

Honor Tour returns from Washington DC

By John Carpenter
Gazette Staff

"It was one of the highlights of my life," is a phrase that was repeated by every Veteran who returned last weekend from the Honor Tour to Washington D.C.

The tour was organized by the Muscatine American Legion with financial support raised by the Columbus Junction American Legion and the Wapello VFW. The Veterans left from Muscatine last Wednesday, and returned to Muscatine in the early hours on Sunday. Thirty World War II Veterans made the trip, with eight of the Veterans from Louisa County.

I've looked at various angles to write this story, but decided that there couldn't be a better approach than to record the impressions from the Veterans themselves. Following are comments from five of the Veterans:

Farrell Gentzler - *I enjoyed every bit of the trip, especially the World War II Memorial. You just can't imagine how the Memorial looks without actually seeing it in person. It was an unbelievable send-off, and I was surprised and impressed with how we were greeted by everyone. I had a great time, and will always remember it.*

Delmore Evans - *I had a wonderful time. I can't describe it in better terms than what the youth use today. Awesome! Everybody was so respectful towards us, and I was amazed how all of the Veterans blended together so well. The organizers did a great job. I was so impressed when we toured Ford's Theatre. When the tour guide mentioned who we were, the place erupted in applause. It was truly a highlight of my life.*

Dick Utter - *I was surprised how people greeted us, and how everyone, both young and old, came up and thanked us for our service. I couldn't believe the response we received at Ford's Theatre. Everyone went out of their way to acknowledge us. It was a great trip, and the organizers handled everything so well. I'll never forget this trip.*

Wayne Buster - *It was a great trip, and very emotional. There were times when everyone had tears in their eyes. The organizers did a fabulous job, which allowed us to see so many things in Washington D.C. From the send-off in Muscatine to our return home, it was an unbelievable experience for me. We received so many ovations and handshakes. Every World War II Veteran should try to make this trip.*

Russ Orr - *Wonderful is the best word I can use to describe the trip..*



Four of the Louisa County Veterans who made the Honor Tour. Pictured left to right: Russ Orr, Farrell Gentzler, Delmore Evans and Dick Utter. Not pictured are Wayne Buster, Thomas Pogemiller, Harry William Furnas and Dennis Brennan.



The Allen Wright Hanft American Legion Post of Columbus Junction's Honor Guard during the Honor Tour send-off.

We had a terrific send-off, and with the great organizers we had, everything came off so well. I was impressed with all of the Memorials in Washington. We were treated like kings by everyone, and I never had so many people want to shake my hand. I couldn't believe the reception we received at Ford's Theatre. Everyone was so respectful to us. Each Veteran received an American Flag from Senator Grassley, and we

even received a water cannon salute when we arrived at the airport in Washington.

Throughout my visits with all of the Veterans, ironically, everyone of them wanted me to use the paper to express their thanks to those who made the trip possible. To all of you, and all Veterans, a thanks from you isn't necessary. This is our small way of saying Thanks to each of you for your service to our country. You de-

served this, and it was a long time coming.

(Editor's note: Funds for the next trip in the fall are still being collected by the Columbus Junction American Legion and the Wapello VFW. A complete listing of donors and overall funds raised will be published in a future issue of the Gazette. A thank-you to everyone who has contributed.)

Tom Huston named 2009 Columbus Distinguished Graduate

By Carmen Lawrence
Gazette Staff

If you know Tom Huston at all, you know that it is a rarity when the guy is speechless, but that's just how he said he felt when he found out he was nominated by Polly Prior to be the Columbus Community Distinguished Graduate for the 2009 Commencement ceremony held Sunday, May 17th, at the high school. Considering he was asked to speak to the 64 CCHS graduating seniors, his state of speechlessness must have been inconvenient, but the whole community knows Huston would not have any trouble pulling it off.

Thomas Hal Huston was born on November 9, 1929 to H. Lee and Juanita (Prizer) Huston in Columbus Junction. He attended Columbus Community Schools until 1947 when he graduated in a class of approximately 33 students. When he was a student in the school district, he was active in all sorts of activities: Band, glee club, mixed chorus, one-act plays, class plays, football, and basketball.

"That's what I like about this school district," said Tom. "Kids get to be involved in all sorts of activities if they choose to."

However, Huston does regret not trying harder to get good grades when he was a student.

"I was never an honor student, that is for sure," states Huston. "I did a lot of extra-curricular activities when I was in school, and then there was activities I did that I never got caught at."

After graduation, Huston attended Iowa State University until he graduated in 1951. He then married Maryan U. McDermott on June 16, 1951. He entered into the United States Air Force in August of 1951. He was stationed and served active duty at Chanute Air Force Base in Rantoul, IL, Good Fellow Air Base in San Angelo, TX, and Brian Air Force Base in Brian, TX. Tom left the service in 1953 and made his home on the family farm in Wyman, Iowa, where he farmed full time. There, he and Maryan raised their three children Susan, Mark, and John until 1958 when he went to work at the Columbus Junction State Bank working for his father. He built the house he currently lives in today in 1962 (next to what the locals now call Huston's Pond). His first wife passed away in 1964. He then married Alice Rowland in 1966 and gained an additional family, N. Dean Rowland, and Sarah (Rowland) Wells. Alice passed in 1992, and Tom married his current wife, A. Kay (Cutler) in 1993. Tom now boasts 7 adult children that all graduated from CCHS with the addition of Kay's children Sarah (Cutler) Hand and Luke Cutler, and 15 grandchildren.

While residing in Columbus Junction, Tom has been involved with the following organizations: Columbus Community School Board Member; he was a stockholder and helped with the building of and served as president and board member for the Cedarcrest Country Club; he helped with the building of the Columbus

Community Swimming Pool; he is a past president of the Louisa County Red Cross; Past Chairman of the Cancer Crusade for Louisa County; Past Chairman of the Iowa Bankers Association Ag Committee; A Director (1968), Vice President (1970) and President (1971) for the Iowa Bankers Association; he was a Director and Treasurer of Iowa State Fair (1974-1976); Served as Superintendent of Banking (1975-1986); Treasurer, Vice President and President of the Iowa Independent Bankers Association (1987-1988); Louisa County Republicans as a past chairman; Columbus Community Booster Club Member; and he has been honored more than once as the Columbus Day Parade Distinguished Citizen.

He is currently active with: The Columbus Community Club (where he served as past president); Director of the Columbus Community Senior Center; Treasurer and Board Member of Colonial Manor; Louisa County Fair Board Member; Deacon of the United Presbyterian Church of Columbus Junction; Industrial Committee for Columbus Community; and Louisa County's self-appointed recruiter for Iowa State University (he never fails to let Hawkeye fans know when the Cyclones have beat the Hawks - in anything).

Huston has always been a staunch advocate for any learning institution he has attended (no accounting for his taste in colleges, though), especially CCHS.

"I really like the fact that our school district is locally controlled,"



states Huston. "And kids from CCHS have a willingness to try unknown things in later life."

Huston has always been one to support his local community and that has always included the Columbus Community School District. So when he was asked to be the Distinguished Graduate for the 2009 Commencement ceremony, he jumped at the chance to recruit new ISU students, and to let the current graduates know that his biggest lesson in life has been to give back to the community that he grew up in. He hopes that they will do the same in the future. Maybe one day then, one of the 2009 CCHS graduates will also be recognized as a Distinguished Graduate from our community. What better way to give back to your hometown and alma mater - just ask Tom Huston - I'm sure he won't be speechless then.

Briefly -

Area Memorial Day Services

Memorial Day Services in Columbus City will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, with State Representative Tom Sands as the speaker. Services will be held in Conesville at 11:30 a.m. on Monday with Pastor Rick Crooks as the speaker.

Museum to extend hours on Alumni Banquet weekend

The Columbus Community Heritage Museum will be open Saturday, June 13th, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. All Alumni classes and others are invited to visit the museum that day.

CCIC to meet

CCIC will meet on Tuesday, May 26, 2009 at the Columbus City City Hall starting at 6:00 p.m. A potluck will be featured with drink, and table service provided. Liz and Virginia will serve as hostesses.

Flags at Cemetery to be put up on Saturday

Flags will be put up at the Columbus City Cemetery on May 23 at 7 a.m. Flags will be taken down on May 27th at 5 p.m.

CJUMC Mother/Daughter Banquet

Columbus Junction United Methodist Church Mother Daughter Banquet will be held today, Wednesday, May 20 at 6 p.m. The evening will include Dinner/Dessert and a program. Tickets are \$6.00; 6 and under free. Tickets can be purchased at the church office. Bring a friend or just come yourself.

Colonial Manor Remembrance Service

You are cordially invited to attend a Colonial Manor Remembrance Service on Wednesday, May 27th, in the Activity Room at 3 p.m. Pastor Al Coffin will be officiating. We will be remembering: Donna Ball, Ada Chrisman, Nadine Cocklin, Thelma Coon, Harold Drinkall, Jean Galitz, Jo Hammond, Edna Hutchison, Clifford Jacobs, Helen Kaczetow, Jerry Phillips, Dick Pugh, Henry Sexton, Dolly Thornton, and Milo Viner.

Legion seeks help to decorate graves

American Legion members and Sons of the Legion: Your help will be appreciated to decorate gravesites on Thursday, May 21 at 5 p.m., at the Columbus City Cemetery.

Great Beginnings Preschool now accepting applications

Great Beginnings Preschool is now accepting student applications for the 2009 - 2010 school year. Great Beginnings offers quality care and education for children ages 3, 4 and 5. The school also provides transportation to and from the preschool. For more info please contact the preschool at 728-2669 or Beth Hills at 728-3157.

Visual Support Group to meet

The Louisa County Visual Support meeting will be held on Thursday, May 21st. The meeting will be held at the Sub Station in Wapello on Highway 61 at 1 p.m. Gary Domstrand from the Low Vision Store in Des Moines will bring some enlargers that have been recently traded in. These models are much cheaper than the new ones and are just as effective. Come join us and see if there is anything there for you. For more information call Lois Richers at 1-319-527-2630.

Immunization Clinic rescheduled

Louisa County Public Health will **not** hold an immunization clinic on May 21, 2009. The next immunization clinic will be on Thursday, May 28, 2009 from 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm.

Main Street Clean-up

Residents of Columbus Community are invited to help clean up the north end of Main Street on June 6th at noon. Bring gloves and hand tools to work with plants, etc. Rain date will be one week later, June 13th - same time. We hope for at least a dozen workers.

Pool may open Saturday

The opening date for the Columbus Swimming Pool is scheduled for Saturday, May 23rd. At this time however, the pool is experiencing a problem with a broken water line. We will open as soon as everything is ready to go. Prices for swimming are the same as last year: Daily Rate - \$2.50 for each swimmer; Family Season Ticket - \$100 (Includes your immediate family only); Single Season Ticket - \$50; 10 Swim Punch Card - \$20. Hours: Monday-Friday 1-6 p.m.; Saturday-Sunday 1-7:30 p.m.; Adult Swim 6-7 p.m. Monday-Thursday.

Shellbark Club to meet

The Shellbark Club will meet Thursday, May 21st at 11:30 at Butch's River Rock Café in Oakland Mills. We will meet at Spring Run Church at 10:30 a.m. to car pool.

Winfield Lions Club Breakfast

The Winfield Lion's Club will be serving a fly-in/drive-in breakfast hosted by Sheldon and Sandy Kongable at their farm NE of Winfield on Memorial Day. Serving is from 7:30 to 11:30. Cost is \$5.00 for adults and \$2.00 for children 10 years and under. The menu includes sausage and biscuits, egg casserole, fruit cup, and coffee. This is the 31st Annual breakfast hosted by the Kongables. Everyone is welcome. Come, bring a friend and a lawn chair so you can watch the planes come and go and enjoy visiting with old friends and making new ones.

Community Club to meet

The Columbus Community Club will meet this Thursday at Noon at the Civic Center.

Gazette Holiday deadline

Due to the Memorial Day weekend the deadline for news and advertising for next week's Gazette will be noon on Friday.

**Have a Safe and Enjoyable
Memorial Day Weekend**