



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 4, 2025, 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 and Donations Make a Difference!



VAFA Board Member Marcia Schrader presents a check to Darcy Dalton, West Campus school nurse, for personal care items for student use. Darcy states that having these products available has eliminated a stigma and students in need come willingly to ask for them.



VAFA Board Member Mary Carlson presents a check to Susan Stewart, school librarian, to be used for the Villisca School libraries.

**You Can Now Pay With  
Venmo! From your  
Venmo account search  
for Villisca Alumni and  
Friends Association**



VAFA awarded stipends to these FBLA members who attended the National Conference in Orlando.

## Your VAFA Donations Impact Students and Community!

Villisca alumni and friends find many ways to give back to our school and community. This is often in the way of donations and memorials to VAFA. We've received many generous donations and memorials, along with membership fees.

At this time we want to extend a special thank you to the Bill and Leona Kernan family for their very generous donation in memory of Leona (Johnson) Kernan, class of 1956. Bill (also class of '56) and Leona became lifetime members of VAFA several years ago. Bill had read our article in last year's newsletter on the demolition of the downtown buildings. His mother, Luella Kernan, along with Dot Kehr, were remembered fondly by so many who frequented Honeyman Drug. Donations such as this allows VAFA to fund even more projects for the schools and community. Thank you, Bill, for believing in the good that VAFA does!



Our most substantial contribution recently came from Richard Elswick, class of 1950. His generous gift of \$28,200 to VAFA will provide and enhance student experiences now and in the future. As a young boy Richard frequently visited the

Villisca Municipal Power Plant watching the diesel engines provide electricity for the town. This sparked his interest and led him to join the Navy. He served our country from 1951-1955 aboard the USS Kermit Roosevelt working as an engine man repairing and overhauling diesel engines for the fleet. After leaving the Navy he attended Iowa State University majoring in engineering. He was employed by Woodward Governor Company in Rockford, Illinois, as a development engineering technician where he tested and refined fuel controls for jet aircraft engines. He retired in 1992. He and his wife of 64 years, Geraldine, raised two children, Julie and Jon. At age 93 he continues to live in the Rockford area. Thank you, Richard, for believing in the mission of VAFA and donating to our cause!

## Loyal and True

As we reflect on the activities of VAFA, it becomes obvious that Villisca alumni and friends of our schools and community are a generous and caring bunch. VAFA's mission has always been to give opportunities to groups, rather than individuals. However, we can't help but notice that many scholarships are made available to individual graduating students from Southwest Valley schools. The scholarships have no direct correlation to our VAFA organization, but their generosity for the benefit of our students is noticed and makes us proud.

Here is a partial list of scholarships given by Villisca graduates or teachers who taught here.

- \* Allen Heaton & Beverly (Day) Heaton, 1950
- \* Beth (Sunderman) Kline, 1990
- \* Bill D. Shipley, 1977
- \* Dallas Clayton, teacher
- \* Don Williams, 1957, & Sherryl Williams
- \* Donna Williams, teacher, coach
- \* Dwight H. & Janice (Focht) Lewis, both 1946, teacher, counselor
- \* Fred & Lois Bryson, 1938
- \* Garry M. Roberts, 1965
- \* Joel Herzberg, 2009
- \* Kathryn "Sis" Wright
- \* Oscar Schroeder, 1900
- \* Rich D. Fast, 1975
- \* Richard Elswick Scholarship, 1950



Kay Fast-Deyoe '76  
presents the Rich D. Fast  
scholarship

In addition several Villisca clubs and organizations offer their own scholarships.  
*Can you still sing the school song, "Loyal and True...?"*

Plan ahead - Villisca All School  
Reunion - summer of 2026!

## Message from VAFA President Pat Shipley

We are grateful for those who are supportive of our mission to provide assistance for elementary and middle school students and staff of the West Campus (Villisca) location of Southwest Valley Schools. Annually VAFA budgets \$7000 to provide up to \$500 per teacher in grades K-8 and in the early childhood center on the Villisca campus to cover classroom “wish list” items not purchased by the school district. We also budget \$500 per building to give the principal money for unfunded student needs. VAFA budgets \$5000 to fund field trip experiences that wouldn’t be possible in the regular school budget. SWV high school students qualifying for national trips receive a \$100 stipend for expenses. VAFA also budgets a \$1000 donation to Feed the Pack, a weekend backpack program for K-8 students. We also assist with projects that come to our attention throughout the year if we have available funds.

During the 2024-25 school year wish list items have been funded in the amount of \$7,755. All items would otherwise have been purchased out of teachers’ pockets or would not be available for students. \$3,500 has been approved so far for Villisca Elementary and Middle School field trips. Some of the field trips are to Montgomery County locations and others will take students to Omaha and Des Moines, locations some students have never experienced.

How does VAFA fund all of it? VAFA funds it with your dues and undesignated Alumni and Friends memorials and donations. That’s why VAFA needs your support. We encourage your membership so VAFA can continue to assist students attending school on the Villisca campuses. VAFA is 501(c3) non-profit organization made up of volunteers interested in supporting students and educators who work in Villisca. The VAFA Board meets

quarterly to advocate for students and to promote the community. Please join us as a member or if you’re interested, there are always openings on the VAFA Board. Just say, “Yes” to membership, support and help.

VAFA annual memberships are \$25 a year per person, and Life Time memberships are \$500 for single and \$750 for couples. Membership is open to anyone who is an alumnus of Villisca Community Schools or who is a friend that is supportive of the work of Villisca Alumni and Friends. Please consider joining us.

## What is the Status of Villisca/Corning Whole Grade Sharing?

*Submitted by SWV elementary and middle school principal, Liz Tmmerman*

The Southwest Valley School District is comprised of two communities that hold an agreement between their schools; Corning CSD and Villisca CSD. Since the 2013 school year these

communities have been sharing students in grades 6-12th grades. That means 6th, 7th and 8th graders attend middle school in Villisca and the high school students (9-12th grade) attend the high school in Corning. The Southwest Valley School District receives funding from the state as an incentive to continue to share and utilize staff that can cover both districts. Some of these shared teachers are: Blake Anderson, 7-12 Ag, Bonnie Goodson-Gibbeau, Chorus, Diane Mitchell, K-5 Art, Kristen Tripp, 6-12 Art, Shelby Cooper 6-12 Band, and Liz McNamara, K-5 Counselor. Each community houses its own elementary school, Enarson Elementary in Villisca and Corning Elementary in Corning. Class sizes range from 11 to 21 in Villisca and 24 to 36 students in Corning.



Memberships, donations and memorials may now be paid through Venmo. Search for Villisca Alumni and Friends from your Venmo account.



## Enarson Elementary School Receives “Exceptional” Rating!

The Iowa Department of Education releases the *Iowa School Performance Profiles* each year. These



were developed to meet both federal and state requirements for publishing online school report cards. They provide information on how Iowa's schools are serving its students. These ratings use a set of indicators including

proficiency results in English language arts, mathematics, and science; student academic growth; chronic absenteeism; graduation rates and postsecondary readiness. The ratings are based on these scores: Exceptional, High Performing, Commendable, Acceptable, Needs Improvement, and Priority.

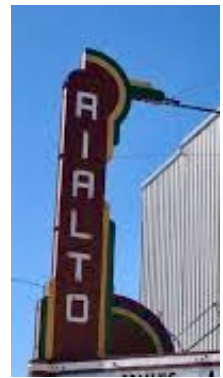
Sylvia Enarson Elementary School received an Exceptional rating! It was one of only 16 schools (1.25% of all schools) in the state receiving this highest rating. It received a score of 565.5 out of 700, resulting in a 80.79% (the state average was 60.95%). Congratulations! In addition the SWV Middle School in Villisca received a Commendable rating. (For more information visit: [iaschoolperformance.gov](http://iaschoolperformance.gov) and [educate.iowa.gov](http://educate.iowa.gov))

**Fun Fact:** This newsletter is mailed annually to 2,218 Villisca alumni and friends. We're glad we don't have to lick stamps anymore! If you have any suggestions for articles please contact: [villiscaalumniandfriends@gmail.com](mailto:villiscaalumniandfriends@gmail.com)

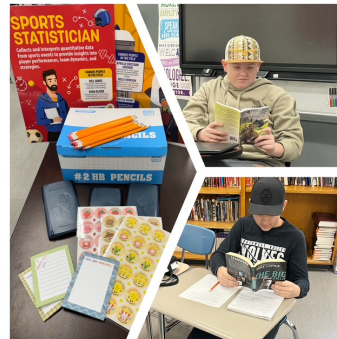
## Rialto Demolition Project

We received many generous donations toward the demolition of the

Villisca downtown buildings as a result of our article in last year's newsletter. The demolition is now complete and an architect is currently at work designing an outdoor performance space and a covered farmers market. The new structures will incorporate some of the ornamental iron from the original buildings. They have also preserved the Rialto marquee and this will be part of the design. Thank you to those who donated toward this project through VAFA.



## VAFA Dollars Appreciated by Students



VAFA funds teacher wish lists, one of which included sets of high interest books to keep students interested in reading.



Another wish list granted provided headphones and scientific calculators.

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. Memorials may be sent PO Box 45, Villisca, Iowa 50864