



A Community Institution steps down

By Mary Masonholder Wilson
Gazette Staff

On Tuesday, July 10th, 2012 Ardeh Ostrem, better known, as Ardee, left the Columbus Junction Public Library for the last time as an employee there. Ardee has had a long and varied career with our town library.

She started her job at the library almost by accident in 1977. She was on the library board with such people as Don Schnell. Adeline Crawford checked out books then and the library was only open 6 or 7 hours a week on Wednesday afternoons and Saturday mornings. People looked for and chose their own books. One day the board asked Ardee if she would have time to buy some new books and get them "shelf ready." She thought about this and talked to Anna Robertson, a friend and former librarian for the city.

She gladly took on the job, never realizing that it would be the beginning of a very long career and more and more tasks. As time went by and the librarian's position was open, Ardee decided to accept this new post. Slowly the library started staying open more and longer, and Ardee could use her knowledge about the books to help readers select something of interest.

Ardee stressed that over the years, there have been many, many changes. When she first went to work, the library was located in the building, which now houses our town museum, formerly known as the Community Building. It was old and needed some remodeling and in time the city raised some money and the library received a Kenny Lindstrom Grant of \$22,000. The library was painted inside a lovely blue; wallpaper was put up; lace curtains were at the windows; and the west room was now put into use for the library and remodeled also. This west room was turned into a children's room and decorated accordingly. Some city meetings were also held there, and in time, it became an ICN room and received a lot of use from teachers and others getting on-line-viewing and classes. Carpet was put in both rooms, the ceiling was lowered, and a kitchenette was upgraded in the middle. The beauty of the original building was reinstated.



Of course another big change came when the library was moved from the Community Building to its current location in the new Civic Center.

Ardee said that they started thinking about a new library in 1990, and it took 15 years for the Board and Committee to finally get the job done.

Other changes Ardee recognizes is the amount of paperwork now required. The government has certain forms that must be completed. Ardee said that in the '80's, these forms were one page in length and could be filled in "by hand." Now they are 60 pages and must be done on-line.

Ardee says she uses the computer, but does not have the knowledge needed in today's world, one reason she is leaving. She compliments current librarian, Cathy Crawford, on her computer knowledge and the programs Crawford has started at the library. It was Ostrem's idea to get Crawford started at the library, and she feels it has been a great move.

When asked what her favorite moment was working at the library, she replied without a moment's hesi-

tion, "Cutting the ribbon for the new building. We had all worked so hard and so long for this moment and this building that it was a great feeling of accomplishment." Ardee continued by saying, "I so enjoyed working with everyone on the planning and fundraising of this building; these people 'made my life.'"

Ardith Ostrem grew up in Bettendorf, Iowa, and attended the Davenport School System. She attended the University of Iowa, where she met a man named Roy Ostrem. They married in 1950 and Roy finished dental school. One day he saw a sign in the dental building that Columbus Junction was looking for a dentist. He took down the sign and called the number given. He and Ardee were given a tour of the town and after a while they decided to come here. Dr. Ostrem bought the practice from Dr. Marker and he opened his office over the State Bank. Ardee commented, "People were so nice here." They made their first home in an apartment owned by Paul Smith on the corner in a big white

house across from the Methodist Church. Years went by and they soon had four children and moved into a house in the Chautauqua Park area.

Ardee tells the story that one night the library board meeting ran very late, and her husband, Roy, was not happy about her coming home at this hour. Her daughter, Lisa, responded, "Don't worry, Dad. Someday, if you are gone, Mom will have something to do." Ardee said in a soft voice, "And that's the way it has been." She lost Roy and did indeed have something to do at the library.

Ardee retired as librarian in 2008, but she continued working at the library until now. She says she will miss "being involved." She plans now to go see her 1946-'47 college roommate in the western part of the state. She also says it will be easier to get her housework done.

Ardith Ostrem has devoted a good many years to the Columbus Junction Library and she has earned some time off. As she leaves, we say, "Thanks, Ardee, for all you have done. We wish you the best!"

The Story of Lawrence Herrick - Chapter 5

By Mary Masonholder Wilson
Gazette Staff

In our last chapter, Major Lawrence Herrick had completed several flying missions during World War II both over Germany and then France. Events were "heating up for Larry" over France.

One such mission: "Only July 8th, Larry went on a mission with his 485th and was escorted by the 402nd. The target was a forty wagon long train which was probably loaded with ammunition considering the huge explosion that followed the attack. The missions were then stopped due to bad weather conditions, but started again on the 22nd. During the mission of July 23rd, the 370th was caught by surprise over Etampes by twelve Focke-Wulfes and Fw-190's and four pilots of the Squadron were shot during the dog-fight. The dreadful Battle of the Hedges was a battle where Americans lost one man every meter.... It ended with the fall of Saint Lo on July 18th. The German paratroopers had inflicted heavy losses to the ground G.I.'s and withdrew only one mile south of the town, pounding it for eight more days with their artillery. The month of July was probably the hardest on the...allies."

Lawrence Herrick was still alive and flying. Preparations were being made for more battles and one preparation was the "creation" of airfields. "Some basic emergency runways were laid out; however the 816th Engineer Airfield Battalion started building an airfield at Cardonville. This A.L.G. (Advance Landing Group) was coded A-3. SMTs were square steel grids which were easy to lay out and could be easily unrolled where wanted and tied to the ground and made operational with special fasteners for the make-shift airfield."

"As the allies were advancing, the men from the 370th were fully aware they would soon have to leave the peaceful area of Hampshire for the uncertainty of Normandy. After all the 9th Air Force was to move as close as possible to the troops. On July 27th, the 370th left Andover and headed to Normandy. The Headquarter Group also moved there with the 402nd Squadron."

"A hard countryside life started for the pilots. There was only one tent for six men, not to mention the rain and the impassive look of cows...Some washed their clothes with aircraft petrol, whereas others, who were neater, gave their clothing to local farm women and gave them soap... Slowly a true friendship developed between the air cowboys and the French stoic farmers." Pilots were given butter, milk, meat, cider—whatever the locals could give them. These pilots were their "liberators."

Let me now leave Lawrence's story for a minute and fast-forward to 2012, May 8, when my brother, other family members, and myself went to Reungy, France, for the celebration in honor of Lawrence. You see, the above comment, "Slowly a true friendship developed between the air cowboys and the French stoic farmers," triggers a feeling for me. There is no way I can communicate to you, Dear Readers, the intensity I felt from these French people as the witnesses to the crash told us in May their stories. Perhaps I noticed it more because these people were speaking in French, thus we had to wait for the translator to tell us what they were saying. Their body language and spirited speaking, sometimes angry, as they described what the Germans had done to them, told me everything, even before the translator told us what they had actually said. I cried sometimes; it was so moving. Remember, these people were elderly. We also were told this was the first time many of them had talked about the crash and the events of those dark days many years ago.

It was as if they were "spilling out their guts."

One woman said to us in an almost desperate voice, "The pilots! The pilots were our only hope! This was the only way we would ever escape the German occupation. The Germans hid under the trees. They took French people right out of their families and made them do work or jobs that would ultimately lead to death."

These French people loved our American troops. It was oh so very obvious from each and every witness or person to whom we spoke. Of course, we only spoke to those for whom the Germans were the enemy. However, it is this relationship between the people and the soldiers that became so very important, especially as I continue the story of Lawrence Herrick leading up to the crash. These people cared for our soldiers and many of them risked their own lives to care for Lawrence.

I cannot write enough about this: people who had no idea who I was, other than a relative of the dead American pilot, came up to me and hugged me. Many of them had tears in their eyes also. They didn't say a word; most of them could not speak English. They didn't have to speak. Their eyes and arms said it all. These are moments I shall never forget as long as I live. It is, and was, indeed, this relationship between the French people and the pilots that MADE this story.

No, we are not done with the story

Groundbreaking set for Fair Grounds Youth Center

On Friday July 27 at 2:00pm, there will be a ground breaking for the new Youth Center at the Louisa County Fair Grounds. If you are a sponsor or have participated in the numerous fundraising for this building, please attend the event. This wouldn't be possible without your contributions. There will be refreshments and a tour of the facility (floor plan) afterwards.

Briefly -

CJPM at Main Street Gifts

Main Street Gifts and Antiques, 204 Main Street, Columbus Junction, IA, is hosting a CJPM and Open House on Saturday, July 21 from 5-7 pm. Stop by and enjoy the music of *Valentin Ruiz, Vocals and Acoustic Guitar, from 6-7 pm under the veranda*. Free chips and salsa served. Bottled water and sodas only \$1.00 each.

Community Club to meet

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

Class of 1977 plans reunion

The Class of 1977 will be holding their 35th reunion (Yes, 35! Wow), on Saturday, August 11, at the Thirsty Camel at 6:00 pm. We will order off menu (everyone paying for own meals), we will be dancing to Crusin' at 9:00. We have a number of classmates that we have been unable to contact. Any help, with contacting them, from other friends or relatives, would be so very much appreciated! We would welcome any former teachers who would like to attend! If you have questions or contact info please contact Cindy Runyon Baker at: Randyncindy@iowatelecom.net or Mike Jay at: mikejay59@gmail.com or text or call 319-530-6775.

Class of 1982 plans reunion

Attention Columbus Community Class of 1982 (and parents): Some of us have been making plans for our 30th year class reunion. We still need some addresses; if you can help – that would be great! We want to find as many classmates as possible. Our plans are: Columbus Day Weekend – Friday, October 12th at 7 p.m. meet and greet at Rumors and Excuses; Saturday, October 13th watch parade at Rumors and Excuses, 5-8 p.m. dinner at the Thirsty Camel, then go to excluded location for a night of fun. Any questions or addresses please call Deb (Sands) Halstead at 319-750-2636.

Columbus City Cemetery Notice

Columbus City Cemetery Notice: This is to advise you that anything that disrupts the beauty of the cemetery or interferes with the maintenance and upkeep of the cemetery is not allowed. This includes seasonal plantings, shepherd hooks not being used, solar lights that are burned out. If they are not removed, they will be placed in the cemetery shed, and if you want them, you may inquire to any cemetery board member and they will return them to you.

Columbus Cross Country Fundraiser

The Columbus High School cross country team is hosting two fundraising races at Chinkipin Bluffs Recreation Area. They are at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, August 2, and Thursday, August 9. The distance is 3 miles for walkers and runners. There is also a 1-mile run for kids age 12 and under. Cost is \$5. For more information, call Coach Steve Riley (319-217-0130) or you can download an entry form at <http://www.runlouisacounty.info>.

Community Club to host Blood Drive

The Columbus Junction Community Club will host a community blood drive on Wednesday, August 1st from 1:30-6:30 p.m. at the American Legion Hall located at 99 Second Street, Columbus Junction. To donate, please contact Kirsten Shellabarger at 319-728-2414 or e-mail her at: Kirsten@horakinsurance.com. Walk-ins welcome! Potential donors must be at least 17 years of age (16 with parental permission form available through www.bloodcenter.org) and weigh more than 110 pounds. A photo I.D. or MVRBC Donor Card is required to donate. To schedule an appointment for donation, please call the Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center at (800) 747-5401. Donors who last gave blood on or before June 6, 2012 are eligible to give blood at this drive.

Early Childhood Board to meet

The Early Childhood Iowa Area Board Des Moines/Louisa Counties will be meeting today, Wednesday, July 18, 2012, at 10:00 a.m. at the First United Presbyterian Church, 801 Middle St., Mediapolis, IA.

This week at the Farmers' Market

This week, the Columbus Junction Farmers Market is excited to have a performance from "Second Hand Toes" and "Fallin' Technique." "Second Hand Toes" is a group composed of four "mature" women from the Washington area. The ladies will entertain with tap dancing to some of their favorite songs. "Fallin' Technique" is a break dancing group composed of five students/alumni from Columbus Community High School. The Market is also thrilled to have Eulenspiegel Puppet Theater join forces with Nicole Beckley, Roundy Elementary Art Instructor. They will be having a mini workshop where kids will get the opportunity to create their own puppets. Later, they kids will have the opportunity to participate in a mini parade to showcase their puppets! So bring your kids, grandkids, nephews, nieces, etc! Also, the United Methodist Women will be serving Walking Tacos at the Market. Reminder, the market opens at 4:30pm at the American Legion parking lot.

Open House at Great Beginnings

An open house will take place at the Great Beginnings Preschool on Tuesday, July 31st from 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm at the Columbus Junction United Methodist Church. Come and visit with the staff and see what is offered for your preschooler for the 2012-2013 school year. Informational packets will be available. The preschool is now accepting student applications for the 2012 – 2013 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. Everyone is welcome!

Fair seeks Expo Hall displayers

The Louisa County Fair Board and the Community Development Center are seeking organizations and businesses to have displays at the Expo Hall at the Louisa County Fair. Information and a registration form are available at www.louisacountyfair.com. Find them by selecting Expo Hall Info from the list on the left.

County Relay For Life set

Louisa County's Relay for Life has been set for Saturday, August 4, 2012 at the L-M High School.

Shellbark Club to meet

Shellbark Club will meet on Thursday, July 19th at 11:30 a.m. at Mi Pueblo Real, 1021 W Madison Street, Washington.

