



Your Award Winning Hometown Newspaper

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Wildcats First ends second year with students

By Mary Masonholder Wilson
Gazette Staff

Last year, a group of community members, mainly from the area businesses, formed a group called 'Wildcats First'. Their mission was to meet with the juniors of Columbus Community School several times to 1. show the students they cared and to develop a relationship with these students. 2. cheer on the students and encourage them to raise their test scores, especially on the standardized test that students take called the ITED tests. 3. help get the Columbus School off the "watch list", a list of schools who have low ITED scores.

Students were bused to various locations downtown to meet with these community members four times. These juniors were divided into small groups and were assigned their Wildcats First leaders.

Wednesday, April 12th was the last meeting between students and Wildcats First members, and from surveys taken; this student-community relationship has been a grand success! This final meeting, held at the American Legion, was the entire junior class and a meal was served.* Food will win the heart of any young teen!

However, all students filled in a survey without their names, and then a different survey was taken with names if the students so chose. Some of the comments: Jocelyn Ramirez: "Thank you for all the stuff you've done. It really helped on the ITED's." Haley Taylor: "I think it's good to get us younger people involved in the community." Christine Milder: "I feel like it was great to learn how much they care." Trevor Conaway: "It was a great learning experience and thank you Wildcats First!" Edgar Rodriguez: "It was nice meeting leaders of the community." Esteban Gutierrez: "We are very thankful for the businesses in the community for caring." Gary Cutler: "It was fun."

Jenna Fuller: "I think that Wildcat's first is a great program. I think that it says a lot about a community when the local businesses take an interest in the education of



Former Columbus Graduate Ivan Gonzales addresses this year's Junior Class

the children of that community and that it is a great experience for us, as students, to be able to form these connections." One of the student groups met at Tyson, and Fuller went on to comment: "I really enjoyed getting to know Sergio Ayala, Dave Duncan, and Mike Grothe of the Tyson Team!" Abigail Garcia added: "I had a great time visiting Tyson and interacting with some of the people that worked there."

Some of the anonymous comments on surveys: I liked attending the Community Club meeting because, "I gained strength to actually try on the ITED's." The Community Club taught me "why the tests are important." "I gain more confidence."

When asked, "Do you think the community group put too much pressure or stress on you?" one student answered, "They put a lot of pressure on us, but not too much, and it was

worth it!" Another student replied, "I don't think they put any pressure at all."

In their surveys, all the students felt that the Wildcats First group should continue this next year for the juniors. However, some said they hated to see their year come to an end, and they wished they could do it again next year.

Ivan Gonzales, former graduate of CCHS and of Iowa State University, has returned to Columbus Junction and has been interning at the Columbus Development Center. He spoke to the students about how he appreciates his home community, but how he also matured having left the community, having achieved a college education, and having traveled to foreign countries. All of this has given him a broader perspective on life and increased his expectations. He sees that "goals can be set as a community and as a school."

The other speakers at this last meeting were Columbus Principal Jeff Maeder, who thanked the community and Wildcats First for their support of the school and the students. Then Wildcats First members, Mark Huston, Steve Sents, and Dan Wilson spoke to wish the students well and to stress that they will always be a part of the community even after they graduate. Also the community would welcome them to stay here or to come back after their further education.

The relationships that have been formed from these meetings will be long lasting. Perhaps Steve Sents, local attorney, said it best, "We (the community) are vested in a part of your lives."

*Thanks to the following for donating food: chips and salsa—La Hacienda. Sub sandwiches—Casey's and State Bank, Cookies—Lisa Hills, Water—Economart.

Sam Bell set to end 41 year Banking Career

By John Carpenter
Gazette Staff

I knew that someday I would have to write this story, but it certainly is something that I haven't looked forward to. My good friend, Sam Bell, has announced his retirement from Community Bank effective at the end of the month. Although I am happy for Sam, I'm surely going to miss him downtown.

Sam graduated from Columbus Community High School in 1966 and attended Simpson College, graduating in 1970. He then entered the Army Reserves serving on active duty for six months then as a reservist for six years.

Sam began working for Peoples National Bank on March 1, 1971. He married Betty Jane (Emily) Spinner from Lansing, Iowa, and brought her to the community where she taught in the L-M School system for thirty-nine years.

Like all new bank employees, he started in bookkeeping, then worked as a teller, eventually becoming a loan officer. Sam witnessed many changes in his forty-one years of banking. The computer age was just coming into existence, and banking methods underwent numerous changes during Sam's career. Today banking is primarily an electronic operation, as opposed to the manual operation that it was when Sam began.

Sam watched the bank convert from a national bank to a state bank, was involved in the formation of a holding company, Peoples National Corporation, then played an instrumental role in the bank's purchase of Community Bank in Muscatine. The two banks merged into Community Bank, which was eventually purchased by CBG. The bank now has five locations in four towns, and Sam watched the bank grow from \$6,396,000 in assets when he began to a \$250 million dollar bank today.



Those are the basic facts of Sam's career, but I have more to add. I had the good fortune to work with Sam for nearly 25 years. From the first day that I arrived at the bank, Sam became a friend. Rather than look upon me as competition in his career, Sam did everything he could to help me. He was a Godfather to one of my sons, and was an enormous help when my late wife, Judy, became ill. He filled in numerous Saturday mornings for me, something that I will always remember and appreciate.

But I also witnessed Sam's work ethic. Sam came to work every day to do his job. There always seemed to be a line of people waiting to see Sam. I recall days where there never seemed to be a let up for him, but Sam

never shirked his responsibilities. If somebody wanted to see him, he was willing. And Sam cared about his customers. He took great pride in their successes, and was sympathetic in their failures. We worked together quite a bit during the farm crisis of the 1980's, and I saw true compassion in Sam during these difficult times, and his work to solve some of the problems was instrumental in many cases. There are people still farming today because of Sam's tireless efforts.

Yes, Sam has always been my friend, and I would suspicion that most of his customers also consider him a friend as well as their banker. Sam's comments when I interviewed him confirmed this, "I have been very

fortunate to have had so many good and loyal customers in my forty-one years here, and have had the opportunity to work with some of the best friends a person could have. I just want to thank everyone for their loyalty and friendship to me, and I'll miss them."

I'm going to miss seeing Sam on Main Street, but Sam and Emily will now have the opportunity to spend more time at their second home on the banks of the Mississippi River in Lansing, Iowa. But Sam did assure me that we'll be seeing him around town also.

A reception is planned at the bank for Sam on Monday, April 30th from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Briefly -

Shirley Hendrickson to read and sign her new book

Shirley (Carey) Hendrickson will be at the Masonic Lodge in Columbus City on Saturday afternoon, April 28 at 1:30 to read from her new novel "The Starting Gate." In addition, she will bring along and talk about her cookbook, "Mission House Bed and Breakfast Cookbook," that was published last year.

Baked Potato Supper at Columbus City United Methodist Church

The Columbus City United Methodist Church is having a baked potato supper on Saturday, April 21st from 5-7 p.m. The menu includes: Baked potatoes with all the toppings; salads and several desserts. The public is invited and welcome. A free will offering will be accepted.

Alumni Banquet Scheduled

The Columbus area Alumni Banquet will take place at Roundy Elementary School on June 9, 2012. Social Hour will begin at 5:30 p.m., and Dinner will be served at 6:00 p.m. Special recognition will be given to the 50-year (1962) class and the 25-year (1987) class. Put the date on your calendar now!

Community Club to meet

The Columbus Community Club will meet this Thursday at Noon at the Senior Center.

Early Childhood Board to meet

The Early Childhood Iowa Area Board Des Moines/Louisiana Counties will be meeting today, Wednesday, April 18, 2012, at 10:00 a.m. at the First United Presbyterian Church, 801 Middle St., Mediapolis, IA.

Gomer's Team to walk for Hospice

Please join Gomer's Team on Sunday, April 22, 2012 at 12 p.m. in Iowa City as they walk while wearing the purple Gomer shirts and accepting pledges for Hospice in Gomer's name. For more information about the walk or to give pledges, please contact Mary Singleton, 107 1st Street, Conesville, or call her at 319-725-4271.

Letts Mother-Daughter Supper

All ladies and girls are invited to a Mother-Daughter Salad Supper at the Letts Bible Church, Letts, IA, on Friday, April 27th at 6:00 PM. Alice Craig of Tremont, IL will be the speaker for the evening. Alice is a pastor's wife, mother and artist. She will be sharing her artwork while speaking. The theme will be, "Me, A Princess?" There is no charge, but reservations would be appreciated by Wednesday, April 25th by calling Cheryl at 726-3142 or Debbie at 726-5108 evenings. Please bring salads or desserts to accommodate the number attending. For more information call the above numbers or 729-5042.

Museum requests old school photos

The Columbus Junction Museum is asking for copies of class photos that were provided for years by Shellabarger Drug. The Museum's goal is to obtain a complete set of photos for each year from the original photos provided by Shellabarger Drug until the program ended. If you have any copies that you would like to share, please contact George Bell, Gloria Newell or Lisa Hills.

Blood Checks at Senior Center

Tami Nichols, R.N. from Colonial Manor will be doing blood checks at the Columbus Junction Senior Center on **Wednesday, April 25th, 2012** from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Come by and have your blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol checked. We hope to see you there!

Shellbark Club to meet

The Shellbark Club will meet on Thursday, April 19 at 11:30 at the Scone House in Grandview. Meet at the Columbus Junction Methodist Church to car pool to Grandview.

City Council sets City Wide Clean up Day

COLUMBUS JUNCTION CITY WIDE CLEAN UP DAY
FRIDAY, APRIL 27TH, 2012 ONLY

E-WASTE ITEMS SUCH AS TELEVISIONS, COMPUTERS, PRINTERS, FAX MACHINES, VCR'S, DVD PLAYERS, VIDEO GAME CONSOLES, SERVERS, SCANNERS, CONVERTER BOXES, CABLE RECEIVERS, SATALLITE RECEIVERS ETC - **WILL REQUIRE A TAG WHICH CAN BE PURCHASED AT CITY HALL - \$10 FOR 18 IN. OR LARGER SCREEN, \$5 FOR 18 IN OR SMALLER SCREEN AND ALL OTHER E-WASTE ITEMS \$2.**

APPLIANCES WILL REQUIRE A \$15 TAG, WHICH CAN BE PURCHASED AT CITY HALL - NO APPLIANCE WILL BE TAKEN WITHOUT A TAG.

SEPARATE ITEMS SUCH AS: METAL, APPLIANCES, FURNITURE, E-WASTE ITEMS.

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.