

BACK TO SCHOOL

WILTON: Souhadra brings experience from West Branch district

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She also has an endorsement in teaching reading and language arts. Husband Jake has been teaching physical education and health since 1997 in Wilton Elementary and the couple has two children, daughter Peyton, a junior at Cornell studying studio art while playing softball for the Rams, and Cade, 17, a senior at Wilton and a four-sport athlete.

Emily Takes

Growing up in rural Iowa in Urbana north of Cedar Rapids, Emily Takes wanted to teach in a smaller community and smaller school district. She found it in Wilton, where the fifth-year educator will teach second grade. “I love the family feel in smaller schools and when I went to interview, it felt like home to me,” Takes said. After earning a bachelor’s degree in elementary education and an endorsement in kindergarten through eighth grade reading at the University of Northern Iowa, Takes began her career at Starmont Elementary teaching third grade and then taught the same grade at Linn-Mar Bowman Woods Elementary for three years. Takes says she looks forward to meeting the staff, families, students and getting acquainted in the community.

Kyle Schweiger

The new seventh and eighth grade science teacher in Wilton is Cornell College graduate Kyle Schweiger, a Maquoketa native who graduated from Andrew High School. He majored in history, psychology and music at Cornell but earned a master of the arts in military history from Norwich University and later gained master’s of education in secondary education from Grand Canyon University. Schweiger said he discovered a passion for education late in life in 2016 after serving in the food service and transportation management business. He served as coring director for Parson Education in Iowa City for seven years, substitute teaching at North Cedar, Springville Mt. Vernon and Olin for four years before completing his student teaching at North Cedar in social studies in 2019. He’s taught junior high science, social studies, psychology, war history, sports history and middle school science while also teaching a military history class at Kirkwood Community College. Schweiger said he chose Wilton because of the community, its reputation, growing enrollment and he teachers who he interviewed with, calling them “fantastic educators and people” who made him feel welcome. “I hope to bring my own experiences into the classroom, hands on learning, student interests and preferences, current science events and different strategies in learning,” he said, noting every student learns and retains differently so he the curriculum will continually evolve based on the needs and interests

of students. Schweiger also likes the fact there is a strong sense of teamwork in Wilton, both in the school and science department, something that was scarce in his last position. A single man with a rescue dog named Churro, Schweiger is one of four children and says he enjoys traveling, gardening, playing the piano, sitting around a campfire and simply watching a good movie while he also loves reading and researching Earth science and history, with particular interest in antiquity and World War II.

Ryan Hand

Coming back home was important to new Wilton Junior High School special education teacher Ryan Hand, bringing nine years of experience to the position. A former level 1 special education teacher at North Scott School District in Eldridge for three years, Hand began his career in the Cedar Rapids School District, where he played a role with self-contained behavior focus classroom teaching for grades 3-6 students for six years in an alternative school. A WHS graduate in 2009, Hand earned a BA degree from Grand View University and masters from Morningside University and brings what he calls “diverse teaching background and skills” he learned through his career. Hand said he also brings with him “hometown pride” that he believes will help him in Wilton and in the school district. He can’t wait to start working with his students to “reach their goals and help them become the best version of themselves.” Hand said he’s wanted to return to Wilton for several years and said a combination of the right job opening and his son, Forrest, starting kindergarten made the timing “perfect” to return to Wilton. Together with his wife, Alecia, the couple has two children, which also includes a daughter, Codi, who is three. The family also has three pet dogs, Athena, Storm and Maverick.

Kayla Gerard

An Iowa State University graduate in English and secondary education, Kayla Gerard will teach high school language arts after starting her career as a student teacher in Calumus-Wheatland School District, where she taught seventh and eighth grade English. Originally from DeWitt, Gerard picked Wilton because of the “welcoming small-town atmosphere” as well as the excellent school staff. She claims to offer a “genuine care for each student” and is committed to helping students succeed and “will do everything I can to support their achievement.” “As the new school year begins, I am excited about getting to know the students and becoming part of the Wilton community,” she said.

DURANT: Brown is a third generation teacher

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A third generation teacher, Brown has a twin brother named Colby and Winnie, a Springer Spaniel. “I have a lot of enthusiasm and passion for learning and teaching,” she said in taking her first full-time position. Brown says the support of the small town in the Durant district is “great,” and says she “truly enjoys” working with the staff, students and community. She says she can’t wait to “meet my students.” An avid reader and watercolor enthusiast, Brown is also a passionate bicyclist, participating in three RAGBRAI events while also enjoying outdoor activities like tennis, hiking and traveling. She’s also been involved in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program for the past three years.

Jasmine Westfall

A University of Northern Iowa education graduate, Westfall will be entering her own classroom for the first

time this school year in Durant as a sixth grade teacher. She’s had some experience as a student teacher in Waterloo’s Lou Henry Middle School as well as a third grade classroom at an elementary school in Dike. A Tipton native, she’s delighted to land a position close to home with her husband, Michael, who is employed with Purina in manufacturing. “I love the smaller school districts,” Westfall said. “I was so thrilled when I got the position.” She said relationships are so important in building a great classroom environment and said teaching in a small district is like “family,” pointing out she can get to know the students and their talents. “I knew I’d have that opportunity in Durant.” Westfall says one of her greatest strengths is “always prioritizing” as well as building relationships with students and their parents. She can’t wait to meet her students and anticipates they will grow in knowledge in her class throughout the year.

West Liberty Legion golf tournament is Sept. 20

The 15th annual West Liberty American Legion Post 509 golf tournament is set for Friday, Sept. 20 and members are seeking individuals and teams interested in participating. The four-person best-shot event begins at 9 a.m. at West Liberty County Club south of West Liberty. Special prizes will be awarded for the longest drive, longest putt and a hole-in-one on a special green. There will also be a number of door prizes.

Anyone interested in more information should contact Mike Calvin at 319-359-8585. Kevin Minor is Legion commander. Funds will aid the Legion and their work in the community. Calvin said he tournament is one of the biggest fundraisers of the year for the Legion while it also gives veterans, Legion and Sons of the American Legion members an opportunity “to build some camaraderie” as they play in the event. Anyone is welcome o participate.

Miller-Meeks says carbon pipelines will help Iowa ethanol

By Robin Opsahl  
Iowa Capital Dispatch

U.S. Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks spoke in favor of carbon dioxide pipelines as a way to aid Iowa’s ethanol production industry with an environmentally conscious impact. Miller-Meeks, the Republican representative for Iowa’s 1st Congressional District, spoke about pipelines and other renewable fuel efforts supported by the Conservative Climate Caucus. She, alongside Republican Reps. Randy Weber of Texas, Doug Lamborn of Colorado and Brett Guthrie of Kentucky — fellow caucus members — visited the Chevron

Renewable Energy Group in Newton, Aug. 15, as part of a trip to Iowa focused on increasing affordable, low-emission energy options. ““I would say from the climate standpoint, if we’re not growing ethanol here in the U.S., and that increases the share from Brazil, they will cut down rainforests, and that is not environmentally friendly to do,” Miller-Meeks said. “So it makes sense in Iowa.” Much of the pushback over the carbon pipeline project has come from the use of eminent domain. Miller-Meeks said the use of eminent domain is a “state issue, not a federal issue,” but said the ideal is for a “limited amount of involuntary easements.”

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**MAP LISTING \$10**  
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**Wilton High School 45th Class Reunion**

**Class of 1979**

**Saturday, Sept. 21 5 p.m.**

Meet at the Candy Kitchen  
310 Cedar St., Wilton, IA  
6:30 p.m.

Axe & Oak Whiskey House  
117 W. 4th St., Wilton, IA

For a evening of fun and reminiscing all our memories over the last 45 years.

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