



RED OAK ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

THE Heart OF SOUTHWEST IOWA

By the Red Oak Heritage Foundation Volume 1 | Issue 1 | April 2022



Scott LeRette and son Austin

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Scott LeRette - Class of 1983 Red Oak Community High School

Scott and his family have a story to tell. He lives in Papillion Nebraska with his wife of 27 years, Teresa, and their sons, Austin, 27 and Logan, 25.

Scott wrote a book that's been made into a major motion picture with LionsGate Studios. He describes his story- "...it's about an autistic kid that's broken almost every bone in his body, had his heart removed, repaired, and replaced... has an addict father, a suicidal mother and a near perfect younger brother... It's a story of faith, it's sad, profound, and inspiring." It is a true story... it's about him, his wife and their boys.

Moving back to Red Oak twenty years ago was a blessing for many reasons, mainly to be surrounded by a loving and caring support system of friends and family. Things did not go well for Scott. He had one fateful night at the

Red Oak Country Club and almost killed himself and the boys driving home drunk from a party. During these times he embarrassed himself on many occasions. It all came to a screeching halt that night... he should have known considering only months earlier he crashed into Austin on the swing sets at Chautauqua park breaking Austin's back in several places. The family was very much broken and in need of love, guidance, and faith.

Scott struggled with addiction for many years dating back to his time in college. That night at the country club was the last night he drank or did any kind of drug. He has been sober nearly 16 years. Scott and Teresa didn't really know each other when they got married. They were more like roommates. They didn't yet love, they were barely friends. But they persevered. For the kids. They learned to love. They've been learning for almost 28 years. There came a time when he decided to share his story with the world. He felt it might help other people as much as himself.

He began writing little stories to himself (journaling), in 3x5 spiral notebooks. This turned into an awardwinning blog. Austin broke a bone in his foot after just getting a cast off his arm... and at the urging of his oldest brother Kevin, RO Class of 77... he started researching how to write a book. He had NO idea what he was doing. The book was a homerun. And he always wanted to make a TV show about his crazy family... so the first thing he learned was how to get the theatrical rights back from his publisher (Harper Collins)... and he did. He will always remember"...every single thing I did... was a first". Total uncharted territory.

Scott then got connected with and independent film company and he worked tirelessly... no after no... it was total rejection with everything he tried. He fired the indie as he was doing all the work. Over the next 18 months Scott was rejected countless times. The "no's" continued to pile up. During his time with the indie he became friends with actor/writer Peter Facinelli, of Twilight fame, his movie producing partner. "We were only friends at first. He gave me advise and direction. Nothing more." After getting the most amazing rejection letter, the 257th "no", from Oscar winning director Alexander Payne... he had a long talk with his friend, Peter. They decided to share The Unbreakable Boy with the world and became partners.

Writing the book and making a movie... it is still an incalculable situation to have come true. The odds of it happening... it just doesn't. Scott believed in one thing during this entire time, something he thought about every single day- "The only way I fail... is if I quit." And he knew his faith would not quit on him so with a dream on his mind and faith in his heart he set out to share his family, his broken story, The Unbreakable Boy with the world... so that maybe someone else can see what they have and realize... with faith and love, it will always get



cott LeRette and Family

RED OAK HIGH SCHOOL NEW BUILDING PROJECT



All pictures of Red Oak Highschool taken from APMA Architecture website

The Red Oak Public Schools Officials hosted a ribboncutting for the new \$29 million school facilities upgrade project back in August of 2019. And although it has been a few years since then, we thought the viewers of this newsletter might like an update on the project.

In June 2017, school district patrons approved \$19.9 million in general obligation bonds. Construction began at the end of the 2017-2018 school year, and Red Oak students have been attending in the new facility for almost 3 school years now. The project was a three-campus plan which closed the previous Middle School Building. The Washington Elementary building is now a new elementary facility. The Inman building houses first-through-sixth grade students and 7-12 students are all on the high school campus.



All pictures of Red Oak Highschool taken from APMA Architecture website

ALLEY POYNER MACCHIETTO ARCHITECTURE

Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture were the architects on the project and they state, "APMA collaborated with construction firm Boyd Jones and the Red Oak Community School District on a master plan that reimagined the district's facilities. Following a successful public vote to approve the bond, projects include a 6,500 SF primary school addition with four new classrooms and new fire suppression system, and a 30,000 SF addition to the high school building. The high school projects included new commons areas for students, the conversion of several spaces into new classrooms, new and more secure academic and activities entrances, and new restrooms. Renovations also created a STEAM center and a 10,000 SF multi-purpose activity building for various athletics and band activities."

https://www.alleypoyner.com/design/red-oak-schools/

The new Red Oak Highschool is loved by all. And as Red Oak Schools Superintendent Tom Messinger said, "(It) wouldn't have been possible without the community of Red Oak supporting what we do at the school system. Thank you for all the support you've given us in the past and thank you for all the support you will continue to give us."





RED OAK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Written by: Mark Erickson, Activities Director



Cast of "Guys and Dolls"

The Red Oak School District Activities Department is proud to highlight our students, participants, and athletes from our winter seasons! Our coaches, directors, and sponsors strive to instill positive character qualities within our programs. Our activities department would like to publicly thank our alumni, businesses, and entire community for their ongoing support! Please read the exciting news about our programs and students below.

JH VOCAL CONCERT

Congratulations to Director Terra Marsden and the junior high vocal students on an outstanding performance on Tuesday, March 8th.

HS VOCAL

Congratulations to Jonah Wemhoff for being selected for the Iowa All State Choir which is the highest honor that a high school singer can receive! Trinity LaMar, James Gass, Jonah Wemhoff, Grayson Hewett, and Sam Fields were selected for and performed in the Nebraska Wesleyan Honor Choir. Director Tim Marsden and the cast of our high school musical "Guys and Dolls" gave impeccable performances on February 25th, 26th, and 27th.

LARGE GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL STATE SPEECH RESULTS

Congratulations to Speech Coaches Laura Horn, Kelsey Mangold and the speech participants! The Red Oak Large Group Speech Team competed at state speech on Saturday, February 5th. Results were: Ensemble Acting with Michelle Grass, Griffin Eubank, and Connor Knight - straight 2s; Short Film with Gannon Sallach, Stef Medina, Lindsey Porter, Tessa Rolenc, Griffin Eubank,

Connor Knight, Aedynn Graham, Jonah Wemhoff, and Grayson Hewett - mixed 1s; Radio Broadcasting with Maddie Doyle and Logan Conn - mixed 1s; Group Improv with Aedynn Graham, Grayson Hewett, Jonah



Wemhoff, Josie Rengstorf, and Stef Medina - mixed 1s; and Ensemble with Tessa Rolenc and Josie Rengstorf - straight 1s.

The Red Oak Individual Speech Team had a fantastic showing at ADM on Saturday, March 13th for the Individual State Speech meet! 9 students competed in 13 events. Receiving straight 1s: Gannon Sallach - Expository; Griffin Eubank - Improv; Grace Goldapp - After Dinner Speaking; Tessa Rolenc - Expository; Aedynn Graham - Storytelling; Josie Rengstorf - Acting; Grayson Hewett - Improv. Receiving mixed 1s: Michelle Grass - Lit Program and Prose; Grayson Hewett - Storytelling; Stef Medina - Poetry. Receiving mixed 2s: Tessa Rolenc - Prose; Receiving straight 2s: Josie Rengstorf - Musical Theatre.

FFA

The FFA program competed in the Southwest District Convention on March 5th at Carroll. Results were: Reporter's Scrapbook - 1st Gold - advance to state - Madison Doyle & Estefany Medina; Secretary's Book - 2nd Gold - advance to state - Lainey DeVries.



Large Group Speech Team

RED OAK SPORTS

Written by: Mark Erickson, Activities Director

BOYS BASKETBALL

The boys basketball team culminated their season at the state tournament. It had been 29 years since the boys basketball program had made the state tournament. Congratulations to Coach Plank and the team on what many would consider a historic season!

GIRLS AND BOYS BASKETBALL: HONORS AND AWARDS

Girls Basketball
Seniors Payten Bass and Lennon
O'Neal earned academic all
conference honors by earning a
cumulative grade point average of
3.5 or better throughout their high
school career. Sophomore Merced
Ramirez was selected as Honorable
Mention All Conference.

Boys Basketball

Seniors Nick Fouts, Ryan Johnson, and Bradley Sifford earned academic all conference honors by earning a cumulative grade point average of 3.5 or better throughout their high school career. Sophomore Max DeVries was selected as First Team All Conference. Max was one of two players chosen unanimously to the first team. Sophomore Hunter Gilleland earned 2nd Team All Conference honors while Senior Ryan Johnson was selected as Honorable Mention All Conference.

Record Breakers: Both Hunter Gilleland and Max DeVries broke the single season 3 point record of 60 held by Nate Barr (01-02). Hunter sits atop the list at 67 while Max is at #2 with 66.



Boys Basketball - 2022 Class 2A Basketball State Qualifier

BAND

The 6th grade, JH, and HS bands put on a wonderful performance for "Bandtasia". Great work by Director Wood and the band participants!

Honor Band Participants Sam Fields, Grayson Hewett, Brayden Sego, Luke Sperling and Jonah Wemhoff were selected into the Southwest Iowa Honor Band A; special congratulations to Sam Fields for being accepted as 1st chair Tuba in the 11th-12th Band. Aedynn Graham, Trinity LaMar, Lauren Dean, Griffin Eubank, Kara Sego, Sam Fields, Luke Sperling, Jonah Wemhoff, Grayson Hewett, and Brayden Sego were accepted into The University of Iowa Honor Band. The Iowa Western Honor Band middle school participants were Anna Butz, Josie Goldapp, Ryelan Kruse, Lily. Marsden, Zoie Rohrig and Kendall Ruhl. High School Iowa Western Honor Band participants were



Iowa Western Honor Band Participants

Griffin Eubank, Sam Fields, Aedynn Graham, Grayson Hewett, Trinity LaMar, Abby Petersen, Kara Sego, Luke Sperling and Jonah Wemhoff.

STATE BOWLING

Jon Piper earned a trip to the state bowling tournament at Maple Lanes in Waterloo. Jon finished 11th at the state individual tournament.

WRESTLING

Senior manager Shelby Heitman earned academic all conference honors by earning a cumulative grade point average of 3.5 or better throughout her high school career. Dawson Bond qualified for the state wrestling

tournament.
Dawson battled
his way to the
medal stand
with a 4th place





University of Iowa Honor Band participants

MONTGOMERY COUNTY YMCA

Written by: Anne Stewart

The Montgomery County Family YMCA started out as a small storefront more than 25 years ago on March 25th, 1995, before moving to its current location at 101 E. Cherry St. in October 2000, the YMCA utilized the old 4-H Exhibit building on the Montgomery County Fairgrounds to hold programs. During that time period it has not ceased to incorporate the core values of the YMCA organization: CARING, HONESTY, RESPECT & RESPONSIBILITY into every aspect of its activities. Like well-trained runners in a relay race the Executive Director position has passed like a baton from first Nick Zimmer to John Blomstedt, to most recently on April 1st, Carrie Shalters.

Speaking of races and activities, the YMCA held their 9th Annual Shamrock Shuffle Race on Saturday, March 12th. Not since Caoilte Mac Ronain has there been a more mischievous or fleet of foot group of runners and walkers. Albeit, Caoilte likely would not have deigned to run under threats of ice or snow and temperatures that make the teeth

chatter like those during the month of March in Iowa. There is no "lion" or "lamb", but a chaotic leprechaun throwing out random temperatures like enticing gold coins. The Shamrock Shuffle participants travel from all over for the opportunity to shiver in various shades of green and festive Shamrock Shuffle hats with their family and friends.

This year, the turnout was small but those who did participate were a hearty lot and all finished with smiles on their face and pride in their accomplishment. The overall winner of the 5K race was Wade Brandt of Clarinda with a time of 22:52. Runner-up was Maya Hunter of Clarinda with a time of 25:58. 3rd place went to Pace Chaillie, and 4th to Winifred Stuck. As with any event, our thanks go out to the volunteers that enable us to provide such programming. Thank you, Beau Boeye, for helping along with YMCA staff Matt Davis, Chris Allision, Trish Earley, and Anne Stewart.

Following on the heels of the Shamrock Shuffle is our 8th Annual Good Friday Breakfast on April 15th, 2022. In partnership with the



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT® FOR HEALTHY LIVING FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Montgomery County Ministerial Fellowship Organization the Montgomery County Family YMCA provides a catered breakfast meal with a message from a local pastor on Good Friday. A singer and other clergy from the area and D.J. Greg Brower usually round out the program centered on Christ's death on the cross. Cancelled due to covid health constraints for the past 2 years, Reverend Alan Dean of the First Covenant Church of Red Oak, Iowa will finally have the chance to deliver his delayed message like Jonah without the messy trip via whale. Singing and leading the music will be Susan Brown of Henderson, Iowa. Returning to emcee the event will be Steven Colerick of Emerson who also leads the Men's Bible Study that meets regularly on Thursday mornings at the YMCA.

Throughout the year we offer opportunities that promote youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. Whether by participating in any of our numerous programs geared towards teaching the next generation skills they will need to navigate life, classes that promote a healthy sense of camaraderie while shedding pounds and gaining muscle, or coordinating a food drive to benefit those effected by the recent financial crisis.



Group that participated in the Shamrock Shuffle Walk

MONTGOMERY COUNTY YMCA CONTINUED

For more information on how one can become a member, volunteer, donor, or simply involved with the Montgomery County Family YMCA, please stop in for a visit or tour of the YMCA, call the YMCA at 712-623-2161, visit the YMCA on Facebook, or the Y's website at www.mcymca.com.



Shamrock Shuffle 2nd place runner Maya Hunter of Clarinda

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JUNCTION DAYS 2022 EVENTS Red Oak Chamber and Industry Association



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RED OAK CHAMBER

Written by: Elaine Carlson Director of Membership & Finance at the Red Oak Chamber & Industry Association

Many of you know, but for those who do not, I am married to Kerry Carlson, Red Oak Class of '81. We were married in September of 1988 and left Red Oak a month later as Kerry pursued his career with Fareway Meat & Grocery. We moved around the state for 21 years as he climbed the ladder to manage two different stores before given the opportunity to move back to Red Oak in July of 2009 to manage the store where it all began. In the time we have been home, so many other alumni have also been welcomed "home." Some to start their families. some with their families, some to start a new job, some to retire. Whatever the reason, they continue to communicate how happy they are to be back, and we are too!

Our Chamber is the only entity that markets Red Oak. We strive to market not only our member businesses and organizations but our community as a whole. We promote our own events and programs but also promote community events as well. If you haven't done so yet, please check out our www.redoakiowa.com, 'like' our @RedOakChamber and @RedOakJunctionDays Facebook Pages, and follow us on Instagram to keep up on the latest news and information!

We have been working on Junction Days 2022 since we wrapped up last year's event. The theme this year is "All Roads Lead Home." We have so many things planned for the fourday event which is June 23rd- June 26th! One of the most popular is our ROAR - Red Oak All Class Reunion event. Again, this year, it will be held on Friday night, June 24th at the Red Coach Inn & Suites property and Stadium 34 restaurant. We have a great line up of Red Oak Alum for our entertainment that night. Starting off the night will be Pete Walker followed by Taylor Perdue. Next up will be Joe Kinser and ending the night is B Side 3 which is made up of Phil Lamb, Eric Nelson, and Greg Brower. It will be a fun night of great music, catching up with everyone,





Jucntion Days 2019 Stage Events

and of course tasty food and drinks!

Saturday is a full day of events which includes, the Fun Run, Shady Tree BBQ Contest, Vendor Fair, Grand Parade, Tractor Display, Water Fights, Stage Events, Bingo, Kid's Inflatables, Face Painting, Balloon Artists, and the Saturday Beverage Garden.



Junction Days 2021 Grand Parade



Jucntion Days 2021 Fun Run



Downtown Saturday Night Beverage Garden Entertainment

Entertainment for Saturday night are Kansas City based Saucy Jack who will perform songs from the 70's up to current day hits and Burning Pianos who will perform all-star keyboardists of rock n' roll including such artists as Elton John, Billy Joel, Jerry Lee Lewis, Queen, Stevie Wonder and more!

Sunday will start off with the Family Bike Ride from downtown Fountain Square Park out to the airport to the Red Oak Ambassadors' Junction Days Flight Breakfast and circle back into town. A tractor ride begins at the Montgomery County Fair Grounds late morning and the Cornhole Tournament begins at noon with the Sunday Funday Beverage Garden located at the Montgomery County Fair Grounds.

We have packed so much into the 2022 Junction Days weekend that you will not have time to get bored! And while you are home, take a tour on Saturday of the fantastic newly renovated and expanded Red Oak JR-SR High School! Oh, and be sure to pack your swimsuits so you can get some fun in the sun at the newly constructed Red Oak City Pool. Stop by the Chamber for more information about these events and more that weekend. Let us know if your class will be celebrating at Junction Days this year. We'd love for you to share your class reunion information on our @RedOakJunctionDays Facebook Page.

Hope to see you soon! Elaine Carlson





Newly Constructed Red Oak City Pool





Water Fights -Junction Days 2019

MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORY CENTER

Written by: Dave McFarland



Exhibit at Montgomery County History Center

THE WILD, WILD WEST?

You might not think of Red Oak, Iowa when you think of the Old Wild West, but you better reconsider. Let's take a look: Native Americans, yep, got a few of those; stage coaches, yes, those too; steam locomotives and tracks being laid west, definitely; and even one of the Earp brothers (Virgil) thrown in for good measure.

Sadly, many of us grew up and went to school only to learn history was boring. Names and dates, too many to have to remember especially when you were graded on putting those names and date into the right blank on some agonizing test. That was a matter of methodology and not the real story, not the story of the people.

Red Oak junction and Montgomery County is a bit of an anachronism. In 1846, when Iowa became a state, the untamed frontier began in Central Iowa and with Fort Des Moines. The movement West had began. Covered wagon crossing the prairie headed for California and points west. The trail began in St. Lois, Missouri. You crossed the Missouri River, then up to the Platte and then west. As for Western Iowa, they believed there was nothing here, nothing between Fort Des Moines and Council Bluffs. An area to be bypassed.

There was a beautiful little creek that ran into the West Nishnabotna River. A handful of people settled there in the mid-1850's. There was a little settlement just to the north with a mill and a post office called Oro. The people, who settled along that oak lined creek called there settlement Red Oak Junction. The name came from it being the junction of several road and with a big dose of optimism thrown in. Then in 1858, something happened. The post office was moved from Oro to Red Oak Junction. The Junction became a town. In 1869, the railroad would come and that little town became a city. In 1901, the City Council will move to drop the Junction, growing pains perhaps.

It would be home to many industries like the printing of calendars, pottery, a steel foundry, a battery company



RED OAK HISTORY FACTS

- In the American Civil War, the area provided more Union troops per capita than any other in the state.
- In the Battle of Kasserine Pass in February 1943, forty-five soldiers from Red Oak alone were captured or killed more than 100 telegrams arrived in Red Oak saying that its soldiers were missing in action. In recognition of Red Oak's casualties, the city's name was given to a "victory ship". The SS Red Oak Victory has become a floating museum in the shipyard where it was built, in Richmond, California.

and many other endeavors. Time and progress is rarely patient and those businesses have moved on. The creek and town remains as do many new businesses and endeavors. But Red Oak has left too many marks on history to ever be forgotten.



Exhibit at Montgomery County History Center

MONTGOMERY COUNTY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Written by: Michelle Zanders, Marketing Specialist | Montgomery County Memorial Hospital + Clinics





Montgomery County Memorial Hospital + Clinics Brings Latest Technology and Techniques to Southwest Iowa

Nestled on the top of the hill off of Highway 34 in Red Oak, Iowa, stands Montgomery County Memorial Hospital + Clinics. For more than 100 years, MCMH has been committed to caring for families through out Southwest Iowa while using the latest in technology and techniques.

Our main campus is home to a variety of services, including our Specialty Outpatient Clinic. We offer more than two dozen specialties from cardiology to urology. Our clinic allows patients to get the care they need without driving to the Omaha Metro.

Our patients see providers from the city right here at home, face-to-face, through video technology called tele-health. MCMH tele-health services include: endocrinology, epilepsy, perinatology, psychiatry, pulmonology and stroke care. Patients can come to our hospital and visit face-to-face with specialty providers that are in the city. It's a great way to bridge the gap, but still provide quality care to patients.

A positive that came from the pandemic is virtual primary care visits. Since Spring 2020, our providers have been able to reach those patients who may be homebound or too sick to come into the office for care. Via phone, tablet or computer, our providers are able to see patients wherever they may live.

MCMH has two satellite clinics in Villisca and Malvern. These clinics are full-service primary care clinics. They offer wellness exams, immunizations, sports physicals, well-child checks, same-day appointments and more! The Malvern Medical Clinic also offers DOT physicals and Radiology services on-site!

While MCMH continues to evolve and advance, you can still find our small-town, Midwestern values in the smiling faces of our staff. We care about our patients, because we are our patients. We sit next to you at the basketball games, community volunteer boards and in daycare line pickup. We look forward to caring for Southwest lowa for another 100 years.

MCMH, ALONG WITH SEVEN OTHER WESTERN IOWA HOSPITALS, SEND SUPPLIES TO UKRAINE



effort to send urgently needed medical supplies to Ukraine. Major Gen. (R) Chris Hughes, Red Oak, spoke to Montgomery County Memorial Hospital and Clinics CEO Ron Kloewer about finding medical supply vendors to purchase supplies.

The request led to Kloewer asking other western Iowa hospitals to donate surplus supplies from their facilities. Seven other hospitals answered the call: Audubon County Memorial Hospital and Clinics, Crawford County Memorial Hospital, St. Anthony Regional Hospital, Cass Health, Myrtue Medical Center, Shenandoah Medical Center and Spencer Hospital.

Between the eight hospitals, Major Gen. (R) Hughes sent 12 pallets of supplies to Ukraine through the nonprofit Nova Ukraine.



If you would like to forward this email on so others can sign up have them follow the link below to join the Red Oak Alumni Network and receive the Red Oak Alumni Newsletter quarterly!

https://www.redoakiowa.com/alumni/

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

If you have a submission for someone you think should be next issue's Alumni Spotlight send us an email to redoakiowa.alumni.newsletter@gmail.com

Have a wonderful week, and be on the lookout for the next issue of the Red Oak Alumni Newsletter coming out the first week of August 2022.



If you would like to join the Red Oak Iowa Alumni Facebook Group just follow the below link and request to join! It is a private Red Oak Alumni group where people can ask questions, post about upcoming events, etc.

https://www.facebook.com/groups/redoakalumni



If you know a graduate of Red Oak Schools that has passed and would like to be included in next issues obituary section please send their name, year of graduation, and year of passing to redoakiowa.alumni.newsletter@gmail.com



SIGN UP FOR THE WEEKLY COMMUNICATOR.

Weekly e-mail of community events and promotions. Delivered to your inbox on Wednesday mornings at 9:00 AM.

The Communicator is put out by the Red Oak Chamber

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The Alumni Newsletter is sponsored by the Red Oak Heritage Foundation, our community foundation. If you would like to help support them or for more information on them go to www.redoakheritagefoundation.org

