

2011 Columbus Day Distinguished Citizens

Don and Arlene Clark

In determining distinguished citizens for Columbus Day, Don and Arlene Clark were selected not only for their many years of service in this community, but also for the family they have produced who have continued to live here and contribute to this very same community. There are now five generations of Clarks in the Columbus area.

Don Clark spent a bit of his youth in the Moravia, Iowa, vicinity; however most of his childhood was spent living on the old White Way outside of Columbus City. Don and Arlene met and were married in 1942, and from this start they raised a large family.

Don had many jobs, however the next one was to last a long time. He got a job at Columbus Schools in 1969 and stayed until 1988. During those years, he did about everything. He was a bus driver, a custodian, at times a groundskeeper, and in charge of the heating system. On Saturdays and Sundays, he even had to go back once a day to check the doors at Columbus to make sure they were

locked. Even after retiring from the school, Don often was called back to substitute, especially as a bus driver, which he did for two additional years. Don has belonged to many organizations in this community including the JayCee's, the Columbus Booster Club, Cedarcrest Country Club, the United Methodist Church, and various card clubs.

His wife, Arlene, married Don when she was 17 years of age and he was 19. When she and Don moved to CJ in their early-married life, she was raising her family. However, she too worked in this community. In the 60's, she worked at the Dairy Sweet. She also worked at the Economart for six or seven years. Then, like her husband, she went to work for Columbus Schools. In 1973 she became a cook at the school and stayed until 1988. She served many a Columbus student their lunch during these years.

Arlene also belonged to clubs, such as the Double 8 Card Club, the County Line Club, and the United Methodist Church. Church played a large part in her life and her families'. After all, she had met her husband at a church!

The Clarks have eight children.



They are Judy Scheef, Bill Clark, Sue Clark, Tom Clark, Dan Clark, Cindy Skubal, Jeff Clark, and Beth Ann Clark (deceased). All of these children, except Jeff, live in the Columbus Junction area along with their families. There are now 14 grandchildren, 22 great grandchildren, with another on the way (this is the expected baby of Sam and MacKenzie Clark, which may be here by the time this goes to press.), and one great

grandchild.

Don said, "Columbus Junction is a great place to call home," and Arlene commented, "Living in Columbus Junction and raising my family has been the best part of my life."

It is people such as Don and Arlene Clark who have graced our town for many years, and their legacy will continue. They are indeed, "Distinguished Citizens."

Marlin O'Donnell

"His presence always demanded respect" was the phrase most mentioned when discussing Marlin O'Donnell at his retirement party last January.

Marlin served his community in many ways, over four years on the fire department with two of those years as chief, as a member of the Sheriff's Department for 10 years, and as a devoted father and husband.

But Marlin's most important role was the years he gave to the community as our Police Chief. He served with sense of true dedication, and with compassion for the citizens.

Marlin devoted endless hours during the flood of 2008, keeping order among the many volunteers, directing traffic, providing necessary materials, and overseeing the safety of the work.

Although it was at times cumbersome, the Community Club could always depend on Marlin to be on duty to help keep order in all of our community events. Directing traffic, moving cars for the Columbus Day Parade, and being there when needed.

Marlin was known to take a sensible approach when exercising his job, he was always willing to listen to the citizens, and only take serious action when necessary.

Marlin is the father of two children, Kim Carney and Kenny O'Donnell, and the grandfather of six. Today Marlin is enjoying his retirement by riding his motorcycle, hunting and fishing. Although he is no longer on duty, you can bet that he will always remain available to the citizens of Columbus Junction when needed.

Marlin is truly a valued citizen of Columbus Junction, and very deserving to be named one of the 2011 Distinguished Citizens. "I just wish Pat could have been here to share this with me," said Marlin.

(So do we, Marlin, you were a great team).



Aurelia Torres

Aurelia Torres, also known as Awie, is probably the youngest person ever selected to be a Distinguished Citizen for our town's Columbus Day celebration. However, one day last winter and weeks following earned her this title.

It was the day that the Fisher/Buffington building in downtown CJ burned. Torres, who works at the Ivan Arthur Tax and Accounting Business, had left the office to pick up some office supplies. Upon her return, she saw flames spewing into the air. She ran up the hill and saw the building engulfed in flames.

"I knew some of the families who lived there," said Torres, "and I was worried. I knew some of them had small children." She then saw a woman coming out whose husband was carrying the kids, and she was relieved that they were safe.

A few seconds later, the explosion happened. One of the first people she saw after this was Paul

Buffington. She remembered what he usually wore and she could see some of his clothes were burned off of him and the back of his head was black. She quickly ran to her nearby home to get something to cover him and stayed with him until the ambulance came. In the meantime she continued to try to keep people back from the building.

She got to thinking, "No one in that fire has anything. They no longer have shelter, food, or clothing." This started her thinking about a clothing drive. And many in the community did indeed help. Ivan Arthur, her boss, when he heard of her idea, volunteered the street level floor of his building as a drop-off point for any donations for the needy fire victims. Soon clothing, food, and even money was pouring in.

The Red Cross had "set up" at the Columbus Motel and Torres went to them and got people's exact sizes, and she put out flyers with this information. Upon her request, the Economart immediately provided

food. She recruited family and friends to sort and wash the donated clothing items. She took some of the donated money, about \$1,500, and bought new undergarments and toiletries for the fire victims. She and others then sorted all the clothing according to the needed sizes and delivered them to the families. She made sure there were some toys for the children, and divided the rest of the money into WalMart cards for each family.

Aurelia Torres has lived most of her life in Columbus Junction. Her mother is Rachel Garcia and she has a son age 5, Aidan Ramirez, in kindergarten at Roundy Elementary.

She credits the school's Peer Mentoring program as having given her the drive to want to help, especially with kids.

When told that she had been chosen as a Columbus Distinguished Citizen, she responded, "I was in shock about being selected. I organized the drive, but I could not have accomplished this without many oth-



ers. It was a community event."

Torres says she wants to give back to the community what she has gained by growing up here. She wants her son to grow up here, too, in a community that gives to others. Torres may be young, but she has indeed distinguished herself.

Mike Grothe

Mike Grothe grew up in the Sutherland, Iowa area, but he has certainly found a home in the Columbus Junction community. Mike graduated from Buena Vista College in Storm Lake, and began a long career with IBP then Tyson Foods.

He has worked in numerous plants throughout the Tyson chain, doing all types of work, from production to where he and now serves as plant manager in Columbus Junction.

However Mike is a different type of manager. He not only prefers the hands-on type of management, but he enjoys his time with employees.

"I truly like this part of the state, and enjoy the small town atmosphere that I see here. Our employees are not only our friends, they also are our family."

Mike is truly a do-er in the community. If it is a school event that Tyson is asked to donate to, a community event like Columbus Day, or any function where he can help, you will always see Mike there with his sleeves rolled up doing the work.

"I was really impressed and came to love and respect this town during the flood of 2008," said Mike. "I don't think I've ever seen a community come together like this one did,

and I'll probably never see it again. It was an amazing experience, and not only was I thrilled to be able to help, I also decided that this was going to be my home."

Mike is a strong believer in the benefits of diversity in cultures, and he is able to witness it every day. "We have the opportunity to meet and work with so many different cultures here at the plant, and it is a credit to the community that everything works so well. This is truly an amazing town, and I'm proud to be a part.

Mike, we are proud to have you as one of our distinguished citizens, and appreciate everything you do.



Briefly -

Legion Auxiliary to meet

The American Legion Auxiliary will meet Tuesday, October 11 at 7 p.m. Dee Gentzler will be hostess.

CJ Lions Columbus Day Breakfast

The Columbus Junction Lions Club invites all to come to our October 8th, Columbus Day breakfast fundraiser at the Senior Center. Serving all you can eat sausage gravy and biscuits, butter and jams, coffee, milk, and juice from 7:00 to 10:00 a.m. Start off your Columbus Day with a hearty breakfast. \$5.00 for adults, \$2.00 for children under 12.

Trick or Treat hours set

Please note that Trick or Treat night in Columbus Junction has been set for Monday, Oct 31st from 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Conesville Methodist Fall Supper

Conesville Methodist Church will be having their annual fall supper Thursday, October 13, at the Community Center in Conesville. The menu includes chicken and noodles, mashed potatoes and gravy, ham balls, green beans, salads, rolls, pie, cake and beverages. Serving begins at 5 p.m. There will be a free will offering.

Columbus Day Car Show

On Saturday, October 8, 2011, the first annual Cecil's Columbus Day Car Show will take place at the old Weber and Huston parking lot. Registration is from 9 a.m. - Noon. T-shirts for the first 25 entries. A \$20 donation will be taken for the entry fee. Various awards will be given. All proceeds go to the Gary "Gomer" Hamilton family. For more information, call Curt Larkin at 641-990-4436.

Columbus Day Puppet Workshop

A Puppet Workshop will take place at the Library on October 8, from 9:30 - 11:30. We will be making HUGE Bobble head puppets. Please register as there is limited room! We hope to march our puppets in the Columbus Day Parade. Call the Library at 728-7972.

Columbus Day Tractor Show

Tractors will once again be part of Columbus Day. We will meet on Main Street at the north end. Have them in place at 9:00 a.m. We will move up to the school for the parade at noon. Any questions call Carol Foster at 319-728-5648 at OUR SHOP, between 10 and 4:00 Monday through Friday. Please register at OUR SHOP on Saturday morning.

Conesville Post Office meeting

A community meeting will be held to explain the discontinuance feasibility study of the Conesville Post Office into the Lone Tree Post Office. The meeting will explain the process and address community concerns. Postal representatives will be at the Conesville Community Building on Thursday, October 20, 2011, from 6-7 p.m. to answer questions and provide information about our service. You may wish to discuss and submit your questionnaire at that time. Written comments may be hand-delivered to the Conesville Post Office.

FCCLA Can Drive

The FCCLA will be holding its annual canned food drive on Wednesday, October 12 from 6:30-7:30 in Columbus Junction. Donations will be given to the Community Action Program of Columbus Junction. Members will be going door to door, please give generously.

Half Hour Club to meet

The Half Hour Club will meet on Tuesday, October 11 at 12:30 p.m. at Weber and Huston parking lot to carpool to Mark Twain Refuge at Lake Odessa, and from there to Connie Lewis' cabin for the meeting. Hostesses are Connie Lewis and Rita Chaney. Roll call: What you do to "Go Green." Please bring your shoeboxes that day. Please dress casual, and bring a jacket for a possible pontoon boat ride.

Fundraiser for Hamilton Family

There will be pork loin sandwiches for sale on Thursday, October 6, 2011, at the volleyball game against WACO. Serving will begin at 5:30, and all proceeds will go to the Gary Hamilton family. If anyone wants to make a donation to the family, you can drop it off at the supper or at Community Bank to Jodi Edwards or Sara Griffin.

Vets honored at Historical Society

On October 9th at 2:00 p.m. the Louisa County Historical Society, Hwy 61, Wapello, will present a program featuring ten World War II veterans. On January 12, 1995, the ten veterans discussed their military experiences with a group of Wapello Elementary students. Only two of the veterans who participated in this DVD recorded program are living. The veterans who gave the students a brief look at their part in World War II history were: Hilton Odle, Edwin Hicklin, Burl Mackey, Les Perkins, Bernard Gajewski, Bud Webb, Phil Downs, Burt Matthews, Dennis Brennan, and Keith Clark. History comes alive in the program. Don't miss it.

Harvest Fest Dinner in Morning Sun

The Morning Sun United Methodist Church will hold its annual Harvest Fest Dinner, Bake and Sweet Shoppe on Saturday, October 8th at the church. A full menu will be served from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. the Bake and Sweet Shoppe will begin sales at 10:00 a.m. (There will be no early sales.) Homemade candy, pastry and food items will be available. For more information contact Irene Kreiger 319-868-7922

Emma Beckman Open House

On Sunday October 9, 2011 Emma Beckman Chapter #445, Order of the Eastern Star will have an Open House from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Masonic Center in Columbus City for the observance of their 100th anniversary. The Grand Chapter of Iowa granted the Charter on October 26, 1911. Friends and members are welcome for this occasion as the one hundred five members of today look forward to the future of the Chapter.

Roundy Rodeo

The 1st annual "Roundy Rodeo" and "Pumpkin and Poems" Family Literacy Night, will be held on Thursday, October 13, 2011, from 6-8 p.m. at the Roundy Elementary School. There will be food, carnival games, raffle prizes, activities and a silent pumpkin auction. This is a fundraiser for the Columbus Community Parents Organization with proceeds going towards field trips, technology, student and teacher incentives and much more for our schools. Join us for a night of fun and support our students and teachers

This week at the Farmers' Market

Fridays from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the American Legion parking lot, now until October 14th. The market offers fresh produce, baked goods, homemade noodles, jams and jellies, and plants. Some vendors accept Iowa Farmers Market Nutrition, WIC and Senior Program coupons. Buy fresh and local and taste the difference. For more information, including how to participate as a vendor, contact Nitza or Mallory at 319-728-7971.

**Look for a complete schedule of
Columbus Day Events on Pages 6 and 7**