



Your Award Winning Hometown Newspaper

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Forty-Four Years of Hearts

By Mary Masonholder Wilson

Shirley Finke has 44 hearts. No, not in her body; rather at her house. For 44 years in a row, her late husband, Leo, gave her a box of chocolates in a heart-shaped box, and Shirley saved every one of them.

Shirley and Leo Finke were married in 1945. In the year 1964, Leo gave Shirley a heart-shaped box with chocolates. Shirley is not sure what prompted him to do this, but she loved the decorated box and saved it. Another box came the next year, and again she saved it. Leo continued to give her a heart-shaped box of candy on Valentine's Day for the next 44 years until he passed away in 2008, and she has every one of those boxes.

Leo and Shirley had 6 children—3 boys and 3 girls: Wayne, Roger, Cheryl, Sonya (Pugh), Nance (Utter), and Lennie Finke. Roger is in Knoxville, Iowa and Cheryl is in Atlanta, Georgia. The rest of the children live in this area. Sonya and Nance come to Shirley's house and help put out the Valentine boxes for display.

There are a wide variety of styles in the boxes. Many of them are floral. One has Elvis Presley on it. Another is covered in denim and even has a pocket. One looks like a man's tuxedo, complete with bow tie. Each box is unique.



The Columbus local TV station, with filming done by Anita Braden, has been to Finke's house to video her and the Valentine boxes. This video is being broadcast on the local Mediacom station channel 7 at various times during this week.

These boxes are beautiful and fun to see. Any man looking for a Valentine's gift idea could follow the example set by Leo Finke. Shirley has mementos of Leo in every room of her house, includ-

ing his picture in a light switch cover. The story of these boxes can be the best example ever of the meaning of Valentine's Day. After all, one can give nothing greater than his/her heart.

Valentine's Day

By Mary Masonholder Wilson

Is Valentine's Day a day you would just like to put your head in your socks until it is over? You say, "Bah humbug to love and hearts, chocolate, and flowers." Everybody has his/her "thing", and if Valentine's Day is not yours, that's the way it is. Hopefully your loved ones are OK with this too.

However, even if you hate the day, there are certain things about February 14th that any human can enjoy. First of all, it is obvious by this time of the year that the days are getting longer. The sunshine in the evenings is very welcome. Also the sunsets have been outstanding this past week. Even if the sky is overcast, there are a few moments the sun sneaks out from under the clouds just before it sets and puts a golden, orange glow over the earth.

Then the songbirds have been singing a few songs lately. Their

melodies are very sweet and automatically makes one think of spring. Often the Cedar Waxwings fill the Flowering Crab trees this time of year and feast on the fruits of the trees.

Spring! Who can hate spring? Yes, it is sometimes muddy and the wind blows a lot, but one can only think of wildflowers, mushrooms, and getting outside.

Valentine's Day gives us a taste of all things hopeful and spring like. Sometimes the day is just a tease and winter is still around for a lot longer. Regardless, one's eyes still start turning toward the ground, looking for daffodils and tulips pushing through the cold earth, or the signs of brown grass starting to turn green.

No matter how you feel about Valentine's Day, it is a day to rejoice in life. Enjoy the day! Also enjoy the many items we have in the newspaper this week that have to do with this occasion. There are fun facts,



These two valentines were once those of Jennie Boulton. One is dated June 24, 1904 and is from her teacher, Miss Gabriel. Jennie Boulton later married Hilton Hanft and they became the parents of Lelia Hanft Wilson, Corriene Hanft, and Lester Hanft.

trivia, ads, and many specials at local eateries and shops for Valentine's Day. Take advantage of the local

happenings, get outside, take a deep breath, and have a wonderful Valentine's Day!

The State of the Community - From the Gazette's View



By John Carpenter
Gazette Staff

Last Saturday evening I decided to see if I could rent a movie that I had been wanting to see. I went to Take 2 Scene 2, and they had the movie so I rented it. This doesn't seem rather interesting as a lead for a story, but what I saw downtown fascinated me.

The downtown business district was packed. Honestly, there wasn't a parking space available on Main Street, and there were only 2 parking spaces left on the north side of the second block on Main Street. There were people everywhere. I saw that many of the downtown businesses were open. I strolled down the block and I could see that there were people inside the businesses, and they were either waiting on customers, or visiting with the merchants. And they were people of all races and nationalities. I saw Chin families on the street, Latino families, Anglo families, and even an Irishman in the

mix of people. Now tell me, where in Iowa would one see something like this in a Saturday evening in February? Not in most small Iowa towns, I'm sure.

So then I began to think about the rest of the community. The Fisher Family has made a large commitment in purchasing the Econo-Mart grocery store so our supermarket is now in very capable hands.

The Medical Board, along with the Community Health Center in Columbus City provides the community with full service medical care on a daily basis.

Our school system, although they are facing some current financial issues, is in a period of expansion and growth with the establishment of a community college campus and additional sports facilities. And when the new Chin children become of school age, I'm quite sure that the school's financial situation will ease.

I read somewhere that for a community to be viable, it requires a full service grocery store, a sound school system, and full time medical facilities. Folks, we have all three.

So I continued with my thoughts on the community. The city is financially very sound. I see nothing negative about the city's operation, only positives. We are in the process of two major projects that will be of major importance in our town. A new water system is being constructed, and a levy is in the process to protect against future flooding. Along with these large projects, many small items area also being added to our commu-

Old sidewalks are being replaced with new ones, work continues on the Chautauqua Park area, and grants to fund projects that beautify our town are being researched. This just touches the surface of our town's progress, but it shows that our town is a community of leaders and visionaries. This is a proud community, and the Columbus Community will continue to be a gem in the state of Iowa.

CWO Princess and Prince of Hearts



The C.W.O. 2013 Princess and Prince of Hearts is Nadia Keller, daughter of Aurelia Ramirez and Joel Keller and Tate Travis, son of Abbey Wilson and Tanner Travis. Submitted photo.

Briefly -

Benefit concert at CCHS

A benefit concert will be held at the CCHS Auditorium on Thursday, February 21, 2013, at 7 p.m. The concert will feature Heartland Harmony Barbershop Chorus and 3 Guys with Soule singing with CCHS Chorus, Vocal Jazz and Jazz Band. A goodwill donation will be taken to benefit the CCHS students' trip to NYC. Come enjoy our guest artists and a fun filled night of music.

City Council to meet

The City of Columbus Junction will hold a regular Council meeting today, Wednesday, February 13, 2013, at 5:30 p.m. in the New Civic Center/City Hall.

Cooks Night Out

Cooks' Night Out will be held today, Wednesday, February 13, 2013, from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Letts United Methodist Church, Letts, Iowa. The public is invited—there is no charge for the supper. Come and visit with your neighbors. The cooks on the Committee are planning a great meal.

Daffodil Days orders

One of the first flowers of spring, the daffodil, is the symbol of hope. To the American Cancer Society, this flower represents the hope we all share that cancer will one day be eliminated. Daffodil Days is about sharing hope for a world of less cancer and more birthdays, where cancer never steals another year from anyone's life. By giving daffodils to friends, family members, and even cancer patients, you are really giving hope because together, we are helping people stay well, helping people get well, finding cures, and fighting back. Volunteers throughout Louisa County are taking daffodil orders through Friday, February 15. Daffodils will be delivered the week of March 11. The most popular items are a bunch of 10 daffodils; a vase and bunch of 10 daffodils; potted mini daffodils; or bear with a bunch of 10 daffodils. Funds raised during Daffodil Days will support services to patients and their families in Louisa County. If you are interested in ordering one of the daffodil opportunities, please contact Jean Bermel at 319/523-3245 or 563/299-5639.

FFA to host blood drive

Columbus Community High School FFA will host a community blood drive from 7:30 AM to 12:30 PM on Thursday, February 28th in the School Gymnasium, located at 1004 Colton Street, Columbus Junction. To donate, please contact Julia Townsley at 319-728-2231 or e-mail her at: julia.townsley@columbuscd.org. 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 1/3/2012 are eligible to give blood at this drive. Blood donation is a safe, simple procedure that takes about 45 minutes to one hour. Individuals with diabetes or controlled high blood pressure may be accepted as eligible donors. Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center is the provider of blood and blood components to 81 hospitals in Illinois, Iowa, Missouri and Wisconsin. In your area, MVRBC is the exclusive provider to Washington County Hospitals and Clinics, Iowa City VA, and Mercy Iowa City.

Habitat Celebration Soup Supper

Louisa County Habitat for Humanity will hold its annual Celebration Soup Supper on Sunday, February 17 at the United Methodist Church of Columbus Junction from 5:00 - 7:00. There will be entertainment provided by the Columbus Jazz Band and Chorus and there will be door prizes.

Conservation Board to meet

The Louisa County Conservation Board will meet today, Wednesday, February 13, 2013, at 5:30 pm at the Louisa County Conservation office.

Legislative Forum set

A Legislative Forum will take place on Saturday, February 16, 2013, with Senator Tom Courtney and Representatives Dennis Cohoon and Tom Sands at the West Burlington City Hall from 9:15-11:15 am.

Louisa Longbeards banquet

The thirteenth annual Louisa Longbeards Banquet is being held Saturday, March 2. This event is being held at the Briggs Community Building, Wapello. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for guests to participate in games, raffles, review items for silent and live auction, etc. Supper is served at 7 p.m. Any questions concerning the banquet or becoming a member, please contact Todd Shutt at 319-572-1522. New members are always welcome.

St. David's Day Parade scheduled

On Saturday, March 2nd, Columbus Junction will host the first ever St. David's Day Parade and Feast of St. David. The parade will start under the viaduct at 1 pm and end at the American Legion where participants celebrate the Feast of St. David with Lobsogows. Please wear red for Wales and either carry banners with your Welsh name or put them on the vehicle you are riding in. Welsh flags would also be nice. This event is only for people of Welsh descent, relatives of people of Welsh descent and people who wish they were of Welsh descent. If anyone can help, or donate food or money, please contact Troy Pugh as soon as possible at 563-299-2472 or troy_pugh@machlink.com. Please R.S.V.P. to Troy so he can get a head count for the food. Alllllun glân Dewi a ddyrchafant!!!

Senior Center Valentine lunch

Local senior meal sites sponsored by the Area Agency on Aging will be hosting a Valentine's Day theme lunch on Thursday, February 14. The meal will include lasagna, garlic breadsticks, peas, carrots, and green salad with mandarin oranges; and for dessert, strawberries with whipped topping. The meal is available to anyone over age 60 (and his or her spouse of any age), regardless of income of residency. Contributions to cover the cost of the meal are requested. Reservations are required by noon today, Wednesday, February 13. Call your local senior meal location: Columbus Junction at 728-3148, Wapello at 523-8455, and Winfield at 257-6921.

Shellbark Club to meet

The Shellbark Club will meet on Thursday, February 21st, 2013, at 11:30 a.m. at the Panda Place Chinese Restaurant in Washington.

Wine tasting at Two Rivers Lodge

Two Rivers Lodge, three miles north of Columbus Junction, will hold a wine tasting event on Saturday, February 16th. It will be from 6-9 p.m. and the cost is \$20 per person at the door. Come relax with the Creeping Charlie Band. Sample wine, micro-beers, food and door prizes. Please R.S.V.P. by Wednesday, February 13th so we know how much food to prepare. Call Two Rivers Lodge at 319-725-6180. Leave a message on the recorder or with Fender.

