



VILLISCA

ALUMNI AND FRIENDS
• ASSOCIATION •

BLUEJAY PRIDE

VAFA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive Committee

Pat Shipley-President
Gail Maxwell-Vice President
Jeff Focht-Secretary
Jim Robinson-Treasurer
Marcia Schrader-At Large
Doug Darnold-At Large

Decade Representatives

50's-Linda Moore '55
60's-Mary Lynn Poston '63, Jim Robinson '67
70's-Tom Shipley '71, Marcia Schrader '77
80's-Mary Carlson '84
90's-WE NEED MEMBERS!
00's-Trisha Fast '00

Members at Large

Ed Peterson '69
Doug Darnold '69
Shari Fulton '67
Pat Shipley '71
Gail Maxwell '74
Donna Robinson '75
Jeff Focht '76

Ex Officio Member

Chris Fenster, Superintendent

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Next meeting of the VAFA Board  
May 5, 2024, 1:30, Villisca Middle School

#### VAFA Mission Statement:

The mission of Villisca Alumni and Friends Association is to support the educational opportunities in the Villisca school system.

Please help keep the website up to date, check us out at [villiscaalumni.org](http://villiscaalumni.org)

Email Class Reunion plans, information about class members, and address changes to: [villiscaalumniandfriends@gmail.com](mailto:villiscaalumniandfriends@gmail.com)

VAFA is on Facebook - join the group and become a fan at **Villisca Alumni and Friends Association**, over 600 members and growing!

#### Mailing Address:

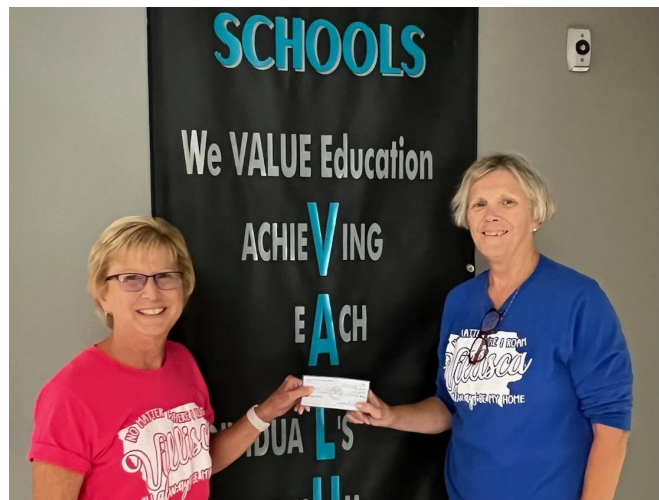
VAFA PO Box 45 Villisca, IA 50864

### Your Memberships Make a Difference!

#### VAFA Contributions 2023-2024



VAFA Board Member Donna Robinson presents a check to Jessie Forsythe, school business manager, and Liz Timmerman, K-8 principal, for teacher wish lists, field trips and national conferences for students.



Gail Maxwell, VAFA Board Vice President, presents a check to Pat Shipley for the Feed the Pack program.

### Your VAFA Donations Impact Students and Community!

VAFA invests in many things for our schools and our community. We pay for all field trips to destinations such as the Anderson Conservation Center, SAC Museum, Henry Doorly Zoo, State Capitol, Durham Museum, and the SWCC Career Expo.

We fund teacher wish lists, purchasing items that are not in the budget but would assist the teacher in providing enrichment to their students and classroom. Examples of items purchased for teacher wishlists are headphones, learning games, individual whiteboards, scientific calculators, class sets of books, science kits, and a 3-D printer.

We help sponsor students attending national conferences and conventions. This year we helped 7 students attending national conferences/competitions.

We also make contributions to the community, such as the Feed the Pack Program, We Care, the demolition of downtown buildings (See page 4) and Pickleball equipment for the Community Wellness Center.



Pickleball fun with nets and equipment purchased by VAFA at the Wellness Center. This center, next to Enarson Elementary, is owned by the school and is available to the community by membership. It has a full-size gym, a three-lane walking track, and a weight room with exercise equipment.



Evan Timmerman, Ethan James, Isaac Currin, and Olivia Kathikar attended and competed in the FBLA National Conference in Atlanta. Charlee Larsen, Mariah Sparks, and Julia Means competed at the National FCCLA Leadership Conference in Denver in July.



Enarson 4th graders attended the 25th annual Oregon Trail event in May. Dressed in period clothing they hike 3-miles simulating the journey made by the original Oregon Trail settlers. Volunteers present short informational programs at various stops along the way. It is always a favorite field trip.

We received a generous donation from an alumna of \$500 to be directed to the Speech and Drama Department. Donations such as these are welcome and much appreciated. Do you have a specific department to which you would like to make a donation? Or perhaps your class would like to donate to a specific need.



### Message from VAFA President Pat Shipley

Villisca Alumni and Friends continues to conduct activities to promote charitable and educational work within the boundaries of the Villisca School District and the community of Villisca. We assist students and residents in the Southwest Valley District who attend Enarson Elementary and the SWV Middle School and also students who attend Southwest Valley High School. VAFA memberships and memorial gifts are used to assist with the ventures.

During the 2023-24 academic year VAFA awarded \$6,844.28 to teachers at the Southwest Valley West Campus/Villisca for items that are not within the school's budget and might have been purchased by teachers from their own resources. Teachers at the West Campus can submit a "Wish List" for consideration up to \$500/teacher. A principal discretionary fund of \$500/building was budgeted for each West Campus building. VAFA budgets up to \$7250 toward transportation expenses and fees associated with field trips for the Enarson Elementary and SWV Middle School. Without the assistance, field trips would not be possible for the students. VAFA budgets up to \$1000 or \$100/SWV high school student who qualifies for a national competition in a school sanctioned club.

VAFA also provides special funding for the community. This year VAFA provided \$2500 of support toward the demolition of vacant and unusable buildings on Third Avenue in the half block between the former Honeyman Drug Store and the Rialto Theatre. It saddens all of us to see the Rialto Theatre and Honeyman Drug demolished. Like many small towns, buildings reach a point beyond repair. VAFA has been working with the Villisca City Council on this project. VAFA also purchased Pickleball equipment for use at the Villisca Wellness Center near Enarson Elementary.

Memorials have been given in memory of deceased graduates and friends of Villisca Schools. A list of these names is printed on [www.villiscaalumni.org](http://www.villiscaalumni.org). Thank you to those who have donated in this manner.

The VAFA Board invites all alumni and friends to become members of the organization. VAFA is a 501.(c)3 charitable organization and is tax deductible. Annual membership is \$25 per person; individual life-time membership is \$500 and life-time membership for a couple is \$750. Please consider joining us to continue our philanthropic work. VAFA Membership is open to anyone with an interest in the future of students in the Villisca area and community whether an alumni, former teacher, or community member.



Welcome to Mary Carlson, class of '84, to our VAFA Board!



The VAFA Board regretfully accepted Susie Enarson's resignation from the board at our last meeting. Susie was a founding member of VAFA and was instrumental, along with a few other alumni, in establishing VAFA in 2006. She served as president in 2011-2012 and was the long time editor of the VAFA newsletter. She was inducted into the Bluejay Hall of Fame in 2013. She also raised thousands of dollars for the school libraries through the VAFA book sales. Thank you so much, Susie, for your dedication.

## Demolition of Iconic Villisca Buildings to Take Place

Villisca will soon be tearing down the buildings on South 3rd Avenue from the old Honeyman Drugstore to the Rialto Theatre. This is being funded by a \$100,000 grant from the Iowa West Foundation, \$25,000 from the Rialto Board, \$60,000 from the city, and donations from local businesses and private citizens. More funds are still being sought. It is sad to lose these historic buildings but due to safety concerns and lack of maintenance through the years they have become unsalvageable. While the buildings may go away, you can never erase the memories.

In 1910 Jim Honeyman, Sr., bought the building that became Honeyman Drug Store. It was owned and operated by the Honeyman family for eight decades. Both of his sons became pharmacists and Jim, Jr. spent his entire career there. About 125 local boys and girls worked there through the years.



Marcia Schrader, '77, stated, "In 1975 Honeyman Drug was my first official job. I worked mainly behind the counter making malts, shakes, sundaes, ice cream cones, and flavored soft drinks. I guess that made me a "soda jerk", but I don't think I was called that (to my face anyway)." Many high school students remember working with Dot Kehr and Luella Kernan, along with Jim and Maxine. Marcia stated, "They all were so kind and friendly and they trained me well. I think it was Dot who got me started on Lemon Cokes and Vanilla Cokes." Another former employee, Nancy Means Nagle, '71, stated, "Jim was a great guy. I don't recall him ever getting mad or upset. Maxine was so kind." She went on to say, "It was interesting how you could

tell the time of day without looking at the clock as the regulars would start coming in for coffee or after-school or after-school activities. Or when the new editions of the *True Love* or such magazines came in."

Favorites from the soda fountain, according to numerous alumni, were: Cherry Cokes, Cornies, Green Rivers, Vanilla Phosphates, and milkshakes. Many memories were made sitting at the soda fountain of Honeyman Drug.

On December 27, 1929, 800 people attended the first movie shown at the Rialto Theatre. In 1974 a theatre group began a series of community theatre events along with movies. In April of 1987 the decision was made to become exclusively a live performance venue instead of a movie house and the last movie was shown. This led to many outstanding productions performed by regional talent, which continued until 2008. In 2010 the Advent Christian Church used the theatre for its Hot Cup of Christmas productions. The Rialto permanently closed in 2013, after 84 years of community entertainment. This wouldn't have been possible without countless hours by volunteers.

Many alumni remember their first dates at the Rialto, making their stage debut in children's musicals, or being part of the musical productions. Pat Shipley '71 remembers, "I was involved for over 30 years with theatre productions at the Rialto, from *Li'l Abner* to the final show, *The Spitfire Grill*. For six magical weeks in the summer community members and those from the surrounding area and towns came together to rehearse, sing, dance, act, build scenery, make costumes and feel the thrill of performance. The memories will live on even when the building is gone. The Rialto Theatre was the location of viewing a movie for the first time, first dates, first kiss, break-ups, first performances, joy, laughter, and community pride. The building may be gone; the memories will live on." *Thank you to Linda Artlip Weinstein for providing historical information for this article.*



**If you would like to donate to the demolition project or the future plans of a green space (which will include the Rialto marquee), please send your donation to Vafa and earmark it for the demolition project.**