

Banner Journal welcomes Kyle VonRuden as reporter

By Ryan Spoehr/
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With a pending opening on The Clark County Press (Press) staff, the publication, based out of Neillsville, had brought on Black River Falls (BRF) resident Kyle VonRuden as a reporter. With that decision, Clark County Press editor Ryan Spoehr would return to his reporter position, a position he'd held at Banner Journal from 2014 to the end of 2015.

After sitting down and talking, Spoehr and VonRuden agreed to "switch spots" so to speak. Spoehr will remain editor of the Press and VonRuden started his role as a reporter with the Banner Journal Dec. 21.

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.

He's done the same at the Banner Journal since arriving.

"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.

"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 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.

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JoDee Brooke/Banner Journal

Kyle VonRuden has filled the reporter position at the Banner Journal. The Banner Journal welcomed VonRuden Dec. 21 as he began his new role with the publication. He is a Black River Falls High School graduate and says he is looking forward to meeting people from different walks of life.

VonRuden From Front Page

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 the 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, 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,” VonRuden 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 posi-

tion 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*