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25-year speaker follows original roots, finds success

By Alex McClelland, 2018

Learning to live with determination, preserving hope, taking control and making room for growth are all lessons this year's 25-year speaker, Krista Sobieski (Minsky), hopes attendees will take home with them.

"My topic reminds listeners that there will be hurdles in life, but as individuals we all have a choice how to move forward and how to achieve personal happiness and growth," Sobieski said. "It starts within, and our success is not measured by what we have, but rather how we have overcome obstacles and persevere after the unimaginable happens."

For Sobieski, the recent occurrence of losing both her parents three hours apart, though a traumatic setback, has backed up the lessons she will teach.

"Losing my parents has given me a whole new perspective on life and since it is very recent, only time will tell how I persevere from this," Sobieski said. "What's important is finding a few people who will be there and won't turn their backs when you need them most. Having a strong inner circle will lift you up during those dark times in life."

Since writing for the newspaper and yearbook as a high school student, Sobieski has received great opportunities. Although torn between the decision as a senior to study early childhood development or to pursue a career in journalism,

Sobieski choose to enroll at Fox Valley Technical College for early childhood education. It's what happened after leaving FVTC that threw Sobieski a curveball.

"After working as a preschool teacher for several years, I managed to be offered a co-director position of an early childhood program I was part of," Sobieski said. "This gave me an opportunity to see first-hand how to run early childhood programs for young children."

After many years of working in the early childhood field, Sobieski went back to her original roots and became a reporter for the Berlin Journal.

"After 22 years, 16 of those building one specific program for children and families, I decided that I wanted to do something that would allow me the opportunity to be involved more in the Berlin area and write," Sobieski said.

In March of last year, Sobieski graduated from the National Speaking Academy-Wisconsin to work on a career in motivational speaking and consulting. That led Sobieski to create Thoughtful Seed Project, a side business that is still growing. She does keynotes and workshops at conferences on topics including leadership development, community collaborations and teamwork. Sobieski is a community volunteer for many events and has been known to plan many volunteer events including being involved in her children's activities, who she says



Photo Submitted

Sobieski considers her family her greatest inspiration when speaking and encouraging perseverance. Pictured here with her family: Lane, Layten, Richard, Lakelyn and Landen.

are the highlight of her and her husband's life.

"Despite any career goals I have had or accomplished or that I do in the future, I still think the most precious gift in this world is children, and I feel extremely blessed to be raising mine with my husband Richard," Sobieski said. "Together our family is our greatest accomplishment yet. Raising children is no easy task, but helping them grow into respectful, considerate people is by far one our greatest goals to date."

If your address has changed, please e-mail your new address to dkirk3420@gmail.com in order to keep our BHS Alumni database current.

 **SAVE THE DATE:**
MAY 29, 2021

Wisconsin's oldest active Alumni Association is preparing for its 150th celebration. All BHS Alumni are welcome to attend. The Board of Directors invites volunteers to plan and participate on this special committee. Please contact us if interested. Thank you!

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Endowment Fund rewards seniors

The BHS Alumni Association Endowment Fund continues to grow and to be used to give graduating seniors a scholarship to assist with college tuition. In addition, it is used to fund The Echo newsletter. The Alumni Association would like to acknowledge that since 2009, our donations exceeded the costs for the scholarships and banquet. Thank you for helping to reward both past and present Berlin High School graduates.

The 2016 BHS Alumni Association Scholarship recipients, who received \$1,000 each, were

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Kwidzinski named as 50-year speaker at alumni banquet

By Caley Huggins, 2018

Within the last 50 years, many aspects of Berlin have changed, yet many have also stayed the same. Although many begin lives elsewhere after high school, 50-year alumnus Harry Kwidzinski has been in the town long enough to witness it all.

"For the change portion, physically, it hasn't changed all that much in looks," Kwidzinski said. "There have been buildings that

have come and gone, but nothing too dramatic."

The speech that Kwidzinski will be giving is on what the town, what Berlin used to be, and what it is now.

"I also intend to sneak some props and laughs into the speech, too," Kwidzinski said.

From the time he attended Berlin High School to his present years, he only left the town for three years for military service. Other than that, Berlin has always been

home.

"I was born and raised here. It has always been a friendly community. Yet, you get out of it what you put into it," Kwidzinski said.

He has also learned how to better himself as a person from the town itself.

"I believe I am one of the richest people in Berlin, and I'm not referring to money," Kwidzinski said. "I am rich for knowing as many people as I know and for getting to be part of all that I have been."

Alumni Spotlight: Hallman pursues music career in Nashville

By Mercedes Zabel, 2018

After being involved in music from a young age, and a striking feeling that this is what she was born to do, alumna Mandy Hallman '10 took her dreams of music to Nashville, Tennessee at the age of 18.

"A lot has happened in the six years I've lived in Nashville. My goals and plans have changed constantly because I've learned so much about the music business and this city," Hallman said. "My favorite part of being in Nashville is the melting pot of people here. It seems like almost everyone you meet is from somewhere else. We're all out-of-towners trying to

make a living for ourselves in a competitive city."

In July of 2016, Hallman auditioned for a new music competition show called "American Super Group," which aired this past fall, and made it through the second episode. Along with this opportunity, Hallman has accomplished many things throughout her endeavors in Nashville.

"I've released a few projects in the recent years, written songs with fantastic songwriters and I got lucky finding a part-time job that fits my lifestyle so I can pay my bills as well. I'll be releasing a new album this year, which I'm extremely excited about," Hallman said.

Although making it in the mu-

sic industry may not be a walk in the park, Hallman has relied on those close to her to help her thrive and believes that is the key to success.

"My message to anyone wanting to follow their dream is to surround yourself with genuine people," Hallman said. "You're going to hit days, weeks or months when you find yourself in a rut or wanting to quit, and those people are going to be there to help you out of it whether you want them to or not. If I didn't have the support system that I do, I would have moved back home a long time ago and settled for something that was easier. Keep pushing forward, always."

Highlights from the Red 'n' Green

Seniors take to voting polls for first time

by Caley Huggins, 2018

There is a first for everything, including making big decisions for one's country. Seniors Shelby Williams, Christian Athens and Samuel Cason were just a handful of the many first-time voters.

"I didn't really know what to expect going in since I've never done it before," Athens said.

Political knowledge was gained from watching the political debates.

"I have a little bit of political knowledge. I watched all of the debates so that was enough to understand what's going on," Williams said.

The confidence level was low for some 18-year-olds, due to the candidates that were up for election.

"I was nervous because

I'm not really thrilled about who I had to choose from to be president," Cason said.

There are many reasons the young voters thought that voting was a good idea.

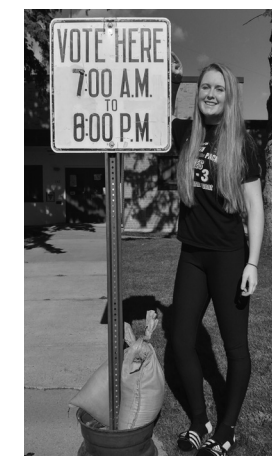
"It's the civil duty of an American," Athens said.

For some, voting was all they have ever known or been taught.

"My parents have always voted, so I didn't really second guess it. I want to have a say in how the country is going to be run," Williams said.

The whole voting process triggered different emotions.

"It was confusing for me because they expected me to know what to do even though I have never voted before. But, it felt cool to be able to represent the country," Williams said.



Shelby Williams stands outside the Armory on Nov. 8 after voting in her first presidential election. Photo: C. Huggins

All three students voted at one of the two of the locations in Berlin designated for voting: the Armory or at Berlin Town Hall.

"It was a good experience. I'm even ready to vote again," Cason said.

Alumna safely rides across states

by Caley Huggins, 2018

Imagine spending the entire summer on two wheels traveling across the United States. Alumna Celia Mueller '14 rode 4,000 miles from Portsmouth, New Hampshire to Bellingham, Washington.

She biked for the Bike and Build Program, along side 33 other participants. This program allows the bikers to build homes for people in need along the way.

"All of us were in the same boat, so we drew strength from each other. If I was having a bad day, I'd just bike with someone else who was too and we would sulk together until we rode all the negativity out," Mueller said.

Throughout the crazy days, she was also able to

keep in contact with her family in Berlin.

"When she was gone, she snapchatted me a couple times. I wrote to her and she sent me a postcard back," Mueller's sister, sophomore Tess Mueller said.

Although this trip alone is a once-in-a-lifetime experience, Mueller explains that she does not want to stop quite yet.

"I am even considering leading a trip in the future. I have nine more years until I age out," Mueller said.

Mueller's family has been there to give her assistance, reassurance and love.

"She is an outgoing girl and is out to conquer anything. As her family, we just try to be her main support," Mueller's mom, Tracy Mueller said.

Athlete perfects game in leagues, at home

by Allison Marks, 2017

Impressing many people with her volleyball skills and practicing year-round, senior Audrey Krueger has been recognized by many coaches, fans and parents.

Throughout her career, Krueger has seen much support from not only her family, but also people outside her home.

"My dad and coaches are my biggest supporters," Krueger said. "They always come to my games and offer advice."

Krueger goes to Appleton to work with an old coach who she played for on a club team last year, but has known for the past three

years.

"She's intelligent, funny and coachable," Wisconsin Volleyball Academy coach BJ Bryant said. "She's also fast, athletic, aggressive and has a 'wow' factor."

Krueger has been playing for local club teams since she was 11, and started playing with a larger club in Appleton when she was 14. She has also had the chance to travel to different states to play in tournaments.

"I've played in tournaments in Kansas, Florida, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Minnesota, Indiana, Illinois and Missouri," Krueger said.

Krueger is still undecided if she will play in college or not.



Senior Audrey Krueger looks to make a play as the ball comes onto Berlin's side of the court.

Photo: EDGE Photography

"Whatever she decides, we believe she'll be involved in some way with volleyball throughout her life, and we are prepared to help her as best we can," parents Terry and Maria said.