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If your street address and/or e-mail address has changed, please e-mail your new information to bhsalumniassociation50@gmail.com or mail to the PO Box listed above in order to keep our BHS Alumni database current.

SAVE THE DATE:
MAY 28, 2022, 5PM

Tickets available by mail, online or locally in Berlin. Celebrating classes of ending in 2 & 7, and those classes ending in 0, 1, 5 & 6 that missed their reunion due to the pandemic.



**CELEBRATING
151 YEARS**



THE **ECHO**



Spring 2022

www.berlinalumni.org

Berlin High School Alumni Association - "The Oldest in the State"

Dawn Putzke '97 chosen to represent 25-year reunion class

By Anna McCarthy, 2023

For this year's Alumni Banquet, Dawn Resop Putzke class of '97 has been chosen as the 25-year class representative and speaker. Putzke attended college at Park University and the Community College of the Air Force.

"I have an associates in management, another associate's in logistics, a bachelor's in management and accounting," Putzke said.

Putzke went into the military as soon as she graduated high school, but she still managed to go to college and get a degree. Putzke has been in the military for over 20 years. For most of her military career, she was doing logistics. Currently, she is doing quality assurance over Cyber Defense Operations and Maintenance for the military.

"Ten days after I turned 18, I left for basic military training and technical school at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio,

Texas," Putzke said. "I got my degrees when I was Active Duty. I went to school at night, on my lunch hour, weekends, online and even took classes during deployments."

Now, Putzke is living in Berlin with her three children Alden (11), Presley (10) and Tillie (7) and her husband Doug.

"We moved back to Berlin a few months before 9/11 and the aftermath of 9/11 brought me back to the service and I joined the Air Force Reserves (440th Airlift Wing, Milwaukee), transferred to the 128th Air Refueling Wing (Milwaukee) until I went full-time for the 128th Air Control Squadron, Volk Field ANGB (Camp Douglas)," Putzke said.

Putzke has had great success in life, but that hasn't come without people doubting her.

"The only reason I joined the Air Force was to serve my country. I started college and I told my parents I was going to get a bachelor's degree before I finished my



Dawn Putzke and her family from last memorial day. "I married my high school sweetheart, Doug Putzke, and we have three kids," Putzke said.

initial 4-year enlistment. My father told me there was no way I could accomplish it. Challenge accepted. Not only did I get a degree, I got a couple of associate's and a double bachelor's," Putzke said.

Putzke's banquet speech will be about going for one's passion. She also has some advice for the Class of 2022.

"Dream big, be proud of where you came from and remember all roads lead back home," Putzke said.

BERLIN HIGH SCHOOL BY THE NUMBERS

BHS has been welcoming international exchange students for

60 years

The class of 1969 was the largest with

197 graduates

Football has been played at BHS for

127 years

The first class graduated

157 years ago

The school paper The Red 'n' Green is

98 years old

Created by: Elyse Osterberg
Source: BHS Alumni Association

Over **11,000** students graduated from BHS

Alumni Association Book

Here's a few things that alumni have had to say about our new book *The History of Berlin High School and the Berlin High School Alumni Association: "Awesome job - it really kept my attention!", "The Alumni Association knocked it out of the park with this great book!",* and "What an exceptional, incredible, tremendous job of documenting history!"

The book is available on Amazon.com or at the Berlin Public Library for \$30. All proceeds benefit the new Teacher Grant Program.

2021 Scholarship Recipients

Nicholas Chier	Landen Sobieski
Emily Goehring	Vincent Evans
Rachel Nackers	Haleh Fredenberg
Deacon Eberhardy	Hayden Mateo
Emma Jenkins	Lindsay Mularski

Thanks to the **Farmers & Merchants Bank** and to the **Fortifi Bank of Berlin** for underwriting the costs of postage for this newsletter. Also, thank you to the **Berlin Journal** for public relations support throughout the year.

- Gary & Connie Kolpin	- Marilyn Burlinson (Wallace)
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Alumni Association provides money for teacher grants

By Issac Smith, 2024

The Alumni Association is providing extra money to the school district to improve teaching capabilities.

Many school districts have teacher and learning grants. The BHS Alumni Association thought that a program like this would be a great way for alumni to give back to their school and show appreciation for their teachers.

Principal Bryant Bednarek, BHS class of 2003, plays a part in this, along with several other teachers and the principals.

"I helped develop the parameters of the grant and the application. When the grant gets rolled out to teachers during our budgeting process in the next few weeks, I will be leading that. I will also be looking through any future applications at the high school as part of the approval process.

We have spent the last year in the planning phase and are just about to roll this out to our teachers with our upcoming budget cycle," Bednarek said.

The Alumni Association is made up of some of the BHS staff and other people who were schooled here when they were younger and have fond memories of the school. Some teachers will also serve on the selection committee.

"The teachers that serve on the committee are Jeremy Mercer, Christie Rilling and Kelly Stobbe, who are all BHS alumni," Bednarek said.

In order for a teacher to earn a grant, they must fill out an application. The building principal must approve the application and then the Alumni Association has to approve it. They are only approved if they align with the building or district's goals.

"This type of financial support encourages academic achievement through helping to fund a variety of teaching and learning tools and experiences that might not be possible in the normal school budget," Alumna Pat Grahn BHS class of '76 said.

The grants are not just a benefit to the teachers, they are meant to be used as extra finance, to provide a better education for students. The idea is that the money goes into better equipment like newer Smartboards and supplies.

"School funding is tight. Any access to additional funding is appreciated. As an alumnus myself, I think it is a nice way to give back to the district and have an impact on multiple students," Bednarek said.

Donors to the BHS Alumni Association Scholarship and Teacher Grant Fund

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- Ruthann Kuble	- Kathleen (Lane)	- Kathleen (Lane)	
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Knoke speaks as honorary member of Alumni Association

By Maddy Kresal, 2023

For this year's Alumni Association Banquet, former teacher at Berlin High School Gary Knoke, has been asked to be a speaker. Knoke taught at BHS for 53 years, from 1956 to 2018, making teaching a big commitment for most of his life. Knoke is an honorary member of the BHS Alumni Association.

"Berlin High School was my second home and my second family. It was a major part of my whole life," Knoke said.

During Knoke's time teaching, he taught a variety of subjects in the social studies department from 20th and 21st Century Wars, Famous and/or Infamous Americans, Law and Criminal Justice, and team taught Human Spirit - A Global View, with English teacher Amy Chier Wenig, BHS Class of 1986. Wenig has known Knoke all her life. He was even her teacher when she was a child.

"He showed me what it truly meant to be a teacher. To give of one's time. To see the best in every student. To know that every student has potential. To teach with heart. Those are the lessons I will carry with me forever,"

Wenig said.

Knoke looks at these relationships as core memories. This is the main reason that he decided to teach at BHS for so many years.

"I taught so long because I loved being around young people and seeing them grow and succeed. I hope it helped me keep a youthful attitude and an open mind. I treasure relationships I had with students and enjoy their continuing friendships. In many instances I taught three generations, and that makes me smile," Knoke said.

Over the course of 53 years, many memories are made and one that stands out is the overnight trivia contest.

"Mr. Chovanec, a retired English teacher, and I started the overnight trivia contest back in, I think 1985, and did it yearly until COVID. It is going to run again this year. Along with Mr. Sanderfoot, Mr. Chovanec and I will be there," Knoke said. "It is always a great time for the students and that made us happy and eager to continue doing it."

Even as a retired teacher, Knoke finds ways to stay involved in the school and community. "I value the lasting friendships with dedicated



Retired teacher Gary Knoke and English teacher Amy Wenig attend a family wedding. "This is just one of my favorite photos of the two of us," Wenig said.

educators in Berlin and other schools in the Berlin school community. Many students have reached out and it makes me feel that maybe I touched somebody," Knoke said.

As an honorary speaker for this year's banquet, Knoke congratulates the alumni association on its longevity as being the oldest in Wisconsin. He also has some final words of advice.

"[My] advice is to work hard and play hard," Knoke said.

Highlight from the Red 'n' Green

Featured Alumni: Mandy Mae Hallman makes it in the music biz

By Lola Jecevicus, 2022

Some people are lucky enough to ignite a spark early in their lives. For alumna Mandy Mae Hallman, '10, she took her spark and ran with it. From when she was just four years old, Hallman began to show an interest for piano and took lessons until the age of 12 when she then moved onto guitar lessons. Hallman's first CD that was produced is called "Destination." This was produced with help from AV Coordinator Adam Umbreit.

"After noticing how talented Mandy was during the school talent show I was blown away. We spoke from time to time, and then I approached her to see if she would be interested in recording her first album at my

old stomping grounds in Minnesota at Rockhouse Productions Studio where I used to be a professional studio engineer for some of the biggest names in the business," Umbreit said.

Hallman accepted the offer and began recording her first CD. At the age of 18, Hallman moved to Nashville, Tennessee to pursue a musical career. This is where she put out an album called "History."

"The album 'History' was really the first time I let myself make music without thinking about what 'they' want to hear," Hallman said.

As any female singer/songwriter might, Hallman faced challenges being in this industry.

"It's difficult every single step

of the way. You end up having to prove yourself in every aspect of your career," Hallman said. "The way you dress, the way you talk, the vocabulary you use, the way you write songs, the people you associate yourself with, the people you date, how well you can play an instrument."

Although there aren't any current plans to make music, Hallman's full time career music will always be part of her life.

"I guess I'm never done writing music. It's just a constant random ebb and flow of ideas, lyrics, and melodies that poke at me every so often," Hallman said.

Hallman knew she loved music from just four years old and once she hit the age of 18, she took that love and decided

she wanted to create something out of it.

"Follow your heart. It's very easy to want to please the world and get attention and validation, but if it's not what you actually want to do and music you actually want to make then it's a very hollow feeling," Hallman said.



Mandy Mae Hallman's album cover for "History," available on iTunes