

# The Best of Times and the Best of People

By John Carpenter  
Gazette Staff

"I sure miss the good old days when neighbors were really neighbors, and everyone used to come together to help each other out. We just don't have that today." This is a phrase that is heard quite often, and although I've always kept quiet when someone uttered it, I have wanted many times to say, "B.S."

I'm sure everyone who has lived here for some time knows that we have can-do people when something needs to get done. The swimming pool, golf course, American Legion, Masonic Building, and Civic Center are examples of our people coming together and accomplishing what seem impossible tasks. These are wonderful things, but the real measure of people, as those that make the opening statement in this article are referring to, are how people respond to others in true times of need. And to all of the members of the Columbus Community, I want to state that your actions over the past two weeks MEASURE HIGH!

Two weeks ago an article appeared in the Gazette describing difficulties that a local family are undergoing, and asking for your help. Well, I'm thrilled to report that as of today; over \$2,000 has been delivered to that family. Your generosity after the article appeared was overwhelming. I had people contacting me asking what they could do. No one ever asked any personal questions. You weren't interested in their names, you weren't interested in their race, you weren't interested in their religion, all you were interested in was finding the best way to help. And after the story appeared, I heard of other things that have been going on for quite some time to help the fam-



Arelia Torres and some of the items given to the fire survivors.

ily. Area churches, organizations and individuals have been providing help to the family since the mother's condition was first diagnosed.

Then, last week the story detailing the downtown fire was published. Immediately groups went to work to help the displaced families. The Methodist Church and the school put together a list of clothing needs for the families. The Methodist Church became a collection location for food and clothing items. The Red Cross, with the help of the Senior Center,

made emergency housing assistance available. Local families made arrangements to cook meals for the displaced families. The Gazette received numerous calls from individuals offering help. And last Friday a food and clothing drive was organized by Arelia Torres for the families with a drop-off point in the Ivan Arthur office building. Throughout the day and well into the evening boxes and boxes of items arrived. The response was astonishing. And again, no one asked names, race or

religion. All that was asked is, "What can I do?"

Readers, I have always been amazed at this community, but your generosity and compassion over the past two weeks has been absolutely overwhelming. Regardless of what religion you may ascribe to, you are people who truly practice your faith.

So, the next time I hear someone state that they miss the good old days; I'm going to respond, emphatically, "Not me, this is the best of times, and our citizens are the best of people."

# Walking to remember his little Sister

(Columbus Junction, IA) Corey Grothe, a junior at Columbus High School, and big brother to Nora is organizing Iowa's MISS Foundation Chapter of the Empty Strollers, Empty Shoes: We Walk for Them awareness/fundraising event on Saturday, May 7, 2011 at Weed Park. Adult registration is \$15, children's registration is \$5 and children under 3 are free.

Corey reflects, "I was seven years old when I lost by baby sister, Nora. I was confused and didn't understand what had happened. It was devastating to watch my mom uncontrollably cry, and see my dad with that blank look of shock on his face. We needed help. Most of our extended family just wanted us to get over it and "move on." But my mom couldn't, so they stopped talking to us. Then, my mom found the MISS Foundation. They helped my family learn how to grieve and had people our own age talk with us. They helped tremendously and to this day, I haven't forgotten about how the volunteers at MISS saved our family.

"I am trying to raise awareness and money for the MISS foundation, so they can continue to help grieving families, just as they helped us. When a family loses a child, it doesn't just affect them. It affects their whole community, it is my goal to show those families they are not alone. There are other families and experienced people who can help them."

Walk Description: Each day around the world, parents walk their babies, safely nestled in their strollers, around parks, neighborhoods, schools, and even zoos. ! Each day around the world, parents hear the steps of their children come through the door at the end of their school



Corey Grothe

day. Each day around the world, parents experience their children's feet returning home for family gatherings and holidays. But, tragically, not all children get to ride in their strollers, return home at the end of the school day, or spend holidays with family.

The Empty Strollers-Empty Shoes: We Walk for Them is an international memorial walk to remember all the mothers, fathers, and families - and their beloved children - and

to honor those relationships on the most sacred of days for families; Mother's Day. The MISS Foundation's international community invites you and your loved ones to participate in our Empty Strollers-Empty Shoes: We Walk for Them because death is NOT bigger than a family's love, and because even in their absence, they continue to walk with us, as we walk for them.

Empty Strollers, Empty Shoes:

We Walk for Them, Saturday, May 7, 2011 - Weed Park - Muscatine. Registration 8:30 am - Walk Begins: 9:00 am, Online Registration: <https://www.firstgiving.com/missfoundation/Event/Iowaemptystrolleremptyshoeswalk> For additional information, please visit [www.missfoundation.org](http://www.missfoundation.org) or call Corey Grothe at 563-299-5302

## LCCB Easter Antler Hunt scheduled

Join Louisa County Conservation for our annual Easter Antler Hunt to be held on Saturday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> from 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. at Virginia Grove Recreation Area. The fee is \$3 per child, which includes an antler hunt along the trails at Virginia Grove, prizes and a traditional egg hunt. Participants will also get the chance to learn about antlers and how they differ from horns.

Pre-registration is required; walk-ins will not be accepted on the day of the event. The registration deadline is Wednesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>. Register by calling 319-523-8381 or email [lccb@lccb.org](mailto:lccb@lccb.org). If leaving a message, include the names and ages of the children you wish to register and a daytime telephone number. Payment can be sent to Antler Hunt, 12635 Co. Rd. G56, Suite 101, Wapello, IA 52653.

Virginia Grove is located about eight miles southwest of Wapello, Iowa. More information and maps can be found at [www.lccb.org](http://www.lccb.org).

## Fire Victims names released

The following is a list of the victims involved in the fire at 110 Main Street in Columbus Junction on Saturday, March 26, 2011.

Injured: Paul Buffington, 76, owner of building. He was transported by Air Care to University of Iowa Hospitals. Percy Taylor, 48, 110 Main Street, Columbus Junction. Refused treatment at the scene.

Deceased: Timothy L. Miles, 52, 110 Main Street, Columbus Junction. James A. Mitchell, 57, 110 Main Street, Columbus Junction.

Further information will be released as it becomes available. The investigation is continuing with the Iowa State Fire Marshall's Office and the Louisa County Sheriff's Department.

## Briefly -

### Shriner onions for sale

Area Shriners will soon have Jumbo Sweet Onions for sale. The onions shipped today, and although many bags are spoken for, there will still be some for sale. they are \$11.00 per bag, and anyone interested can contact any local Shriner or call Special Effects.

### Alumni Banquet scheduled

The annual Columbus Schools Alumni Banquet will once again be held the second Saturday in June. The location is Roundy Elementary School for the meal and program. The United Presbyterian Women will provide the banquet meal. Make sure this event gets on your summer calendar!

### Free blood checks

Carrington Place of Muscatine, Iowa is offering free blood pressure checks on Thursday, April 7, 2011, from 2-4 p.m. They will continue to offer this service each month on the first and third Thursdays from 2-4 p.m. You do not need to make an appointment, as blood pressures will be checked on a walk-in basis. Mark your calendars to stop by. Carrington Place of Muscatine is located at 3440 Mulberry Avenue, Muscatine, Iowa 52761. Should you have any questions, please call Dana Yerington, Director of Admissions and Marketing at 563-288-4091.

### Music Boosters seek overnight hosts

On Friday, April 8, the Columbus Community Music Department will be hosting musicians from Luther College's Jazz Orchestra. The musicians will be interacting with CCHS students in the afternoon and then performing in a free-will offering show at 7:30 p.m. in the school auditorium. Following the performance the musicians will need housing for groups of 2, 3, and 4 male students overnight. If you are interested in showing these students our Columbus Spirit please contact Music Booster members Kim Carson at 319-212-0580 or [carski1282@hotmail.com](mailto:carski1282@hotmail.com) or Donna Wittmann at 319-728-7705.

### Creamed Chicken dinner

The Columbus City United Methodist Church Adult Fellowship is sponsoring a creamed chicken dinner on Saturday, April 16, 2011, from 5-7 p.m., at the Masonic Lodge in Columbus City. On the menu is: Creamed chicken and biscuits, great salads and several yummy desserts. The public is invited and welcome. A free will offering will be accepted.

### Easter Egg Hunt scheduled

The annual Easter Egg Hunt will be held at Chautauqua Park on April 23, 2011 at 1:00 p.m. Children ages 0 - 10 are welcome to attend. Anyone wishing to donate please contact Lisa at 319-728-8115, and leave a message.

### Fish Fry at Lone Tree Presbyterian

The Presbyterian Church in Lone Tree will serve a catfish dinner on Friday, April 8<sup>th</sup> from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m. The menu includes: catfish, baked potato, baked beans, coleslaw, rolls, beverage and bar/cookies. Tickets are \$10.00 for adults and \$5.00 for children ages 10 and under.

### Half Hour Club to meet

The Half Hour Club will meet on Tuesday, April 12<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 p.m. at the home of Phyllis Utter with Martha Murry serving as co-hostess. Master Gardener Jim Everett will have the program. Roll call: plant trivia games.

### County Fair dates set

The Louisa County Fair will take place July 24-30, 2011. Kick-off will be Sunday, July 24<sup>th</sup>. Fair will start on Monday, July 25 ending on Saturday, July 30. Hope to see you at the fair!

### Visual Support Group to meet

The next meeting of the Louisa County Visual Support Group will be on Thursday, April 14<sup>th</sup> at Corner Market. For more information contact Lois Richers at 319-527-2630.

### L-M Kindergarten Round-up

The L-M School District is in the process of identifying next year's kindergarteners. If you have a child who will be 5 years old by September 15, 2011, or know of one, please contact the elementary office at 319-726-3634. Kindergarten "Round Up" will be Thursday, April 28<sup>th</sup> and Friday, April 29<sup>th</sup>. This will be a 2-hour session. Teachers meet with students and the Principal will meet with the parents. You must be pre-registered, please call the elementary office to set up time. We are also accepting students for our preschool/childcare program located in the elementary building. Please call Busy Hands Preschool/Childcare at 319-726-3645 ext. 200. The preschool and childcare have limited space so sign up soon.

### Historical Society to meet

Sunday, April 10, 2011, at 2:00 p.m. at the L.C.H. Museum, Wapello, Iowa. Area collectors have been invited to share their collections: pottery, sprinklers, glass dishes, and more.

### Retired School Personnel to meet

The Louisa County Retired School Personnel will meet Tuesday, April 19<sup>th</sup> at the new Letts Community Center. Please plan to be there by 11:30 a.m. we will have lunch, a tour of the new Community Center, and a visit from Tom and Opal Handlen, our new District Six Co-coordinators. This promises to be an interesting day; we hope you will plan to attend.

### School Board to meet

The Board of Education for the Columbus Community School District is holding a special meeting/budget workshop #3 public hearing on Monday, April 11, 2011, at 6:30 p.m. in the Roundy Library, 1212 Colton Street, Columbus Junction, IA. 52738.

### Luther College Orchestra here

Luther College Jazz Orchestra will perform Friday, April 8, 7:30 p.m. at Columbus Community High School Auditorium, 1004 Colton Street, Columbus Junction, Iowa. The performance is open to the public. Freewill offerings will be accepted. For concert information, call 515-293-2956. The Jazz Orchestra concert program will feature Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue. The Jazz Orchestra tours both nationally and internationally. Recent tours include Brazil, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and the Upper Midwest.