

Encouraging Pride and Effort

By John Carpenter
Gazette Staff

The Columbus School administration, in partnership with the Columbus Parents Organization, met with Junior class parents last Saturday evening at the Las Vegas Ballroom to discuss the upcoming Iowa Tests of Basic Skills.

The Junior class was singled out because their scores will be compared with other Junior class scores throughout Iowa when determining underperforming high schools. Columbus High School is no longer on the underperforming list, and administrators stressed to the parents the importance of staying off the list.

High School and Middle School Principal Jeff Maeder explained that the tests not only show our ranking with other schools, but also helps point out areas where students may need help. He explained that a score of 41% or higher is considered proficient. He displayed graphs that showed that over 80% of students in other Iowa schools were proficient in Math and Reading, while less than 50% of Columbus students were deemed proficient.

However, both Maeder and Superintendent Rich Bridenstine stressed that these scores do not necessarily reflect our students' skills. Bridenstine stated that Columbus scores in the ACT test traditionally are higher than in the ITBS. School personnel feels that possibly the students do not consider the ITBS important, as it does not help them obtain scholarships. "This is a thought



Some of the Junior Class parents receiving materials at the Parents' Meeting last Saturday evening.

that we need to reverse," said Bridenstine, "and school personnel, along with community groups like the Columbus Parents' Organization and the Wildcat First Group have been working on this all year."

The school has adopted the following slogan, "Good Scores = Good School = Good Education = Great

Place to Live," in an effort to encourage students to do well in the ITBS tests. Both Bridenstine and Maeder encouraged the parents in attendance to discuss these tests with their children, and urge them to perform to their best level. "I know, with the help of parents, school personnel, and the community, we can significantly im-

prove our test scores," said Bridenstine. The tests will be given the week of March 21st, and results should be available in early May.

(If you know a member of the Junior Class, please encourage them over the coming weeks. They are great kids and will make great citizens.)

Bob Buckman and Wanda Carson named Habitat Volunteers of the Year



Robert Buckman of Morning Sun and Wanda Carson of Columbus Junction were named Volunteers of the Year Award at the 15th annual Habitat for Humanity Soup Supper. Also receiving recognition as Sustaining Partner for the continuing support over the years were AJ and Dorothy Boysen, Kenneth and Betty McChesney, and Myrtle Wollenhaupt from Wapello and Corrine Moyer from Columbus Junction. About 100 people enjoyed a variety of soups and desserts held Sunday, February 27th at the United Methodist Fellowship Hall in Wapello. The event celebrated "Neighbors Helping Neighbors" in Louisa County, which has resulted in building 11 Habitat homes and construction planned for the 12th home this spring. The Wapello High School Band provided entertainment during the dinner. Warren Woepking led a brief program following the dinner to thank the churches, businesses, and individuals who have donated their time and resources in the past year. TriState Envelope, Bandag Inc, Hotel Wapello, Wapello Self Storage, and Tyson Fresh Meats were recognized for their yearly in-kind support. Paula Buckman, Development Chair, announced that LCHH had received a \$3,500 matching grant from the Community Foundation of Louisa County for weatherization projects for lower income homeowners. President Trish Woepking urged volunteers and churches to get involved in these construction projects in the coming year. The program ended with names drawn for several door prizes.

Pictured above, left, is Trish Woepking, President of Louisa County Habitat for Humanity presenting Volunteer of the Year Awards to Robert Buckman and Wanda Carson. Pictured above, right, is Kenneth and Betty McChesney receiving a Sustaining Partner Award for their support over the past 15 years from Habitat Board members Paula Buckman and Warren Woepking.

City Council reviews budget and signs

By Jim Rudisill

A \$5.8 million spending budget for 2011-12, which includes \$16,000 in interest savings on a sewer improvement loan, was approved by the Columbus Junction City Council during its regular February 23 meeting. The council approved the FY 12 budget following a public hearing, which was not attended by any local residents. Officials also reported no comments on the budget.

According to budget documents, the new budget is about \$4.6 million above the current budget, but officials said most of that increase comes from state and federal grants for relocating the city's water treatment plant, levee upgrades and park improvements.

The tax levy for the new budget is around \$11.66 per \$1000 assessed valuation, which is about two cents lower than the current levy. Mayor Dan Wilson presented a list of local communities and their rates to the council and pointed out only four

were lower than Columbus Junction's. "I would say ours is pretty reasonable," council member Mark Huston said.

One line item in the budget that will fall is interest payment on the city's 2001 Sewer Revenue Bond. When the city issued the \$505,000 bond to construct its sewer treatment lagoon, the interest rate was 3.92%. However, the city received a report earlier this year from the Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) that the interest on the bond had fallen to 3%. Officials said the decrease would mean a savings of around \$16,000 for the city over the remaining 10 years of the bond schedule. That was welcome news to the council, which approved a resolution accepting the lower rate.

The council is less likely to find the budget news on its water fund as welcoming. Several months ago when the council first began discussing its new budget, officials had agreed the city's water rates needed to be ad-

justed. According to the discussion at that time, the last time rates were changed was about 12 years ago.

The new budget does suggest new rates and the council agreed last week to begin a rate review at its March 9 meeting. Any changes in rates would require an ordinance change.

In a related report on the city's water treatment relocation efforts, Huston said a March 4 meeting of local officials and project engineers should provide some forward movement on the work. "We're going to meet with French-Reneker and go over a questionnaire," he said.

Originally, bids on the project were expected to be let in April, but Huston said that might be too optimistic. "It doesn't look like we'll get that," he said, explaining the questionnaire that will be discussed at this week's meeting with the engineers showed they were not developing the plan.

"There's enough details on this they couldn't have planned it yet," he

said. In final action, council member Hal Prior suggested the city should begin looking at ways to control the growing number of flyers being taped to the outside of store windows. Prior said strong winds and other conditions are ripping the flyers from the windows, often creating a blanket of litter in the downtown area.

"It's a real problem," Wilson acknowledged, adding the city's anti-littering ordinances had previously been used to control the issue.

Wilson said part of the problem is that some property owners may not routinely check on their buildings if a business is not located there and often are not aware the postings are being done.

"We can send all the business owners a letter and ask them to monitor (the use of their windows)," he told the council.

"That would be a good first step," council member Phil Kaalberg agreed.

Briefly -

Legion Fish Fry

The American Legion will be holding a fish and chicken fry on Saturday, March 12, 2011 at the Legion Building. Serving will be from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. The price is \$8.00.

After Prom Committee to meet

The After Prom Committee will meet on Wednesday, March 9th at 6:00 p.m. at the High School student center. All junior parents are encouraged to come. For more information please contact Cindy Johnston 728-5032 or 212-0330.

Legion Auxiliary to meet

The American Legion Auxiliary will meet on Tuesday, March 8th at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Kathleen Sands.

Daffodil Days extended

There is still some time to put a little spring into someone's life and help out a great cause. The American Cancer Society Daffodil Days has been extended. Daffodils are regarded as the symbol of hope for cancer patients. The American Cancer is accepting orders for fresh cut daffodil bouquets until Friday, March 4th. To place an order, please contact Jean Bermel at 319/523-3245.

Grandview-Letts Lions Blood Drive

The Grandview-Letts Lions Club will be sponsoring a blood drive on Thursday, March 10th, from 1:30-6:30 p.m. at the Letts Library/Community Building. To donate, contact Marvin or Margaret Thomas at 319-726-3286. Please eat before donating and bring photo I.D. You are eligible to donate if you last donated on or before January 13, 2011.

Half Hour Club to meet

The Half Hour Club will meet on Tuesday, March 8th at 1:30 p.m. at the home of Rose Wagoner with Roberta Boulton as hostess. Program will be Critter Control. Roll call - Most annoying critter. Please note change of meeting place.

Kindergarten Round-Up

Will your child be old enough to attend school at Roundy Elementary, Columbus Junction, IA, this fall? Roundy Elementary is preparing for Kindergarten. If your child was born before September 15, 2006, and is not currently enrolled in the Columbus Preschool Program, KFC Preschool, or the Great Beginnings Preschool Program, please call the school at 319-728-6218.

Usted cree que su hijo/a tendrá la edad necesaria para empezar el Kindergarten en el Otono del 2011? Tendrá su hijo/a la edad necesaria para asistir a la Escuela Primaria Roundy en Columbus Junction, IA, este otono? La Escuela Primaria Roundy se está preparando para Kindergarten. Si su niño/a nació antes del 15 de Septiembre del 2006 y no está inscrito actualmente en el Programa del Preescolar de Columbus, el Programa Preescolar de KFC, o en el Programa Preescolar Great Beginnings, por favor llame a la escuela al 728-6218.

Kingston United Methodist Church Soup Supper

The United Methodist Church in Kingston (Pastor Earlene Lewka) is having a soup supper on Sunday, March 20th, from 4-6:30 p.m. The menu includes Chili or Cheesy Chicken Vegetable, salads, and dessert. \$7 adults. 8 miles north of Burlington on Hwy 99.

Historical Society Soup Supper

Please come join us for a variety of soups and pies at the Louisa County Historical Museum, 609 Highway 61 North, Wapello, Iowa, Saturday, March 5, 2011. Serving begins at 5:30 p.m. Free will offering. Program: "Rural Schools" by Michael Zahs, Washington, Iowa.

Louisa Longbeards Banquet

The eleventh annual Louisa Longbeards Banquet is being held Saturday, March 5th. A prime rib supper will be served at the Briggs Civic Center, Wapello. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for guests to participate in games, raffles, and review items for silent and live auction, etc. Early bird ticket packages and supper tickets must be purchased by Tuesday, March 1. Any questions concerning the banquet or becoming a member, please contact Dave Boysen at 319-572-1551 or Todd Shutt at 319-572-1522.

Muscatine GOP Scholarships

The Muscatine GOP Scholarship Foundation is taking applications for its two \$600 scholarships. High school graduating seniors who live in Muscatine County are eligible. Packets are available at school counselor offices or contact Kenneth Irwin, 1988 Geneva Hills Rd., Muscatine, Ia. 52761 or 563-263-3538. Completed packets are due by Friday, April 22, 2011.

School Board to meet

Columbus Community School District, you are hereby notified that the Board of Education will meet on March 7, 2011 @ 6:30 p.m. location Roundy Elementary Library, 1212 Colton Street, Columbus Junction.

PEO to meet

The next meeting of PEO Chapter CX will be hosted by Melanie DeVore at the Pride of Iowa Market Place, 211 Main Street, Columbus Junction on Monday, March 7th at 7:00 p.m. and co-hosted by Ann Murphy. The program will be Election and Installation of Officers. All members are encouraged to attend.

Branson in Cedar Rapids with the RSVP Club

Join your friends and the R.S.V.P. Club of the Columbus Junction State Bank as we see the Doug Gabriel Show, Sunday, March 6 in Cedar Rapids. This show has been one of our "must-sees" in Branson. When we discovered that his show was coming to Cedar Rapids, we said, "Let's go!" Gabriel has been voted the best guitarist in Branson and his show is one of the best! On Sunday, March 6, we will leave Columbus Junction at 1:00 p.m. (doesn't interfere with church services), the show starts at 3:00 p.m. we'll stop for supper at the Coral Ridge Mall in Coralville and be home by early evening. The price is \$75.00 (supper on your own). Call or email Ramona Wink TODAY. 319-212-0366 or wink123@lisco.net. We have only a few seats left. Make a memory with a Really Special Variety of People!