

His presence demanded respect

By John Carpenter
Gazette Staff

The dictionary defines a police officer as an individual appointed by a city with the duty of maintaining order and enforcing the law. Sounds simple enough, anybody should be able to do it. But as we all know, law enforcement requires a good deal more than the above statement. It requires dedication, integrity, common sense, fairness, and the determination to see that right will prevail over wrong. And no one has exemplified these attributes over the past seventeen years better than Marlin O'Donnell.

Marlin retired as the city's Chief of Police at year-end, but the professionalism that he has brought to the department will be an asset that the city will benefit from for years to come. Marlin truly defined the role of a small town police officer. He could be abrupt and authoritative when necessary, but could also be bending and understanding when the situation required it.

To underscore this, one only needs to go back to the flood of 2008. As many of you recall, the town was full of heavy equipment, scores of people running around trying to help, and looming issues at every corner. It could have been a disaster in the making, but there was Marlin and his police force, at all hours of the day, on constant patrol solving issues, directing traffic, and bringing an overall sense of order to things. The fact that there were no injuries, no disagreements, and a maintained sense of cooperation can be attributed, to a good part, to the professionalism that Marlin instilled in his department.

There are certainly numerous stories that Marlin could tell of his years of service, some humorous, some sad, and some that brought Marlin great satisfaction. But as Marlin said, "There have been so many things that it is hard to remember all of them. I should have written them down when they happened, it would have made a great book." I'm sure, though, that Marlin probably would have understated his role in these events.

But the best tribute that a person can receive is from their co-workers. New chief Donnie Orr said, "I have worked with Marlin for seventeen



Marlin O'Donnell greeting the public at his retirement reception

years, and I can't recall any real problems we ever had. He was a take-charge guy, but always had respect for his fellow officers. He gave us a lot of flexibility, but was there to help if it was needed."

City Clerk Julie Heindel remembers her first day on the job. "It was payroll day," Julie said, "and Marlin came to me and put his hand on his gun and told me that I should always do the police payroll first. I was scared of Marlin in the beginning, but I came to realize he was a John Wayne type: tough on the outside, but soft on the inside. He has a heart of gold, and has been a great person to work with."

City Councilman Mark Huston remembers Marlin as an old style of policeman. "Marlin's presence demanded respect, but he was always very dedicated to the City," said Huston, "he did a great job of making his department one of the best small town police departments in the state."

"Public safety is one of the most important responsibilities of city government," said Mayor Dan Wilson, "and Marlin has done an excellent job



Mayor Dan Wilson congratulates new Police Chief Donnie Orr

as chief of police in Columbus Junction. He has served the community for nearly eighteen years, and has been someone we could count on every day. Law enforcement is demanding work and is always changing, even in a small community. I appreciate the stability Marlin has given us."

A newspaper article a few years ago described Marlin as blunt spo-

ken. I don't think that was an accurate description. Marlin is not a blunt speaker, he's a direct speaker. You always know how Marlin feels and what he stands for. And for the past seventeen years, Marlin has dedicated his life to standing up for the town of Columbus Junction. Enjoy your retirement, Marlin, and thanks for everything you have given to our community.

2009 Year in Review

January 7, 2009 – The City is concerned about the dwindling salt supply.

FEMA money begins to come to government agencies to help with flood recovery expenses.

Ruben Zuniga speaks to Half Hour Club on "Iowa Most" program. Obituaries include James "Bill" Sands, Ramiro Mendez III, Donald D. Buster.

January 14, 2009 – Columbus teacher Sara Sullivan is invited to ride the Whistle Stop Train Tour from Philadelphia to Washington D.C. for President Obama's inauguration.

Work continues on Senior Center flood recovery. Exterior walls are in place and insulation is being placed on the inside.

Seventeen month old Irving Camargo tragically loses his life in a house fire in Conesville.

Obituaries include Dr. Feryl Duane Gipple, Betty McKray, Jeffrey David Souza, Ralph E. Oak, Irving Camargo, Meriel Louise Benge.

January 21, 2009 – Influenza season gains momentum.

Gary Carle of Columbus Junction wins \$30,000 in Iowa Lottery. Russell Timmerman of Wapello wins \$3,000 in Crossword Game.

William Juhl named 1st Vice President of Kaaba Shrine.

Community Foundation awards nearly \$99,000 in grants to area organizations.

Dr. Yahya El Shinnaway joins Community Health Center.

Columbus School Board votes to move 6th grade to Roundy Elementary.

Obituaries include George V. Neal Jr.

January 28, 2009 – Late Bob Stapp honored by U.S. Trotter Association.

Michael Pavey joins Lewis Homes for Funeral and Cremation.

Former area resident Bruce Thomas named Chairman of National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies.

Iowa Governor Chet Culver headlines Louisa County and Des Moines County corn and soybean banquet.

World War II Honor Tour for Louisa County Veterans announced. Conesville and Columbus Junction families, businesses and organizations come together to aid the Camargo Family after their fire.

Physician Assistant Kathy Rashid joins Community Health Center.

Columbus Junction State Bancorporation announces successful year for the Columbus Junction State Bank.

Obituaries include Allen D. Molander, Mary Marcella Mottett.

February 4, 2009 – City Council explores possible relocation of water plant.

Vivan Jennings completes term on ISU Extension's Citizen Advisory Council.

Roundy Students David Lagunas, Marisa Leyden, Gloria Montiel, Melissa Martinez, Danny Ayala and Brodrick Wittmann display artwork at state level.

Youth Ice Fishing clinic held at Langwood.

Nominations sought for second Columbus Distinguished Alumni Award.

Auction scheduled to benefit Tri-Rivers Foundation.

Bob, Sue and Rob Reid donate

funds to help purchase bricks at the All Veteran Memorial in Grandview for veterans who lost their lives in past wars.

Brenda Keller, R.N., joins Community Health Center.

February 11, 2009 – A Valentine's Salute to our Citizens of Tomorrow was published.

Music Video is recorded in Wayland.

Maritza Rodriguez joins Community Health center as interpreter.

City enters into partnership with Keep Iowa Beautiful to explore possible improvements in the city's appearance.

Integrity Dental participates in "Give Kids a Smile Day."

Obituaries include Steven L. Langstaff, Clifford Jacobs, Geraldine McGill.

February 18, 2009 – Pam Pugh and Alejandra Sanchez joins dental department at Community Health Center.

Habitat for Humanity recognizes Schrock Lumber of Mediapolis for their support over the years.

Reuben and Dee Deese take over operation of Thirsty Camel Restaurant.

Columbus FFA Alumni organization is formed.

Lions Club International presents \$22,665 check to Senior Center for flood recovery expenses.

Mayor Dan Wilson publishes a letter asking the public to become involved in the partnership with Keep Iowa Beautiful.

WWII Honor Tour organizer Pam Ramer hosts meeting at American Legion describing the Honor Tour efforts.

February 25, 2009 – Columbus students meet with Representative Tom Sands at the State Capitol.

Columbus FFA and FCCLA ac-

tivities are recognized.

Extension Office offers flood rebuilding seminar.

Columbus students score high in seat belt program sponsored by Monsanto.

Open house held at Community Health Center's temporary facilities.

City Council looks into future flood control programs.

Obituaries include Robert Bradley Fulton, Alice Reschly Davis.

March 4, 2009 – 41st March Winds Blow held at Columbus Schools.

Selina Lara is crowned Princess of Hearts and Wyatt Blodgett is crowned Prince of Hearts.

Dr. Eli Goodman joins Community Health Center.

Wapello Fire Department awarded 0% loan for aerial apparatus.

Conversational English classes offered.

Conesville Fire Department provides smoke detectors for every home in Conesville.

Donations begin to roll in for Honor Tour.

Columbus High School holds second career fair.

Obituaries include Donna Marie Ball, Rosalinda Zuniga Nunez.

March 11, 2009 – Former resident Jay Story launches Sportraits, LLC in North Carolina.

United Fund releases \$20,000 in flood relief funds.

Roundy Elementary holds Pink Ribbon Day.

Scouting for Food Program held. Plans are announced for Columbus Junction's first St. Patrick's Day Parade.

Spring thaws cause flooding at Fairgrounds.

County receives federal emergency funds to supplement food and

Briefly -

Legion Auxiliary to meet

The American Legion Auxiliary will meet on Tuesday evening, January 12, at 7 p.m. Mae Martin will be the hostess. We will be collecting for the Veteran's Hospital.

Winter band concert at school

The Columbus Community School Bands will present their annual winter band concert on January 18, 2010, at 7 p.m., in the middle school auditorium. Bands performing will be the 5th grade band, 6th grade band, Junior High band and the High School band. The bands will be performing a variety of music including traditional and contemporary band pieces. There will be an admission charge of \$3.00 for adults and \$2.00 for students. The concert will conclude with a performance of the combined bands. This will bring over 100 band students together – a grand finale performance! It should be a rousing performance! Make plans to attend this concert and enjoy an evening of band music.

Blood checks at Senior Center

Colonial Manor will be doing blood sugar and blood pressure checks at the Columbus Senior Center today, Wednesday, January 6th, 2010, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Embroidery club to meet

The embroidery club meeting for the month of January will be meeting today, Wednesday, January 6th at 1:00 pm at OUR SHOP, 106 Main Street, Columbus Junction, and January 11th at 6:30 pm. Both groups are still working on Hardanger Projects. Any one is welcome to attend. Please call Carol at 319-728-5648 for more information.

Fair schedule announced

The dates for the 2010 Louisa County Fair are: July 24 – Parade and Fair Kickoff; and July 26-31 – Fair. The dates for the State Fair are August 12-22.

Grandview/Letts Lions soup supper

The Grandview/Letts Lions Club will hold their annual all-you-can-eat Soup Supper on Saturday, January 16, 2010, from 5-7 p.m. at the L-M Elementary School cafeteria. The menu includes chili and Wisconsin cheese soups, homemade pies, crackers, celery, carrots, pickles, and beverages. Tickets can be bought ahead of time for \$5.00 from any Grandview/Letts Lions Club member. Tickets will be \$6.00 at the door. Ages 6-12 cost \$3.00. Ages 5 and under are free.

Half Hour Club to meet

The Half Hour Club will meet on Tuesday, January 12th, at 1:30 p.m., at the Columbus Junction Public Library. Hostesses will be Doreen Fuller and Janet Vincent. Program: Cathy Crawford. Roll Call: The last book you read.

First program at Historical Society

WAPELLO – The Louisa County Historical Society's first program of the new-year will be at 2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 10, 2010, at the Louisa County Heritage Center, 609 N. James L. Hodges Ave., Wapello. The Society has invited several hobbyists to display their collections and to share stories about them. Refreshments will be served. As always, admission is free.

Census workers needed

US Census 2010. Work up to 40 hours per week. Temporary Part-time job with 2010 Census. Enjoy good pay, flexible hours, mileage fee reimbursement, chance to serve your community. Call 1-866-861-2010.

Legion to hold fish and chicken fry

The American Legion will be hosting a fish and chicken fry on Saturday, January 9th at the Legion Building. Serving will be from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. The price is \$8.00.

shelter programs.

Heavy rains cause closing of County Road H22 and Highway 99.

Obituaries include Richard W. Brockett.

March 18, 2009 – School Board approves early start date.

County participates in Emergency Preparedness Exercise.

Columbus Community Schools earn "America's Best Schools" Bronze Award.

SEIRP receives \$900,000 grant for revolving loan fund.

Louisa Builders' Network unveiled.

Louisa County Habitat receives \$170,000 grant from Governor's Embrace Iowa Fund to help 2008 flood victims.

Gary Todd announces his retirement from Community Bank.

Columbus City Council appoints Bob Watson and Duncan Bell to fill vacancies.

March 25, 2009 – Community Club donates proceeds from Columbus Day raffle to Colonel's Kids for flood recovery efforts.

Spanish GED classes held in town.

Special section is published highlighting Louisa County Shrine.

CJ Speedway schedules race car show.

Exterior work on Senior Center nears completion.

Red Cross Training

WHAT: American Red Cross Muscatine-Louisa Unit Health and Safety Trainings.

WHEN: Adult, Infant, and Child CPR with First Aid.

This course will train students to recognize and respond to breathing and cardiac emergencies in adults, infants, and children. Participants will also learn basic first aid skills such as determining unconsciousness; treating cuts, scrapes, and burns; controlling bleeding; treating injuries to muscles, bones, and joints; and preventing and caring for sudden illness, including heat and cold emergencies.

Saturday, January 9, 2010 OR Saturday, January 23, 2010, from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. **Class Fee: \$50**

Adult, Infant, and Child CPR Recertification Review Course

A review course is an abbreviated course that briefly reviews course information and allows practice of skills and knowledge before testing. Recertification is determined by successful completion of skills evaluation and written exam. A review course is designed for participants with a current CPR certification and a need for on-going certification.

Monday, January 25, 2010, from 4:30 – 7:30 p.m. **Class Fee: \$35**

WHERE: All classes are held at the Red Cross office at 3500 Oakview Drive, Suite D, Muscatine.

HOW: To register, please call the Red Cross at (563) 263-6124.

Continued next week