

Columbus FFA captures State Title and moves to Nationals

By John Carpenter
Gazette Staff

"Indianapolis, here we come!" is being echoed through the FFA Chapter at Columbus Community this week. Sending a team to a state tournament is a major accomplishment for any school, but rarely does a school have the opportunity to send a team to a national competition. Columbus Community Schools reached this milestone on Monday, April 14th as the Columbus FFA team won the state competition and will represent the school in the national FFA competition in Indianapolis, Indiana next fall.

The team is comprised of Bret Carlson, Austin Conaway, Brandon Harris, Jordan Lyon, Elyssa McFarland and Javier Rendon and is under the direction of Columbus FFA instructor Katie Lewis. The Columbus team competed against ten other FFA chapters at the 2008 Iowa FFA Ag Issues and Perceptions Career Development Event held at Hilton Coliseum in Ames.

For the competition members of the team played various roles in the community. Elyssa McFarland was a county supervisor, Javier Rendon the meat plant human resources manager, Jordan Lyon the school superintendent, Brandon Harris a representative from DNR, Bret Carlson the county sheriff, and Austin Conaway was a concerned citizen. They held a round table discussion on the effects that our community has felt with the arrival of Tyson Foods (originally IBP). They discussed demographics and the economy, crime rates and drug activity, changes in the school and environmental issues.

In their research they found that the population of the Columbus Community has grown from 1,000 in 1960 to nearly 2,000 in 2000. Of this growth the Latino population grew from 4% of the population in 1960, compared to 1% in Iowa, to 39% of the population in 2000, compared to 2.8% in Iowa. The area's median income of \$17,941 in 1980 was above the state average of \$16,799, however by 2000 the median income of \$33,167 was below the state average of \$39,469. The community's poverty rate of 9.6% in 1980 was below the state average of 10.1%, but by



Pictured above with an unidentified state FFA delagateare, left to right: Bret Carlson, Elyssa McFarland, Austin Conaway, Javier Rendon, Brandon Harris and Jorday Lyon.

2000 the poverty rate had grown to 11.2% whereas the state average had decreased to 9.1%.

In their discussion of education, they reported that in 1980 44% of area citizens were high school graduates, with 74% of the population being high school graduates by 2000. In 1980 12.6% of residents had at least four years of college, with this number rising to 16.7% by 2000. The school's Hispanic population was 18% in 1990, but has risen to 52% by 2006. Although their report showed that the level of education has increased over the past 20 years, they did point out that there is a problem with student mobility. They analyzed one school year and discovered that in 6th grade of that year 20% of the students left the school district during the year with 22% of the students being new to the district. In the same year in 11th grade, 23% of the students left the district with only 11% being new.

Pollution appeared to not be an issue in their research. A DNR map showed some levels of pollution in the Iowa River north of Columbus Junction, however it seemed to dissipate at the junction of the Iowa and Cedar Rivers.

Their overall conclusion found that there were upsides and downsides on all issues. Regarding the economy, there is an infusion of money into local businesses, there are new businesses in town and people on main street, and more goods are purchased locally. However, there is an increase in the poverty level in the community, and there exists a language problem in the business sector.

In analyzing crime, the county does benefit in some measure financially as confiscated items are sold, and some undocumented residents are discovered, but there are more arrests, gang activity, and more laws are broken.

In the school, the population is more diverse, there are more students, and consequently more activities are offered. But in the negative, there is a high mobility of students, test scores are lower, there is some increase in gang activity, and again there is a language barrier.

The group did discover that there are very little environmental issues

with the meat plant. It was their general conclusion that Tyson Foods provides a good example of how an environmentally safe plant should operate.

Columbus Junction Mayor Dan Wilson stated after hearing the news, "I am very proud of the Columbus FFA chapter and the Ag Issues Team for winning at the State Convention. Their hard work in developing their presentation about their community has been rewarded. Great job and good luck at the National Convention."

We have all read many reports from governmental agencies, think tanks, and "experts" addressing each of these issues. But I doubt that I have ever seen anything that is more direct, to the point, and as informative as this presentation. This is a great group of young people who know how to research the facts, gather information, and find a novel way to present their findings. Each of them, along with their advisor Katie Lewis, should feel very proud of their accomplishment, and we wish them the best of luck when they travel to Indianapolis to bring home the national trophy to Columbus Community Schools. This reinforces the old saying that if you want to know what is going on, ask our young, they are the ones experiencing it.

Area School Reunions

Wyman School Reunion and Banquet

The Annual Reunion and get-together for all former Wyman School students and teachers will be held July 12, 2008. The school was started in 1912 when 3 one-room school buildings were moved into town. Classes continued there until the school was closed in 1978. The Reunion and Banquet will be at the United Church of Crawfordsville, doors open at 5:30 P.M.; Banquet and entertainment at 6:30. For more information or to make reservations please call Lorraine Frame at 319-257-3401 or John Wittrig at 319-257-3377.

Winfield - Mt. Union Alumni Banquet

The Winfield-Mt. Union Alumni Association is hosting the 99th annual banquet to be held Saturday, May 24, 2008, at 6:30 p.m. The banquet will be held in the Winfield gymnasium. Tickets are \$10.00 per plate for all alumni and guests for the buffet which will be catered by Pork's Restaurant. Reservations may be made to Frances Lowe, P.O. Box 5, Winfield, IA 52659 (Phone: 319-257-6784), or to Wanda Linder, 606 W. Central Ave., Apt. 9, Winfield, IA 52659 (Phone: 319-257-6724). Deadline for receiving reservations is Saturday, May 10, 2008. The Alumni Association would appreciate an update of any name or address changes. A casual coffee will be hosted by the Winfield Chamber of Commerce in the school lunchroom from 3-6:00 p.m., on the afternoon of May 24th. This is a time for visiting and catching up with old friends.

Grandview School Banquet

The 74th annual Grandview Consolidated School Banquet will be held May 24th, at the Grandview Community Bible Church Friendship Center. Registration will begin at 5:00 and dinner will be served at 6:00. The classes of 1933, 1938, 1948, and 1958 will be honored. All alumni, former students and faculty who were part of the Grandview School through 1959 and their guests are invited. For reservations, contact Betty Jo Rowe, P.O. Box 335, Grandview, IA 52752 (319-729-4291); or Sharon Beik, 12200 130th St., Wapello, IA 52653 (319-729-5331). Please make reservations by May 20. The cost is \$8.00 per person at the door.

Columbus Alumni Banquet

Tickets are now on sale for the Columbus-Cotter-Conesville Alumni Banquet. It will be held on Saturday, June 14th in the Roundy Elementary School. Tickets may be purchased at \$10 per person from Sherry Pine at the State Bank (728-2436) and Carol Howell at the Community Bank (728-2226). Questions about the banquet can be phoned to Jerry Bell (728-2505) or Jim Howell (728-7602).

Briefly -

Farewell reception for Angie Sanders

You are cordially invited to a public send off for Angie Sanders as she leaves Louisa County and the Louisa Development Group. The send off will be on Wednesday, April 30th from 6-10 pm at the 92 Roadhouse (just west of Columbus Junction on Hwy 92).

C.J. City wide Clean-up day

FRIDAY ONLY - Friday, April 25th: Appliances will REQUIRE A \$15.00 TAG, which can be purchased at City Hall - No appliance will be taken without a tag. SEPARATE ITEMS such as: Metal, Appliance, Furniture. We WILL NOT PICK UP: Tires, batteries, paint, paint cans, hazardous materials, chemicals, spray cans, windows or any glass items. NO WOOD OR BUILDING MATERIALS. Do not put anything in garbage bags - they will not be picked up. All items must be set out by 7:00 a.m., the day of clean up. This clean up day is for Columbus Junction Residents only. Any questions, call City Hall at 728-7971.

City Council to meet tonight

The City of Columbus Junction will hold its regular Council meeting today, Wednesday, April 23, at 5:30 p.m. in the new Civic Center/City Hall.

Columbus City Clean-up Day

Columbus City Clean-up Day will be on Saturday, May 10, 2008. Have all items at the curbside by 7:00 a.m. on Saturday morning. \$15.00 tag for all appliances and must be attached to all appliances (refrigerators, stoves, freezers, microwaves, humidifiers, dehumidifiers, water heaters and air conditioners.) We will not take tires, batteries, paint/paint cans, hazardous materials, spray cans, wood/demolition materials, garbage/anything in garbage bags or yard waste. Stop at Columbus City Hall on Monday night from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. to purchase tags or call Lisa Hills at 728-2175 after 6:00 p.m. to set up a time to pick up tags. Anyone willing to help with the clean up day please contact Lisa Hills. We will meet at City Hall on Saturday morning at 7:30 a.m.

Digital TV conversion questions

We are less than a year away from the conversion to digital television. Do you have questions? The Muscatine Amateur Radio Club invites the public to a presentation about the digital television conversion by Dr. Kenneth Colwell on Monday, May 12th at 7:00 pm in the Upper Level Meeting Room of the Musser Public Library at 304 Iowa Avenue in Muscatine. For more information, phone (563) 260-5486.

Fair Queen meeting scheduled

Please join us for an informational meeting about the Louisa County Fair Queen and Princess Contests in the Columbus Junction State Bank basement (use east door) at 1pm on Saturday, May 3rd. Special guests include Jessie (Hutcheson) Henning, former Iowa State Fair Queen; Adair Boysen, Louisa County Fair Queen; and Aubrey Duncan, Louisa County Fair Princess. Applications and complete paperwork will be available on-site for interested young ladies. Fair Queen contestants must be between 16 and 21 years old, live (permanent residence) or attend school in Louisa County. Fair Princess contestants must be between 4 and 8 years old and live (permanent residence) or attend school in Louisa County. The 2008 Louisa County Fair Queen and Princess Contest will be held on Monday, July 21st with an orientation meeting earlier in July for all confirmed contestants. We hope you will join us and learn about this great program for the young women of Louisa County. Questions may be directed to Michelle Hunt, Director, via email: michelle@centraliowakfc.com

Fundraiser set for Frank Best

Best for Statehouse Committee is sponsoring a fundraiser on Friday, May 2, 2008, at the Sombrero Restaurant in Grandview, Iowa, at 6:00 p.m. Tickets are \$25.00 per person. Please mail payment/donation to BEST FOR STATEHOUSE, P.O. Box 24, Wapello, IA 52653. This confirms a reservation(s)/and a donation. Thank you.

High School Art Show plans

Plans for the High School annual art show is underway. Mark your calendar and plan to attend. It will be our pleasure to place the art pieces 2007-2008 into a gallery setting for the public to enjoy. The show will be held in the new art complex. This site will allow the public to see the new facility that the art department has made in the old ag building. May 2 will be the artist reception from 3:30-7:00. The show will be open May 5-9th between 3:30 and 5:00 for the public to attend. There are over 50 artists who are going to be shown.

Free internet training class

A free internet training class will be offered to customers of Louisa Communications and Mutual Telephone, to be held Tuesday, May 13 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., at Columbus Junction City Hall. There will be three very informing topics covered: Online fraud; ebay - getting started; and digital photography. We ask that you call the office at 319-527-7636 to reserve a spot, or if you have any questions concerning this class.

P.E.O. Salad luncheon

Washington D.C. may claim to be the Cherry Blossom capital during the spring season, but for one spring day, Cherry Blossoms will be blooming in Columbus Junction, thanks to Chapter CX P.E.O. Mark your calendars for the annual P.E.O. Salad Luncheon on Monday, May 5th at the American Legion in Columbus Junction. This event will be held from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and all who come are in for a real treat! Scrumptious salads, mouthwatering ham balls, drinks and desserts are yours for the taking. (Carry-outs are also available.) Tickets are \$6.00 each and can be purchased from any chapter member or from these businesses in Columbus Junction- Feed Wagon, Plants and Things, Special Effects, DrugTown. All proceeds go to the CX P.E.O. Scholarship Fund. Mark your calendars for May 5th. Come see, smell and taste how sweet spring can be. A beautiful and blossoming buffet will be in bloom that day!

Postage rates to increase

Postage rates will increase effective Monday, May 12th. The cost to mail a one-ounce letter will increase 1 cent to 42 cents. Postcards will increase one cent to 27 cents. The post office has plenty of Forever Stamps, which can be purchased at the current rate and are good for the 42 cent rate effective May 12th.

Senior Center movie schedule

The Senior Center movie that was scheduled for Thursday, April 17 has been cancelled. Another movie will play at the Senior Center on Tuesday, April 29, 2008, at 1 p.m.

Gazette story helps Wellman Skating Rink receive funding

By Deb Bean
Gazette Staff

It is always a good feeling to know when we have helped someone out even if it was just printing a story, no matter how big or small, but that the story helped someone in some way.

In 2007 I brought you a story about some good old fashion fun that we discovered in Wellman, Iowa, "Roller Skating" at the Wellman Recreational Center. Little did I know that by writing this article I would help contribute in a small way to the Rec Center receiving grant money. I was honored when Teresa Lampe, Recreation Director, told me that she used my article when writing their grant. "I used your article from the newspaper to help write the grant for this money and I have showed this article to so many people, I was so appreciative of you writing this for us," says Teresa.

I took the kids back to Wellman for an evening of roller-skating and was talking with Teresa. She was very excited to show me a huge check hanging on the wall behind the snack counter. The check was from The Washington County Riverboat Foundation in the amount of \$42,750. She was thrilled to share that they also received \$2,000 from the Wellman Association and the remainder of the funds for the \$71,000 project will come from the City of Wellman.

What does this mean? This Saturday, April 26th, the doors of the Rec Center will close to skaters and open to contractors. With the money that the rec center received they are getting what some would call a very needed and welcomed face-lift.

"I am very excited, and can't wait until the remodeling begins, we are getting a new 2" maple hardwood floor, replacing the existing concrete,

new handicap accessible bathrooms, new paint job, new carpet and all new skates, just to name a few of the new changes coming," says Teresa.

I was almost brought to tears when a family came to the center with their son who was in a wheelchair. I watched as his mother pushed him around the rink so he could feel a part of the group. I spoke to her and told her how nice I thought that was. "He loves it," she smiled. Later that evening I saw his little sister helping to push her brother around the rink. What was also impressive to me is that all the kids skating didn't mind that they were there allowing their son to have a good time just like they were. "All kids are allowed, no matter what, if it takes someone helping them around the rink or pushing them around the rink, that is perfectly fine, we want everyone to have a good time and enjoy themselves while they are here," smiles Teresa.

Did you know that the first roller skate was invented in 1760 by a Belgian inventor named Joseph Merlin? He introduced the first patented roller skate in 1760? He wore his new skates to a party in London, where he crashed into a very expensive mirror. He wasn't very interested in skating after this experience. In 1863, James Plimpton, a businessman from Massachusetts invented a roller skate that could turn. It was called a "rocking" skate—the first one that really let people skate curves and turn.

So for the kids of Wellman and to all the kids and families who make roller skating an enjoyable activity, you can bet they will be anxiously awaiting the rink's grand-reopening in September and excited to see all the changes made possible by a Community that cared enough to want to keep one of America's oldest past times alive and going for many years to come.