

# Press welcomes Kyle VonRuden

*New staffer hopes to use English education background in new position*

**By Ryan Spoehr**

With a pending opening on the Clark County Press staff, the publication has brought on Black River Falls (BRF) resident Kyle VonRuden as a reporter.

VonRuden jumped into the world of reporting right away after starting at the Press Dec. 10. After helping with the editing process with the Press' Dec. 12 edition, he covered boys basketball and worked on feature stories for the paper. He also took photos throughout the area for publication in the Press.

"So far so good. I think I'm enjoying it. I'm starting to get a better idea of what to expect from day to day," VonRuden said.

He spoke with several area officials and business owners last week, either for interviews for stories or just for introductions as he settles in at his new office.

"I think I'm looking forward to meeting people in a lot of different areas from different walks of life and developing some professional relationships with a lot of different folks around the community. I think that's the thing I'm most excited about right now," VonRuden said.

VonRuden is originally from western Wisconsin.

"My family moved around several times when I was growing up, but it was always in the area," VonRuden said. "Monroe County was home until I was 12. We moved to BRF and that's where I finished middle school and all of high school."

In Monroe County, he



**Kyle VonRuden**

lived in Kendall, Wilton and Sparta. His family also lived in Elroy, which is in Juneau County.

VonRuden is a 2007 graduate of BRF High School.

After that, he attended the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse for two years. VonRuden took a semester off and then transferred to UW-Oshkosh, where he graduated in 2012. He double-majored in political science and English.

VonRuden said he always planned on having two majors at the university level, with one being in political science because of his interest in social sciences.

"I was lucky to have good teachers in BRF that showed me the potential of those fields of study," VonRuden said.

The second major, however, was one that took some thought. After starting psychology, VonRuden changed it to economics, but eventually settled on English.

He said he had good English professors, which led him to deciding on English. But, he found that English gave him flexibility in areas of study.

"It gave me a sense that, within the English major, you have a lot of range of what interests you. It's really interdisciplinary," VonRuden said. "I'm a social sciences kind of guy, so history is on table, [as well as] politics, sociology [and] psychology. So, with English, I thought you could pick from all of those buckets and have a lot of leeway."

One of VonRuden's political science professors told him of a job opening in a fellowship program in Boston, MA, to work at a charter public school district. VonRuden filled the position, which had tutoring,

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# ost farm 2022

side is that there are fewer and fewer counties that have the ability and resources to host, like smaller agriculture counties and those that just don't have the farm infrastructure anymore. At least some of the shows will probably move to a more permanent location, like what happened for 2021. My guess is that most likely it will become a combination of the show sponsored by counties and selecting a semi-permanent site, maybe one year out of three. I can see it becoming a hybrid in the next few years."

Glewen mentioned that the board is wary of establishing a permanent site because it may become difficult to maintain attendance considering the size of the state and the diversity of its agriculture sector. Rueth, meanwhile, said that Clark County will be prepared to serve as a future host whatever the WFTD board of directors decides.

"We want to keep promoting WFTD if and when they decide to go to a permanent site," Rueth said. "Clark County would definitely be interested in putting something together for that."

Jefferson County will also host next year's WFTD in late July at Walter's Grain Farm near Johnson Creek. The 2020 exhibition will take place at Huntsinger Farms in Eau Claire.

*Happy  
Holidays to Clark  
County Press  
readers.*

## Reporter

### From Front Page

mentoring and general tasks around the school.

For a year, VonRuden tutored middle school students, mostly in English, language arts and math, but in history and science as well.

The following year, he worked as a recruitment manager in that district. After that, he was the facilities manager in the district.

"At that point, we were operating three separate schools in three separate buildings, as well as providing housing for a lot of the fellowship tutors, so I was overseeing a lot of the properties and a lot of the operations within the properties. Much of that was contracted services - custodial, waste removal, plumbing, electrical and things like that," VonRuden said.

He was the facilities manager there for two years. In that time, the district built a new elementary school.

"I managed a lot of that work on behalf of the school. A lot of the day-to-day management for the construction project was my domain as well," Von Ruden said.

In late 2015 and early 2016, he decided to transition to the United States Peace Corps and started filling out applications for that. VonRuden finished his position at the charter school district in August 2016.

One month later he was in Rwanda and he began training to become an English teacher. He taught there until November when he returned

to Wisconsin.

VonRuden was then on the lookout for some sort of job in the professional setting.

"I was looking for something that hopefully I could put to use the skills and the experience I've had since college, which revolve around education, English/Language Arts and composition," VonRuden said.

After returning, VonRuden saw the advertisement for the open reporter position in *The Shopper*.

"I thought that would probably be a really good fit based on my mix of skills and experience, and of course with growing up in the area and graduating from BRF, I was familiar with the *Banner Journal*, the *Clark County Press* and *The Shopper*," VonRuden said.

VonRuden said he felt stressed about if he would be able to find a job in the area, so it was a relief to find the reporter position available.

Shortly after Press general manager Kathy Potter spoke with VonRuden, it was decided he would join *The Press*.

"I just feel fortunate that just a few days after I came back, there was this advertisement that I came across. Serendipitous is probably too strong of a word, but just fortunate," he said. "I was looking forward to the conversation with Kathy. I felt things may move pretty quickly from there. When she said that she thought I would be a good fit and asked if I wanted to give it a try, I was definitely ready to say yes and come aboard."

For more on the new look Press staff, turn to page 3

## Christie

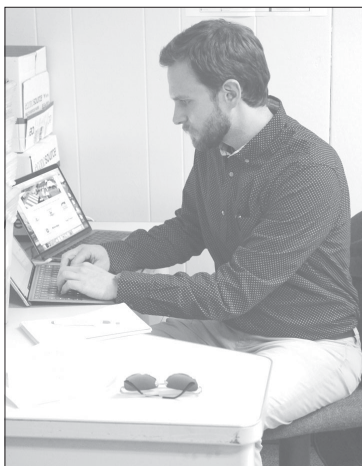
### From Front Page

Council members voted to refer discussion of the Christie property to the property committee.

Although property committee members will ultimately decide what action to take to refer to the council, council members briefly commented on the property.

"I really think we need to be a little bit more selective on who we sell it to," said alderperson Julie Counsell. "That's in the middle of our downtown, in the middle of our historic district - I think we really need to kind of weigh the difference of getting the most money we can out of it versus getting a purchaser that is going to repair that building and bring it back so that it's a nice-looking building in our downtown instead of what it looks like right now."

"The best case scenario



Ryan Spoehr/Clark County Press

**Kyle VonRuden has joined the Clark County Press as a reporter. He started last week and has stories in this week's edition.**

would be to find somebody that's going to put a retail in there," said council president and chairman of the property committee Jerry Quicker. "Is this going to happen? Probably not. This is the thing. I totally agree that the building has to be fixed up and not turned into a slum."

The property committee will meet this Thursday, Dec. 20, at 1 p.m. in the Council Room at the Neillsville City Hall for discussion and action on the property. The common council and historic

preservation committee will meet at the same time, but only for discussion on the item. The meeting is open to the public.

## PD

### From Front Page

\$3,000. The reimbursement required decreases by \$125 for each month employed through 24 months.

Klueckmann said that two years was a standard length of time for such an agreement.

# Asking Santa for Christmas gifts



Ryan Spoehr/Clark County Press

**Harold Drescher (r) turned down an offer to be an elf, but he was willing to tell Santa what he wanted for Christmas during the Neillsville Legion Post's Christmas breakfast Dec. 16. Drescher asked Santa for a high bowling score for Christmas. For more, turn to page 20.**

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