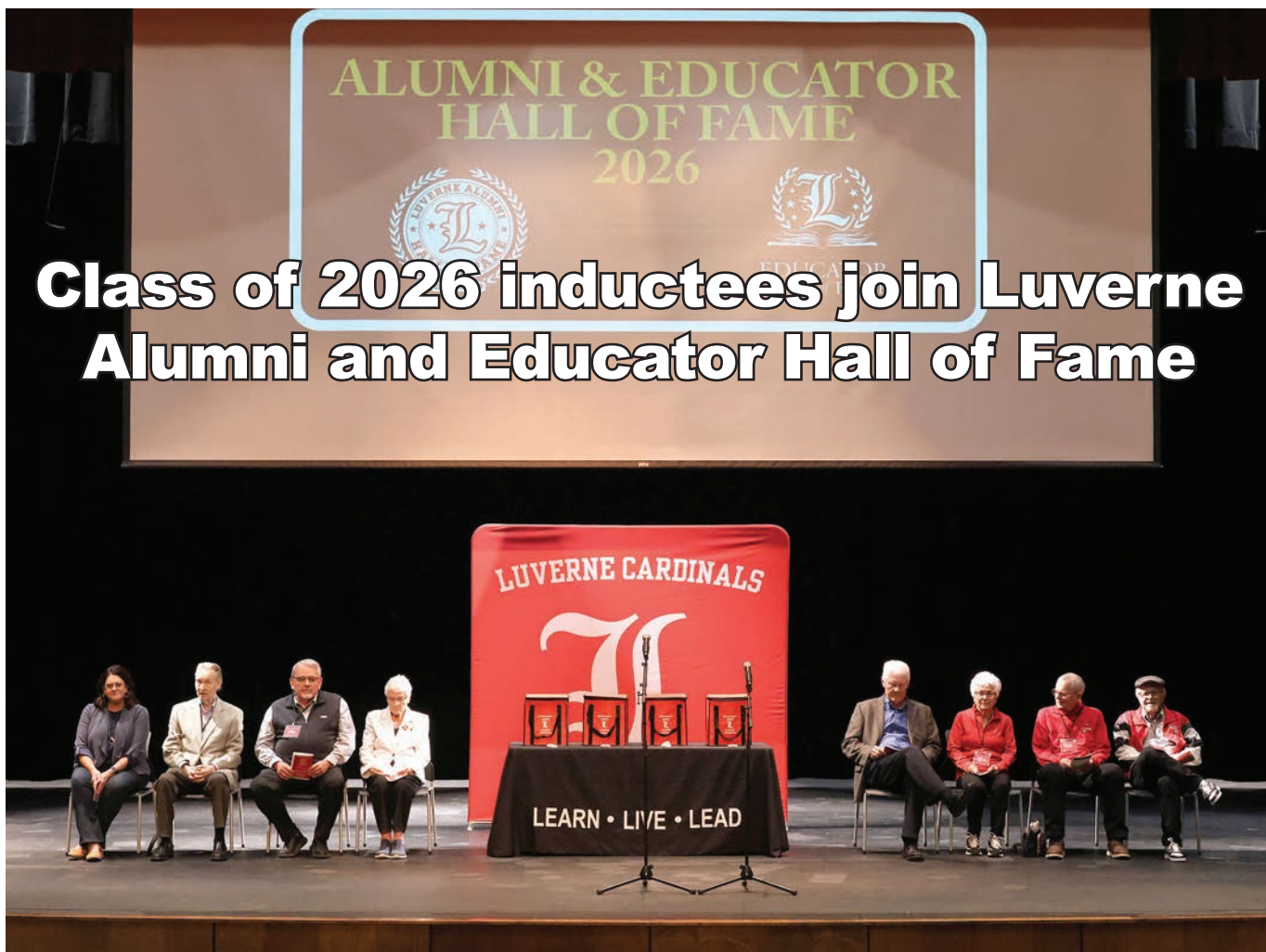




Class of 2026 inductees join Luverne Alumni and Educator Hall of Fame

Pictured at the school performing arts center are (from left) Alumni Hall of Fame inductees Emily Crabtree, Omar Olson and Bill Weber, Betty Mann (on behalf of James Wiggins), and Educator Hall of Fame inductees Joel Christensen (on behalf of his mother, Marge), Shirley Harrison, Jerry Jensen and Jim Sanden.

Honorees celebrated during Luverne homecoming festivities Oct. 2

By Lori Sorenson

Luverne Public Schools inducted a new round of honorees into its Alumni Hall of Fame and Educators Hall of Fame Friday, Oct. 2, ahead of homecoming activities that evening.

At 4 p.m. alumni inductees were introduced in the Alumni Garden on the east side of the school campus where the Alumni Hall of Fame Wall was also unveiled.

At 4:30 p.m. educator induct-

ees were introduced in the school performing arts center where they were presented gifts and allowed time at the microphone for acknowledgements.

HALL OF FAME/SEE PAGE 7

Honor Roll of Alumni News contributors

Compiled by Johnna Ahrendt

During this past quarter ending Sept. 30, 2026, the Alumni News received money in the form of memorials, and gifts totaling \$1,660. 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 2027, 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 6/30/26 \$68,850.57
Donations: 1,660.00
Int & Div: 843.27

Expenses

Postage 2,801.82
Printing 962.40
Labels 752.94
Database 90.00
Paypal Fees 1.94

Balance 9/30/26 \$66,744.74

Memorials

Charles Hansen '41

Audrene Hansen - Friend

Eugene Meyer '53

Joyce (Turner) Sexton '53

Audrey (Smeins) Poppen '55

Fred '59 & Judy (VanOtterloo) '59
Smeins

Margaret (Henningsen) Kohl '55

Alice (Henningsen) Phillips '61
Yvonne (Lind) Halter '55

John Martin '60

Bill Martin '62
Garfield '60 & Ellaine Henriksen

Alice (Ossenfort) Hansen '65

Gordon '65 & Joycelyn

(Aanenson) '65 Hansen

James '66 & Carol (Aanenson)
'66 Hatting

Joan (Aanenson) Berry '75
Linda (Ossenfort) Molden '67

Bruce Kurtz '70

Kathy Dykers '70

Ellen (Arends) Cannefax '70

Lona (Gabrielson) Klosterbuer
'70
Kathy Dykers '70

Korey Heck '94

Bradley '84 & Angela (Earl) '89
Ahrendt
James '59 & Gloria (Aanenson)
'63 Rolfs
Mick & Joan (Aanenson)'75
Berry

Contributions

Beth (Eberlein) O'Dea '70

Christine (Mohr) Tortorella '71

Hardwick All School Reunion

Jeffrey Eberlein '67

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.

Luverne Dollars for Scholars ... Did you know?

Student scholarship applications are evaluated by set of criteria provided in applications

Scholarship application season is upon us once again! The Luverne High School Class of 2027 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 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.

Good luck to the Class of 2027! We look forward to awarding your hard work over the past four years.

If you would like to contribute to Luverne Dollars for Scholars, 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...

Patti Pierson piersonprp@alliancecom.net,
1-507-920-5186
or 1562 201st ST Hardwick MN 56134

Remembering our classmates

Compiled by Carol Schumacher Serie

1940 – 1949

Barbara (Barrett) Wilfahrt '45 died April 11, 2025. No obituary available.

Dr. Doris Schoon '47 died July 29, 2026, in Anaheim, CA. Dr. Schoon earned her medical degree from the University of Minnesota in 1954 and became a board-certified ophthalmologist. She later earned a master's in electrical engineering from CSU Long Beach in 1991 to advance research into age-related vision changes. She taught resident physicians at UC Irvine, served veterans at the VA Long Beach Healthcare System, and volunteered at mission hospitals in Kenya and New Mexico.

Dr. Schoon is survived by her nieces and nephews, **Susan '65** Schoon Eberly, **Peter Schoon '67**, **Christian '70** Schoon, Hans Schoon, and Donna (Steven) Schoon, along with their families.

She was preceded in death by her brother, **Warren '40** Schoon and nephew, **Steven '62** Schoon.

Enore (Bergman) Boelman '48 died August 18, 2026, in Hills, MN. Enore was married to **Edwin '42** Boelman on June 9, 1948, and the couple dairy farmed in Kanaranzi Township, Rock County where they raised their family and Enore maintained a huge garden. She moved to Luverne in 1984, becoming a day care provider. In 1996 Enore took a food service position at the Luverne Public Schools, which she enjoyed for 20 years. Later in life she wrote a book reflecting her life with 11 siblings.

Enore is survived by children Barbara (Lary) Nelson, **Bruce '70** (Carol) Boelman, **Brenda '72** Hurley, **Becky '73** (**Steve '72**) Sehr, **Bobbie '78** (**Tracy '84**) Boelman, **Beth '81** (Cory) Chambers, and **Bridget '88** (Grady) Nelson; 17 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren; brothers Lowell Wessels, **Harold '63** Wessels, **David '65** (Bev) Wessels, **Doug '65** Wessels; sisters-in-law Gert Wessels, Theresa Wessels; and special friend Carol Cook.

She was preceded in death by her

husband, **Edwin**; son, **Bryan '76**; son-in-law, Norman Hurley; brothers Dale, Norman, Stanley and **Darrel '60** Wessels; sister, Vernice Wessels, **Phyllis '52** Schouwenburg, **Iva '56** Elbers; brothers-in-law Donald Schouwenburg and Ed Elbers, and sisters-in-law, Sharon Wessels, Jolene Wessels, **Joyce '47** Wessels, **Ginny '68** Wessels; and nephew **Mike '67** Wessels, niece, **Tina '96** Martinez, great-nephew **Andy '94** Wessels, great-grand-niece, Lucy Sailor.

1950 – 1959

Sally (Olson) Hemenway '56 died January 12, 2026. Sally attended Mankato State University, where she met her husband of 65 years, George Hemenway. For 39 years she taught elementary school children in Long Prairie, Mound, Kason, and Stewartville. Beyond the classroom Sally traveled the world with George, exploring new cultures. She was deeply rooted in her community and a proud member of Alpha Delta Kappa, the international honorary organization for women educators.

Sally is survived by her husband, George; her son, Paul (Jessica); and two grandchildren, Eva and Austin.

She was preceded in death by her sisters, Norma Olson and Ardis Thorogood.

Marilyn (Meyer) Munns '54 of St. Michael, died June 20, 2026. Marilyn had a lifelong career with Northwest Bell. She enjoyed quilting, sewing, gardening and cooking. Known as a social butterfly, Marilyn is remembered for always having frozen cookie dough ready to bake at a moment's notice.

Marilyn is survived by her children, **Gary '75** (Michelle), Rhonda (Dung) Nguyen, and **Nancy '84** Munns; 7 grandchildren; 8 great-grandchildren; sister, **Dorothy '48** Sherburn; sister-in-law, **Rosie '53** Meyer; and many nieces, nephews and friends.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Ronald; grandson, Matthew Wayne;

REMEMBERING OUR CLASSMATES/SEE PAGE 5

Remembering our classmates/continued from page 4

daughter-in-law, Katie Munns; siblings, Joy Meyer, Pauline Hogue, Robert Meyer, Betty Iveland, Dick Meyer, **Maxine '50** Prahm, **Dallas '52** Meyer, and **Gene '53** Meyer.

1960 – 1969

John Martin '60 of Luverne, died August 22, 2026. No obituary available.

Donald (Don) Doeksen '60 died July 21, 2026. Don worked a variety of jobs in the Twin Cities before returning to night school to graduate from the University of Minnesota and launch a career in computer programming & systems analysis working most of his career for the University of Minnesota. Don and his wife Peggy raised their children in Golden Valley before they divorced. Don moved to St. Paul and pursued his wide variety of interests from reading to fishing, biking, running (completing 18 marathons), X-country skiing, music, photography, ASL and more. He volunteered for more than 20 different organizations and received an award from Literacy MN for volunteering over 2,080 hours.

Don is survived by his son, Carl (Kelly), daughter, Amy (Mike Zimmer); 7 grandchildren; sisters Pat (Garlan), Linda (Bob), Diane (Kevin), Jodi (Gary); and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his sister, Sharon, and granddaughter Lynn.

Bruce Ohlsen '68 died on September 4, 2026, in Madison, WI. Bruce graduated from Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall, with a bachelor's degree in Sociology and minor in Political Science. He worked at Cardinal Glass in Spring Green, WI, and then for Unity HMO for 21 years. Bruce settled in Sauk Prairie, WI, where he raised his family.

Bruce is survived by his three children, Amerlee, Bryan and Aaron; and his sister **Gretchen '63** Becker.

Gail (VanEngelenhoven) Bremer '69 of Hardwick, died in Luverne on July 3, 2026. Gail was united in marriage to **Dwight '67** Bremer in Luverne on August 31, 1968. They lived on an

acreage near Hardwick where she enjoyed taking care of the animals and flowers. Gail attended Worthington Community College and earned a degree in nursing. She worked as a licensed practical nurse for eight years at the Good Samaritan Society in Pipestone and later worked at the Minnesota Veterans Home in Luverne for almost 22 years. In addition to animals and plants, Gail loved all living things, people, pets, and birds.

Gail is survived by her husband of 56 years, **Dwight**; children, **Michele '88** (Paul) Martens of Brandon, SD, and **Lisa '91** (Rick) Johannson of Rock Rapids, IA; 3 grandchildren; and her brother **Duane '76** (Deb) VanEngelenhoven of Slayton.

She was preceded in death by her infant daughter, Cindy, and two sisters, **Carol '73** Wessels and **Sheryl '67** Schreck.

1980 – 1989

Brock Thielbar '83 died August 9, 2026, at his home. Brock attended Southwest State University and the University of Minnesota Morris. He enlisted into the Minnesota Army National Guard in 1986, serving for 23 years in the infantry and artillery units. He deployed for active duty in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2003-2004, and Operation Iraqi Freedom 2005-2007, 16 months which were in Iraq. Brock completed many training and professional development courses and received numerous awards over his career: Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and Iraq Campaign Medal.

Brock also lived a life of service to his community, including 20 years with the Hardwick Fire Department and contributing to many construction efforts throughout the area. He loved sports, playing pool and spending time with family including fishing with his wife, Jill, who he married on July 2, 2014.

Brock is survived by his wife, Jill; his mother, Jennifer Kiebach of Luverne; 4 children, **Brooke '14** Thielbar of DeSmet, SD, **Levi '22** Thielbar of Luverne, **Luke '22** Thielbar of Sioux

REMEMBERING OUR CLASSMATES/SEE PAGE 6

Falls, SD, **Bridget '24** Thielbar of Luverne; one stepson, **Jared '17** Jose (friend, Abbey) of Luverne; brother **Bart '86 (Paula '86)** Thielbar, Luverne; half-sister, Heather Schiefert (fiancé David Voss); 2 nieces; father and mother-law Jerry & Karen Minett, Ruthton; brothers-in law Joel (Karen) Minett, Jeff (Tracey) Minett, Ruthton; and many extended relatives and friends.

He was preceded in death by his father, Skinny Kiebach.

1990 - 1999

Korey Heck '94, of Luverne, died August 30, 2026, in Sioux Falls. Korey was diagnosed with diabetes at the age of 17 which in many ways would shape his future. After graduating, he spent most of his working career at Ellison Meat in Pipestone. In the late 1990's, Korey found a love for NASCAR and his favorite driver was Dale Earnhardt; after his death, Dale Earnhardt Jr. was his car on the track. Korey amassed a significant collection of NASCAR memorabilia and was a devoted watcher on Saturdays and Sundays. In 2008, due to complications of his disease, Korey had to have his leg amputated. He "retired" from Ellison Meats and move to the Blue Mound Towers. As his physical limitations progressed, he began spending most of his time on his two scooters, which provided him freedom. A resourceful person, he always found a way to get things accomplished, despite obstacles. He never let his diabetes get him down.

Korey is survived by his mother, **Sandy '64** Heck, Luverne; three siblings, Kimberly (Mike) Monmaney, Marshall, Kristine Heck, Luverne, and **Kirby '92** (Wendy) Heck, Colorado Springs, CO; 10 nieces; 3 nephews; aunts, uncles and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his father, **Steve '63** Heck.

Former School Staff

Bonnie (Leppa) Kirchhofer, of South Haven, died August 3, 2026, in Litchfield. Bonnie earned her degree in education from St. Cloud State University. She began her teaching journey at Minnetonka, where she spent three years before dedicating 30 years to the Luverne School District, teaching second grade, retiring in 2003.

Bonnie and her husband, Jim, raised their three children in Luverne. In 2005, they relocated to the serene surroundings of Lake Francis. Bonnie was an avid quilter, entering several award-winning quilts in the Minnesota State Fair.

She is survived by her husband, Jim, of South Haven; children **Tom '85** of North Branch, **Jane '86** (Doug Hennessee) of St. Paul, and **Jon '92** of Minneapolis; 3 grandchildren; 4 siblings; 2 sisters-in-law; and other family members and friends.

Tom Haugen, age 88, of Decorah, IA, died on August 26, 2026. Tom attended Luther College in Decorah, IA where he earned his B.A. in music education. He married Lola Pederson on August 4, 1962. They were blessed with two children, Todd and Kari. Tom was band director in Luverne in the late 1960's and early 1970's. He taught in other communities as well, leaving Luverne to direct the Kellogg High School band in Roseville, and finishing his graduate work at Bemidji State. Tom completed his teaching career in Alexandria.

Tom's concert and jazz bands received Division 1 ratings in contests from 1963-1998. Many trips were taken with his marching bands including the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, CA. After teaching for 38 years, Tom spent 16 years supervising more than 250 music student teachers for Luther College. In addition,

REMEMBERING OUR CLASSMATES/SEE PAGE 7

Please help us find missing addresses

Please check the Alumni News website for "unknown" addresses. We need your help locating them for postal addresses and email addresses. If you know the individuals personally, please ask them to email their postal address to piersonprp@alliancecom.net. Thank you.

Remembering our classmates/continued from page 6

Tom and Lola operated Tri-State Band Judges, servicing roughly 50 summer parades, ten fall field show competitions, and 20-30 clinics each year across the Midwest. In 2011 he was inducted into the Minnesota Music Educators Hall of Fame, as well as receiving many more awards and accolades.

Tom is survived by his wife, Lola; children Todd and Kari (Marty); 2 grandchildren; 2 sisters; 2 brothers; and more relatives and friends.

Friend of Luverne Graduates

Lorraine (Hoime) Olson died July 22, 2026, at the Tuff Memorial Home in Hills. Lorraine received her education in the Kenneth School System, Augustana Academy in Canton, SD, and Augustana College, Sioux Falls, SD. She married **Bert '44** Olson on June 29, 1952. Lorraine began her teaching career in Petersburg, MN, for two years and continued in Luverne for seven more, then substituting as she and Bert raised their family. She served as organist at Grace Lutheran

Church for more than 65 years, retiring in 2014. Lorraine also shared her love of music teaching private piano lessons in her home until age 90. She was active in many church ministries and was a community volunteer while also serving on the Sioux Falls Community Concerts Board and the Augustana Alumni Council.

Lorraine is survived by her children, **Pamela '75** Olson (friend, Justin Winter) of Sioux Falls, **David '79** (Patti) Olson of Luverne, and **Timothy '84** (LeAnn) Olson of Jackson; 6 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; sisters Eunice Minick of Shrewsbury, PA, Judy (Don) Erickson of Sioux Falls, **Marcia '60** (Bruce) Odenbach of Rochester, MN; and her brother, **Ken '57** (Karen) Hoime of Kenneth.

She was preceded in death by her husband, **Bert**; twin grandsons, Patrick and Preston (sons of Tim and LeAnn) and grandson, Christopher (son of Pamela); sisters, **Kathy '57** (Dick) Robinson and Marilyn (Bob) Ode; and brother-in-law Robert Minick.

Luverne Alumni and Educators Halls of Fame/continued from page 1

Their names were unveiled on the Educator Hall of Fame Wall in the commons, where Class of 2026 inductees and guests gathered for an informal reception following induction ceremonies.

The LHS Homecoming football game was at 7 p.m. against Pipestone, for the Battle Axe Trophy, which the Cardinals took home with a 42-0 win over the Arrows.

The game followed a tailgate meal fundraiser at Cardinal Field with a for the Luverne Education Legacy Fund.

Hall of Fame inductees were announced at the game prior to kick-off for fans and



Class of 2026 Luverne Alumni Hall of Fame inductees included Omar Olson, Bill Weber and Emily Crabtree. They're pictured during induction ceremonies Friday, Oct. 2, at the Alumni Hall of Fame wall in the Alumni Garden on the east side of the middle school-high school.

HALL OF FAME/SEE PAGE 8



Class of 2026 Luverne Alumni Hall of Fame inductees are announced during induction ceremonies in the Luverne Alumni Garden Friday, Oct. 2, on the east side of the middle school-high school building.

Luverne Alumni and Educators Halls of Fame/*continued from page 7*



Educator Hall of Fame inductees are (from left) Joel Christensen (on behalf of his mother, Marge), Jerry Jensen, Jim Sanden, Shirley Harrison.

families in the stands.

Alumni Hall of Fame Class of 2026 inductees Emily (Bowron) Crabtree, Class of 1990:

Emily's community and county service has been as executive director of the Rock County Community Foundation, formerly known as the Luverne Area Community Foundation.

During her 15 years of leadership, the RCCF has grown from \$1 million in assets with six funds to over \$10 million supporting 150 funds that enhance quality of life

HALL OF FAME/SEE PAGE 9

Luverne Alumni and Educators Halls of Fame/continued from page 8

throughout Rock County.

Omar Olson, Class of 1967:

Omar's life journey has included newspaper editing, radio announcing and politics. He was active in the Walter Mondale campaign, in the communications department. Omar was instrumental in educating people about early detection of colon cancer. He recently promoted "The Boys in the Light," book by Nina Willner about the heroic war experiences of Luverne WWII veteran Elmer Hovland.

Bill Weber, Class of 1971 is

an accountant and a politician. He owns a Luverne business that focuses on residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural appraisals. As a public servant, Bill was a city councilman and mayor of Luverne. Bill was elected as a state senator in 2012 and represented southwest Minnesota at the state capitol until he retired from elected office in 2026.

James Wiggins, Class of

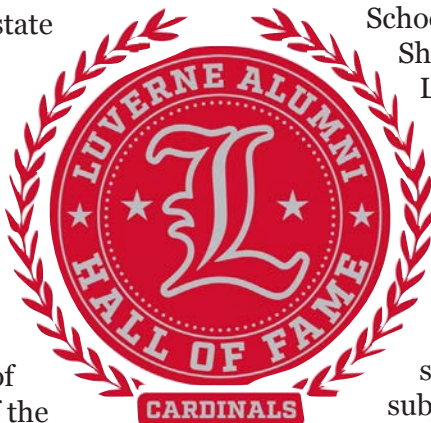
1922: James was owner and editor of the Rock County Star. He then wrote for the St. Paul Pioneer Press-Dispatch before his career took him to the Washington Post for 25 years. He was managing editor and eventually executive editor of the Post. He cared about freedom of the press and helped pass the Federal Freedom of Information Act. President Lyndon Johnson named James U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations from 1968-69.

Educator Hall of Fame Class of 2026 inductees

Shirley Harrison created a character education program to teach elementary children about values. Shirley was awarded \$10,000 for the program, which she donated to the Luverne Public



Principal Jason Phelps unveils the Wall of Fame etched with the names of the 2026 Luverne Alumni Hall of Fame inductees.



Schools character education program.

Shirley started the annual Respect

Lunch event that continues today after 26 years. She was Luverne Teacher of the Year in 1998. She taught primary levels from 1969 – 2005.

Marge Christensen was passionate about educating young people. To her ninth-grade civics students, government was not just a subject; it was an obligation as citizens.

Marge often invited state and local government officials to her classroom as part of her instruction. She was a substitute teacher and 12-year classroom teacher. In a nomination letter, she was described as a teacher who was determined, encouraging and always put students first.

Jerry Jensen began teaching science at Luverne High School in 1973, with biology being his primary focus. His use of creativity and inte-

HALL OF FAME/SEE PAGE 15



NOMINATIONS ACCEPTED NOW THROUGH APRIL 30, 2027

FOR THE LUVERNE ALUMNI AND LUVERNE EDUCATOR HALL OF FAME

The next induction ceremony will be scheduled for the date of the Homecoming Football Game. (Date to be determined.)

LUVERNE ALUMNI 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.

Nomination & Selection Criteria:

- 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 nominee may be living or deceased.
 - The nominee must have attended Luverne Public Schools for a minimum of 8 (eight) years or who has graduated from Luverne High School.
 - The nominee must have led an exemplary life of good character following graduation.

LUVERNE EDUCATOR HALL OF FAME

The Luverne Educator Hall of Fame was established in 2024 to recognize rich heritage and tradition of successful academic, extra-curricular, and operation of Luverne Public 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.

Nomination & Selection Criteria:

- Exemplifies the highest standards of ethical conduct and moral character.
- Significant and/or long-term contributions to Luverne Public Schools and the Rock County community.
- Been employed as full-time staff (administrator or educator) within the Luverne Public school system for minimum of 8 years.
- 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 nominee may be either living or deceased.

Applications for the Luverne Alumni Hall of Fame and the Luverne Educator Hall of Fame are available on-line at:

www.isd2184.net

A Short Biography of Laura Emma Huntington LaDue

Luverne's First High School Graduate!

By Gregg Gropel

Laura Huntington! That's the answer to the often asked local trivia question: "Who was the first graduate of Luverne High School?"

Laura was a member of the two-person class of 1888. The other graduate was Sampson Start.

With no school gymnasium or auditorium at that time, the graduation ceremony was held at Armory Hall, which when after the Palace Theatre was built it was eventually transformed into today's local bowling alley.

Looking into Laura's life she was born in Platteville, Wisconsin, on September 6, 1867. Her parents were George Cooper Huntington and her mother Lydia Ann (maiden name Huntington).

Laura wasn't the only child in the family, she had two brothers: Otis Purl Huntington (1869-1893) and Guy Bateman Huntington (1874-1962).

Platteville is a community in southwestern Wisconsin, near the Mississippi River and several miles north of the Wisconsin-Illinois border. With today's cars driving from Platteville to Luverne would take about a six hours to drive.

Laura and her family eventually made that long trip to Luverne. They moved from Platteville, where her father farmed, to Luverne in 1883.

Looking at early Rock County land maps, Laura's father became both an owner and co-owner of several acres of land scattered around Luverne.

In the years before the family moved to Luverne, Laura attended school in Platteville. Her education did not stop when she left Platteville. As noted, she graduated from Luverne in 1888.

Not long after graduation, on August 28, 1890, she married Albert Deratt LaDue, a 25-year-old banker who was a well known citizen of Luverne. Like many men of that era he went by the initials of A. D. LaDue.

The LaDue House



Pictured above is the A. D. and Laura Huntington LaDue house, 515 N. Essey Street. Listed in the 1930 census the value of the house was estimated to be worth \$12,000. The LaDues raised five children in this house.



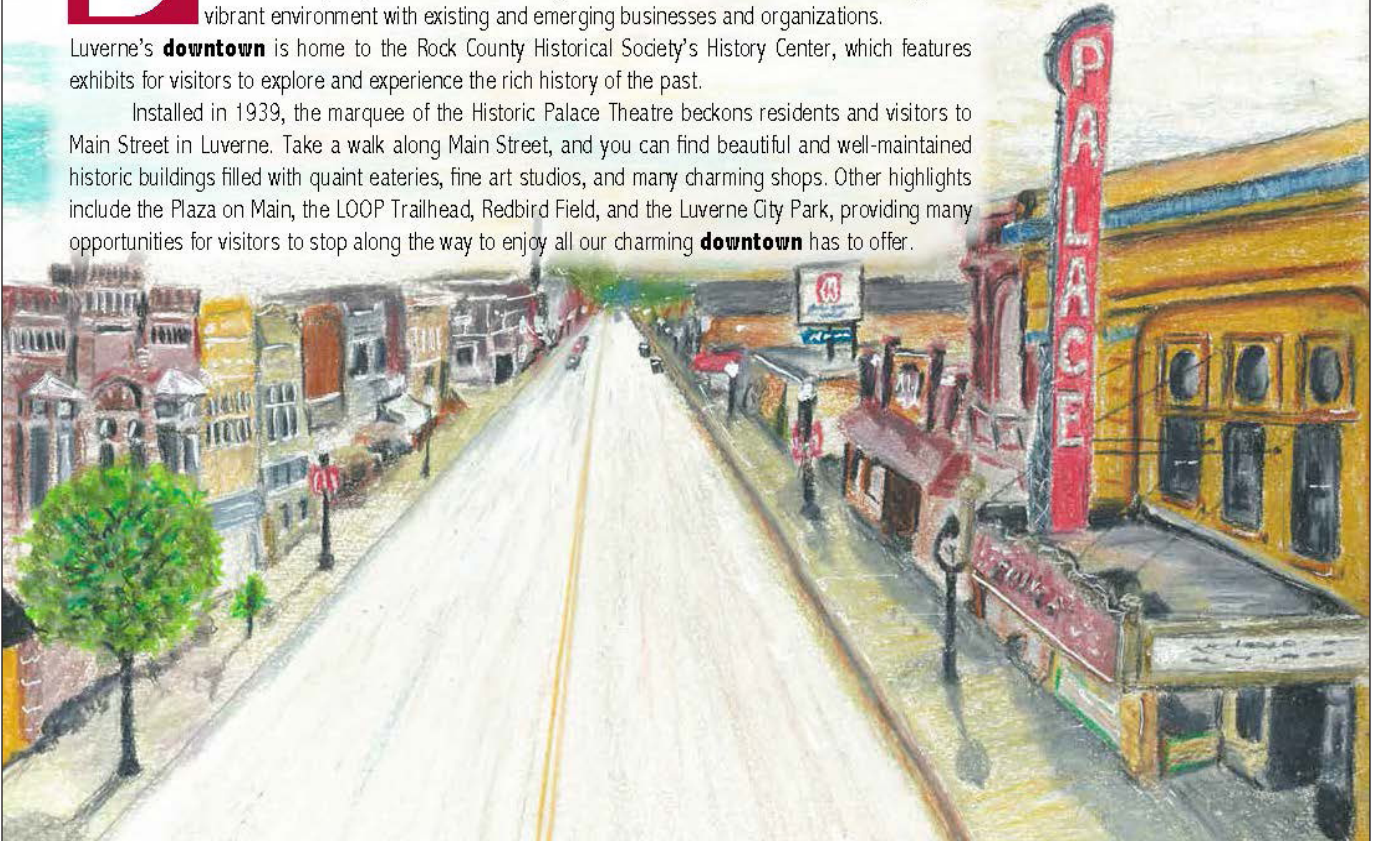
Above is a more recent photo of the LaDue house. When comparing this photo to the top photo notice the slight alterations made to the 1910 era-built home. Even today, more than 100 years since this well-kept, beautiful house was built, there are a few community residents who still refer to this home as the "LaDue house." (Currently the house is being painted a different color.)

D is for Downtown.

The heart of Luverne is our **downtown**. **Downtown** is the place where people go to gather with friends and meet new ones. **Downtown** has been the hub for the community since the early days of Luverne, offering residents and visitors a safe, welcoming, and vibrant environment with existing and emerging businesses and organizations.

Luverne's **downtown** is home to the Rock County Historical Society's History Center, which features exhibits for visitors to explore and experience the rich history of the past.

Installed in 1939, the marquee of the Historic Palace Theatre beckons residents and visitors to Main Street in Luverne. Take a walk along Main Street, and you can find beautiful and well-maintained historic buildings filled with quaint eateries, fine art studios, and many charming shops. Other highlights include the Plaza on Main, the LOOP Trailhead, Redbird Field, and the Luverne City Park, providing many opportunities for visitors to stop along the way to enjoy all our charming **downtown** has to offer.



A to Z LUVERNE Book Celebrates the Community

Luverne Initiatives for Tomorrow's **A to Z Book Committee** released the **A to Z LUVERNE** book during this year's Rock County Fair. More than two years in the making, the hardcover book features original illustrations by local artist **Janine Anderson Brands**.

Janine has always had a passion for art and a deep love of nature. When the committee asked her to create the original illustrations for the book, she graciously accepted the challenge. The committee spent countless hours making the difficult decisions about which words would best represent each letter of the alphabet.

Once each word was selected, Janine used her creativity and artistic talent to bring the idea for each letter to life.

Members of the **A to Z Book Committee** are **Janine Brands, Kristi Groth, Calla Bjorkland Jarvie, Jenny Jorgensen, Kenzi Klein, Betty Mann, Knute Oldre, Sara Oldre, Jill Schmidt and Jane Wildung Lanphere**.

Jenny Jorgensen and Kaleb Roach of Quality Printing of Luverne were responsible for the book's layout. The book was printed by **CG Book Printers of North Mankato, Minnesota**.

Luverne's historic Main Street graces the cover of the book and represents the letter "**D is for Downtown**."

Books are available through the **Luverne Chamber** for **\$30 each or four for \$100**. Postage

A TO Z LUVERNE BOOK/SEE PAGE 15



Retired Luverne School District teachers gather for annual reunion at the start of the school year

By Lori Sorenson

An exclusive club of retired teachers is gaining members who gather annually at the start of the school year.

This year the group included nearly 40 women, some recent retirees and some who have been retired longer than they were teachers.

"As I was thinking about this year's endeavor, I was curious as to how many of our retired colleagues were in the area," said retired teacher Jane Cote, who led the gathering on Sept. 8, the first day of school in Luverne.

She said the group includes colleagues who have worked side by side, in the same grade levels, the same building and same district, and some were Luverne alumni and classmates since elementary school.

Some in the group were also mentors and mentees, teachers and student, family members, neighbors, travel companions, coffee mates and lifelong

friends.

"We are connected in so many ways," Cote said.

"In this room are, do I dare say, hundreds of years of experience in the classroom, thousands of hours of preparing for students, and a collective lifetime love for learning and teaching."

The group also paused to remember teachers who have passed away and whose names were noted with flowers on tables and read aloud at the Sept. 8 gathering.

Cote read a poem, "Some Lessons Never End," in memory of the late teachers.

"She taught more than lessons written on a board," Cote read from the opening lines of the poem. "She taught patience, kindness and the quiet power of believing in someone before they believed in themselves."

The poem also touched on the lasting impact of

RETIRED TEACHERS REUNION/SEE PAGE 14

RETIRED TEACHERS ANNUAL REUNION/continued from page 13

teachers.

“Some lessons never end. And neither does the love of a teacher who changed the world one student at a time.”

Cote remarked on the opportunity of the annual gathering of retired teachers.

“Thank you so much for sharing this time with us,” she told the group.

“Isn’t it great that we can sit back, smile and remember the days we spent in the classroom while another group of young women are looking out over a sea of wondering faces thinking, ‘Oh my! Another year. Will I survive?’”

Cote, who is also a local musician, sang, “You Can’t Make Old Friends,” before the group departed with a “Blessing for a Teacher” poem.

“May your heart always be filled with the joy of knowing how deeply you’ve impacted lives,” the poem begins.

“You were not just a teacher; you were a builder of dreams, a nurturer of potential, and a blessing to every life you’ve touched.”



Former teachers attending the annual reunion included:

Patsy Amborn
Wendy Bosshart
Jeanne Bowron
Beth Capistran
Pam Christenen
Jane Cote
Darlene Dreesen
Esther Spease Frakes
Joann Gabrielson
Randa Gangestad

Peggy Goettsch
Mary Jo Graphenteen
Linda Gulden
Karen Hardick
Shirley Harrison
Elaine Harms
Diane Headrick
Katie Hemme
Erma Hilbrands
Sue Hup

Rhonna Jarchow
Delaine Jensen
Sandy Klosterbuer
Helen Laabs
Linda Limesand
Lisa Lundgren
Betty Mann
Kathy Olson
Karla Osterday
Ann Robinson

Diane Robinson
Lucinda Rofshus
Becky Runnoe
Heidi Schacht
Lynette Stensland-Bos
Carol Svingen
Deb Vander Kooi
Deb Ward

LUVERNE A TO Z/from page 12

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HALL OF FAME/continued from page 9

gration of technology in the classroom received state-wide recognition when he was named the 1994 Minnesota Outstanding Biology Teacher of the Year one year after being recognized as the Luverne Teacher of the Year. Jerry's teaching method during his 38-year career was "learning by doing."

Jim Sanden often asked, "Are there any comments or questions?" at the start of his class, and the discussions that followed became lasting memories for his students. They could share their beliefs, discourse was encouraged, and opinions mattered, and all were friends when they left the classroom. Jim stressed the importance of critical thinking, current events and being a knowledgeable voter. He taught in the same classroom for 39 years.



WOULD YOU LIKE HELP PLANNING YOUR REUNION?



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Attention, Luverne High School Alumni: LET'S STAY IN TOUCH!

We know you're connected with each other on social media, but this is YOUR newsletter. It's news about Luverne alumni for Luverne alumni.

If you enjoy reading information here about your classmates, you can rest assured they will also enjoy hearing the latest about you.

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:
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