

City of Letts merges past with future

By John Carpenter
Gazette Staff

Overcast skies and a light rain could not dampen the spirit of the citizens of Letts last Monday afternoon as Letts celebrated their past by moving into the future. That date marked the 100th anniversary of the Letts Library, but it also foreshadowed the future of Letts as ground was broken for the new Letts Community Center.

This new facility will house the city's Library, City Hall, community room, and through the gift of a \$25,000 generator from FEMA, will also serve as the city's emergency shelter.

Although preliminary estimates put the cost of the building at \$800,000, cost estimates are now projected at \$600,000. Funding for the facility came from a \$400,000 IJOBS Grant, a \$60,000 Carver Trust Grant, a \$25,000 Grant from Muscatine Foods, with the balance from private donations and fund raisers. "The citizens of Letts never cease to amaze me," said Mayor Jerry Kirk, "this project has been in the planning stage for four years, and people never gave up in their fundraising efforts. This will mark a new beginning for our community."

Dirt work is scheduled to begin next Monday, with an anticipated



Pictured breaking ground for the new Letts Community Center are, left to right: Jerry Kirk, Don Foor, Bill Kemp, Karen Koppe and Annette Townsley.

completion date of October 1st. First Construction Group will be the general contractor with ten local contractors serving as sub-contractors.

When completed, this new facility will not only be a valuable asset to the citizens of Letts, but will also serve as a monument to a community

of citizens that care.

Congratulations to everyone in Letts for this amazing accomplishment.

U of Iowa faculty to visit C.J.

The professors will become the students when a group of University of Iowa faculty members embarks on a two-day learning tour of Southeast Iowa this month. The fifth annual Faculty Engagement Corps will visit Fort Madison, Burlington and Columbus Junction, where UI faculty will meet with business, and civic leaders, visit schools, tour a hospital and discover the power of wind energy.

The trip allows faculty members to develop a clearer understanding of the cultural, historical, economic and educational underpinnings of the state, and introduces faculty to the communities from which their students come and in which the state taxpayers live.

"Often when our faculty and administrators visit Iowa communities, we are making presentations about an area of our expertise or sharing information about the university's mission, goals and achievements," said UI Provost Wallace Loh. "This trip is different. It's a learning mission for our faculty, an opportunity to find out how we can contribute to these communities' efforts and to learn from what they are already doing so well."

The group will start in Fort Madison on Wednesday, May 19, where it will tour Siemens Energy and meet with the executive team to learn about wind energy and the future of Iowa's green economy. From there the bus heads to Burlington, where the group will meet with leadership and staff at the Great River Medical Center day concludes with a dinner meeting with business and civic leaders who will share the successes and challenges of one of Iowa's oldest communities.

The tour's second day focuses on education, with May 20 visits to Southeastern Community College in the morning and Columbus Junction Community Schools in the afternoon.

The Engagement Corps began in 2006 as part of the university's Year of Public Engagement and now is supported by the Office of the Provost, the Faculty Senate and the Office of University Relations.

"I am so gratified at the gracious and generous way the hosting communities have opened their doors to us," said Loh. "I truly believe the university faculty are the net beneficiaries of this important exchange of ideas."

Library hosts CCHS Art Show



The Columbus Junction Library was the host of the annual Columbus Community Schools' art show last week. A number of exhibits were displayed showcasing a variety of talents. New items at the Library this week includes: Every Last 1 - Anna Quindlen; Hannahs List-Debbie Macomber; Kitchen House- Kathleen Grissom; Postmistress - Sarah Blake; Shadow of Your Smile - Mary Higgins Clark; Whiter than Snow - Sandra Dallas; Yellow House - Patricia Falvey; Innocent - Scott Turow; Kisses - Stuart Woods; Lucid Intervals - Stuart Woods; Now Eat This - Rocco Dispirito.

Remember to check the Catalog Tab on our website to check all new titles added in the last month: www.columbusjct.lib.ia.us.

Thank you for the book suggestions that have been coming in through our website! We appreciate any and all suggestions! We use our suggestion list in our purchase plan.

Dr. Dan Crawford to be honored as Columbus Distinguished Graduate at graduation ceremonies

Columbus Community School District will celebrate the third recipient of the 'Distinguished Columbus Graduate Program' during the Columbus graduation ceremony Sunday, May 16. The distinguished graduate chosen, Dr. Dan Crawford, will be attending the ceremony and will speak to the graduates. Prior recipients of this award are Mr. Hal Prior and Mr. Tom Huston. Mr. Brian Cummins did the nomination of Dr. Crawford.

County Interpretative Center receives \$10,000 from Tri-Rivers Foundation

Going once, going twice... \$10,000 for the Louisa Interpretive Center! The Board of Directors of Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation recently approved directing \$10,000 from the proceeds of their February auction to the Louisa Interpretive Center at Langwood. The auction raised \$10,700; the balance not designated for the interpretive center project will remain in the foundation's general fund to support conservation activities in the Louisa Resource Area.

This year's auction, held at Delzell Bros. near Morning Sun, had record attendance and was a record setting fundraiser for Tri-Rivers. "People came to support the Interpretive Center and we are thrilled to be able to direct another \$10,000 to that project!" remarked Kathy Vance, Louisa Interpretive Center fundraising committee co-chair. This

is the fifth donation of this size for the Louisa County project. Previous major donations came from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, the Tri-Rivers Board of Directors, Dorothy and AJ Boysen and Cloverdale Farm.

The Louisa Interpretive Center will be a natural resource focused Great River Road destination with indoor and outdoor exhibits plus 40 acres of natural surroundings adjacent to Langwood Education Center, southeast of Grandview. Fund raising is currently underway to provide matching funds for a \$576,000 Federal Scenic Byways grant awarded for site and design work that is starting this spring.

More information about the Louisa Interpretive Center and Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation is available at www.tri-rivers.org or by calling 319-527-4530.

Area School Reunions

Grandview School Reunion

The annual Grandview Consolidated School Reunion will be held May 29, 2010 at the Grandview Community Bible Church Friendship Center. Registration will begin at 5:00 p.m. and dinner will be served at 6:00 p.m.

The classes of 1940, 1945, 1950 and 1955 will be honored. All alumni, any former students and faculty who were a part of the Grandview School, through 1959 are encouraged to attend. Guests are welcome.

For reservations contact either Betty Jo Rowe, P.O. Box 335 Grandview Ia. 52752 or phone 319-729-4291; Sharon Beik, 12200 130th St. Wapello, Ia. 52653 phone 319-729-5331 or 563-299-7348. Please make reservations by May 24. The cost is \$9.00 per person at the door.

Wyman School Alumni Banquet

Will be held on Saturday July 10, 2010 in the United Church of Crawfordsville with doors opening at 5:30 p.m. and the banquet starting at 6:30 p.m. all alumni, former school employees, anyone who ever attended Wyman School, and all other friends who have an interest in the school and community are invited to attend. The committee is planning on a record attendance in recognition of this very special occasion, 75 years of Wyman Alumni Banquets! Honored classes will be 1940, 1950, and 1955.

For more information, or to make reservations, please call Frieda Finke 319-658-2316 before June 30.

The class of 1956 was the last to graduate from Wyman High School before the school became a part of the Winfield-Mt. Union School District. The Wyman School building was then used as an elementary center for the WMU School District until it was closed in 1978.

Briefly -

Relay For Life golf tournament

A 4-Person Best Shot Tournament will be held on Saturday, June 5, 2010 at the Cedar Crest Country Club in Columbus Junction to benefit the Louisa County Relay for Life and the American Cancer Society. Tee times are 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. Teams may consist of 4 men, 4 women, or any combination (co-ed). Entry fee is \$100.00 per team. There will be hole prizes, a 50/50 drawing, drawing for prizes, and a \$1,000 prize for a hole-in-one on Hole #9. Contact Cedar Crest Country Club at 319-728-8461 to sign up and reserve your cart.

City Council meets tonight

Will hold its regular Council meeting on Wednesday, May 12, 2010 at 5:30 p.m. at the new Civic Center / City Hall.

Lions Club pancake breakfast

The Lions Club will hold their semi-annual pancake breakfast on Saturday, May 15 and Sunday, May 16 from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the Columbus Senior Center. All-you-can-eat pancakes, eggs, sausage and drinks. Adults - \$6.00 and children under 12 - \$4.00. All bikers and friends are welcome. We serve good food to good people for a good cause (Lionism).

Colonial Manor Potluck

Colonial Manor will host their annual Nursing Home Week Potluck for residents, families and friends today, Wednesday, May 12th at Noon. Guests are asked to bring one dish to pass. Chicken, rolls, beverages, and table service will be provided.

Embroidery Club to meet

The Embroidery Club meeting for May at, OUR SHOP will be on May 18 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. We are working on Brazilian Embroidery. Please feel free to come and bring your own project if you don't want to do these projects. It is a time to get out and enjoy people.

2010 County Fair dates set

The dates for the 2010 Louisa County Fair are: July 24 - Parade and Fair Kickoff; and Fair - dates July 26-31. Dates for the Iowa State Fair are August 12-22.

Conservation Board to meet

The Louisa County Conservation Board will meet today, Wednesday, May 12, 2010 at 5:30 p.m., at the Virginia Grove Recreation Area Shelter.

Masons to honor 50 year members

The Columbus City Masonic Lodge will be hosting a supper at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 20th to honor two new 50 year members of the Masonic Lodge, Tommy Thomas and Karl Elliott, and also to honor all 50 year members. All Masons are invited to attend.

School Board to meet

Columbus Community School District, you are hereby notified that the Board of Education will meet May 17, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. at Roundy Elementary School Library, 1212 Colton Street, Columbus Junction, Iowa 52738.

Retirement party for Steve Helscher and Jay Hauenstein

Sunday, May 30, 2010 please come and help us honor our music directors Steve Helscher and Jay Hauenstein as they retire from CCHS. The program will begin at 2 p.m. in the Columbus High School gym for Mr. Helscher and immediately following for Mr. Hauenstein in the auditorium. Refreshments will be served in the student center after the programs.

Book Fair at Roundy Elementary

Stop in at Roundy Elementary for the annual Spring Book Fair. We are open every day this week during school hours and will close at noon on Friday. Enjoy the buy one get one free in our jungle like setting. Books for all ages ranging from cookbooks, dictionaries, fiction, and nonfiction. Questions call 319-728-6218. The Book Fair will be open this Thursday, May 13, 2010 during Parents' Night.

Shellbark Club to meet

Shellbark club will meet May 20, at 11:30 a.m. at the Bisto in Washington, Iowa.

Retired School Personnel to meet

The Louisa County retired school personnel will meet Tuesday, May 18 at the Historical Society in Wapello. This will be a potluck dinner at 11:30 a.m.

CCHS Alumni Banquet

The CCHS Alumni Banquet will take place at the Roundy Elementary School on June 12, 2010. The delicious Banquet meal will be provided by the Columbus Junction Presbyterian Women. Brian Cummings from the 50-year class will be Toastmaster, with entertainment by the Columbus Junction Men's Quartet. Special recognition will be given to the 50-year (1960) class and the 25-year (1985) 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. Superintendent Bridenstine will be hosting a school tour in the afternoon. Show up at 4:00 p.m. and join the 50-year class for the tour. Contact co-chairmen Jerry Bell and Jim Howell with questions.

The Conesville School Reunion is slated for May 29, 2010 at the Community Center in Conesville, Iowa. Invitations have been sent but anyone interested in this event is more than welcome to attend. You may call Fran Morrison at 319-728-2319 or Rose Wagoner at 319-728-2027 for reservations. The doors will be open at 11:30 a.m. and Kalona Country Catering will be serving a full meal at 12:30 p.m. The cost is \$16.00 per person. Don't let this reunion be something you've always wanted to attend but didn't. Just do it!

Wapello School Reunion

The planning committee for the Wapello All-Alumni Banquet needs to know if any graduates did not receive letters regarding the July 17 event. Anyone who did not get the letter is asked to contact Jean Brauns at 319-523-3462 or by email at bjbrauns@mchsi.com or Paula Buckman at pbuckman@louisacom.net. The letters are needed for making reservations.