

GO

BRONCOS

RITZVILLE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

AND

LIND-RITZVILLE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

GRADUATES INTRODUCTORY BOOKLET

2020 AND 2021





The mission of the Ritzville High School and Lind-Ritzville Alumni Association is to honor all graduates, provide a venue for all alumni to gather, share memories and reconnect, and to preserve and protect the history, tradition, and memorabilia of Ritzville/Lind Ritzville High School.

The Ritzville High School Alumni Association is the longest running alumni association in the nation. It has been active since 1905.



DETAILS

The Alumni Association puts on a banquet every Memorial Day weekend. It takes place on the Saturday Memorial Day weekend, the last weekend in May.

During the banquet, we induct the graduating seniors and also honor the 100 year, 75 year, 50 year and the 25 year classes. These classes are introduced at the banquet.

The alumni board chooses an alumni to be the toastmaster during the banquet.

The graduating seniors tell us what they are planning in their future and also scholarships are handed out to the recipients at the banquet.

Classes gather and have reunions on that weekend and many attend the banquet. It is a great time to get together and reminisce about their time at good old RHS and LRHS. Fun times are had by all. There are usually 300 to 400 people in attendance.



High school classes and the alumni board set up for the banquet.







2020 Graduates





Welcome sign that hangs over Division Street during Alumni weekend!



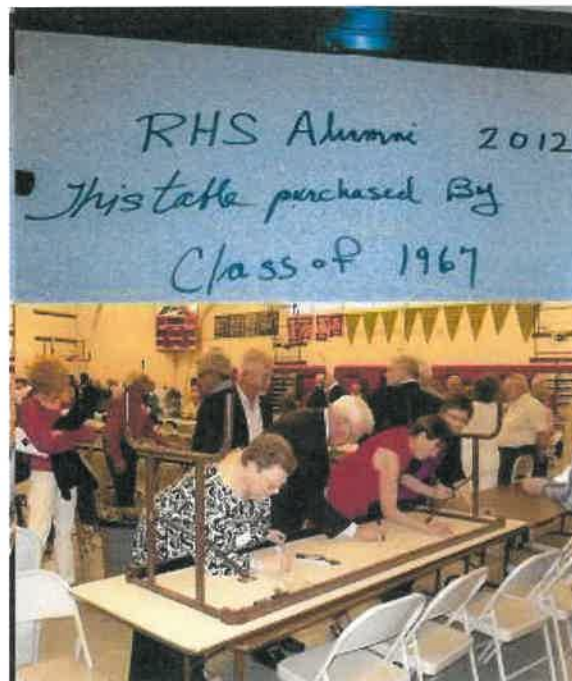
Tom McLain Class of 1968 and Carl Eckhardt Class of 1967 provide music for the banquet. Tom does this every year for us and Carl joined in during his 50-year class reunion. Hopefully Carl can join us again at a future banquet.



The Alumni Association donated the roll down American Flag at Gilson Gymnasium. They were able to raise money from alumni members to purchase the flag.



The photo (taken by Roger Evans) of Terry Tufts wearing the black/red boa is from 5-26-2007 at our (1967) #40 Reunion when Terry brought Louisiana style Mardi Gras to us--complete with masks, red/black necklaces, confetti, etc. He wanted to thank his classmates for all the support we gave him after he lost his home/possession when Katrina hit.



The Class of 1967 signing tables they donated to the Alumni Association for the banquet.

BOARD MEMBERS

Let me introduce you to the RHS/LRHS Alumni Board and tell you a little about what each of us does through the year to bring you the alumni banquet. Remember we are all volunteers.

First is our current President, Colby Schell, Class of 1983. At the first part of February he calls a board meeting to discuss the upcoming banquet. At this meeting we award the bid to a caterer, set ticket price and set up banquet committees. He oversees much of what the committees do and keeps us in line. The day of the banquet he does the introduction at the banquet and keeps things moving along. The first part of June he will call a meeting to discuss the banquet and make initial plans for the next year. We also discuss prospective toastmasters for the next year. In September or October he will call another meeting of the board to discuss any items that need attention. Thank you Colby Schell for volunteering to be our alumni board president! We appreciate you!



The Vice President/Recording Secretary position is currently vacant. This person takes minutes at our meetings. They makes sure Gilson Gym is reserved for the banquet weekend. They send bid requests to caterers and arrange to have the floor covered with the school maintenance people and to have the chairs available at the setup. They meet with the scholarship committee to choose scholarship recipients. They arrange with the caterer to have table coverings delivered to the gym before decorating. This person also takes care of other small miscellaneous things when needed



Stacey Schell Schoessler, Class of 1978 is the Alumni Treasurer. Stacey pays our bills, orders stamps and envelopes, makes deposits to the banks and keeps track of different balances such as scholarships, a picture fund, etc. She writes the scholarship checks. She makes sure the books are audited every year.



Let me introduce our directors. Michele Kagele Kiesz, Class of 1979, Gwen Benzel Schaefer, Class of 1964 and Mary Rowe Arlt, Class of 1970. The directors help in making decisions and any changes that need to be made. They help at the banquet helping attendees find seats, pick up their tickets, etc. They also help setting up the tables and decorate for the banquet. Gwen is in charge of the decorations.



Michele Kagele Kiesz

Gwen Benzel Schaefer

Mary Rowe Arlt

Thomas Pulliam, Class of 1994, is our webmaster. He is in the process of setting up our new website which is <http://www.ritzvillealumni.com> . He is taking the old composite class pictures that hung on the wall in the old high school and in the hangers in the current high school to Spokane and having them scanned so we have a preserved copy. The pictures are starting to deteriorate and we want to be able to keep this memorabilia. He is also downloading these pictures as he has them done on the website along with the class annual so you can click on it and open it. This takes a lot of time. Thomas is also the math teacher at Lind-Ritzville High School and is involved in many community volunteer jobs.



Let me introduce Marilyn Sielaff, Class of 1970! She has the volunteer job as membership secretary. It is a little different because it requires work 24/7. She keeps track of around 3,500 to 4,000 alumni keeping the database updated on a daily basis and updates the Facebook page. She checks obituaries, receives e-mails letting her know of any changes in the alumni status such as name, address, e-mail phone or spouse changes or if an alumni passes away. In January she sends out an information update letter to all of the alumni with e-mail addresses. She gets a great response from people changing their information but then she also gets many back saying the address is no longer valid. Then the detective work starts and she tries to contact these people to see if she can get a new e-mail address, etc. Facebook has been a great tool for this. The end of March the alumni banquet invitations go out which she writes up, prints and folds. She is thankful that Donna Koch's class stuffs the envelopes for her. She usually has the e-mails updated but then she gets several of the mailed invitation envelopes back saying... moved, no longer at this address, so she is back doing detective work trying to find these peoples new addresses to send out another invitation. White pages and Facebook help with this. That why it is so nice when you let her know if you move or change your e-mail. It saves her a lot of time. After the board chooses who they may want as toastmaster for the next banquet she contact that person and see if they would be willing and if so she will work with them sending them information they will need to know at the banquet. She contacts the honored classes and find out who will be doing the introductions of their class to put in the program, she sells the banquet tickets, does articles for the journal, sends out questionnaires to the 75 year honored class and writes up something for the toastmaster to read at the banquet, she does the program for the banquet and gets them printed, decides how many tables will be needed at the banquet and helps get them to set up for the banquet and hands out the on call tickets at the banquet. She gets a list of the graduating seniors to put in the database. She is rather busy through the year with all of this, but she loves what she does. On a last note...please send her your updated information so she can get it changed in the database. You can send it to sielaffm@hotmail.com. It saves her a lot of time.



CONTACT INFORMATION

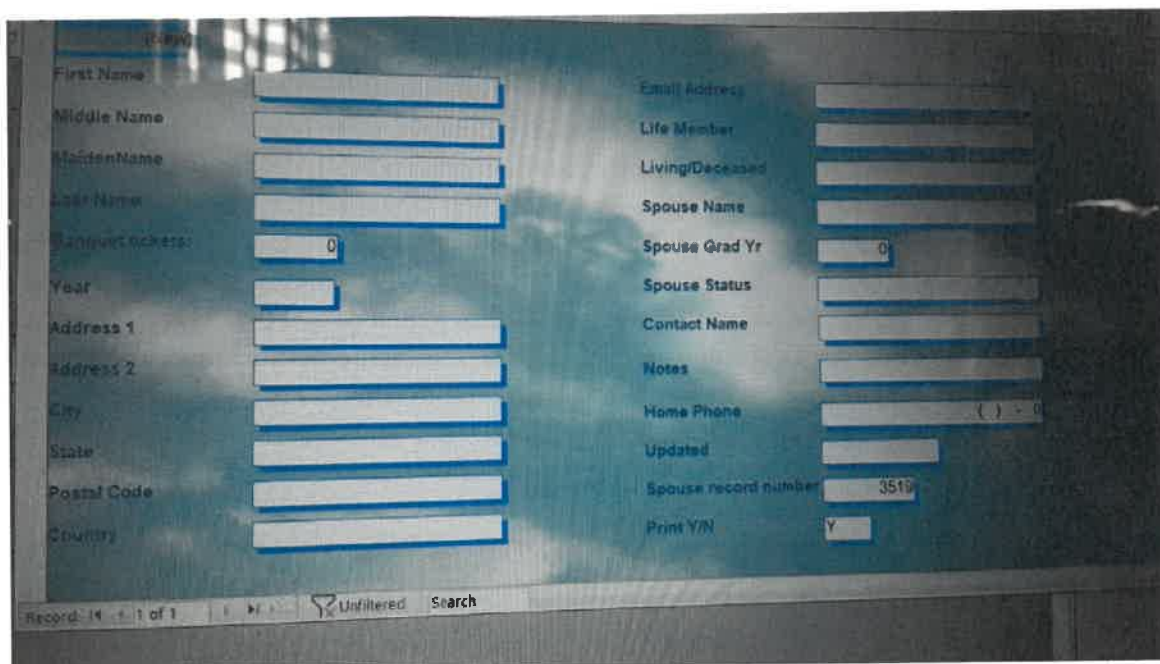
The Alumni Association has a Facebook page. Check it out and join:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/213086222057825>

Many Classes make their own Facebook page to keep in touch and spread class news.

The Alumni Association also has a website:

<http://ritzvillealumni.com>



This is a picture of the alumni database. Please keep Marilyn Sielaff informed with all of the above information. You can e-mail it to her at sielaffm@hotmail.com. It helps to have the information updated when she sends out information about the alumni or if your classmates want to reach out to you about a reunion. They contact her for a class list. If she does not have the updated information, the e-mails are returned as undeliverable as well as the printed ones that go out in the snail mail. When they are returned, she has to research and see if she can get a new e-mail or mailing address and it takes a lot of time. Thank you in advance for doing this.

TESTIMONIALS

RHS/LRHS Alumni have shared testimonials about what the Alumni Association and their reunions mean to them. If they are married to an alumnus, pictures of both follow their testimonial.

It has been my pleasure for the last 10 years to be the RHS/LRHS Alumni Association Membership Secretary. I keep track of the database and all the alumni who has graduated. Our database ranges from 1905 to the present listing all graduates. My mother, sister, brother, children and grandchildren are graduates from RHS/LRHS as are many other relatives. It is fun to see where life has taken the graduates. We have them all over the world. There are CEO's, missionaries, lawyers, doctors, architects, nurses, secretaries, plumbers, electricians, janitors, contractors, engineers, auto body repairmen, farmers, teachers, professors, senators, housekeepers, cooks, waitresses, etc. You name it, we have probably had someone make their living doing it. I was not involved with the alumni association for the first 25 years after graduation. I did go to my 11th year reunion. We did not have a 10th reunion because that was the year Mount St. Helen's blew and we had to cancel the reunion. My class, the class of 1970, has always been a very close class. We have met every five years since our 20th reunion. We love to get together and visit and talk about the "old times." We were supposed to have our 50th year class reunion last year. Like our 10th, it was cancelled. It must be something about our class!!! Next year we will honor several classes. When we have the alumni banquet, we honor the 100th, 75th, 25th year and current graduates at the banquet. We are honored to be able to give scholarships to the current graduating students with donations given by previous graduates. I look at so many people RHS/LRHS graduates on Facebook and a good majority of their friend's list consists of their school classmates. It is always so much fun to see all of the alumni come back for their reunions and the alumni banquet every year. Keep in touch with your high school friends. It is fun to get together at your reunions and compare stories, even though they get repeated over and over it is still so much fun. Remember to keep me updated with your new address, phone number, e-mail address, name changes, spouses name, etc. The database is used by people reaching out to contact their classmates for their reunions. Congratulations on becoming RHS/LRHS Alumni. It is an honor. We are one of the most active and longest running alumni associations in the United States.

Marilyn Sielaff, Board Member, Membership Secretary, Class of 1970



After graduating from RHS in May of 1961, I started my banking career that June. I spent 47 years in banking--all in Ritzville. During that time I served as Vice President, President, and Secretary for the Alumni Association plus helping with setting up tables and decorations for the banquet. The RHS/LRHS Alumni Association has helped me keep in contact with not only my classmates but other friends made during high school. This organization may not mean as much to the younger graduates, but it will some day. Because of the contact with fellow classmates through this alumni association, you will be able to relive some of the wonderful stories and friendships made while in high school.

Leslie VanVleet Adams Class of 1961--
still the best class ever even after 60 years!



I was in the Class of 1965, except for four years in Karachi, Pakistan, I consider myself a lifelong Bronco. Even during the years away my biggest concern was to return to Ritzville and graduate from RHS. What a great experience I had but always knew there was no place I'd rather be, the history, the friends, the sports and just the ability to be a kid in Ritzville. Upon graduation Geo and Mabel Burrill gave me a Life Alumni Membership and I consider that one of my best gifts ever. To be part of the best and maybe the only organization like it has been a privilege. To the new classes being honored I say hold on to your memories, explore your big new world but never forget the times in Ritzville, the good and trying moments for they will help make you into the person you will become. Enjoy the RHS/LHS Alumni Association and don't forget to thank all the wonderful volunteers that make the Association possible.

Danny Packard Class of 1965



Being part of our Alumni Association has brought me joy to be part of such meaningful relationships over the years. I never imagined the positive impact it would be to belong to this organization. I look forward to each year to be with my classmates who I would not see otherwise. We relive memories of our togetherness of days gone by and catch up on our lives. Our time in history is irreplaceable.

Marsha Louise Reimers Smith, Class of 1960



My family has quite a few Ritzville graduates. It's a club I'm pleased to be part of with my dad and six of his siblings, my sister, my two stepchildren and my two sons. Membership dates back to 1910 through 2001. One of them many of you know is Mr. Arlt your PE teacher and coach. Home is maybe where you hang your hat, work and live. The world changes and even Ritzville has changed but at a slower pace. It's always nice to have a place to come back to and see people that were part of your life, slow down a little and remember moments in time that only those you graduated with also remember. I hope you all will at times take advantage of what we as an alumni association try to offer – a banquet and get together to honor and remember friends and events. You will find that connection is something special as the year's pass. Your school days have greatly been affected by covid and your stories will be unique. Perhaps many of you will keep in touch with all the different means of social media. That's great, but I do hope many of you will remember your communities of Ritzville and Lind and return for a banquet and especially your special year ones on Memorial Weekend. Go Broncos!!

Mary Rowe Arlt, Board Member, Class of 1970, RHS/LRHS Alumni Board Director



Ritzville Alumni Association offers the unique opportunity to renew acquaintances on a regular basis. This organization provides all of us the opportunity to renew and maintain lifelong friendships not only with your immediate classmates but with many members of the local community. Graduation grants you a membership into an organization like no other at the high school level. Enjoy it - as each year goes by you will begin to appreciate the meaning of our Alumni Association. It is an organization like no other.

Howard Bourne Class of 1965



When you are a senior and anxious for Graduation, the Alumni Association is probably on the bottom of your list of things to do. You can't wait to graduate and get on with your life. We all did that, then you go off to college and begin your education. In a few years you begin to wonder what happened to all your classmates, where are they and what are they doing?

The Alumni Association is there for you when you are a senior and working for scholarships for college, and after you have been gone a few years and want to meet up with your classmates. The Alumni Association keeps track of every graduate.

Being a lifetime member is a good way to assure you will always be able to locate the members of your class, and attending the banquet becomes more important to you. Remember **ONCE A BRONCO ALWAYS A BRONCO!**

Ronna Lesser Galbreath, Class of 1958



Ronna 1958

Gary 1958

Sorry to hear about the cancellation of the Alumni Banquet again. It has been a big event for me, and I looked forward to it every year. It was a special time for me, to meet lifelong friends, that I haven't seen for many years. It's a joy for me to see them once again. Looking forward to Next Years.

ALLAN LITTLE RHS "67"



It has been a tough couple of years. Sporting events have been lost, proms have been passed over, the chance to grow up with friends has been passed over. One will never have the chance to experience what might have been. And now, one is missing out on their alumni banquet.

When I was your age, the banquet was just one more thing a person had to do before he could graduate and get the heck out of dodge. I am guessing that I was not alone in not wanting to go to a formal banquet -- sitting in a hot gym, wearing Sunday clothes, and listening to some old fogey talk about how great school was.

While I was at the banquet, I looked around me and noted that the 50-year class really looked old. Their hair was short or nonexistent and in most cases, the hair was 50 shades of gray (Back then, 50 shades of gray only had one meaning.) The athletic bodies were gone, however, a couple of people somehow managed to get into their letter sweaters and the ladies wore dresses that only accentuated their age. Physically speaking, there was nothing there that should have made anybody happy. What surprised me were the pure joy and sense of pride that radiated from the group? This intrigued me, and probably helped me to keep my sanity as the speaker lost my interest shortly after "It is great to be here".

As I looked closer, I realized that this group was made up primarily of the children of the generation that turned sod into productive farmland. They knew first hand about the grit and hardship that it took to make a community and make it successful. It was then that I realized that I had something in common with the classes of 25 years, 50 years, and beyond. We shared the same experience of growing up in the "sacred halls of Ritzville", especially since we had high school in the same building (and probably had some of the same teachers, or at least it seemed that way).

It is unfortunate that you will not have the chance to experience being together with the generations that went down the same path that you have just traveled.

The Lind-Ritzville Alumni Association is special. There is no other like it that I am aware of -- and that is HUGE. Little old Ritzville plus Lind has something nobody else has in the USA. Every year, one can count on having an all class reunion on Memorial Day weekend, barring of course things like volcanic eruptions and pandemics. What's more, it isn't a haphazard event. Countless hours go into maintaining class data bases so that invitations are sent to everyone, not just a few people that Joe and Mary keep in touch with. Other schools have a reunion once in awhile and the dates vary. Usually the reunion only involves a single class. Very few have a reunion EVERY year for ALL classes.

Although I did not think Ritzville was a great place to grow up at the time, in looking back, it was a pretty good place to grow up because people cared. Reconnecting with classmates is one of the best things that has happened to me in the past 20 years - and believe me, that is the last thing I was thinking about while I was sitting at a banquet and wearing a necktie!! Keep this in mind and come back every chance you get. Seeing how your classmates fit into their adult roles is always interesting and it is always a good idea to return to your roots to see how far you have gone.

Lyle Heimbigner (Class of 1970)



We've seen the message, "It's great to be a Bronco," and I can attest that has been the case for decades. You may know me as a Middle School football or basketball coach; or one of the guys on the chain gang at home high school football games or the guy that runs the shot clock for home basketball games. Why would I do those things? It is my way of giving back to the school that first gave to me. You may not come back to your hometown to work, live and raise a family like I did. But whatever or wherever you go you can still take that great Bronco spirit and make your home a great place to live by giving back some of what you learned and give support to the hometown team. That Bronco spirit also lives in the alumni association. You may think the banquet is for the old folks but it is for the generations of Broncos that come back to see how their friends, former classmates, teammates and other 'Broncos' are doing. Don't be a stranger if you do move on because you have left your mark on LRHS forever!

Dale Anderson Class of 1970



I graduated from Ritzville High School in 1965 and my husband, Larry Schafer, graduated from RHS in 1963. We lived on the west side of the state for nine years where Larry was a teacher and I completed college then worked as a legal secretary. We returned to Ritzville and the family farm in 1976 and have raised our family here. Our daughter, Jennifer Schafer Lux, graduated in 1992 and our son, Derek Schafer, graduated in 1994. The Alumni event has been important to us. We have not attended each year but have enjoyed the times we have gone. I want to encourage graduates to attend the Alumni event and reunions. I am aware that your young generation has many types of contact at your disposal and may not feel the need to attend such functions. However, over the years some of my best memories have been seeing and visiting with someone I haven't kept in contact with and didn't necessarily expect to see. Surprises like these makes the Alumni reunion special.

Sherie Eichner Schafer Class of 1965



Sherie 1965



Larry 1963

My parents purchased a membership for me in the RHS Alumni Association when I graduated in 1965. I didn't know then how important my relationships with my classmates would be as I grew older. The 10, 25, and 50 year reunions solidified the connections and importance my classmates are to my life, even though I live 3000 miles away in Maryland. It really came home when my husband, who had attended several reunions with me, passed away in September 2020. I received many cards and condolences and even phone calls from my Ritzville classmates and relatives which meant a great deal to me. The bonds with people, for which you share your youth are strong and the LRHS/RHS Alumni Association helps maintain those treasured connections through the years. Congratulations to the class of 2021!

Edlu Thom-Harper Class of 1965



I graduated from RHS in 1967. There were 58 in the class. We all agreed to get together every five years for the alumni banquet, and we've had good turnouts for each. Not all, but many were there over the years, especially for our 50th in 2017. We are looking forward to another reunion in 2022. As time goes by and we start to lose more of our classmates, these reunions become more important. After high school I attended college at WSU in Pullman, WA and law school at the U of I in Moscow, ID. After passing the Washington State Bar exam in 1974 I went on active duty as a military lawyer with the USMC in 1975. It was there I met and married my wife of 43 years, Linda. We now have three adult sons. After leaving the Marines we came back to Ritzville for about a year and a half. I practiced law with Cross and Morgan for about a year, and we decided to go back in the military. In the meantime, Mt. St. Helens paid a visit, which kept me busy with the volunteer fire department in the Spring of 1980. The USMC had no openings, so a friend from the USMC who transferred to the USAF and was in charge of the Fairchild AFB legal office helped me join the USAF. Leaving Ritzville for Offutt AFB, NE in the summer of 1980, we had various assignments until I was able to retire early in 1993 from Los Angeles AFB, CA. Along the way I studied for and passed the California and Arizona Bar exams. We settled in Phoenix, AZ area where both Linda and I had family and I practiced law in several organizations until fully retiring in 2010. Music was always my passion, and I sang in barbershop harmony choruses for many years. Having played trumpet/cornet from 5th grade through college, I started playing again after retirement in several Sun City AZ community bands.

I am looking forward to the 2022 reunion. Although we have not lived there for decades, I always consider Ritzville home. I try to keep up with the news there. It's changed a great deal since I grew up there, as one would expect, but there are many cherished memories, and especially of my classmates, who have always been like an extended family.

Carl Eckhardt Class of 1967



I have enjoyed attending the banquet several times since I graduated 58 years ago! My husband of 15 years, Ron Knight, has also loved returning and seeing many classmates, friends, and former teachers. We're grateful for the organizers who've worked so hard keeping these banquets running. Looking forward, hopefully, to a healthier year and a celebratory event next year!

Carrie Reimers Knight Class of 1963



Carrie 1963

Ron 1959

Memorial Day weekend has become a sentimental journey home for me. A time to visit with family, friends and classmates. The weekend is full of things to do and highlighted by the LRHS Alumni Banquet. I have always felt privileged to belong to the Alumni Association. It is held every year and is one of the largest active Alumni Association in the US.

The association is the keeper of all the class records going back to the first graduating class, along with providing several scholarships! Members of the association are working on restoring and preserving these records for the future. This is a huge undertaking.

I am looking forward to being able to get together at the next banquet. The older I get the more I enjoy "catching up" with friends and fellow classmates.

Lastly, when you venture away from Ritzville/Lind as I did you will soon realize that the LRHS Alumni Association is truly one of a kind!

Kae Braun Koch Class of 1961



When I graduated from Ritzville in 1965, the Alumni Banquet was a very important event. Now a few years later I realize just what it means to be an alumni of Ritzville High School and to be able to attend the banquet. Many people have mentioned we have a strong bond for one another and that getting to see and visit with old friends that travel from all over to attend is priceless. Go Broncos!

Cheryl Ragsdale Eng Class of 1965



Congratulations RHS/LRHS graduates. Sorry that the alumni banquet was cancelled because of the COVID-19 epidemic.

Now about what the alumni association and reunions will mean to you. When I graduated, the alumni banquet didn't mean as much to me at that time. But aging has a way of changing your mind. My graduation banquet was held in the Marcellus Grange Hall which is now Ritzville Lumber and Hardware. It was very crowded and hot. For graduation I was given a lifetime membership in the alumni association as a gift. I thought, what do I need with this? I moved to the SF Bay Area in 1963 and spent 17 years there until 1980 when I moved back to this area.

I attended the 1980 banquet in the spacious Gilson Gymnasium which was later air-conditioned. I was still five years short of my 25th reunion from school. The interesting part though, was I got to see the 25th year class from 1955 who were my upper schoolmates. Didn't even have to go to their private party to see them. So I got to see my upper schoolmates, 1955-1959, my own classmates of 1960, and then my lower schoolmates, 1961-1965 over 11 years of banquets.

The same thing occurred at my 50th year out of school. A good thing I went to the 25th anniversary because several of the graduates in the 50 year classes are no longer with us.

Bruce Telecky 1960



I appreciate the alumni association in looking through its records, organizing them, and working for the association. It has been a privilege to be able to try to archive, restore, and preserve many of the records of our time at Ritzville High School. Being able to put them online for others to view gives me great satisfaction that things that were out of sight in drawers and cupboards are now available to the entire body of alumnus. There are still things that are being unearthed and brought in to figure out how to preserve and present to all. There are a lot of happy stories, a few tragic ones, but all in all, I appreciate the alumni association as it continues to tell our story.

Thomas Pulliam Class of 1994
Teacher and Alumni Board Member



Whenever the subject of high school reunions comes up, people are always amazed that Ritzville has a reunion banquet every year, for every class, for every graduation year. Even though we don't make it every year, it will be nice when the normal times resume. I graduated from Ritzville in 1955. Spent five years at Washington State University. Fifty three years at Boeing, and have been in retirement for eight years. Had a good start in Ritzville.

Alan Bentz, Class of 1955



The Alumni Association for our school has been a source of enjoyment over the years. When you first come back, usually at the 10-year mark, you are still making your way in the world and it's fun to reconnect with your classmates. As time goes by, you realize how important your school years were and the friends and memories you made are never forgotten. It's a good time each year to come back and relive the memories and more importantly to keep in touch. You might find you only come back at the 20 or 25, 40th or 50th but the pride in this wonderful group of classmates from all the years coming together and keeping the tradition going is so rare. So, I wish you all success as you go your separate ways and hope that this tradition of the Alumni Association and the banquet held each year is something each of you holds on to.

Susie Becker Kirkendall Class of 1971



Susie 1971

Harold (Bud) 1968

The Ritzville High School Alumni Association has had an important role in numerous ongoing activities of the community through many years. Its history of scholarship support and community/school enhancements are well documented and every graduate from RHS should appreciate the contributions that the Association has made. Attending the annual banquet has been an event that has provided opportunities for classmates to reconnect as well as to rekindle past friendships from other generations that may have lapsed. The honored class reunions are anticipated long in advance of the date by those who are to be recognized: graduating seniors, 25 and 50 year alums! In addition, other class milestones are celebrated as alumni from 5, 10, 15, etc. years gather independently prior to and after the banquet. Reconnecting with alumni with whom we shared classes and extracurricular activities have been very special! Seeing those, who have graduated in other years, and sharing/catching up with a relative/friend.....just meeting and greeting others who adore the BRONCO relationship is a cherished opportunity! Welcome to the Alumni Association and I hope you will take the opportunity to enjoy the reunions in the years ahead!

Charlene (Miller) Clark, Class of 1959



I'm Denise Manke Vickerman a proud Ritzville High School graduate from the class of 1976. I am married to Mike Vickerman, Sr. and have one daughter Alicia. After a 37-year career in hospitality just recently retired. I started my hotel career as a part time bookkeeper and never looked back. I stayed in the hospitality field and in the same hotel 37 years becoming the General Manager in 2007. Over years as GM I was honored to be given the Washington State Hospitality Association General Manager of the Year and received was a Woman in Business Leadership recipient and the hotel received several Best of the Best awards from Ramada and Hotel of the Year from the American Hotel & Lodging Association.

And, I am a Bronco. My class of 1976 graduated during the Bi-Centennial, we were Bi-County Football Co-champs and we participated in both the wrestling and basketball state championships. We were the largest during that time, with 51 graduating members and I consider one of the closest knit classes; we were and still are a family with big ideas, albeit now our ideas lean more toward retirement adventures. We came to know each other's hopes and dreams, our goals for the future. We were newscasters, business owners, scientists, journalists, dance teachers, farmers, nurses, dads, company vice-presidents, moms, teachers, engineers, general managers and lots of other things in the making. We forged lifelong friendships through the bonds of a great high school that gave us excellent teachers, offered sports, clubs, opportunities and wonderful tradition. A traditions that included that some of our parents, graduates of RHS, even some of our grandparents that were Golden Grads in 1976, info which we knew because of the RHS Alumni Association, the association we look back on through all these years since for that common bond. Today, no matter what, we all have the unique distinction of being RHS/LHS - Broncos – and unbelievably whether ten, twenty or 40 years since graduation, when you come back for an Alumni Banquet, words of our Fight Song just spill out as you join in.

Our Alumni Association allows a distinct comradery and network of other people with at least one – but realistically probably many - common thread, that of being a RHS/LHS Bronco graduate. There are those graduates that become mentors to students as well as role models – and through the association you can connect with them even if it is just once a year at banquet time. That connection can help greatly when searching for a job, reaching out for new customers, looking for help during difficult times or even finding a friendly face when traveling. Being a member of the Association you will always have a source to stay in touch with your alma mater, whether it be the website with all the great information including PDFs of your class Kernal and graduation photos and names of that one classmate whose last name you just cannot recall, learning of a friend’s passing or perhaps it is the annual notice each April of the annual gathering of RHS/LHS alumni and possibly the “big 25th or 50th year” for your class reunion. This Association offers scholarships to graduating seniors and gives all graduates the opportunity to show your pride and is essential in keeping that red and black pride alive.

Although at 18 you may not think about an Alumni Association as anything important in your world at this time, but trust me in years to come it will give you that connection to your hometown, your class, friends and even your family. Proud and tough times, good and sad times will come to all of us and knowing the bond you had with people that went through school with you will be irreplaceable; not in two years or even ten years – but as you get older, it is the simple thing like reconnecting with a classmate, a high school best friend, or favorite teacher that the Alumni Association can always help with. And it is a group of people – perhaps 200 at a time – that get together for fellowship, reminiscing, laughter, a few adult beverages, dinner, photos and exaggerated story telling that will always have the words...

“Oh Ritzville High that’s us, let’s shout it out, we’ve got the best darn school

without a doubt! And we will yell, yell, yell for all of you our Alma Mater will sing our praises to” without thinking, just come spilling out...“For its no wonder we’re so proud of that, Red & Black, rah, rah, rah!

Denise Manke Vickerman, Class of 1976



The other fight song is:

Oh we’re from Lind-Ritzville High School, faithful we’ll be. Here’s to our colors red and black you see fight fight fight. Here’s to all the fellows where ever they be we’ll carry on our fight for victory.

The RHS Alumni Association has been an incredible association for many years. Generations have proudly celebrated together as another class graduates and moves on to meet the many challenges that lie before them. Many times, several generations are present to celebrate together a new family graduate.

Years ago, one of the only means to reconnect with our classmates was through the Alumni Association. Now days, we can connect with each other through the internet but connecting with old friends in person is the best!! Not only do we have the evening of the banquet to reconnect, but many of us also make it an entire weekend.

There are no friends like old friends. Spending time with classmates that we started within the first grade through the twelfth grade was so special.

Always be proud of where you came from and stay connected to your community. The Association has provided this opportunity for reconnecting and sharing memories with old friends. Let us keep the RHS/LRHS Association going for years to come.

Dena Freese Roberts, Class of 1958



I look forward to attending the Alumni Banquet yearly. Reconnecting with classmates and alumn is so enjoyable as we did not grow up with social media. The reminiscing and story telling can be quite surprising. The banquet to me means friendship and fellowship. We welcome you, the class of 2020 and 2021.

Jeanette McRae Harris Class of 1960



I was born and raised in Ritzville. I graduated from RHS in the class of 1960. But, my Alumni experience goes much further back into the late 1940s and the 1950s. My mother had graduated in the class of 1929 and my dad began teaching at RHS in 1935. My dad graduated from Lind High also in 1929. We were fortunate to have a rather large house and prior to the banquets there would be a large gathering of prior teachers at our house and my mother's class gathering post banquet. In the 1940s we lived next door to Wally and Pearl Proctor who were early RHS graduates. I think 1910. They would have visitors at Alumni time, including Doc Gilson most years, and we would see and meet these folks from time to time. In my young mind the Ritzville Alumni Association was a big deal! And in fact, it is. I still enjoy the get-togethers and honored class reunions. As a young person I always enjoyed the fun of everyone getting together. And now, nearing 80 years of age, I still enjoy Alumni time.

Max J. Webb RHS Class of 1960



After graduation from RHS, I was one of those who got wrapped up in further education, establishing and advancing my career, and other things I thought were really important at the time. It took a fair number of years for me to appreciate how rare the RHS/LRHS Alumni Association and annual all-class reunions really are. Although I kept in touch with my closer friends from high school, I'd lost touch with many of my classmates. When I finally did start attending reunions on a more regular basis, I found that I'd missed out on the opportunity to keep in touch with not only my own classmates, but with friends in classes around mine, with my siblings' friends and classmates, and with friends' parents and even grandparents who had also graduated from RHS. As years pass and memories are less vivid, I've found that the annual reunions are an in-person connection to friends and to a time when life seemed less complicated and lifestyles less transitory. Between the face-to-face reunions and the alumni website, we, as RHS/LRHS grads, have a rare opportunity to maintain connections to an important, formative time in our lives.

Steve Heimbigner, Class of 1967



I am extremely proud and honored to be in the RITZVILLE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION. As I get older, I have come to realize just how fortunate I was to have grown up where I did and to have gone to school all 12 years in Ritzville. I decided when I was in the fifth grade to become a teacher and later a coach because of those who helped and mentored me during my school days. Now, 54 years after graduation, I still phone 1967 classmates often and talk of the present, future and yes, the past. The older I get the more I appreciate what a cherished part of my life being a proud Bronco is. Our unique banquets and reunions are a huge part of keeping me connected!

Kevin Heimbigner Class of 1967



Congratulations Graduates! My name is Mistee (Pitman) Verhulp and 30 years ago my Ritzville High School Senior Classmates and I were walking down the same school halls you are walking down, hanging out in the Pit, and talking about all of our big plans after graduation. More than half of us had gone to school from 1st Grade to 12th Grade together. As much as I loved my classmates and living in a small town (most of the time), I purposely went to college at a school I knew no one else in my class was going to attend so I could grow and flourish into the person I was meant to be. Many of us kept in pretty good contact those first few years out of high school, but as people started new careers, got married, and had babies, it was almost impossible to coordinate our schedules to get together. And when we did, we were lucky if we could get a handful of us together. But thanks to our strong Alumni Association and the Memorial Day All Class Reunion and Banquet, I've had the opportunity to see my classmates and other Ritzville and Lind Alumni regularly (with the majority attending every 5 years).

You may not realize it now, but the bonds you develop with your classmates when growing up in a small town is unique and special. Yes, we had our so-called clicks and people we hung out with regularly, but we all knew each other and deep-down, really cared about one another. Every five years, we walk down those same high school halls over Alumni Weekend and it's like we are 18 again! It doesn't matter what important jobs we may or may not have, or who was a jock and who was a cheerleader, we are just "us" again. All of those superficial labels people had for us in school are gone. We hug each other, sit in the Pit, and talk about all the big plans we have for the future.

We bring our families, introduce our spouses to each other, and watch our kids play together. Because of the Alumni Reunion Weekend, we have all gotten to watch each other and our families "grow up" and continue to be an important part of each other's lives; regardless of whether our parents still live there or not. I've attended several of my College Reunions, but they just don't compare to the depth of feelings and comradery I experience at my high school reunions. Indeed, my classmates and I are at the age many of us are losing parents. So for that one weekend a year, it truly feels like we are coming "home."

God Speed Graduates! I wish you the best of luck and look forward to seeing you at the next Alumni Reunion Weekend. And if you happen to be walking through the high school and see a bunch of "old people" hanging out in the Pit talking about the big plans they have for the future, feel free to join us.

Class of 1991 rules!



Mistee Pitman Verhulp Class of 1991



What does it mean to be a Lind Ritzville alumnus? To me it means home. There are about 4000 Bronco alumni out in the world who have grown up in Adams County, had similar experiences to you and who can share in your stories of teachers, places, and events. You will soon discover what a small world it really is as you meet people who know someone from here, have stopped at Starbucks or attended the Combine Derby. And home will always be here. After 116 years, things have changed but the feeling of Bronco pride will always be the same. And wherever in the world you go, every day will always be a good day to be a Bronco!

God bless you on your journey. Be sure to come visit. I will be waiting for you at home.

Donna Koch Ritzville High School Class of 1982

Lind Ritzville High School teacher 2005 – 2021 and beyond!



“Alumni”...what does that word mean to me? It means FAMILY, a very large extended ‘family’ of all of us who graduated from high school in Ritzville. It was Ritzville High School (RHS in 1967 when I graduated). We were a family of friend’s & cousins, especially since 39 of the 58 classmates, spent all twelve years of school together. And, over fifty-four years later, we are still a family of friends/cousins, kept together by attending the yearly Alumni Banquet (a very serious tradition for many graduates), having our reunions every five years, plus, extra smaller get-togethers, along with phone calls, texts, cards/letters, etc. And somewhere over the years, I became the ‘glue that holds us together’, as classmates comment about me keeping all in contact via monthly (or more often) emails, noting birthdays/anniversaries, class news, fun topics, but also sharing sad news related to our classmates/siblings/parents/teachers, etc. I’ve kept photo albums filled of our class attending Alumni Banquets, reunions/get-togethers, and thus, our class history is documented for years to come!

Best Wishes to all the past/present RHS and LRHS graduates as you are also “Alumni” & family!

Most Sincerely, Jeanne Benzel Englund (Class of 1967)



Well, obviously the banquet gives me a chance to see some of my classmates but also I get to see Marilyn Sielaff herself who was a good friend in my youth. I get to hug her too!

Kathy Beale Ream Class of 1967



Hello fellow Alumni!

I am Susan Gering Webley, class of 1977. I graduated from Ritzville High School 44 years ago and have so many fond memories of those years and the classmates I graduated with. Our class graduated 34 students with 24 going through all 12 years together. My husband and I graduated in the same class and proudly proclaimed we were high school sweethearts. We brag on our school and community to all of our friends to this day, there is something special about a small community and the local ties that still remain.

I come back to the alumni banquet often and love seeing all the age groups gather to reminisce and renew acquaintances on Memorial weekend each year. I am excited to be part of the triple celebration in 2022 as it will be our 45th reunion as well.

I remember serving at my 1st alumni banquet as a Junior in High school and then attending as a Senior was so special and unique. Our state track meet was the same weekend, so our mile relay team competed in the last event of the day, breaking a state record, and getting 2nd place. We skipped the traditional celebration dinner and drove back to be part of the last hour of the banquet. It was too important to all of us to miss. We walked in to over 400 people applauding our success. This is what the alumni continue to do, be proud of each other's successes and at that moment we knew we were part of an elite and special group.

I, also, had the privilege of having my great grandmother, Bessie Stratton Snyder, class of 1907, being in attendance at that banquet.... I have parents, brothers, nieces, nephews, cousins and lifelong friends all graduating and being part of this alumni association. Please know that we as alumni welcome you into this very special group and hope you will attend future gatherings to celebrate where your adult adventure began. I cannot wait to see all of you next year! Best of luck and best wishes from your fellow alumni. Go Broncos!

Susan Gering Webley Class of 1977



Susan 1977



Brian 1977



Bessie Stratton Snyder - 1907

Dear Graduates,

Wherever my wife and I have lived, people have always seemed to be amazed that we from Ritzville would make such a big deal of Alumni banquets. They had no vision as to the great blessing it is to be able to remain in touch with classmates and friends from our years in school. Since 1988, we have lived out of the United States for all but 5 years when we lived in New Jersey (which is like a foreign country to someone from Ritzville!). Whenever possible, I have made the effort to be at the banquet and keep in touch with those with whom I grew up. It's like having a large extended family and getting together for a family reunion to catch up on everyone's lives. Don't miss out on your "family" reunions. They are a gift which will never go away.

Michael Koch, Class of 1970



As long as I can remember, my parents were proud to be graduates of RHS. They talked fondly of the friendships they made and the activities they participated in. My mom, Veda Klein Miller and Cynthia Heimbigner Langenheder (class of 1950) wrote the lyrics to the school's fight song. I guess you could say school and community pride ran in my veins. I looked forward to becoming 'an alumni', attending reunions and reminiscing with former classmates and teachers. As the years have gone by, my dear ol' friendships from Ritzville remain close to my heart. Everywhere I go, my path connects with someone from the Ritzville/Lind area and there is a smile and 'feeling of home'. The RHS/LRHS Alumni Association is a unique treasure very few communities have. The Alumni Association is essential in keeping friendships connected, preserving the history of our schools and community, and ensuring success for future generations.

Colleen Miller Kuhn Class of 1979



As a member of the class of 1967, it's a blessing to be able to welcome my granddaughter, Julia Klein and her classmates of the class of 2021 into the RHS/LRHS Alumni Association. Julia's mother, Alisha Walli Klein, 1995, and great-grandfather, Art Benzel, 1934, also at one time had their graduation pictures grace the halls of RHS! Relationships and memories become more treasured the older we become which make the Alumni Association banquets and class gatherings such a unique organization. No matter where life will take you, the friends established during your school years will always be there for you as you are for them!

Anita Benzel Walli Class of 1967.



Hello! I am a 1997 Ritzville High School graduate! What a privilege it was to be a Bronco! We had a great class full of successful people. We were fortunate enough to gather for our 10 and 20 year reunions in 2007 and 2017. At both reunions, we welcomed over half our class back to the great community of Ritzville to celebrate. We gathered at the Ritzville Golf Course and the Pastime. It was a wonderful time to reconnect with old friends and meet classmates' spouses, significant others and children. We enjoyed sharing stories and memories of our years at RHS!

My husband Kristian, who was also a 1997 RHS graduate, and I moved back to Ritzville in 2005 to raise our family. We feel very fortunate to be raising our two boys in this wonderful community. They are currently students and athletes of the Lind-Ritzville School District. I have had the privilege of teaching at Ritzville Grade School since 2005. It is very heart-warming to be teaching in the same school district where I was educated. My previous teachers became my co-workers. Some of the coaches who coached my husband and I are now coaching our boys. Things have come full circle and it has been a great ride from being a student, to an alumni member to an educator of this fantastic school district. Once a Bronco, always a Bronco!

Jennifer Kramer Boness Class of 1997



Jennifer 1997 Kristian 1997

Whenever anyone asks me where I am from, I proudly say Ritzville. What a wonderful place to grow up and grow friendships along the way. I feel very fortunate to feel like I know all my classmates very well, including the people in the class years surrounding my own. We have shared experiences as a whole that we could only have gotten in a small town where every kid was needed to fill a team or activity or participate in some way.

Even though we may not have seen each other for years, the feeling when we get back together is so great. We start off like we just left each other. We are fortunate to have a strong RHS Alumni Association. Our 30th year Alumni reunion was so much fun in 2015, playing (or trying to play) golf, dancing, talking and catching up in each other's lives. We reconnect with our past friendships and strengthen them with new memories. I can't wait until we get together again! "85 is Alive"

Kelley Gross Mathia Class of 1985



Pictures of the Class of 1985's 30th year class reunion in 2015.



As President of the Lind-Ritzville Alumni I would like to welcome you. You have seen more change and complications the last couple of years than any other two classes in recent history. I hope this will be the last of it. But life is a series of change and complications and you have a head start in dealing with them. The Alumni represents the past and you represent the future. I wish you well as you move to the next chapters of life and remember us as you become a representative of the past for Lind-Ritzville High School.

Colby Schell, President, RHS/LRHS Alumni Association, Class of 1983



Colby 1983



Aimee 1985

Dear Graduates:

Congratulations! I graduated from good ole RHS in 1983. We were the last class to inhabit the old high school and the first class to graduate from the remodeled junior high school. Our class remains very close. We have held a reunion every 5 years since graduating. Several of us also attend the RHS/LRHS Alumni Association banquet during those years. Some may say that the banquets are boring and, to be honest, parts of them can be. However, I feel it's important to attend because this is your heritage! One year the speaker announced that, for the first time in the history of the alumni banquets, there was no one present for the 25-year class. A collective groan could be heard throughout the audience. Don't be that class!

I wish you the very best in all your future endeavors. Don't forget where you came from. I hope you help keep the traditions of the RHS/LRHS Alumni Association alive and cherish meeting together at your reunions.

Sincerely,

Lisa Y. Oestreich-Berg, Class of 1983



I am proud to be a member of the Alumni Association. My parents were also Ritzville alumni, and to me, it represents a lifelong connection to my roots and a place where I belong. Coming from a smaller community meant that you could get to know everyone in the high school if you wanted to. Many of my classmates were together all 12 years, so our relationships seem like we were brothers and sisters as well as classmates. When we were cheering for our team, we were rooting for people that we knew and cared about. Many of the teachers and people in the community were enthusiastic and loyal supporters of us students. Looking back on things, I can appreciate what a privilege it was to grow up here — in this school and in this community. I hope that our new alumni will cherish their memories of LRHS and continue the tradition of honoring its new and old grads each year!

Shannon Ahern Alberts Class of 1971



The year was 1975, my parents divorced and we moved from Odessa to Ritzville. I was a sophomore, my sister, Rhonda was a senior (class of 1976), and brothers Colby (class of 1983) and Jason (class of 1987) were in the 5th grade and 1st grade respectfully. After being miserable for a couple weeks, Colby and I decided we would tough things out until the end of the first quarter, then move back to Odessa! Well, that first quarter ended – fast forward to 2021, we are still here! There are so many ways that the Ritzville School District, the community, our classmates, kids younger and older than us and their parents influenced us to become who we are today. We have been a part many civic organizations and spent countless hours of volunteering at many events – to give back and keep traditions alive.

I am sad that the classes of 2020 and 2021 did not have the opportunity to gather at a banquet and experience the comradery of all those who attend – young and old! To hear the deep belly laughs, the loud squeals of excitement and to sing the Fight Song with 400 alumnus from across the decades! My hope is that these classes will plan a 5 year reunion party and plan to attend the banquet.

The RHS/LRHS Alumni Association embraces the changes needed today with respect to the past. Please know the legacy you leave today WILL be heard in the future.

Stacey Schell Schoessler Class of 1978 – Alumni Treasurer

Married to: John Schoessler Class of 1977

Daughter: Caitlin Schoessler Strohmaier Class of 2014, 1st Grade Teacher, Ritzville Grade School

Married to: Shane Strohmaier Lind, Class of 2010



Stacey 1978



John 1977

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RHS Class of 1970



