

It's time to celebrate Cinco de Mayo

By John Carpenter
Gazette Staff

A tradition in the downtown business district will return this Saturday as Cinco de Mayo will again be celebrated in town.

The festivities will begin at noon on Sunday, with most of the activities being held in the area near the American Legion. Bands scheduled to appear include Agressivo, Los Chinelos, Danza de San Judaz Tader, Valentin Ruiz, Grupo de Musicu de la Escuela Primario, and Columbus Junction School's Beat For Peace group. A number of dance groups are also scheduled to appear, as well as various other forms of entertainment.

Also, downtown merchants will be holding sidewalk sales, and many food vendors will be in the downtown area.

So if you are looking for great food, great music, great entertainment and a great time, downtown Columbus Junction will be the place to be on Sunday afternoon.



Weather Siren update

With the recent violent storms in the southeastern part of the country, we thought it would be a good idea to republish the local weather siren information from our emergency center.

When you hear the weather sirens sound in your community, do you know what they mean? Many residents believe that these advisories are strictly for a tornado warning or "touch down". However, these sirens are set off for a few instances with specific guidelines. The majority of residents are correct in thinking that we hear these sirens to warn us of impending or sighted tornado. But in addition to this, the guidelines in Louisa County also involve them being set-off for a severe thunderstorm warning as well.

Severe thunderstorms also have their own set of criteria. There has to be expected winds of at least 70 MPH and/or hail at least one inch in diameter. The main goal of the Severe Weather Sirens is to warn residents and guests that may be outdoors that there is cause to take

cover. 70 MPH winds can definitely knock over full-grown trees as well as make any unsecured item a flying projectile. One-inch hail can cause damage to vehicles as well as break windows.

Louisa County 911 Call center staff would like to remind everyone that public safety is the number one priority. We want to be sure that all residents that are enjoying being outside as well as any guests in our towns have enough warning to gain access to adequate shelter. All weather related decisions are made according to National Weather Service advisories as well as any trained spotters that report to us.

Tests of the sirens are done monthly on the 2nd Tuesday morning of the month at 10 a.m. unless there is a possibility that severe weather may be present. The next time you hear the severe weather sirens please take the advisory and take cover in a shelter, find the nearest radio or television for the specific information.

Free Marigold Seeds available

Keep Columbus Beautiful is distributing free marigold seeds during May. Pick yours up at City Hall, the farmers market or bulletin boards around town. Plant the seeds in prominent places around your house and do your part to Keep Columbus Beautiful.

Mother and daughter donate to Locks of Love



By Mother Michelle Snyder and Daughter Dakota Storm age 5

We donated our hair to Locks of Love, together at Reflections in Washington. This happened April 21st. Dakota donated 11 inches, and I donated 10 inches. This is Dakota's first time donating and my 3rd time. Dakota found a picture of me after I donated my first time and asked some questions about it. I explained to her that I did it to help little kids who lost their hair from cancer, burns and things like that. When you donate your hair they use the hair to

make wigs for them. She thought this was really nice and asked if she could do it. I explained to her that she would have to let her hair grow long. She wanted to do it and after talking about it we decided that I would donate my hair as well and we would do it together. With the weather getting warmer she wanted her hair shorter, so I thought....why not. I made the appointment and we chopped our long hair. Dakota loves her new hair cut and she is proud she helped little kids out.

ITBS and ITED scores up at Columbus Schools

By Jim Rudisill

Optimism is increasing that the Columbus School District might be on the brink of being removed from the Persistently Low Achieving School (PLAS) watch list. PLAS rankings are based on a three-year average of class proficiency, using test scores from various standardized tests. The district's middle/junior high school has been on the list for the past two years because of low reading proficiency scores.

However, student scores on this year's Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED) were among the highest in years, prompting some cautious assessments from school officials. Curriculum director Tara Paul presented the mostly good news on the test results during the school board's first monthly meeting Monday. According to test data, students in several grades achieved their highest scores in years. "Only two classes didn't make gains. That's really something to be proud of because last year it was the other way around," Paul told the board.

Although last year's scores were low enough to keep the school's middle school on the PLAS list, Paul said it will take some time before Columbus learns if this year's results are good enough to take the school off the list. "The status on the list cannot be determined until all Iowa ITED scores are in," she explained.

However, there was enough growth in nearly every class that Paul was clearly pleased with the results.

According to the data, the junior class had 19.3% more students proficient in reading when compared with their scores as sophomores; and as a group, they registered the highest percentage of proficient in reading since they were in fifth grade, Paul reported.

The news was also good for several other classes. The eighth grade saw its first gain in math proficiency since third grade with a 6.8% growth in the number of students who scored proficient. Overall, the middle school's math proficiency registered a 3% increase, rising from 59.6% in 2009-10 to 62.6% in 2010-11.

Reading proficiency in the middle school presented a mixed bag, with the seventh grade going up 10.2% and the eighth grade jumping 20.8%. However, a 13.3% decrease in the sixth grade's reading proficiency actually caused an overall 3.1% decrease in that category for the middle school.

However, those bits of bad news were overshadowed by the more positive achievements. The 3-5 grades saw an increase of 2.9% in math proficiency; and the fourth grade's 29.8% math proficiency represented the largest gain in math of any other grade level this year. The good news also continued when Paul presented a supplemental education services report.

The school district was required under the federal No Child Left Behind program to provide the supplemental services to disadvantaged students after it was identified last year

as a School In Need of Assistance (SINA) because of low achievement scores. To be eligible for the program, students needed to participate in the free-reduced lunch program.

According to Paul's report, 22 students attended the program, which was presented by Sylvan Supplemental Educational Services (SES). Eight students in the third grade attended the sessions and recorded 8.6% growth in scores. Six fourth grade students also attended the program and had a 16.8% growth. The eight fifth graders who attended the sessions recorded 13.83% growth. The average growth for all SES students was 11.6%.

While Paul's report pleased board members, they were more split over how to handle the upcoming vacancy in her position, which was created last month when she submitted her resignation. She reported at that time she had accepted the superintendent's position in the Estherville-Lincoln Central Community School District.

The board had requested Superintendent Rich Bridenstine to poll teachers at the school to determine their opinion on filling the position. Bridenstine said the survey had indicated a majority of teachers favored hiring a curriculum director or someone with those duties, while a smaller percentage did not favor filling the position.

After one motion to table the issue failed because there was no second, a second motion to hire a curriculum director was defeated on a 2-3 vote. Board members Dan Peters and Polly Prior voted for that motion, while Marsha Gerot, Joy Lekwa and Sandy Martin opposed it. After that defeat, a motion to hire a joint curriculum director/teacher development coach was unanimously approved.

Lekwa had proposed that alternative, explaining teachers she had talked with had indicated they favored having someone to help them more frequently with implementing new education protocols. As part of the motion to hire a joint individual, Bridenstine is to meet with members of the development committee to identify job duties.

The board also met for a board development training session with Iowa Association of School Boards Leadership Development Director Harry Heiligenthal. The session focused on helping the board identify goals and objectives and determining if various board actions were micromanagement or a broader "balcony view" management processes.

Local district resident John Carpenter also urged the board to take advantage of a possible joint construction project with the Muscatine Community College. The school district and the college have been discussing the construction of a new attendance center on the school district campus, but no final decision has been made.

Carpenter said he had heard funding for the center could be in jeopardy because the school district has not acted. "I can't think of a better way to serve our population," he told the board.

Briefly -

Columbus Alumni Banquet info

The CCHS Alumni Banquet will take place at Roundy Elementary School on June 11, 2011. Social Hour will begin at 5:30 p.m., and Dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. The Columbus Junction Presbyterian Women will provide the delicious Banquet meal. Special recognition will be given to the 50-year (1961) class and the 25-year (1986) class. The 40-year and 60-year classes will be recognized also. Tickets are available from Carol Ann Howell at the Community Bank 319-728-2226 and from Sherry Pine at the State Bank 319-728-2436. Tickets are once again the best buy in town at \$10.00. get your tickets as soon as possible so meal plans can be completed. Contact Temporary Co-Chairman Jerry Bell and Jim Howell with questions.

Columbus Pool schedule

The Columbus Community Pool will be open on Saturday, May 21, 2011 and close Sunday, August 14, 2011. The admission rates will remain the same as last year. There will be an 'early bird' sign up period for season passes. If a season pass is purchased from May 1st through May 20th, the single season will be \$45 and the family season will be \$95. Columbus Group swimming lessons will also be taught and the price will be \$30 for ten one-hour lessons. Your child must have completed kindergarten to attend.

Conesville School reunion set

May 28, 2011, is the date set for the Conesville School Reunion to be held at the Conesville Community Center. The reunion is open to anyone wishing to attend. However, you must have reservations. You may make reservations by calling either Fran Morrison at 319-728-2319 or 319-631-0682 or Rose Wagoner at 319-728-2027. The cost is \$16.00 per plate. The door will open at 11:30 a.m. and a full meal will be served at 12:30 p.m., catered by Kalona Kountry Katering. See you there.

Elvis to be at the Manor

Join us today, Wednesday, May 4th for an evening of fun with Elvis (Junior Tally). The concert will begin at 7:00 p.m. in the Colonial Manor Resident Dining Room. We hope you will be able to attend.

Etude Spring Show

The Etude Spring Show will be Tuesday, May 10th at 7:00 p.m. at the United Methodist Church. Donations will be used for music scholarships.

Columbus City to flush hydrants

City of Columbus City will be flushing fire hydrants on Saturday May 7th, 2011 early morning. Water pressure may be low that day and may be discolored. Check the water in your washing machine before washing clothes. Also Columbus City will NOT be holding a City Wide Clean up day this year.

Half Hour Club to meet

The Half Hour Club will meet Tuesday, May 10th at Connie Lewis' cabin. Lake Odessa for a potluck lunch at 11:30 a.m. please meet at the Weber & Huston parking lot at 10:45 a.m. to car pool. Notice the change of date and place.

Horticultural Class plant sale

The Columbus Community High School Horticulture Class will have their annual bedding and vegetable plant sale Monday, May 9th thru Friday, May 13th from 3:30-5:30 p.m. at the greenhouse, located behind the high school off of Springer Street. New this year: Hostas and other perennials! For questions, please call Mrs. McWhirter at 319-728-2231 x 3621.

Conservation Board to meet

The Louisa County Conservation Board will meet today, Wednesday, May 4, 2011, at 5:00 p.m., at the Louisa County Conservation Board Office.

Senior Center honors all Mothers

All ladies eating at the Sr. Center on Friday, May 6th will receive a flower to celebrate Mothers Day.

Potluck at Colonial Manor

Mark your calendar for Wednesday, May 11th. Mark Moore from Burlington, Iowa will play the piano at Colonial Manor starting at 11:00 followed by the Noon Potluck. Guests are asked to bring one dish of their choice. Meat, rolls, beverages, and table service will be provided.

Mothers' Day Social at the Manor

You are invited to stop by Colonial Manor on Saturday May 7th from 9:00 - 10:30. Join us for piano music by Marsha Gerot beginning at 9:00 followed by refreshments at 9:30 a.m.

Farmers' Market begins this Friday

Fridays 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the American Legion parking lot May 6th to October 14th. The market offers fresh produce, baked goods, homemade noodles, jams and jellies, and plants. Some vendors accept Iowa Farmers Market Nutrition, WIC and Senior Program coupons. Buy fresh and local and taste the difference. For more information, including how to participate as a vendor contact Nitza or Mallory at 319-728-7971.

Winfield Mt.-Union alumni banquet

The Winfield-Mt. Union Alumni Association is hosting the 102nd annual banquet to be held Saturday, May 28, 2011, at 6:30 p.m. The banquet will be held in the Winfield gymnasium. Alumni and guests will be served a buffet, which will be catered by Pork's Restaurant. Reservations may be made to Gwyn McCreight, 109 North Huntsberry, Winfield, IA 52659, phone 319-257-6724, or by email to pjfricke@hotmail.com. Please note "WMU Alumni" in the subject line. Deadline for receiving reservations is Saturday, May 7, 2011. The Alumni Association would appreciate an update of any name or address changes. Also, a casual coffee will be hosted by the Winfield Chamber of Commerce in the school lunchroom from 3-6 p.m. on the afternoon of May 28th. This is a time for visiting and catching up with old friends.

Breakfast at the Opera House

It's time for the May breakfast at the Ainsworth Community Center/Opera House. The date is Saturday, May 7th, 2011. Time is set for 7 am to 9 am. Cost is \$7 per person with children 10 and under free with adult. We serve biscuits and gravy, ham, sausage, hash browns, scrambled eggs, pancakes, casseroles, rolls, fruit, orange juice, milk, coffee and whatever else the cooks come up with. This is a fundraiser for the Opera House. Come enjoy breakfast with us.