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A look at the Columbus Development Center

By Mary Masonholder Wilson

Mallory Smith is the director of the Columbus Community Development Center, located in the Columbus Civic Center Building. You might ask, "What does Mallory Smith do?" You might also ask, "What in the world is the Columbus Development Center?"

In answer to the first question, I would ask another question, and that is "What doesn't she do?" After visiting with Mallory Smith, I'm convinced she does everything, knows everyone, and is a bundle of excitement about promoting the Columbus area and businesses." This answer also explains what the Community Development Center does—this department of the Columbus Civic Center looks for ways to improve and develop the area and looks for ways to start and promote businesses here. "It is estimated the number of people served by the Development Center is 2,500, roughly the population of the school district."

Smith says, "A lot of my job is to respond to the needs, interests, and potential of the community." Smith was instrumental in getting the Community Health Center project moving. Now that facility is up and running in Columbus City, so Smith moves on to another project. She is currently working to get the Burmese people more acclimated to living in this area and to become a part of the culture here. She also is getting organized for the up-coming Farmers Market, another project she started here. Then there are more city sidewalks to improve, and on it goes.

In the past, Smith has worked in developing trails and other uses of the Chinkapin Bluff Recreational area. She is proud of what also has been done in Chautauqua Park with the restoration of the fireplaces, new restrooms, trails, etc. and still more improvements are happening there with plantings, etc. She has created a city website and promoted many of the events here in the area. She works with the United Fund. She works to keep litter out of the town and parks, and she works to beau-

tify these areas. She writes grants and finds out about other available grants that have brought thousands of dollars to the community.

Smith will be the first to tell you, that she does not do all these projects alone. She says, "I try to focus on one project. I ask myself, 'What can I do to tip that project and make it a success.'" She goes on to say, "I am probably only 5-10 percent of what makes a project a success. I try to use the resources I have made: people, programs, materials—available both regionally and statewide."

Whatever Smith uses, she gets a lot done. She is working currently on trying to create the Monkey-Run Creek Park by expanding it. This is the area where the houses were often flooded near Walnut Street and many of these homes were bought out by FEMA and moved. She explained that the city now owns much of this property, but not all. A half soccer field was put in there, but Smith would like to see sand volleyball courts and more of a park there along with a full-court soccer field there or some place else.

Smith is aware that many people in this area are interested in the history of the people and the land. That is why much effort has been made to preserve such places as Chinkapin Bluffs and Chautauqua Park. Before working for the city of Columbus Junction, Smith was employed by the county as the LDG director. Her office then was located in the Louisa County Conservation Building and she learned much from such mentors as Julie Ohde. Smith is also quick to comment on the amount of volunteerism that is given in this community—whether it is building, planting, organizing—this is a "can do" community, people are willing to make it happen, and collaboration is the name of the game.

Smith along with Nitza Lopez, also of this community, started the Columbus Development Program. The two planned to use the apprenticeship program where somewhat less experienced people, even high



A clean-up day at Chautauqua Park

school students, could work and learn. Many of these were volunteers, such as those painting the crosswalks, but a few were paid. Some of the interns have been Megan Leyden, Jesus Lizzaraga, and Isabel Diaz. College students have also come here to learn how a city runs.

Smith points out that there are many advantages to living in a small town. She mentions the interconnectedness of the community, the diversity of population, and the dedication of the people here to the community.

The hard part of her job is that much of what is planned today won't come to fruition for about four years. This is the average amount of time it takes for start-up until finish, and takes a lot of patience and diligence to keep one project on hold while starting another. She mentions that some of the projects being done today, such as the river levy creation and the water system move, are a result of the 2008 flood, and they are just now being done in 2013.

Smith says the team that works throughout the whole Civic Center Building motivates her. The people in the library, city offices, police, city council, and the mayor—Smith feels

it is a vibrant group that motivates each other. She loves her job and working with the community.

As we close our review of the Columbus Civic Center, it is obvious this building of now 6 years, starting its 7th year as of February 14th, has been quite an asset to the community. Each separate division—Library, City Offices and council chamber, and the Community Development Center have become an integral part of life in Columbus Junction.

If only Marie Spaethe, who left \$250,000 for the building of a NEW library could see this Civic Center building now. Some people wanted to remodel the old library with the money; however Marie's will was specific—it had to be a new building, and so it was. The architect of the Civic Center "mirrored" the architecture of the former library and Community Building. This older building is now our Community Museum, a great use for this wonderful structure.

A lot of people worked hard and gave a lot of money for the Columbus Civic Center. But this is no surprise in Columbus Junction. That's the way it always has been, and that's the way it should be.

Briefly -

Fredonia seeks council applicant

The City of Fredonia will be taking applications for a city council member. These applications will be accepted until Monday, March 11, 2013. If you have any questions, please contact Lisa Exline at 319-750-0801 or they can be dropped off at City Hall in Fredonia. Reminders: Sewer bills are due by the 20th of the month, if late, a \$25 fee will be charged. Dogs running loose – owners will be ticketed.

Conesville Fire Department Fish and Chicken Fry

The Conesville Fire Department will host their annual Fish and Chicken Fry on Saturday, March 16, 2013 at the Conesville Fire Station. Serving will begin at 5:00 p.m. and will continue until 8:00 p.m. Everyone is invited to come and enjoy a good time with great friends and food!

Cook's Night out

The next Cooks' Night Out Community Supper will be held on Wednesday, March 13, 2013 at the Letts United Methodist Church from 5 to 7 p.m. Everyone in the community is invited and there is no charge for the supper. Contact the church office for additional information at 319-726-3541.

Half Hour Club to meet

The Half Hour Club will meet on Tuesday, March 12th at 1:30 p.m. at Our Shop, 106 Main Street, Columbus Junction. Program: Carol Foster shares her talents. Roll call: A sewing hobby or experience. Meeting at the 92 Roadhouse – "Dutch Treat."

Movie Night at the Library

Movie night for seniors at the Columbus Junction Public Library. Our very first movie night is scheduled for March 7 at 6:30 pm. We will be showing a great movie, serve popcorn, candy and a beverage. Jim and Bonnie Gabriel will host this event. Please call the Library if you need a ride – 728-7972. Remember the movie starts at 6:30 pm.

Donkey Ball at L-M School

New rodeo stars will be born during the wild and crazy "Dairyland Donkey Basketball Show" at Louisa-Muscatine High School Gym today, Wednesday, March 6th starting at 7 p.m. It's basketball played on real, live donkeys and it will be wilder than a rodeo and funnier than a circus. ALL Louisa County FFA teams and L-M seniors will be riding, so come out and see someone you know try to ride a donkey and play basketball at the same time. It's a thrill a minute, a spill a minute. Laugh as you've never laughed before at the wild and crazy donkey basketball show. This fun-filled show is sponsored by Louisa-Muscatine FFA Alumni. All of the proceeds will be for the benefit of FFA Scholarships. Advance tickets can be purchased from members of the sponsoring organization or by calling 920-250-0144. Tickets may also be available at the gate if there is space available.

Supper and Bingo season winds down

The Morning Sun Lioness and Lions Clubs are reaching the end of the 2012-2013 Supper and Bingo season. Next week's March 14 date will leave April 11 as the only remaining Supper and Bingo night on the current year's calendar. Bingo is held in the Morning Sun School. Consequently, time is running out for local folks to support these service clubs in their respective efforts to raise funds for humanitarian projects in the immediate area. The Lioness will offer food service from 5:00 to 6:30 PM while snacks and beverages will be available during the Lions bingo games beginning at 6:30 PM. While specific plans are not yet final, participants may expect special food items and bingo prizes to be available during the two remaining sessions. The Lions and Lioness express appreciation for the reasonably high turnout during the current season of Supper and Bingo. The two Clubs encourage those who have yet to enjoy the meals and the games to join with the regular participants for the final two sessions of the Supper and Bingo year.

Morning Sun PTO Vendor Blender

MORNING SUN – The Morning Sun PTO will be hosting a Vendor Blender on Saturday, March 23. This is a fundraiser for the PTO Playground project. The Blender will be held from 9 am to 2 pm in the Morning Sun School Gym. The Morning Sun Youth League will provide the food throughout the event. Vendors scheduled to be on hand include: Tupperware, Scentsy, Tastefully Simple, Dove Chocolate, Paparazzi Accessories, Premier Jewelry, Jamberry Nails, Gold Canyon Candles, Origami Owl, Norwex, It Works, Thirty-One, Mia Bath and Body, Nerium Skincare, Mary Kay, Glam Glass and Gifts, Bee's Bags, Clever Containers, Wildtree, Pampered Chef, Lia Sophia, Vault Denim, Celebrating Home, Books R Fun, Beauticontrol, Advocare, Avon, Wine Shop at Home, Sunny's Boutique plus many handmade items and more.

Taco Supper by Shooting Stars sports club

The Louisa County Shooting Sports 4-H Club will be serving a taco dinner with a dessert auction and a 50/50 raffle (the raffle sponsored by Grandview Community Club) at the Briggs Center in Wapello on Saturday, March 16th from 5-7 p.m. A free will donation will be accepted. There will also be a labor auction, where three groups of kids will be auctioned off for three hours of labor. For more information or to make a donation, please contact Angie Crumly (563-571-5560), Dianna Bolander (319-212-1353) or Missy Plowman (563-299-1070).

Shooting Stars free soup supper

The Shooting Stars 4-H Club will be hosting a FREE soup supper for the congregation of the Pleasant Grove Community Church on Sunday, April 14, 2013 at 6 p.m. The group will serve chili and potato soups, relish, crackers and desserts with drinks as part of their service project. Congregation members and family members of the Shooting Stars are invited to attend.

Legion Auxiliary county meeting

The American Legion Auxiliary will hold its county meeting on Tuesday, March 12, with the meal at 6:00 P.M. and the meeting at 7:00 P.M.

United Methodist Women to meet

The United Methodist Women of Columbus Junction will meet today, Wednesday, March 6, 2013, for a 12:30 p.m. luncheon honoring "Call to Prayer and Self-Denial." Delores Gentzler will have the lesson and Kathleen Sands will be hostess. This is our first meeting of 2013. Please come and join the fellowship.

BANG! The Welsh have come to Town

By Mary Masonholder Wilson

If you were in downtown Columbus Junction on Saturday, March 2 at 1:00 PM, you probably thought a war was starting, as there was quite a big bang. And I mean a big bang! You see, a cannon was shot off on downtown Main Street right at 1:00 to signal the beginning of the Welsh parade. What a parade it was!

Troy Pugh, son of Janice and Terry Pugh and grandson of Art Pugh and great grandson of the late Louis and Scelena Pugh, was the main organizer of this event. All his family members helped Troy. Nate Boulton, also of the Art Pugh family, did a lot of work. Patsy Pugh Taylor, Art Pugh's daughter, supplied decorations of Welsh banners, daffodils, and more at the Legion. Together, these people, their families, and other Welshmen pulled together one of the biggest nationality events ever seen in Columbus Junction.

For the parade, families organized themselves in groups and carried their family name sign, such as Pugh, Peters, Williams, Thomas, Rees, Jones, Morgan, Evans, and Davis. Many of the family members were in costume. Other people rode in vehicles with the family name posted on the car or held by someone. There was also a giant dragon, the patron symbol of the Welsh, in the parade. It must have been at least ten feet tall.

But the real coup of the day was the cannon. Roger and Janet Gipple own it. Not many people knew the cannon was there until Roger shot it off. Many people jumped. Some from inside ran outside to see what was causing such a ruckus.

Before the parade started, Nate Boulton led everyone in the singing of the Welsh National Anthem. Nate sang it in Welsh; however, most others sang it in English. Then the parade began. It started under the via-



These individuals are 100% Welsh, left to right: Bill Edwards, Margaret Patterson, Art Pugh, Ruth Erwin, Margaret Dunnahoo, Jack Pugh, Margaret Hootman, Dallas Davis

duct and proceeded to the American Legion Building.

At the Legion, Troy and his mother Janice Pugh had prepared a Welsh stew, called Lobsgows, for over a hundred people, and there were well over a hundred there. The Lobsgows was made with potatoes, leeks, rutabagas, onions, beef, and a rich broth. Rolls, crackers, cookies and bars were also served.

The tables in the room were beautifully decorated in red, green, and white—the colors used in the Welsh flag. Welsh banners were all around the room, and there was a Welsh memorabilia display. There were daffodils on all the tables. There is a story behind the daffodil, Troy Pugh explained to me.

According to Pugh, the story actually begins in the sixth century with

a Bishop named David. It seems the Welsh were fighting the Anglo Saxons on a very muddy battlefield. The soldiers got so muddy it was impossible to tell friend from foe. Bishop David told all the Welsh to gather leeks, a vegetable close in looks and taste to an onion, which were growing nearby the battlefield. He had the Welsh put these leeks on their hats.

Thus the Welsh knew their own comrades and were able to defeat the Anglo Saxons. Later Bishop David was made St. David, and he became their patron saint. It is St. David's Day, March 1, that the Welsh celebrate.

Pugh also explained that in the Welsh language the word leek is 'cennin'. The word for daffodil in Welsh is 'cennin pedre'. Because the two words are so close, somehow the

leek and the daffodil became "intertwined" and the daffodil became the flower for the country of Wales.

The Welsh on Saturday had such a good time, they say it will be a yearly event. There certainly are a lot of Welsh people in this community. It also is interesting how many (as evidenced by the photo) are one hundred percent Welsh.

Troy Pugh definitely started something. For many of the Welsh, especially Joyce Thomas McCullough, it was a dream come true. Maybe next year, there will be more Welsh, especially Delmore Evans, who was so looking forward to it and ended up in the hospital and could not attend. The Welsh are a hardy people, and let it be known now that next year is already in the making.

