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Featuring a message from the 25 and 50-year classes!
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Spring 2018
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25-year speaker Kim Everson focuses on life's satisfying turns

By Paige Krause, 2019

With accomplishments like being accepted into UW-Madison Veterinary school and starting her own veterinary business, Kim Newport Everson has been chosen as the 25-year speaker. Everson's life has been filled with surprising and unexpected turns.

Everson originally earned her bachelor of arts in English Creative Writing from University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh in 1997 and her master of arts in English from UW-Eau Claire in 2000. Everson intended to find a position as a college-level English professor. However, during her training, Kim was reminded of growing up on her family's farm and was inspired to pursue her interest in veterinary medicine.

Everson enrolled in UW-Fond du Lac and UW-Oshkosh for acceptance into veterinary school in Madison.

Everson says her experience at Berlin helped her get to where she is today.

"It has been my experience, starting at Berlin High School, that following one's passions and interests is very important. It's probably more important than choosing the right high school classes in preparation for college or technical school. Even choosing the right major in college is less important than taking every opportunity to learn

as much as possible about the world around you," Everson said.

After working as an associate for several years, Everson's life took another turn when she built her own animal veterinary practice at her home in Van Dyne, Wisconsin. Everson and her husband, Kirk, converted an old building on their farm to an efficient veterinary clinic and opened for business in September of 2011.

Combining her creative writing roots with her veterinary training, Everson then began writing her Practical PetVet blog in 2011. She shares different types of stories from her day-to-day life as a veterinarian and mother. Over the past several years, Everson has also been a journalist for "The Pet Journal," "Fond du Lac Reporter" and various local newsletters.

Everson explains what she will talk to her classmates about.

"I will recount my journey so far emphasizing how many surprising but satisfying turns my life has taken. Along the way, I started a family, which is nothing remarkable but was certainly unusual in veterinary school. And yet, probably because I knew no better, I managed to get married, have babies, manage a household, spend long days studying at veterinary school, train a year in



Veterinarian Kim Newport Everson will be the 25-year speaker at the Alumni Banquet in May. She will speak about life's unexpected but satisfying turns.
 Photo Submitted

clinical rotations and emerge a competent, ready veterinarian," Everson said. "Each of these roles can be difficult, so people often act amazed I put them all together at once. I've had the support of my husband, family, fellow students and university parent aid organizations. I'm betting each one of us alumni has overcome struggles and carried burdens that others would find impossible to bear in order to achieve success."

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 2017 BHS Alumni Association Scholarship recipients, who received \$1,000 each, were

2017 Scholarship Recipients

Andrea Briese
Lauren Disterhaft
Angeline Evans
Amanda Gimenez
Sarah Huffman
Emily Schmidt

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.

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Marlene (Sierakowski) Gersch

Leikness named 50-year speaker at alumni banquet

By Bryn Hermanson, 2019

From being the first woman accepted into the UW Hospitals General Surgery residency program to being one of the first 10 women in the U.S. that became board certified in urologic surgery and the first in Wisconsin, alumna Mary (Hallman) Leikness has been selected

as the 50-year speaker.

"I plan to do a walk down memory lane and remind people about what things were like, what we did and things we used that are no longer in use today," Leikness said.

Growing up in a rural community on a farm has strongly impacted Leikness.

"I do know the small town, farm girl is still there in me despite where I have been, what I have done or what I have experienced in life," Leikness said. "Being from a small town always made me a bit more shy around people from bigger cities, but over the years I learned their experiences were really no different than my own."

Alumni Spotlight: Hinton researches obesity and breast cancer

By Alex McClelland, 2018

Currently researching obesity and breast cancer at the University of California-Berkeley, Ben Hinton '08, is the 2018 Alumni Spotlight.

"I choose this program in bio-engineering because I really liked doing research when I was getting my undergraduate degree in biomedical engineering at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities," Hinton said. "I helped in a wide variety of labs studying arthritis, analyzing plastics used in growing cells and growing artificial blood vessels. I quickly realized I really liked the people I was working with, and the types of things I was doing."

After graduating from UM-Twin Cities, Hinton's hiatus before starting his PhD in California was spent in New Mexico teaching high school students with Teach for America. Teach for America is a nonprofit organization that focuses on developing future leaders to strengthen the movement for educational equity and excellence.

"Doing this with Teach for America not only helped me better understand teaching as a profession, but it also let me contribute to and teach in underserved areas of the U.S.," Hinton said.

Shortly after starting his PhD

program, Hinton met a professor whose main areas were working in body composition and cancer detection.

"Both areas are big topics with big impacts, and I thought I could fit into this lab well and help make a difference there," Hinton said. "It's a community of researchers that are attacking the problem from different angles, who are being helped by an army of doctors and radiologists. They are all working with survivors and advocates to implement that research into the community, all with the hope that they can save more lives from breast cancer."

Highlights from the Red 'n' Green

Moulis overcomes adversity, receives initiative scholarship

Mercedes Zabel, 2018

Reporter

After being told she was the recipient of the Herb Kohl Initiative Scholarship, a financial burden was lifted off the shoulders of senior Maggie Moulis.

The Herb Kohl Initiative Scholarship awards \$10,000 to 100 high school students across Wisconsin who put forth their utmost effort in the classroom and have overcome adversity, but may not be eligible to receive other academic scholarships.

"I felt really relieved to have received this; I started crying. I have a big family with not a lot of money, and that was my

biggest worry about not getting into college," Moulis said. "I never thought that something like this would happen."

Recipients are selected through an internal process by school administration and staff.

"Focusing on academics after high school was part of the criteria for Herb Kohl. The students selected have the ability to do that, but may not have the means to do it because of their hardships," guidance counselors Ann Ragus and Matthew Willett said. "Herb Kohl believes in teachers and kids, and because of that this school has the opportunity to pay

it forward to a student that may have limitations."

Since middle school, Moulis has had ambitions of becoming a large animal veterinarian and potentially faces 12 years of additional schooling. However, English teacher Cory Willhite does not envision her backing down from achieving the life she has set out for herself.

"Perseverance, respect and a good attitude pays off in the end, and I honestly believe that's what Maggie takes away from all of this," Willhite said. "Life, like it has to all of us, has kicked her down a few times and she's always been able to fight



Senior Maggie Moulis was selected as one of the 2018 recipients of the Herb Kohl Initiative Scholarship.

Photo: M. Zabel

through, get back up and find the persistence to carry on."

The Herb Kohl Initiative Scholarship was designed

to give students who do not always have the ability to perform at a high academic level due to hardships an easier way to pursue their future educational goals. Now, with this opportunity more available to her, Moulis plans to attend either UW-Fond Du Lac, UW-Oshkosh or Ripon College.

"I work a lot and sometimes don't have time for school, so I don't always have the best grades, but I've learned to keep going no matter what," Moulis said. "This scholarship is a good start for me, and now I know that I will definitely be able to get into college."

Alumnus pursues writing career in New York

Caylie Krebs, 2018

Reporter

A former Berlin High School student is now onto new things. Lucas DeRuyter, '14 alumnus, attended Comic Con 2017 as a writer for Fandom.

DeRuyter was writing for the online company for roughly two months when he was asked to cover this event. Fandom is a web-based publication whose purpose is to explore, contribute to and celebrate the world of popculture, according to their website.

Comic Con took place in New York. It was founded as the Golden State Comic Book Con-

vention in 1970 by a group of San Diegans.

"At Comic Con I attended a variety of panels and wrote articles that covered any news or pieces of interest that emerged from the panels," DeRuyter said. "Primarily, I covered panels that related to animation."

After attending these panels, which are groups of experts who speak on a topic, DeRuyter found a favorite.

"The biggest highlight for me would probably have to be the 'Archer' panel," DeRuyter said. "It featured the entire rough cut of the first

episode of the upcoming season."

Many people may wonder how this BHS alumnus got to this position. "Participating in Forensics in high school gave me the opportunity to practice a lot of writing early on. Operating my own blog for about a year and a half also allowed me to find my voice and improve my writing. Majoring in political science and communication arts at UW-Madison also helped me sharpen these skills," DeRuyter said.

DeRuyter says he would love to have a career in writing, but some dif-

ficulties arise with that.

"This is a difficult field to work in sustainably when starting out," DeRuyter said. "I would be okay with doing this part-time until I built up enough clout to earn a more substantial position."

DeRuyter sees this difficulty as a challenge to be met.

"I'm not sure where I'll be headed next," DeRuyter said. "I do not have any other on-location assignments lined up with any of the outlets I write for, so that's difficult to know where I will head next. After I graduate, I will probably



Lucas DeRuyter, '14 alumnus, attended Comic Con in New York in Oct. 2017. He wrote news pieces and articles for Fandom.

Photo Submitted
move to either Chicago, Washington D.C. or Los Angeles."