



# TITAN TIMES

RUTHVEN-AYRSHIRE COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Back to School on August 23



The first day of the 2021-22 school year is Monday, August 23. As it did in 1947, the day will begin with the traditional Opening Day exercises including the flag-raising ceremony at 8:30 a.m.

The ceremony will be in front of the school. In the case of inclement weather, the exercises will be held in the school gymnasium.

The ceremony will start with the Presentation of the American Flag by the American Legion and the Presentation of the Iowa Flag by the Legion Auxiliary. The flags will be raised by students with the National Anthem and Pledge of Allegiance. The ceremony will close with dismissal by Mr. Lewis and the school song.

School administrators would like to see the beginning of the 2021 school year look more like 2019 than 2020. But, much like last year, mandates by public health officials may go into effect at some point during the school year.

"We understand that the restrictive demands caused by the pandemic last year were challenging," said Superintendent Marshall Lewis. "Compared to last school year, we are hoping to have fewer restrictions. We had made great progress at the end of the year with the loosening of restrictions and as long as the number of cases remain low, we want to keep the restrictions low. But, we really can't predict what changes may be required."

"Right now, we do not anticipate using the Plexiglas dividers, or requiring social distancing and masks. But there are no guarantees. We do appreciate the understanding of students and

parents as we find our way through the start of the school year."

Mr. Lewis doesn't foresee changes or additions to school routines for the year and says perhaps a return to pre-pandemic routines and traditional learning is change enough.

One new curriculum difference will take place for students in grades K-5.

"A new illustrative math curriculum will be a big philosophical change," he said. "Instead of showing students a process, teachers will ask more questions of the students. It allows the students to approach the problem to get an understanding and sense of the numbers rather than asking them to memorize. The curriculum goes away from the drills like many of us grew up with and instead works to develop a numbers sense in the students."

As families prepare for the first day of school, getting a routine established early is important.

"Students may be sleeping in later now and not having a routine. Now is a chance to build excitement and stress the opportunity of being able to go to school."

"We are really excited to work with the students and are looking forward to the new school year."



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# Enderson earns Certificate for School Business Management

Alyssa Enderson recently graduated from the Iowa School Business Management Academy, completing four years of study. The program is offered by Iowa State University. The Iowa Board of Educational Examiners requires that school business officials (SBO) complete a 2-year program of 135 instructional hours plus a one-year mentoring program which Alyssa completed in 2019. She chose to continue with an additional two years of study to reach the graduate level.

"I will continue to go every year for additional graduate-level training," she said. "The first two years were in-person. But the last two years were online because of COVID. It was interesting to do an academy program over the computer, it was very different. I preferred the in-person sessions because of the networking opportunities it allowed."

Alyssa believes there were about 40 graduates in the required two-year program and that number dropped to about half for the additional two year academy.

In 2015, she started at Ruthven-Ayrshire as the HS/MS secretary, a job she had through 2017. "Supt. Woiwood asked if I would consider taking the position of the School Board Official since I had a background in accounting. I started the SBO position in January 2018," she said.

"I do the financials for both school districts. That means I oversee and control inflow and outflow of money and monitor every financial aspect for the districts. I pay bills, record receipts, do budgets, file certified reports – basically anything that deals with money.

"When my work day is done in the office, I have some things that trickle to home. I have a very detailed planner. It is a very detailed job, especially doing the work for two districts."

Prior to her taking the position, the tasks was done by the Prairie Lakes AEA. As Supt. Woiwood retired, they wanted to transition from the work and both G-T/R-A districts needed a person on site.

Even though the work is challenging and can be stressful at times, Alyssa says she has fun. "I love numbers! I actually went to school for accounting. My mom worked in bookkeeping for a bank. When I was a kid, I remember watching her doing balancing and that always intrigued me even when I was young. I always got numbers. They always made sense to me. There was always a right or a wrong answer and I loved that. I caught on from the time I was very small and I knew growing up that I wanted to do something with numbers. I have always loved problem solving and have had a fix-it attitude. Now being in a school setting and doing the things I love has been a great opportunity."

Alyssa and her husband have recently moved to an acreage near Ayrshire. They have four children: Jayden, age 12, is going into seventh grade; Cayleb, age 10, starts fifth grade; Sophia, age 6 is going in to first grade; and Bennett, age 1-1/2 enjoys daycare.

"I wear lots of hats," she laughed. "If it wasn't for my husband, I don't know what I would do. He runs kids here and there and cooks supper when needed. I am not always done at the same time as the kids with this role and he is a big help. I make a to-do list every day for work and at home and I do my best to get it done. Both of our parents are around here and we have a close-knit family around us."

Both Alyssa and Tyler are R-A grads, Alyssa graduating in 2009 and Tyler in 2008. Tyler works for Reynold's Construction of Ruthven and is the manager of the construction side of the operation.

"The training from the Academy has been very in-depth. During the training we learned about many issues that school districts face. It also gave us a chance to actually perform the work and be tested for our understanding. For example, we would do a cash-flow analysis and I could bring that back

and utilize it within the districts. We were tested on it after creating the tools.

"Having the advanced training has been very helpful. I brought home tools that I understood and I could use for both schools.

"The Academy built on the foundation I received during the first two years. It has helped with my confidence as an SBO. It also helped that I had more of an understanding of both districts that I could apply over time.

"One of the biggest tools that I brought home was having a budget process. We have not had a five-year model here. But now, Mr. Lewis and I are working on a five-year projection model that we can look at for changes in enrollment or employment. We can test different scenarios and predict what the financial impact may be."

At larger schools, being in the business office means that multiple staff members are involved in the financial system. Here, Alyssa can see a complete, overall picture of the financial state at any time and may pick up on things that could be missed with multiple staff persons involved.

"One thing many may not realize is how little things affect the school budget," she said. "It is not just one big pot of money that can be used for anything. There are separate pools of money and each are directed on how they can be spent. Employee benefits, educational items, capital assets – that big pot of money can look like a lot. But we have to understand the restrictions that are put on the categories of money. Some money must be spent within the year, some can roll forward. It is a very intricate process to determine how to spend the money. That was very eye-opening when I started working in the business office. Budgeting time and numbers is also critical with the demands of reporting required by the state."

"It has been great to come back to this school as an employee. I didn't know there was this type of job here. It is cool to see the next generation going through the school system. People I graduated with are having kids and they are coming back here to school. I am emotionally invested here. I enjoy working here and I look forward to seeing my kids graduate from here."





# Making the Grade with Staff Development

At Ruthven-Ayrshire, a commitment to continued learning opportunities and allowing the time for training has grown over recent years. Some of this work starts with professional development days before the start of school. But the majority of it takes place with the “early-out” schedule that provides teachers and mentors to work together each Wednesday afternoon of the school year.

Becky Masters and Marc Benedict are master teachers at G-T/R-A. They are part of the Teacher Leadership and Compensation (TLC) system implemented at every Iowa school district.

There are also eight mentor teachers. The mentor teachers are there to support others. Teachers know they are able to go to someone else when they need help. Becky says it is a good relationship built on trust.

According to her, working towards educational improvements and making things better for students is the biggest goal. “Over the last year we spent a lot of time on addressing social and emotional needs of students that changed because of the pandemic and changes to school routines.

“Having a specific time set aside makes it easier for the staff to stay focused. When we have full-day sessions, we try to have a guest speaker and staff can earn educational credit hours.

“Teachers need to have an individual growth plan and we work with them to develop that so they can achieve professional growth.”

Becky has 38 years of teaching experience and previously was a teacher with Graettinger-Terril CSD. “Professional Development is not a coffee break,” she said. “Teachers have growth mindsets and when we can improve teaching we can improve student learning.

“I want to see us have the best schools. It is rewarding to see all that is going on and to see teachers learn, grow and get excited.”

Some of the recent training has focused on new technology used while classes were done remotely and according to Becky, the teachers have all adapted well in the use of that technology. Google Classrooms has been adopted for fourth grade on up.

Elementary teachers have focused recently on social and emotional learning; student behavior support through PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support); and creating standards and objectives.

In the state of Iowa, a professional development program must align with the Iowa teaching standards. It must also align with the long-range improvement goals established by the district. The district needs to provide not less than thirty-six hours in the school calendar, held outside of the minimum school day.

Through TLC, mentor teachers take on extra responsibilities, including helping colleagues fine-tune instructional strategies as well as coaching. The philosophy of the program is to improve student learning by improving the instruction they receive each day. The structure allows for opportunities for teachers to collaborate, support and learn from each other.

Becky says that through professional development, staff are made aware of student scoring in academic, social and emotional screenings. Then, through the training sessions staff can work together to identify strategies for improvements.

Pictured above: teachers learn through collaboration and the leadership provided by the master and mentor teachers.

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# Three Seats Open for School Board Election in November

There will be three open seats on the Ruthven-Ayrshire School Board for the election November 2.

Nominations for open seats can be filed between Aug. 23 and September 16. Any person who is a United States citizen, 18 years of age or older, a resident of the school district and is eligible to register to vote may become a candidate for the school board. Nomination papers are available from the school board secretary. Candidates must obtain the signatures of at least 1% of the qualified electors of the district or 50 electors, whichever is less, but at least 10 signatures.

School board members are elected to serve four-year terms, with elections taking place in odd-numbered years. Those elected receive no pay. School board members play significant roles in their communities – they must have leadership, vision and dedication. They are charged with accountability for student learning, determining educational goals, setting policy, overseeing school finances and more.

Those with terms to expire at R-A are Bruce Long, Darin Malm and Susan Sikora. Other board members are Jill Conlon, Stephanie Fay, Tracy Enderson and Heather Ruehle, all with terms that expire in 2023.

**Bruce Long** has served on the board for 8 years, two of those as board president. He does not intend to run for another term.

“At the time I decided to run for the board, my kids were getting older and I wanted to get more involved in the community,” said Bruce.

“I learned it was not exactly what I thought it would be. For the most part it is simple, but at the same time we got involved in some big projects which took quite a bit of time. One of those was the athletic complex and the other was the retirement and replacement of Supt. Woiwood.”

Bruce said he learned a lot through the experience such as the school requirements, policies and state laws. “Over the years, we learn a lot about those things. Some people may think our policy book is small, but it is a monster and it can be difficult to understand.”

Long-term, Bruce expects to see a trend to more virtual learning but he is hopeful that the face-to-face learning will remain for districts like R-A.

“After spending time with the administration, teachers and students, it was eye-opening to realize the needs they have and the challenges that are faced on a regular basis. No teacher goes into the career to be a millionaire. They do it for the kids. I realized that for some kids, school is the only normal they have and the only authority in their lives. That is why it has been important to me, whether it is ten kids or 110 kids, it is always about the kids.

“Everyone on the board tends to focus on certain areas. I am proud of the work we did on the athletic complex and getting it accomplished without the need to borrow any money. Financials were always important to me, and I probably wore everyone out with the questions about what we could or couldn’t do. I am also pleased with our move to hire an outside marketing agency to assist with school promotions and to share all of the good things about our school throughout the area.

“Being on the school board is a good opportunity to be involved in the community and with your kids.”

**Darin Malm** is in his eighth year of service on the school board and is currently serving as board president. His term is up in the fall and he does plan to run for another term.

He feels strongly about the importance of volunteerism in a small community and that the school is essential to the community.

Darin has learned to appreciate the effort and dedication it takes for administration and staff to run a successful school system. “It requires many

team members that are willing to work hard and are invested in R-A and its students.

“When I joined the board, I had four young children and wanted to do my part to ensure that they could receive their education at Ruthven-Ayrshire,” said Darin.

“For me, the most rewarding experience has been taking part in the audience to the senior presentations of their Titan JAM, Journey of Academic Mastery. Year after year our seniors share their educational path and I am always impressed with the quality students that R-A produces. I also enjoy seeing them cross the stage at graduation.

“I am happy to see the improvements to the school building such as air conditioning, improved security and technology upgrades. As well as the revamp of our outdoor athletic facilities. Students and staff in small districts deserve a quality environment and amenities.”

According to him, the time commitment for a school board member varies from month to month.

“Sometimes it is a meeting a month. Other times committee meetings as well as extra projects and trainings take extra time. Attending sporting events, concerts and student activities has helped me to feel more involved as a board member.

“In the future, I believe that there are some challenges that will affect all schools such as a teacher shortage. It is my hope the board continues to keep a positive relationship with the Graettinger-Terril district as it has been immensely beneficial for both districts and communities. I look forward to seeing Ruthven-Ayrshire grow with the stability established and the quality educational advantages only a small school can offer.”

**Susan Sikora** has served on the Ruthven-Ayrshire school board for 21 years including serving several terms as board president. She plans to run for another term at the election in November.

“I would like serve another term in a district I am truly passionate about,” said Susan. “I feel Ruthven-Ayrshire has a lot to offer for a small district and our students have a wide selection of courses and opportunities to pick from and are able to participate in as many activities as they choose.”

When Susan first ran for a term on the school board, she wanted to serve in education and hoped to make a difference for the community and all those attending R-A.

“There are so many rewarding things to say about Ruthven-Ayrshire, I am proud to say we have maintained our K-12 and have great education in our small district. It is great to see our students graduate and become successful young adults.

“I have learned to work together as a board and

work towards offering a great education and success for all the students and staff. Our school is the heart of our community.”

The time commitment for a board member varies. For Susan, this has meant time to read board policy, listen to concerned citizens, attend board meetings, attend student/staff meetings and attend the annual two-day board convention in Des Moines each year.

“It is truly a learning and rewarding experience. The school board never stops learning. I foresee ongoing enrollment challenges in our district. It is a priority to educate students in our school and offer a quality and challenging education to each and every student.”

Board member **Jill Conlon** has served 18 months. “I committed to the school board because I have strong ties to the school. I believe we live in an awesome community with a terrific school and want to see the school continue to thrive and provide a great education for all those that attend.”

Jill says it is rewarding to know that she is helping to make decisions that help the school district grow and evolve all the time.

“I have learned a ton but I have learned most about how a school is run financially.”

So far, she has not seen a huge time commitment as a board member, with a current routing of attending the monthly board meeting. I don’t believe it is a huge time commitment.

K-12 school board members are elected by local communities to serve four-year terms. School districts are subdivisions of the state and most general laws regarding conduct of public officials and handling of public funds apply to members of the local board of education. Iowa has 327 school districts with five- or seven-member boards.

The school board represents the citizens of the district in overseeing the public school. As the entity legally charged with governing a school district, each school board is responsible to its community to govern effectively. This obligation imposes some fundamental duties on the board.

An effective school board member recognizes that governing requires teamwork and collaboration, accountability and transparency, future-focused decision making, community engagement, and above all else, a commitment to student achievement.

Among other responsibilities, the work of a school board is:

- Ensuring creation of a shared vision, plans and



Pictured are the current school board members. Those with terms to expire are Bruce Long, Darin Malm and Susan Sikora. Other board members are Jill Conlon, Stephanie Fay, Tracy Enderson and Heather Ruehle, all with terms that expire in 2023.

goals that reflects common values and core beliefs of the school community. The board must ensure that student learning and success are central to the focus, monitor progress toward improvement efforts, and ensure accountability for student learning.

- Setting sound, written policy to clarify the board’s intent for district direction, while also ensuring that board and district actions comply with state and federal laws.
- Hiring, setting goals for, and evaluating the superintendent as the chief administrative officer. The superintendent is responsible to lead and manage the district in compliance with written board policy.
- Overseeing employment processes for other school employees through policy. The superintendent is responsible for employee management, and brings hiring or termination recommendations to the board, subject to provisions of law.
- Monitoring and evaluating the financial health of the district, ensuring strong financial planning, approving an annual budget consistent with the district vision, receiving financial reports and ensuring an annual financial audit.

Members of the school board should expect to attend a monthly meeting with additional time outside the meeting to review materials, communicate with citizens and attend school functions. There is also a commitment to understand educational trends, issues, and legal requirements.

Anyone with question about serving on the Ruthven-Ayrshire School Board is urged to contact Supt. Marshall Lewis at the school or by email at [mlewis@gt.ratitans.org](mailto:mlewis@gt.ratitans.org).

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# Meet the New Staff



**Ashley Erne**, from Lake Park, moving to Ruthven

**Position:** Second grade teacher

**Experience:** First year teaching

**Education:** Iowa State University

**Making the choice for R-A:** Everyone that I met made me feel so welcomed and comfortable! I also grew up in a small town and I like how there are so many opportunities to get involved within the school and community.

**Enjoys most:** My favorite part of teaching is to make learning fun and interesting for my students. I also love building connections with students and getting to know them.

**Most looking forward to:** Getting to know all the second graders and their families!

**One thing you will tell your students as an introduction:** It is okay to make mistakes! Even teachers make mistakes, but that is a part of learning.



**Dustin Horst** from Ruthven

**Position:** Maintenance Director/Head Custodian/Transportation Manager

**Experience:** Worked at Lakes Plumbing & Heating in Spirit Lake for five years and Midwestern Mechanical for 11 years.

**Family:** Wife, Melissa and twin girls starting second grade. Melissa works for Good Year in Spencer.

**Making the choice for R-A:** I wanted to be closer to home and now I can spend more time with my kids and see them every day.



**Samantha Hegwood** from Cedar Rapids

**Position:** Middle school math

**Experience:** First year teaching

**Education:** Iowa State University

**Making the choice for R-A:** I chose Ruthven-Ayrshire CSD because I liked the sense of community in the school district!

**Enjoys most:** The "lightbulb" moment where you can see a student fully understanding the content and being able to complete it independently. It is very rewarding!

**Most looking forward to:** All of the things I will learn that will make me a better educator.

**One thing you will tell your students as an introduction:** I am from Knoxville, Iowa which is the Sprint Car Capital of the world!



**Ashley Ellenwood** from Spencer

**Position:** G-T/R/A Art Teacher

**Experience:** First year teaching, previously substitute and TA

**Education:** Buena Vista University

**Making the choice for R-A:** I student taught here last year and fell in love with the staff, students, and school.

**Enjoys most:** I love working with students and watching them learn new things. It makes me feel worth something special.

**Most looking forward to:** I look forward to working with the staff and students. I can't wait to fill the shoes of being a teacher!

**One thing you will tell your students as an introduction:** I have worked with children since I was a teenager. I have been a helper in Sunday School and a teacher. I have been a camp counselor for children and teenagers. I have been a TA and have subbed. My life has changed over the years, but working with kids is my passion. I love art. I knit, crochet, draw, paint, and sew. I like to try new art projects and pick it up fast. My world is falling into place with children and art combining. What could be better?



**Adam Mickelson** from Odebolt, hoping to live in Ruthven by the start of the school year.

**Position:**

PE and health, assistant high school volleyball coach, junior high boys' basketball coach.

**Experience:** I have been working and coaching in schools for the last 8 years. I have three years of teaching experience including the last two years teaching PE at Newell-Fonda. I also taught Special Education at OABCIG

in Ida Grove previously. I have worked as a classroom associate for three years at Ridge View and also worked at East Sac for two.

**Education:** Graduate of Northwestern College in Orange City.

**Making the choice for R-A:** I love the location and the fact that it's a small, close-knit school with very encouraging people at all levels.

**Enjoys most:** Seeing students succeed and learn new things. I love to see students improve on their skills and become more confident learners in the classroom and on the playing fields/courts.

**Most looking forward to:** To seeing how my skill set will help me to fit into this school and the communities and can't wait to be able to impact those around me.

**One thing you will tell your students as an introduction:**

I will tell them about what they can expect from me as a teacher and let them know that I want to see them improve during the school year.

**Kim Haburn** from Spirit Lake

**Position:** Middle school language arts, specifically 5-8 ELA and 5-6 reading

**Experience:** First year teaching

**Education:** Journalism degree from Columbia College Chicago and teaching certification from Buena Vista University

**Making the choice for R-A:** I like that Ruthven-Ayrshire is a small district in a small community. I wanted to teach in a school where I could really get to know my students and their families.

**Enjoys most:** One thing I enjoyed while student teaching was learning about my students. I loved getting to know their likes and dislikes and being able to joke around with them.

**Most looking forward to:** I can't wait to start my teaching career at Ruthven-Ayrshire. I'm most looking forward to planning and implementing fun and exciting projects for my students throughout the school year.

**One thing you will tell your students as an introduction:** I sing bass in an all-women's chorus, Spirit of Harmony, based in Spirit Lake. My photo is from when we won our regional contest in 2019 and qualified for international competition.



**Gabriel (Gabby) Davis** from Ruthven

**Position:** Science

**Experience:** First year teaching

**Education:** Middle Level Dual Teaching: Science and Mathematics with an endorsement in 5-12 Basic Science Teaching, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls.

**Making the choice for R-A:** I love the small school atmosphere. After teaching in Waterloo and Cedar Falls throughout college, I was drawn towards teaching in a smaller school district. It gives me the opportunity to learn and grow as a teacher and a community member. I'm excited to get to know my students, their families, and my coworkers, as well as, get involved in the community as much as possible!

**Enjoys most:** It's hard to pick just one thing to love about teaching. I think my favorite part about teaching is that students have a lot of opportunities to use creative problem-solving skills to come to a solution. When students get to the 'ah-ha' moment when they figure out a solution to a problem they felt was too difficult makes me proud of what I do. This helps students work towards a growth mindset by thinking through difficult problems until the 'ah-ha' moment happens! It makes me proud to see them proud of themselves for getting to that point and pushing themselves outside their comfort zone.

**Most looking forward to:** The new experiences that I am going to have in my first school! I'm excited to hear the feedback from my students and to learn and grow as an individual. I can't wait to try new and exciting ways to teach science to them.

**One thing you will tell your students as an introduction:** I recently got a Catahoula/Australian Cattle Dog mix puppy. She is my baby, so I will have a lot of pictures of her on my desk! One thing I am going to tell about my classroom is that it is a brave space where we are going to challenge ourselves and move outside our comfort zone to learn and grow. Science is a harder subject, and it is not everybody's favorite. However, we will work together as a team because I am learning just as much as they are during my first year!

**Geoff Maurer** from Milford

**Position:** Middle School At-Risk and assistant baseball coach

**Experience:** Has taught elementary classes at three districts and last year was a long-term substitute at R-A in all grades.

**Education:** Two years at ILCC then graduated from Northwest Missouri State at Maryville.

**Making the choice for R-A:** It felt like it was the right fit for me. I have worked in larger districts but after last year I decided it was the right school for me. Also, I have friends that I graduated with that also work in the district.

**Enjoys most:** Working with the students and helping them to be successful in the classroom.

**Most looking forward to:** Starting fresh at the beginning of the school year as last year I started mid-year.

**One thing you will tell your students as an introduction:** I am a third-generation educator. My dad was a superintendent at Graettinger in the 90s. I have many family members involved in education. My great uncle was a founding father of what is now Hawkeye Community College in Waterloo.



# For G-T/R-A Bulls Eyes there's Much More than Taking Aim



Stopping for a photo during their Bully Bullhead Weekend shoot are, left to right: Brian Swanson, asst. coach; Oliver Hansen; Erin Helmich; Micah Iedema; Pat Helmich, asst. coach; Cade Eisenbast; Kendall Umscheid; and Paul Molitor, head coach.

Members of the G-T/R-A Bulls Eyes say that the sport is about much more than improving shooting skills. Certainly that is a goal, but along with that, participants learn the importance of teamwork, good sportsmanship and mental focus.

Paul Molitor helped to get the club started in 2013 and serves as head coach. "We talked to Bill Grange at the time about using the shooting range at his farm for practice and meets," said Paul. "He was tickled to death to have us use it."

Outdoor practices and meets are held at the farm just south of Ruthven and indoor practice is held at the American Legion in Ruthven. The season begins September 1 each year and ends the following June with the State Championship shoot. Students in grades 5 through 12 from G-T/R-A and the Spencer area are able to participate. Trap shooting is not currently offered at the Spencer school district. Athletes who attend a minimum of six practices and four meets automatically qualify to attend the state shoot.

"Of course they learn about shooting skills, but they also learn a lot about firearms safety," said Paul. "We also teach them to be responsible. We do it by having them work at club fundraisers such as the annual pancake breakfast and the Bully Bullhead trap shoot. They also help the American Legion to raise flags at the cemetery for Memorial Day."

Participants use their own guns, either a 20 or 12 gauge in whatever make or model they are most comfortable with.

"It is probably a five percent muscle memory skill and the rest is all in your mind and where you are at. If they can get their minds in a good place, they do a lot better when they shoot. It really is more of a mental game. When we see a kid struggling and all of a sudden they start hitting and we see the smile on their face – you can't put a price on that. We also see a lot of camaraderie and that is great to see with the kids."

Paul's wife, Pat, is also involved and works with the club. And, there are two assistant coaches, Brian Swanson and Pat Helmich.

"You don't have to be number one here. Anybody can come to the meet and everybody shoots. There is no sitting on the bench. If you want to put in the time you can shoot."

**Kendall Umscheid** from Graettinger will be a senior this year. She has been involved since sixth grade. Her dad encouraged her to start and it became fun. "He is an avid hunter and he thought it would be a good way for us to learn how to shoot before he took us out," she said.

"I don't want to hunt, but this is actually fun. It is very challenging. Your mood can affect the entire thing. If you are in a bad mood, you are a bad shot. There is more that goes into this than people think. I would say to stay calm, stay focused, and stay out of your head. If you get in your head you keep missing.

"We have fundraisers where we are expected to help out and a big thing is supporting our team. When we are at meets, we go up to other teams to cheer them on. My favorite thing is when I get to shoot with the others at my level."

**Cade Eisenbast** is a freshman attending Spencer High School. He has been a member of the team for three years. "I decided to start because I was getting into pheasant hunting and thought this would help. It is really fun to do," he said. "I have learned about muscle memory, following through and getting ahead of the bird which is an important thing. I did it to be a better hunter, but that is not the case for everyone. It is something to do in my free time."

**Oliver Hanson** is in his second year with the Bulls Eyes. He will be a seventh grader at Spencer. "My uncle did it and my grandpa was a coach," he said. "We hunt ducks, pheasants, and deer. I shoot about 75 shells per night. We use our own shells and I use a 12 gauge."



Erin Helmich fires her shots during the BBW trap shoot.

**Micah Idema** from Spencer will be a freshman this year and has spent one year on the team. "I had a couple friends that suggested I should join. I hunt for pheasant and deer. I would like to get into turkey and duck hunting," he said. "It is important to stay positive. Muscle memory is also a big one. If you have a mentality that you aren't going to hit the bird, you won't be able to hit it. During a meet, we start at an assigned station, one through five. These are positioned 16 yards from the center of the trap house. The squad leader calls pull, the bird flies, and we shoot it. After shooting five shells, we switch positions and rotate through the stations for a total of 25 shells. We take a break and then return and repeat the process. The results are scored with the goal being to reach 50."

**Erin Helmich** attends Spencer and will be a freshman this year. "I wanted to get better at shooting for hunting pheasants," he said. "I have learned hand-eye coordination. I enjoy hanging out with friends. It is very much a team sport. We attend practices once or twice a week with a meet on the weekend. There are a lot of safety techniques that we learn as well."

**Tristan Lowman**, a freshman at Spencer, has been on the team for two years. "I wanted to shoot more to improve my hunting. I enjoy the friendships I have made. So far my top score has been 24 of 50."

**Collin Lowman** a senior at Spencer, has been involved with the team for the last three years. "I enjoy shooting and we do a lot of hunting. I have learned to be patient, focus, and to take my time. We have great teammates. Even though we are shooting for ourselves, each individual score goes towards the team. My highest score was a 49."

**Davin Lux** from Everly is a freshman and has been on the team one year. "I got involved because my friends were involved. I have enjoyed it. I like hunting so this is good practice. I think it has improved my hunting skills. My highest score has been 47 of 50. It is fun to spend time with friends and I have also learned a lot about sportsmanship."

In June, 15 athletes attended the state shoot in Cedar Falls with over 2000 attending from around the state over the six-day event.



A tradition started by Jan Graettinger about 20 years ago, the 2021 graduating seniors added this painting to the collection in the upstairs hallway. There are a total of ten paintings in the hallway with the oldest being from the class of 2011.



This mural of the Columbia River in Mt. Hood, Oregon was uncovered with a recent school maintenance project. The painting was done by E.E. Jensen of Spencer. It was located facing the administrative offices and entrance at the school. It is thought to have been painted there in the late 1940s when the pre-school room was an auditorium.



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# Time to Get Tech-Ready for Back to School

Back to school time is the perfect time to change and update passwords. R-A Technology Director Brian Hersom says that with all of the data breaches this is a good time to change passwords.

"My advice for a password is to actually use a pass phrase," he said. "Many sites will allow the use of spaces as special characters now. Try not to use a common phrase. Something such as 'I like the color blue' would be a good password. If you change the 'l' to a number '1' it is more secure. Make it stronger by adding a punctuation mark at the end of the phrase."

For families, each individual should have their own password, even if they all know each other's. "It is especially good on a home computer. If one password gets compromised, it limits the spread of how fast an attacker or virus can spread. It is always good to have individual passwords."

R-A provides computer devices for students in all grades. But, for those looking to purchase new devices for their students, Brian recommends an I-pad for lower elementary students because of the supervision and lock-down features. "As they move to higher grades, a Chromebook is really the best option in my opinion for the money. That age range is still learning how to handle a computer. It limits the amount of money to be lost in the event of breakage and it will perform all of the tasks needed."

"For middle-school, everything we require is available on a Chromebook. For those grades, we start to allow students to take their computers home, so it is not necessary for them to have a personal computer."

"The high school level is full one-to-one taking home their computers. There is no requirement for a personal computer."

"Internet service is a must for all grade levels. If anyone has problems getting Internet access, they should let us know because their are assistance

programs available for anyone that has a barrier due to cost of the service."

Brian suggests students in the lower grade levels not carry a phone to school, but if they do, it is best to leave it in their back-pack so it doesn't get lost.

"In middle and high school, many students carry phones and we recommend that families use them for emergency purposes only as text messaging and calls can be a big distraction to student learning."

"We don't want to be the phone police and students do need to learn to manage the distractions."

Brian is an advocate for limiting screen time as much as possible even though we are in an always-on digital world.

"We need to be teaching our kids at home that disconnecting is important. A big thing is not allowing phones in compromising areas – bedrooms, bathrooms, changing areas. Phones should be out of those areas to protect privacy and to safeguard children from encountering issues that may be challenging."

Parents are encouraged to set up their Infinite Campus portal. "We will be expanding the offerings there. We have activity tickets and a co-insurance now, and will add more throughout the year. Lunch balances can be paid and of course student progress can be monitored as well."



- GRADES
- WRITING
- MATH
- STUDENTS
- SCIENCE
- DESK
- TEACHER
- PAPER
- BOOKS
- READING
- FRIENDS
- LIBRARY
- PENCIL
- HOMEWORK
- SCHOOL
- SUBJECTS

F	E	K	S	B	O	O	K	S	V	P	X	X	R
K	P	A	U	R	R	E	A	D	I	N	G	A	S
S	S	E	B	M	O	N	U	X	L	I	Y	P	S
T	J	H	J	W	R	I	T	I	N	G	M	A	P
U	A	F	E	N	Y	S	C	H	O	O	L	P	I
D	F	Y	C	E	P	N	M	A	T	H	X	E	O
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S	N	T	E	A	C	H	E	R	E	L	H	K	A
E	D	U	D	E	S	K	W	B	N	W	P	J	D
Q	S	S	S	G	Z	O	O	J	C	Z	C	I	E
L	I	B	R	A	R	Y	R	H	E	S	X	D	S
Q	X	F	U	Y	C	H	K	Y	A	S	S	Y	G



## HOME PLATE

Two of our favorite blonde brownie recipes. The first one is a traditional recipe. The second one we use boxes of cake mix which should be good for busy lifestyles right now. It is super simple.

### Blonde Brownies

- 3 eggs
- 2-1/4 c. brown sugar
- 1/2 c. butter, melted
- 2-1/2 c. flour
- 2-1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt

Mix all together and spread in a 9" x 13" pan. Sprinkle with 6 oz. chocolate chips. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes at 350°.

### Yellow Cake Blonde Brownies

- 1 stick butter, melted
- 2 eggs
- 1 pkg. yellow cake mix
- 1 12 oz. pkg. chocolate chips.

Melt the butter and cool. Mix in eggs, add cake mix and chocolate chips. Spread in a 9" x 13" pan. Bake 25-28 minutes at 350°.



The R-A District received a mini-grant award from the Palo Alto County Gaming Development Corporation in the amount of \$3,861 to purchase 9 picnic tables.

With other PACGDC funds, 64 new computers were purchased for high school students in the amount of \$18,736.



# Victrola, not Computers, tops the School Investment

*Ruthven Free Press, Sept. 28, 1916*



## Lake Center School Notes

Three dictionaries and a set of maps have been ordered for use in the school.

A new \$75 Victrola has been ordered for the school on the theory that it is one of the very best investments a school can make.

The boys of the high school and grammar rooms started football practice this week. We expect to do battle with the forces of a neighboring city in the near future.

Thirteen scenic and historical views from the Haines Company have been framed and now adorn our walls. There is nothing better in the line of views than that put out by this company.

Our Primary teacher, Miss Heckroth gave a party at her home Friday evening to which many from school were invited. Only one fellow was disappointed the entire evening; he said there wasn't enough girls to go around.

The stoves are up, pump fixed, well cleaned and the telephone working. Stock is going up.

One of our teachers met with a very distressing accident the other morning, but we are not permitted to write concerning the nature of the catastrophe; however, its moral is this: look out for details.

## DATES AND TIMES

### Thursday, August 19

8 a.m. Professional Development  
5 p.m. Open House at Ruthven  
7 p.m. Computer Roll-out  
7:15 p.m. Freshman Orientation  
7:30pm ILCC Orientation

### Friday, August 20

8 a.m. Professional Development  
5 p.m. VB Gatorade Scrimmage at Graettinger  
7:30 p.m. FB Gatorade Scrimmage at Ruthven

### Monday, August 23

1st Semester/1st Quarter Begins  
5:30pm Volleyball JV/V vs. multiple schools at West Bend

### Wednesday, August 25

Preschool Begins

### Thursday, August 26

5 p.m. Volleyball JV/V Varsity vs. multiple schools at Newell

### Friday, August 27

7 p.m. Football Varsity vs Kingsley-Pierson (Away)

### Monday, August 30

5:30 p.m. Volleyball JV/V C vs multiple schools at Sioux Central

### Wednesday, September 1

2:30 p.m. Early Out/PD

### Thursday, September 2

4:30 p.m. Cross Country JV/V Meet vs Okobojo at Milford  
5 p.m. Volleyball JV/V Varsity at Storm Lake HS

### Friday, September 3

2:30 p.m. Early Out

7 p.m. Football Varsity vs Glidden-Ralston (Home)

### Monday, September 6

No School

### Tuesday, September 7

4 p.m. Football JH vs West Bend-Mallard (Home)  
5:30 p.m. Volleyball JV/V vs Estherville Lincoln Central (Away)  
5:45 p.m. Football JV vs West Bend - Mallard (Home)

### Thursday, September 9

5:30 p.m. Volleyball JV/V C/JV/V vs MNW (Away)

### Friday, September 10

7 p.m. Football Varsity vs Northwood-Kensett CSD (Away)

### Monday, September 13

4 p.m. Football: JH vs North Iowa (Home)  
4 p.m. Volleyball JH vs St. Mary's (Home)  
5 p.m. Cross Country JV/V vs Emmetsburg (Away)  
5:30 p.m. Volleyball JV/V C vs SCC at Lake City  
5:45 p.m. Football JV vs North Iowa (Home)

### Tuesday, September 14

8 a.m. Picture Day at Ruthven

### Thursday, September 16

4 p.m. Volleyball JH vs Harris Lake Park (Home)  
4:45 p.m. Cross Country JV/V vs Sioux Central (Away)  
5:30 p.m. Volleyball JV/V C/JV/V vs Sioux Central (Away)

### Friday, September 17

No School

8 a.m. Professional Development

7 p.m. Football Varsity vs North Iowa (Home)

### Saturday, September 18

9 a.m. Volleyball JV/V Tournament vs multiple schools (Home)

### Monday, September 20

5:30 p.m. Volleyball JV/V vs multiple schools (Home)  
6 p.m. Football JV vs Bishop Garrigan at Algona

### Tuesday, September 21

4 p.m. Volleyball JH vs Harris Lake Park (Home)  
5:30 p.m. Volleyball JV/V C/JV/V vs West Bend-Mallard (Away)

### Wednesday, September 22

2:30pm Early Out/PD

### Thursday, September 23

4:00pm Volleyball JH vs West Bend-Mallard (Away)

### Friday, September 24

7 p.m. Football Varsity vs West Bend-Mallard (Away)

### Saturday, September 25

TBD Volleyball JV/V Tournament vs Alta-Aurelia (Away)

### Monday, September 27

Homecoming week starts

4 p.m. Football: JH vs Newell-Fonda (Home)

4:30 p.m. Cross Country JV/V vs Algona (Away)

5:30 p.m. Volleyball JV/V C Girl vs multiple schools (Home)

5:45 p.m. Football JV vs Newell-Fonda (Home)

### Tuesday, September 28

4 p.m. Volleyball JH vs Harris Lake Park (Away)  
5:30 p.m. Volleyball JV/V C/JV/V vs Pocahontas Area (Home)

### Wednesday, September 29

2:30 p.m. Early Out/PD

### Thursday, September 30

5 p.m. Cross Country JV/V vs ELC (Away)

7 p.m. Coronation

### Friday, October 1

2 p.m. Homecoming Parade  
7 p.m. Football Varsity vs Harris Lake Park (Home)

### Saturday, October 2

TBD Volleyball JV/V Tournament vs ELC (Away)

### Monday, October 4

4 p.m. Football JH vs Harris Lake Park (Away)  
5:30 p.m. Volleyball JV/V vs. multiple schools (Emmetsburg)  
5:45 p.m. Football JV vs Harris Lake Park (Away)

### Tuesday, October 5

4:30 p.m. Cross Country JV/V vs Eagle Grove (Away)  
5:30 p.m. Volleyball JV/V C/JV/V vs ELC (Away)

### Wednesday, October 6

8 a.m. Picture Day at Ruthven

2:30 p.m. Early Out/PD

### Thursday, October 7

4 p.m. Volleyball JH vs Sioux Central (Away)  
5:30 p.m. Volleyball JV/V C/JV/V vs Alta-Aurelia (Home)

### Friday, October 8

7 p.m. Football Varsity vs Bishop Garrigan (Away)

### Monday, October 11

TBD Cross Country: JV/V vs Forest City (Away)  
4 p.m. Volleyball JH (7th) vs Emmetsburg (Home)  
4 p.m. Volleyball JH (8th) vs Emmetsburg (Away)

### Tuesday, October 12

5:30 p.m. Volleyball JV/V C/JV/V vs Emmetsburg (Home)

### Wednesday, October 13

2:30 p.m. Early Out/PD

### Thursday, October 14

5:30 p.m. Volleyball JV/V C/JV/V vs Southeast Valley at Gowrie

### Friday, October 15

7 p.m. Football Varsity vs St. Edmond (Home)

### Saturday, October 16

9 a.m. Cross Country JV/V vs Conference Tournament at Pocahontas

### Monday, October 18

4 p.m. Football JH vs West Bend-Mallard (Away)  
5:45 p.m. Football JV vs West Bend-Mallard (Away)  
7 p.m. Volleyball JV/V District TBD

### Tuesday, October 19

7 p.m. HS Band/Vocal at Graettinger

### Wednesday, October 20

2:30 p.m. Early Out/PD

### Thursday, October 21

1st Quarter Ends

All activities subject to change.  
Spectator guidelines vary by location. Please view our website for updates.



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POSTAL CUSTOMER

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## Conlons Find a Fit in Finance

Larry Conlon and his son, Chris, are both graduates of Ruthven-Ayrshire and both have found a good fit in the world of finance.

Larry is a senior vice president and branch manager at Iowa State Bank in Ruthven. He attended school in Ayrshire through fifth grade and graduated in 1989 from R-A after the schools consolidated. He attended the University of Northern Iowa and returned after earning his degree in finance.

"I got my first finance job as a lender at the Farmer's Home Agency in Spencer. I was later asked if I wanted to move back here, which I did and I've been here for 20 years. I also farm south of Ruthven."

Larry and his wife, Vicky, have three children. Chris; Bradley, a senior; and Lindsay, a seventh grader.

"At R-A, the smaller class sizes provide for all kinds of opportunity. There is a spot for you in anything you want to try out for. There is also more one-on-one help from instructors. Chuck Burris was the accounting teacher. He was just wonderful. I related to him very well.

"As a parent, I think the part-day sharing with Graettinger-Terril is a wonderful thing for the kids to be with a mix of other kids. When I was on the school board for eight years, I could see the kids liked it. There are more opportunities for both schools to offer."

During his school career, Larry was involved in band, football, basketball and golf. His advice to students now is to think before doing something. "With social media today, kids need to be careful. Common sense can take anyone a long way. If you know it is wrong, don't do it. As a potential employee, I think those who are in sports learn a good work ethic. It is important to show up for work, and do the work without complaining."

Chris is a 2019 graduate of R-A with a total of 16 in the senior class. "I really enjoyed the aspect that we could attend two different schools," he said. "In the morning our class time together made us like family. When we attended Graettinger, we could mix with that senior class of about 30.

"I think in the smaller school you are out in the community more. There are opportunities to be involved in the community. We raked yards and sang at the care center and it was a good chance to be in the public.

"I also think the coaches and teachers in a small school provide a lot of flexibility so students can participate in many activities.

"We also have great support from the community. Whenever we travel for games, there is a sea of purple to cheer us on. Also, the community does an awesome job donating to things at the school."

Chris is working on earning a degree in financial management at UNI. "Another thing at R-A, was that we could earn dual credit through Iowa Lakes Community



Learning  
Today for  
Living  
Tomorrow

College. I was able to go into UNI with almost a full year of credits.

"The smaller school atmosphere allowed us to get to know the teachers and go and talk to them. They were willing to work with us."

Chris was in football, basketball, track, baseball, student council and NHS. He was also involved at the Catholic Church for CCD. "I was always doing something. Over the last two summers, I have been meeting with the football team to run them through conditioning. It is nice to give back because people always did that for us."

Over the summer, Chris worked as an intern for Iowa State Bank at two Algona locations and the Ruthven office. He gained a broad experience working in the different areas of each location.

After graduation, he hopes to come back to this area where he can enjoy the small town life. He would enjoy coaching and helping on the family farm.

"It has been nice to say that I want to follow my dad in finance and help join on the farm. It has been a great opportunity."

For R-A high school students, he advises to get involved in extra curricular activities and in the community. "That is where you will make and build a lot of friendships. The more comfortable you are talking to people, the easier it is to do anything in life."

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