

Former Columbus grads on Alaskan Adventure

By Deb Bean
Gazette Staff

When Jim Gabriel held a retirement party at his home for retiring Columbus Junction Police Chief Marlin O'Donnell, a discussion was brought up about traveling on motorcycles to Alaska. Jay Schweitzer a local resident and attorney, was telling Marlin and friend, John Gabriel about his quest to travel by Harley to Alaska and being turned down by two of his friends that did not want to take that long of an adventure. Marlin and John both agreed they would love to make the trip with Jay and his two sons, Ben and Sam.

Marlin, John and Jay were 1965 Columbus Community graduates. The five travelers calculated they would be traveling between 5700 and 6000 miles round trip. It was decided at this time that they would travel to Stewart, British Columbia and then cross into Hyder, Alaska.

On Saturday July 17, 2010 at 7:00 a.m., the adventure begins for these former classmates and friends. They straddled their hogs and away they began riding the open roads, witnessing the beauty of nature when they saw pelicans and swans on Lake Wobegone as well as feeling the wrath of Mother Nature as they ran into rain, high winds and hail. At one point during the storm everyone was pulled over waiting for the storm to pass or let up. They journeyed through Northwestern Minnesota and eastern North Dakota where everything is made up of lakes and potholes. Approximately 660 miles later their first day ended at Jamestown, North Dakota.

Day two the travelers passed through the Canadian border where Ben got the shake down and Jay dropped his bike while standing in the loose gravel and had to have help to pick it up. They rode through towns called, Drinkwater, Donnybrook, Bowbells and Milestone. They rode past pretty yellow fields that the travelers believed to be canola and some beautiful blue fields which they were not familiar with. They saw a huge coal and potato mine which was being stripped as well as many oil fields. Day two's journey ended with approximately 440 miles, spending the night at Moose Jaw.

Day three started out with some excitement as they saw a trailer burning near the road. Riding through Edmington, the capitol of Alberta, they saw a beautiful lake called Buffalo Pond Lake. Raining four different times the riders decided to just leave their gear on. It was decided that John broke the record for the fastest gear on and off. John even came up with a name for the short rains; "car wash." They stayed in Prince George, British Columbia. Day three had them traveling approximately 600 miles.

Day four the riders traveled through Jasper National Park and were able to see elk and deer at Mount Robson, which is believed to be the tallest mountain in Canada. Entering the Pacific Time zone they put approximately 340 miles on their bikes on day four.



Pictured above from left to right in Hyder, Alaska is Ben Schweitzer, Jay Schweitzer, John Gabriel, Sam Schweitzer and Marlin O'Donnell

Day five traveling approximately 447 miles brought the group into Hyder, Alaska, seeing black bears and glaciers and traveling in more rain. All riders agreed the glaciers were nice and 40 miles on Highway 37A were magnificent. They all agreed Hyder, Alaska makes Fredonia look really good. Enjoying great halibut before calling it a night.

Day six the group traveled approximately 250 miles to Smithers, British Columbia. They had beautiful traveling weather, there was no rain. Seeing a moose and a black bear, the bear came out and sat down in front of them looking at Jay. Marlin thought the bear wanted to tangle with Jay but when the others pulled up on their bikes the bear changed his mind. Ben, Sam, Marlin and John drove to Salmon Glacier, which is the third largest glacier in North America. Marlin thought he crossed the border five times on the gravel road.

Day seven, before leaving Smithers, they had their bikes serviced at the Harley Davidson Store. Oil changes for four bikes, turn signals on one bike, lights on two bikes and of course tee shirts. They left Smithers around 2:00 p.m. and traveling approximately 300 miles to Quesnel, British Columbia.

Day eight leaving Quesnel the riders got split up twice running into a little bit of confusion on the road. The men agreed it was hard mountain riding with several switchbacks. They had nice weather and traveled through a canyon which was very hot.

Attempting to stay in Whistler was a mess, they all agreed it was a tourist trap. They wanted \$250.00 a night for a motel. So the bikers drove onto Squamish, British Columbia, traveling approximately 365 miles. At their hotel they had a scenic view of the mountains.

Day nine they left Squamish and headed for Castlegar, British Columbia. With mountains on one side and ocean on the other, the riders finished up riding in the mountains on what is called the sea-sky highway. It was an exquisite view enjoyed by all of them. They had to travel through Vancouver and did 100 miles of heavy city traffic making it hard to keep five bikes together. Taking the Crows Nest highway had them traveling through the Kootenay region famous for fruit, marijuana and draft dodgers. One interesting thing they noticed in Canada is that they have what they call "points of interest" and "important intersections." The group traveled approximately 425 miles.

Day ten the travelers arrived back in the states through Idaho and then into Montana. They traveled 245 miles and took a break when Marlin and John purchased peaches, apricots and cherries which were enjoyed by them all. Here they began seeing a lot more Harley's instead of BMW's. After spending the night at Kallispell, Montana, the group headed for the Glacier National Forest. Their run to the Sun was magnificent, except for it being very narrow and having road construction plus being cold at those elevations, so they wore full leathers and gloves. They stayed in Great Falls, Montana then traveled through the Lewis & Clark National Forest. This day they traveled approximately 245 miles.

Day eleven from Great Falls the bikers traveled to Sheridan Wyoming which was approximately 380 miles. They saw a lot of deer, elk and antelope on their journey. Jay wanted to take his companions to eat the best steak ever eaten at a restaurant called the Chop House where he and his family had eaten in previous travels. They passed through the Big Horn

Mountains and Little and Big Belt Mountains. They also traveled through Crow, Black Feet and Flat Head Indian Reservations, ending the days travel with approximately 380 miles.

Day thirteen they left Sheridan, Wyoming and rode approximately 300 miles to Sturgis, seeing places like, the Devil's Tower, Deadwood and Lead. They toured through Spearfish Canyon and Belle Fourche, the home of Columbus City Mayor Mark Shear and Judy's hometown. They found themselves having to make another group decision on whether or not to take two days to get home from Sturgis, which is approximately 800 miles, or take three days and travel 250, 250 and 300. Everyone was getting a little weary so they all agreed to take three days.

Day fourteen they left Sturgis and rode to Winner South Dakota, approximately 260 miles. Riding through the Badlands was very hot for the bikers. Two boxes of bagels had been dumped on the road and were covered in grasshoppers. The men agreed the grasshoppers felt like small stones hitting them.

Day fifteen traveling approximately 350 miles the bikers reached Fort Dodge. They had a beautiful cool day to ride, even though they had to back track about 8 miles due to a bridge that had been taken out. Highway 20 was not a good road to travel on, agreed the bikers, but traveling over the Missouri River at Fort Randall Dam was really beautiful.

Day sixteen, after approximately 215 miles, the bikers were back in Columbus Junction. Happy to be home but even happier to have had the opportunity to travel as friends the 5,967 miles together, safely, and an adventure they will always remember.

Council considers recycling rate increase

By Jim Rudisill

After 13 years of the city's recycling fee remaining the same, Columbus Junction residents will be facing an increase, but they will decide how much. Kim Hewitt and his son Gabe, owners of Hewitt Sanitary, Morning Sun, told city officials during the council's regular August 11 meeting, mounting expenses were forcing them to raise their fee.

"Costs have gone up," Kim Hewitt said, adding the increased volume of recyclables in the community was helping to drive that increase.

Hewitt said when the town originally started recycling he was able to handle the load with a small truck and a two-person crew. However, a large trailer was now needed and the crew had more than doubled, causing an increase in time and wages. He also blamed fuel costs and little revenue from the sale of recyclables as contributing factors.

While recycling costs are mounting, officials said trash reduction still

keeps residents from paying higher garbage fees, since they must pay \$1 for extra tags if they exceed the weekly pickup limit.

Currently the city pays \$3.71 per month per residence for the weekly recycling service and Hewitt offered two options for the council. Under one option, the once-per-week service would continue, but the cost would increase \$1.75 to \$5.46 per month per residence. The second option would cut back the weekly service to two times per month, but still raise the monthly fee by \$1, to \$4.71 per month per residence.

Hewitt said Wapello residents currently receive curbside recycling pickup twice a month.

Council members agreed Hewitt deserved a fee increase, but they were unsure which option to select. Council member Hal Prior suggested residents who were used to recycling once a week might find it less appealing to store the items for a longer period.

"I'd probably do less," he pointed

out.

"I'm inclined to think (we should keep) every week," council member Mark Huston agreed.

The council eventually agreed to delay any decision until its August 25 meeting to give residents time to voice their opinions.

In other action, the council approved an amendment to the city's property tax abatement ordinance that will allow council members to consider other abatement formulas. Under the original ordinance the city had only two options. For commercial properties a three-year, 100% abatement was available to owners who made major improvements to their property. Residential property owners could receive a 10-year, graduated abatement.

The council agreed to adopt the amendment, which will allow the members to consider any type of formula, after local businessman Elias Gutierrez requested a 10-year, graduated abatement for a new business he and his mother have established. The

council agreed to waive the second and third readings of the amendment, meaning it will go into effect immediately.

Gutierrez, who attended the meeting, was asked to submit his abatement application once he completes a property purchase he is pursuing.

In final action, the council approved a resolution establishing a Keep Columbus Beautiful Committee and pledging community support for the effort. The council also approved a \$75,000 Resource Enhancement and Protection grant application to help fund improvements at Chautauqua Park.

Mayor Dan Wilson also notified the council that he was proposing to rename a portion of Locust Street in front of the American Legion in honor of long-time resident and philanthropist Beryl Roundy. Wilson said naming the street Beryl Roundy Way would recognize Roundy's contributions to the community. The council will consider the request at its next meeting.

Briefly -

2011 Auxiliary dues now due

A reminder to American Legion Auxiliary members, that our 2011 dues are now due. A prompt response will be appreciated.

CCIC to meet

C.C.I.C. will meet at the Columbus City City Hall at 5:30 p.m., on Tuesday, August 24, 2010, enroute to the Roadhouse at 6:00 p.m.

FFA information meeting

The August Columbus FFA meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 25th at 7:00 p.m. at Chautauqua Park. Any student in grades 9-12 wishing to learn more about the opportunities that the FFA has to offer is welcome to attend and parents are welcome and encouraged to attend as well. Following the meeting, a meal will be provided and the Columbus FFA Alumni will have a brief meeting. Anyone interested in learning more about the FFA and the Alumni are welcome to attend. If you have any questions, please contact FFA Advisor Katie McWhirter at 319-728-2231 x 3621.

Columbus SPIRIT meeting

An Informational Meeting for all Columbus Community High School Students (Parents are encouraged and welcome to attend) on Wednesday, September 15 at 6:30 p.m., at the Columbus Senior Center. Questions, please call Mike and Renea Jay at 319-530-4010 during evening hours.

Early Childhood board to meet

The Des Moines/Louisa Early Childhood Area Board (formerly Empowerment Board) will be meeting at the First Presbyterian Church, 801 Middle Street, Mediapolis, IA, on Wednesday, August 25, 2010 at 9:30 a.m.

This week at the Farmers' Market

The Columbus Junction Farmers' Market is held Fridays from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. through October 8 at the American Legion parking lot, 99 Second St., Columbus Junction. The market features regional vendors selling Iowa-grown produce, plants, baked goods, eggs, snacks, crafts and more. Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards, IFMNP/WIC checks, Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition checks and Louisa Bucks are welcome. Eat local and taste the difference!

Great Beginnings Open House

Great Beginnings Preschool, a private part-time preschool offering free transportation, as well as tuition grants for four-year-olds, will host an Open House at the Methodist Church on Second Street on Tuesday, August 24th from 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Republican Fundraiser scheduled

The Louisa County Republicans will hold their annual summer fundraiser on Saturday, August 28. The fete will be held at the Briggs Civic Center, downtown Wapello. A social time will begin at 6 p.m., with a meal to be served at approximately 6:30 p.m. Featured speakers will be candidate for U.S. Congress Marianne Miller-Meeks, and State Representative Tom Sands. Tickets are \$25 per person (\$15 for students), and are available from Louisa County Republican Central Committee members, and at the door.

Visual Support Group to meet

The Louisa County Visual Support Group will meet on Friday, August 20th. We will meet in the East Room of the Corner Market located at 340 North 2nd Street in Wapello. The meeting will start at 1 p.m. Llewann Bryant from Keck Memorial Library will be our guest speaker. She will tell and show us what is available for us at the Library as our vision deteriorates. She will also tell us about the changes that will take place due to the new addition. Everyone is invited. For more information call Lois Richers at 319-527-2630.

Meet the Wildcats

This Friday, Aug. 20th, everyone is encouraged to come out and meet the student-athletes of Columbus High School participating in fall sports. Coaches will be introducing the athletes involved in Cross Country, Volleyball and Football. Scrimmages for football and volleyball will be held following the program, which will take place at the football field. The fall Cheerleading squads will also be introduced and the Columbus Athletic Boosters will be holding a membership drive as well as serving free ice cream and brownies in the student center. Hope to see you there!

School crosswalk etiquette

School crosswalk etiquette: If a student is in the crosswalk, the car needs to stop. Cars have not been stopping as the students walk across to the Springer Street Arts Complex. Please be aware of pedestrians' right-of-way.

Shellbark Club to meet

Shellbark Club will meet on Thursday, August 19th at 5 p.m., at John's Shamrock BBQ in Ainsworth. This is date night. Please call 319-728-2081 so we know how many are going by August 17th. Please note the time change.

Community Club to meet

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

Ainsworth Opera House closed until October

Due to other commitments and business, the Ainsworth Opera House will not be having breakfast buffets until October 2, 2010. Thank you to everyone who has been attending and we will be back as good as ever we hope.

School busses back on roads

School started this week, so please drive carefully when approaching school bus stops.