



Your Award Winning Hometown Newspaper

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## Two Former graduates to be honored at CCHS Commencement Ceremony

By Mary Masonholder Wilson  
Gazette Staff

A few years ago, Superintendent Rich Bridenstine started a new tradition at graduation. He felt there were many people who had graduated from Columbus that would be great role models for the seniors to see and hear. Bridenstine had the public submit the names of people they felt would meet this criterion, and each year one person was selected to speak at the ceremony. However, this year, two names were selected. The names were John Ritchie Orr and Roger Salazar.

John Ritchie Orr was born on January 16, 1933 and was the son of Carolyn and Lester Orr. Lester Orr operated a store, 'Ritchie and Orr', in downtown Columbus Junction for several years. Rich Orr, as he became known, grew up in Columbus Junction and spent his school years here. He played football, basketball and ran track for Columbus High. He was the first Eagle Scout to earn that ranking in Louisa County history.

He then went on to the University of Iowa and earned a degree in Physics with Dr. James Van Allen as his mentor. He earned his Ph.D. in physics at the University of Washington. He participated in the construction of the Meson Lab in the early 1970's, and he eventually became the project manager for the Tevatron. During his career, he worked in several different Fermilab departments, and he was one of four scientists to receive the National Medal of Technology for his contributions to the creation of the Tevatron. The medal was presented to Orr by President George H.W. Bush. John Ritchie Orr passed away last year on November 3, 2011. Because he is no longer living, Brian Cummings, retired science teacher at Columbus, will accept the award on his behalf.

Roger Salazar was a Texas resident originally born in Acuna, Mexico when he came to Southeast Iowa as a teenager to visit his brother who was working in Muscatine. Salazar ended up in Columbus Junction and in the fall of 1966, Roger enrolled in Columbus Community High School as a freshman. He was the first Hispanic football player on the CCHS team, and in 1969, Roger became the first Hispanic to graduate from Columbus Community High School. In his later life, he married Laurie Snyder, also a Columbus grad, and they made their home in the Junction. From 1972 until 2002, he was a member of the Columbus Community Fire Department, spending two terms as Fire Chief. He also served as a member of the Columbus Junction City Council. Salazar, who is a man of principle and hard work, has set a fine example for incoming Hispanics of how much the community has to offer if one has dedication and a good work ethic. Salazar is one who gives to the community because he feels it is his duty, and he expects nothing in return.

Both Orr and Salazar are outstanding role models for anyone at any age. They will be honored at this year's graduation ceremony on May 13<sup>th</sup>.

## A Real Frog Choker hits CJ



The Columbus Junction area has experienced its share of rain in the past week. Last Thursday evening, a number of storms hit southeast Iowa. The Wyman area suffered tornado damage as a number of farm buildings and homes were affected. In Columbus Junction over five inches of rain fell in a short time. This was followed up with another inch and a half rainfall on Sunday evening. Fortunately no wind damage was reported in our area during these storms, however many basements were flooded. Pictured above is the run-off damage at Monkey Run Creek.

## Welcome to Conesville



The City of Conesville has a new welcome sign in its downtown. The sign was the idea of Tom and Teri Bell and painted by Jesus Rubaclava. It features symbols that represent Conesville, as well as a portrait of Willard Solomon in the center. Pictured above is Willard standing in front of the sign. Notice that Willard donned the same shirt for this picture that he was wearing when his picture was painted.

## Odessa Winery makes mark in area

By Mary Masonholder Wilson

The current interest in wine is getting closer to home. With the opening of Odessa Vineyard, at 10448 77<sup>th</sup> St., Wapello last summer, another Iowa vineyard appeared.

Their actual location is on the bluff just 2 miles west of their namesake, Lake Odessa, right off Highway 99.

The winery is owned and managed by Corey and Tami Nichols with Corey being the vintner. Tami has been a nurse in Columbus Junction at Colonial Manor for several years. Tami tells the story that 13 years ago

they bought their current property and moved there. There were nine acres of land with the house. The couple wanted to do something with the land and considered a Christmas tree farm, an orchard, or the planting and selling of grapes. They decided to do the grapes, and at first had no intention of making and selling wine. However, in time, the winery idea grew, and they are glad it did.

They actually planted their first grapes five years ago as it takes 4-5 years to get a good crop. They opened their winery last year, complete with tasting room, and

handcrafted gifts for sale. They currently have twelve different wines, some sweet, dry, or semi-sweet. When their inventory is complete, they will have a total of fifteen wines. All but two of the wines are made from their grapes. French oak and American oak are used to age and flavor the wines.

Various events are planned at the winery. One up-coming presentation will be by an acoustical guitar player. Check their website: [www.odessavineyards.com](http://www.odessavineyards.com) to find out what is happening. They are closed on Monday and Tuesday;

## Body found in river identified

On Saturday, March 31, 2012 at 2:38 p.m. the Louisa County Sheriff's Department received a 911 call, of a body found in the Iowa River, south of Highway 70 river bridge. This was reported by two subjects who had been fishing at the river.

Officer's from the Louisa County Sheriff's Office, Columbus Junction Police Department, Iowa Department of Natural Resources and Iowa State

Patrol responded to the call, along with Columbus Junction Fire and Rescue.

The body of a male subject was subsequently recovered from the river. The subject was taken to the Iowa State Medical Examiner's Office, where an autopsy was completed. Cause of death was undetermined.

An investigation into the identity

of the subject showed the male to be, Lo Pi, age 32. Lo was a refugee from Burma, who was living in Columbus Junction. He had been reported missing to the Columbus Junction Police Department on January 19, 2012.

Anyone with information concerning the whereabouts of Lo Pi between the dates of December 16, 2011 and March 31, 2012, is encouraged to contact the Columbus Junction Police Department or the Louisa County Sheriff's Office at 319-523-4371.

## Briefly -

### City Council meets tonight

The City of Columbus Junction will hold a regular Council meeting on Wednesday, May 9, 2012 at 5:30 p.m. in the New Civic Center/City Hall.

### 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! Tickets are available at both Columbus Junction Banks.

### Columbus Pool to open

The Columbus Community Pool will be open on Saturday, May 19, 2012 and close Sunday, August 12, 2012. 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 3rd through May 18th, the single season would be \$45 and the family season would \$95. They can be purchased in the high school office. Arrangements can be made for swimming lessons by calling the swimming pool office (319-728-2233). Lifeguard certification and re-certification classes will take place May 19-21, 2012, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, contact Sue O'Donnell at the high school.

### Early Childhood Board to meet

The Early Childhood Iowa Area Board Des Moines/Louisa Counties will be meeting on May 16, 2012, at 10:00 a.m. at the First United Presbyterian Church, 801 Middle St., Mediapolis, IA. The board will be reviewing funding requests for FY 2013.

### County Fair dates set

The Louisa County Fair dates for 2012 are a July 22 kick off and the fair is July 23-28.

### Visual Support Group to meet

The Louisa County Visual Support meeting will be held on the third Thursday of May, (May 17<sup>th</sup>). We will meet at the Ambulance Building at 1 p.m. Susan Howard from the Des Moines Department for the Blind and Handicapped will be our speaker. She will be bringing aids and devices that will help those of us having low vision. Please stop in and see what new things Susan will show us. The host/hostesses are Bill and Charlene Aspelmeier, Bev Paris and Clyde and Phyllis Mueller. For more information, call Lois Richers at 527-2630.

### Conservation Board to meet

The Louisa County Conservation Board will meet on Wednesday, May 9, 2012, at 5:30 p.m. at the Louisa County Conservation Office.

### New division in Floral Hall

There will be a new division in the Floral Hall for the 2012 Louisa County Fair in Snapshots. Interpretive snapshots to include topics of light, safe, free, shaker. For more information, consult the 2012 fair book.

### Speaker at Historical Society

The Louisa County Historical Society will host an afternoon speaker on Sunday, May 20, 2012 at 2 p.m. at the museum in Wapello, Iowa. Rosemary Harris of Columbus Junction, will speak about "A Lady Aviator, a Friend of Amelia's." You are invited to attend. The hosts will be the Columbus Junction Board members.

### Museum in need of class 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.

### Quilts of Louisa County

Coming to Louisa County Historical Society on Thursday, May 10, and Friday, May 11<sup>th</sup> (both days from 1-4 p.m.) and Saturday, May 12 from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Many demonstrations will be presented every day. On Saturday, a quilt program will be followed by a button program. Refreshments will be available on Thursday and Friday and a luncheon will be available on Saturday. This outing will make a great Mother's Day gift! Any questions, call 728-8818.

### Shellbark Club to meet

The Shellbark Club will meet Thursday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at an Amish home in Kalona at 11:30 a.m. Please meet at Ainsworth Four Corners at 10:45 to carpool. Please call Judy Wilson by May 15<sup>th</sup> for her to make reservations.

Wednesday-Friday is 3-7 P.M.; and Saturday is 11 A.M.-7:00 P.M. Sunday is noon to 5:00 P.M..

Tami Nichols says, "Wine takes patience and an understanding of

chemistry." The couple has done several wine-tasting events and hope to do more. Most of all, they hope people come to their winery and find a flavor that suits the palate.



Tami Nichols gives samples of Odessa Wine during an open house at Main Street Gifts and Antiques.