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Two join Free Press staff

The Amery Free Press has a new [editor](#) and additional help in the advertising sales department.

Justin Runberg began work Dec. 4 as the new [editor](#).



Runberg

A Balsam Lake native and Unity graduate, Runberg attended UW – River Falls and transferred to UW – La Crosse, where he earned a Bachelors of Communication Studies degree, emphasis in Broadcast Media.

During school and after graduation, Runberg worked as a photojournalist at WKBT News 8 in La Crosse. He moved to Colorado in 2021 to photograph wildlife, working jobs to support his passion.

Runberg returned to Polk County this fall and is currently living near Cushing.

Dana Egler began work Dec. 7 as Sales Coordinator in the advertising department.

Egler lives in Centuria and has her own business, ELEmark.

Egler's firm, which she has owned since 2004, does business to business appointment setting and database development for insurance companies. She has over 20 years experience in sales and customer service.

As Sales Coordinator at the Free Press, Egler will work part time with Tony Aizpurua to aid in customer service, booking and follow up. The position is a new one for the Free Press.

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Hello Amery!

Hello there! My name is Justin Runberg and I am the new **editor** at the Amery Free Press. I have been a long-time resident in the area but have left for school and a few other adventures.



From the
Editor's
Desk

Justin Runberg

I am a Unity grad and grew up in Balsam Lake but had a few connections here in Amery. My grandparents, Karen and Ron Hastings who lived in Amery, and I were very close and it seemed as though I spent just as much time here in this town than I ever

did in Balsam Lake. I'm excited to write and tell the awesome stories this community has to offer.

I'm sure you are wondering a little more about my background and what I enjoy doing in my free time. After graduating from Unity I went to the University of Wisconsin- River Falls for my first year of college. At the time I thought I would become a middle school science teacher and come back home to teach.

But life plans rarely go the way they are supposed to. After my first year I transferred to the University of Wisconsin- La Crosse to finish my education. About two years into my middle school teacher curriculum I came to the realization that maybe this isn't what I wanted to do with my life. After some soul searching, I knew that I wanted to work with people. I took a combination of all communication classes there and ended up falling in love with the broadcast and media department. Throughout my time there I worked with the on-cam-

pus radio, news station, and was working part time at the local news station as well.

After graduating I went into news broadcasting becoming one of the full-time photojournalist in La Crosse. I spent three years there covering a huge variety of different stories from the very worst up to the very best of times. A few things I was able to do was shoot and edit stories that would highlight some of the cool things happening in the Coulee region and bring to life some experiences you would never had known were there. I also had some of my footage make the CBS national open as they were beginning their morning broadcast. Just before I left the station I also tied for the Jowett Award for new photographers to help improve my skills with video and still cameras.

After three years there though, I knew it was time for a change. I thought of going to a bigger station but had gone through a small rough patch just as the pandemic was starting. I thought long and hard of what my dreams and goals were and made a pretty crazy decision.

In September of 2020 I left my news job, sold half of my things, bought my own camera and drove west. I had never been anywhere beside Minnesota and Wisconsin at the time. I didn't have anything lined up for a job and had a very short-term place to stay as a landing spot.

For the next two and half years I would stay there, going to the mountains as often as I could to shoot the wildlife and nature that Colorado had to offer. My goal was to be featured and eventually work for National Geographic.

However, again, my plans changed the longer I stayed out there. That goal hasn't left but

I missed home and my family. Throughout my experiences there the one thing that seemed to happen is that in every role I had gotten out there, I would be asked to use the skills I picked up with my time at the news station. After being reminded of how much I really enjoyed journalism I knew that that is the industry I wanted to be in. When I got home I started searching for an opportunity to get back into it.

I'm glad to say I think I may have found one! I am glad to be in a community that feels like home and to be able to provide great news to you all.

But, enough of the origin story. When I am outside of work I have quite a few hobbies that I enjoy. I am sure you could have guessed that I enjoy being in the woods hunting and fishing. I am also pretty active and like going for walks, working out, and hiking.

I am sad to say that I am musically cursed but had bought an acoustic guitar just as the pandemic started. Truth be told it gathered a little dust the first year or so but slowly and surely I have been getting better.

There is a lot more I could say but there needs to be some room for some of the other stories that are going on in the town right now. If you see me, don't be afraid to come say and introduce yourself. Or offer guitar lessons.

I am thankful to be able to have this opportunity and am excited to bring you stories that will keep you informed.

You can reach me by email me at editor@theameryfreepress.com, write me at P.O. Box 424, Amery, WI 54001 or call me at 715-268-8101 ext. 103.