

Meet the 2009 Columbus Day Distinguished Citizens

Verl and Earlene Lekwa

By Deb Bean
Gazette Staff

In an elegantly decorated two story home in Columbus Junction lives a couple, Verl and Earlene Lekwa, who have been married thirty-eight years. The couple has two sons: Jeff and wife, Joy who have three children, Jarrett, J.D. and Jobie. David has a son, Justus. Both of their families reside in Columbus Junction.

Earlene graduated from Columbus High School in 1960. She is very active in many areas of her community and Church. She operated her own beauty shop for twenty years, worked briefly for Ross Dry Goods and Colonial Manor. Earlene worked eight years as City Clerk and served one term as our Mayor. She taught at Great Beginnings Preschool for eight years and for the past four years has taught at KFC Preschool as well as serves as a member of Colonel's Kids Day Care Board. Earlene is a member and past president of Columbus Community Club and now serves as their Community Club treasurer. She is president of the Etude Music Club, member and past president of Columbus Women's Organization, past president of the Columbus Junction American Legion Auxiliary and currently membership chairperson. She is also the Iowa American Legion Auxiliary First

District President, past President. She is currently 3rd vice president of Columbus Junction Lions Club. She holds current positions at her church, the Columbus Junction and Columbus City United Methodist Churches, Columbus City membership chairperson and Lay Leader.

Earlene is attending College in Mt. Vernon for School of Lay Ministry; she is in her final year of a three year course. And if all of that doesn't sound busy enough, for the past eleven years she has volunteered for Justice for our Neighbors. She has many hobbies like quilting, singing, playing the guitar, walking and working in her flower garden.

As for Verl, he spent thirty-three years teaching the children of our community at the Columbus Junction Community Schools. In the 1970's he served on the Columbus Junction City Council and served on the Columbus Junction Library Board. For twenty-five years Verl was chair of serving committee at Columbus Day, past president of Columbus Junction Lions Club and is current Tail Twister. He is past Commander of American Legion Post #100, Columbus Junction and present District One Historian. Like his wife, Earlene he holds positions at Columbus Junction and Columbus City United Methodist Churches and presently on Commission on History and Archives for Methodists state-wide. Verl is currently vice president of Louisa County Historical Society and frequent contributor to that society's



quarterly magazine, co-editor of Cedar County Historical Review, a yearly review now in its 51st year of publication and is an Officer in Sons of Norway of Cedar Rapids. Verl was also featured in the magazine, OUR Iowa detailing how, after retiring, he visited every town in Iowa in 'Old Blue,' his favorite old car. He also served for ten years on the Columbus City Cemetery Board, and was in charge of the Homecoming festivities at the School for twenty years. He dedicates his time to volunteering at Colonial Manor showing slides and St. James Elementary School in Washington, helping in their Library and delivers senior meals.

The Lekwas say time spent with their children and grandchildren is

very special to them. When asked what has kept them here in our community, they responded by saying, "We know a lot of people and have a lot of friends. It has been a great place to live and raise a family, it's home." One thing that Verl thinks is one of the many unique features of our community is how our little towns of Columbus Junction, Fredonia, Columbus City, all come together and play an important part in each other's lives. And the fact that we have a close proximity to Iowa City, Muscatine, Washington.

The Lekwas are proud to be an active part in our community and are surprised and humbled that they were chosen as Distinguished Citizens for 2009.

Ron and Martha Murry

By Deb Bean
Gazette Staff

Nestled back in cozy little home under old oak trees for shade just before reaching Chautauqua Park in Columbus Junction you will find a nice comfortable home with a loving couple residing there. Ron and Martha Murry have been married for forty-six years. The couple married May 18, 1963 in Crawfordsville.

The two are hometown people having lived here all their lives. Both Murrys graduated from Columbus Community High School, Martha in 1959 and Ron in 1960.

After graduation, Martha attended Iowa Wesleyan College where she earned her Elementary Teaching Degree. She first taught for approximately a year at Washington School District and then three years at L-M School District. After High School Ron spent one year in Reno, Nevada and then came back to Columbus Junction and attended AIC in Davenport where he learned Accounting and Bookkeeping skills. Work was never an issue for Ron. Growing up, he began working at the age of thirteen working along side his dad at McKee Grain and Lumber Company

in Conesville until graduating high school.

Moving from a downtown apartment, the Murrys purchased a farm northwest of Columbus Junction. Ron farmed and worked for Rath Packing for over eleven years and the couple started their family. Their first born was Teresa, then Tracy, then Melinda and then Wendy and their youngest, Ronald Dean II "R.D."

The couple sold their farm and moved into town where they ran a Cargill Seed and Feed Business for approximately one and a half years in Columbus City selling Nutrina Feed and DeKalb Seed. Martha began substitute teaching in area schools, worked eight years as a secretary for Russell Newell and thirteen years at Community Action. For the past three years she has been retired. Martha has been an active member of two Red Hat Ladies Society Groups, Today's Book Club and has coffee with the ladies several times a week at Ainsworth Four Corners. She now helps to babysit and run errands for Ron.

Once their Seed and Feed Business sold, Ron began his construction business in 1982. "I was semi-retired in 2008 and I am now helping Phillip Mincks with carpentry work and helping out Reids with their



Laundromat and doing snow removal in the winter months," states Ron. "I knew Ron wouldn't be able to do not do something," laughs Martha.

What has held the Murrys' roots here is plain and simple, "We love this community, it has been a good place to live and raise our family," agrees the couple. Both Murrys also agreed that when they tragically lost their daughter, Tracy and their son, R.D. they were overwhelmed by the support they were shown by so many people from the community. "That is what small towns have that bigger

cities don't have, the closeness of friends and the outpouring of support for each other," states the Murrys.

The couple enjoys spending time with their family, especially their grandchildren, Ryan, Austin, Nicole, Joshua, Brittany, Jayden, Isaiah, Mackenzie and Jay and a great-granddaughter, Aurey.

Both Ron and Martha feel they have had a good life, good marriage and a wonderful family and are very honored to have been chosen as Distinguished Citizens for a town they are proud to call home.

Mike and Marcia Pavey

By John Carpenter
Gazette Staff

In the early 1970's a young couple moved to town to begin their lives. Little did anyone realize what an impact these two individuals would have on our community over the next thirty plus years.

Mike Pavey grew up in Webster City, Iowa, and attended college at Westmar in LeMars, Iowa. While there he met and married Marcia, from Marcus, Iowa, who would become not only his wife, but his partner in serving the residents of Columbus Junction. Upon Mike's graduation, he received a teaching offer in Columbus Junction and the young couple moved here. Marcia had not completed her education yet, so she enrolled at Iowa Wesleyan College in Mt. Pleasant and received her teaching degree. She also found a teaching job in the Columbus Schools. Mike eventually obtained his Master's Degree from the University of Iowa. Along with their teaching duties and raising their family, Mike and Marcia found time to become very active members of our community.

Mike has been a long-time member of the Columbus Lions Club, chairing the club's annual blood drive for many years. He is a member of the Columbus Community Club, the United Methodist Church, the Louisa County Historical Society, he was a member of the Columbus Education Association, and officiated high school and junior high school basketball games. He produced a very comprehensive video detailing the community's efforts in fighting the flood of 2008. Mike retired after thirty-six years of teaching, and works today for Lewis Funeral Homes.

Marcia has been a member of P.E.O. for many years. She serves on the Columbus Medical Facilities Board, as well as an advisor for the Swimming Pool Advisory Committee. She also was a member of the Columbus Education Association. Marcia is a member of the United Methodist Church Women's Committee, and for a time participated in the bell choir at the Church. Marcia retired from teaching after thirty-four years, and now substitute teaches in the school system.

Their family consists of son, Eric and his wife, Natalie (Malynn, 7 and Kayne, 3); daughter, Kendra and her husband, Shawn Walsh (Taryn, 3 and



Cael, 1); and son, Eli who is a second year law student.

In commenting on the Columbus Community, Mike said, "I have lived here longer than I have lived any other place in my life, and it is truly my home. The people are wonderful, the community is wonderful, and I am always amazed as to how everyone blends together and comes forward when help is needed. The response to the flood of 2008 is an example of our community values. We truly selected a great place to be our home." Marcia added, "We came here not knowing anyone, and the

community embraced us and made us feel welcome and a part of Columbus life. It has been a wonderful place to live, work and raise our family. Mike and I made a wise decision when we decided to move here."

It's people like Mike and Marcia Pavey who keep the Columbus Community viable and progressive. Through their efforts in the many organizations they serve, our community has been a better place.

See Pages 6 & 7 for a complete Columbus Day Schedule

Briefly -

Legion Auxiliary County Meeting

The American Legion Auxiliary will host the county meeting and dinner on Tuesday evening, October 13th. Dinner will be at 6:30 p.m. with the meeting to follow at 7 p.m. Remember - dues are due.

FCCLA canned food drive

The FCCLA will be having their yearly canned food drive; this year there will be 2 dates. The first day is October 14th and we will be collecting the cans in Columbus Junction. The following week, October 21st we will be collecting the canned foods from Conesville, Columbus City, and Fredonia. Both nights we will start collecting at 6:30 and go until 7:30. The food we collect both nights will be donated to our local CAP (Community Action Program) office. We really appreciate all your support and hope we have a good turn out.

Lions Club Columbus Day Breakfast

The Columbus Junction Lions Club invites everyone to their Columbus Day Breakfast fundraiser on Saturday, October 10th, at the Columbus Senior Center from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Serving all-you-can-eat biscuits and gravy with jelly, honey, coffee, milk and orange juice. Cost is \$5.00 for adults, \$2.00 for children under 12.

CCHS Class of 1974 plans reunion

The Columbus Community Class of 1974 will hold their 35-year Class Reunion on Saturday, October 10, 2009 at Cedarcrest Country Club. Meal served at 6:30 PM. \$15.00 per person. Please contact Jan Wagoner 319-728-2638, or by mail at 623 2nd Street in Columbus Junction, 52738 with your reservation and meat choice (ribeye steak or chicken breast). I would also ask any parents that still live locally to contact their children that no longer live in the area to remind them to respond. We would love to hear from them even if they aren't able to make the trip.

CCHS Class of 1979 plans reunion

Join us for an informal 30-year reunion on Columbus Day October 10th. Watch the parade, meet for dinner at Thirsty Camel Supper Club at 5 pm, and then enjoy the downtown entertainment at night on Main Street, Columbus Junction. For more information please email columbuscommunityclassof79@hotmail.com.

Embroidery Club to meet

The Embroidery Club will meet at Our Shop in Columbus Junction on Wednesday, October 7th at 1 p.m. Any questions please call 319-728-5648.

FCCLA Fundraiser

The Columbus FCCLA will be selling personalized cakepans and Klean Kanteen Bottles, as well as, personalized cutting boards, mugs, and photo frames. If you need something special for a Christmas, wedding or birthday gift this may be just what you need. If interested call Lois Mincks at Columbus Community School 319-728-2231 Ext. 3332 or email her at lois.mincks@columbus.k12.ia.us and she can have a member take your order. Orders will be placed on Oct. 30. Orders will arrive in plenty of time before Christmas.

Half Hour Club to meet

The Half Hour Club will meet at the Weber and Huston parking lot on Tuesday, October 13th at 11:15 a.m. to car pool to Muscatine. We will have lunch at the Pizza Ranch at Noon and visit the Muscatine Art Center on Mulberry Avenue at 1:30 p.m.

4-H Foundation at Columbus Day

The Louisa County 4-H Foundation group is taking part in the Columbus Day activities on Saturday, October 10. Walking tacos sales will happen on the west side of Main Street (Ken Purdy's building next to H&R Block) in Columbus Jct. Starting at 11 a.m., the Foundation group will be selling bottles of water and walking tacos. Sales from this activity provide the 4-H Foundation with funds for scholarships, membership dues, community projects completed by local clubs, etc.

Visual Support Group to meet

The Louisa County Visual Support Group will meet next Thursday, October 15th at the Sub Station in Wapello starting at 1 o'clock. Perry Fletcher will be our guest speaker. He will talk about trapping moles, gophers and other varmints from our yards. He will be bringing some live traps for us to see. You do not have to be a member to come and listen to Perry. This should be very interesting, as we have seen a fox and an opossum in the south side of town. Questions, please call Lois Richers at 1-319-527-2630.

Fish Fry at Historical Society

WAPELLO - The Louisa County Historical Society will host a fish fry at 5:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 17, at the Louisa County Heritage Center, 609 James L Hodges Ave. Highway 61, Wapello. The menu includes pollock and catfish, baked beans, coleslaw, bread and butter, and lemonade, tea and coffee. The cost is \$8 for all you can eat.

Shellbark Club to meet

The Shellbark Club will meet on Thursday, October 15th at Café Old World for lunch in Mediapolis at 11:30 a.m. Meet at Spring Run Church to car pool at 10:45 a.m.

Wanted: Antique Tractors

Wanted: Antique tractors and Engines at Columbus Day in Columbus Junction on Saturday, October 10th at the American Legion parking lot. Registration will be at the American Legion parking lot. We will go up to the high school for the parade at 12:00. A gentleman from Eddyville is going to bring his tractor. He has painted it to honor the recent war dead. Bruce Smith is one of the men he has listed on it. Any questions, call Carol Foster at 319-728-5648 between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Other times, call 319-728-2903.

Habitat hosts "Taste of Wapello"

Louisa County Habitat for Humanity will again host "Taste of Wapello and Area" in conjunction with Wapello Walk the Block the evening of November 6, 4-7 p.m. at the Briggs Center. There will be both commercial and individual exhibits. This event will have a holiday theme but not limited to that. If you like to cook or bake, call to reserve a spot to set up! We do plan to have more seating arrangements but please remember, this is a TASTE; no item is to be a meal. We just want everyone to get a good sample from all of our good cooks! The cost will be \$10 for adults, \$5 for children 12 and under. Everyone welcome! Join the fun and perhaps get some new ideas for your upcoming holiday meals. Please call Lois Wanfalt at 319-729-2773 or Ruth Yakle at 319-523-2381.