

Lisa Piper honored at CCHS Graduation

By John Carpenter
Gazette Staff

Fifty-two Columbus Community seniors crossed the stage last Sunday and entered a new world as graduation ceremonies were held at Columbus Community School.

Lillana Alvarez welcomed the attendees. Sean Hernandez gave the Main Address and Jared Todd was the Speaker at Large. The Farewell Address was given by Marina Ramirez. The Columbus High School Band and Chorus provided music for the ceremony.

For the fourth year, a distinguished graduate was recognized. This year's honoree was Lisa Piper, a 1988 graduate of Columbus Community. Lisa was an outstanding student at Columbus Community, and devoted her extracurricular time to music, mock trial, the yearbook, and school newspaper, along with many other activities.

After graduation Lisa attended and graduated from the University of Iowa, and earned her JD degree at the American University College of Law in Washington D.C. In 1993 she entered the Peace Corps where she taught English in Thailand. Upon her return to the United States she



worked as an intern and staff attorney for Senator Harkin's office.

Lisa entered into private practice in Arlington, Virginia for a number of years, always advocating for the

best interests of children. Since 2004 she has been with the "Save the Children" organization in Afghanistan, China and now La Paz, Bolivia.

Lisa Piper has devoted her life to

helping others, and through her success sets a wonderful example of what can be accomplished with a Columbus Community education coupled with a sense of doing the right thing.

County Relay For Life set for August 6th

The Relay for Life Committee has selected Saturday, August 6 for the 2011 Cancer Relay. The ceremony will begin on Saturday at Noon and closing will be at 12 Midnight. Columbus Junction will be the host city this year. Events will include survivor's walk and dedication, entertainment, survivor's dinner, silent auction, pie auction, kids' games, and frozen t-shirt contest.

We need teams!!! Contact Karen Varnum at 319-523-8147, Jean

Bermel at 319-523-3245, Verlinda Prior at 319-728-2568, or Midge Craven at 319-728-2808.

We welcome anyone interested in helping. It is a great night to celebrate life. Cancer is a killer of too many friends and loved ones. University of Iowa is a big recipient of monies that we make at the Relay. Their research has made the survival rate of cancer patients much higher and a much-needed cure is closer.

It is not hard to form a team. We

have many ideas on ways to make money, so talk to your friends and family and join us for a night of remembrance and celebration.

Personal Note: I found out I had cancer in July of 2009. I went for a cat scan because of pain in my stomach. Because of the cat scan, they found spots on my kidneys. In August, I went for my kidney operation to remove the cancer. I was cut almost in two, and it was a 6-week recovery. In October of 2010, I went

in to have the tumor removed on my other kidney. This time, I had five small cuts, was in the hospital two days and watching my granddaughter run track in four days. In that short amount of time, new methods had been adopted by the hospital for this treatment. This is what our Relay money does. I am cancer free and more determined than ever to raise enough money that we can give more people a longer and better life.

/s/ Karen Varnum

School Board reviews long range plan

By Jim Rudisill

A five-point, long-range plan unveiled before the Columbus School Board Monday would mean a 40-acre land acquisition, new athletic fields, a community outreach building, new wrestling facility and a new drive to Roundy Elementary School.

Al Bohling, a Columbus Junction resident who works as a community development team leader for Shive-Hattery, Cedar Rapids; and civil engineer Jon Fitch outlined the plan to about 30 board members, school staff and local residents.

Bohling said the plan was developed by a long-range committee that had been established by the school board, partially to help the school district replace an aging wrestling facility. He said the committee held three meetings and quickly agreed a major overhaul of the entire school campus was needed.

"There have been a lot of opinions (given) and (this plan) represents the general direction all the committee can support," Bohling said.

The key to the plan is the acquisition of a 40-acre parcel on County Road X17 west of Columbus Junction. The proposed site would be across from the current Columbus Softball Association fields and south of Wiele Motor Company. School officials said the owner had already been contacted and indicated support for the plan. If the school is able to purchase the land, Bohling said the long-range plan calls for the district to relocate its athletic fields to the site. The first that should be moved is the softball field, he said.

A site plan developed by Shive-Hattery included fields for baseball, softball, football and a multi-use/soccer area. A central building would provide both concession space and locker rooms for the athletes. Parking would be available for 400 cars,

Fitch said.

Bohling said the softball field relocation would set the course for other components of the project. In addition to the land acquisition, those steps would construct an outreach building for Muscatine Community College; building a wrestling facility; and constructing a new drive to the Roundy Elementary School Building.

The outreach building is a joint project of the school district and Muscatine Community College (MCC). The two organizations have been discussing the project for the past several months. MCC President Jeff Armstrong told the group he had arranged \$600,000 in funding assistance for the new building and was seeking more. Bohling said cost estimates for the work had not been developed, but for budgeting purposes had set the cost of the MCC building at \$1.2 million. Other budget costs included \$780,000 for the wrestling building; \$300,000 for the land; and \$100,000 for the new Roundy drive.

School board members were excited over the proposal, but were warned by Superintendent Rich Bridenstine about potential funding difficulties. According to Bridenstine, the school could finance the improvements through revenue bonds, using the district's 1% state sales tax revenue. However, the district currently does not have the authority to finance revenue bonds with any sales tax funding that does not come from Louisa or Muscatine county because of the language used in the sales tax election several years ago.

Obligating funds that come from outside those counties would require the school to seek a new vote from district residents. Officials said they would plan to hold a vote in September, but wanted to move forward now with design work.

A final decision is expected next month.

In other action, the board ap-

proved hiring a curriculum coordinator/instructional coach to replace Tara Paul, who resigned last month after accepting the superintendent's position at the Estherville/Lincoln Central School District. The board also accepted new academic goals and reviewed proposed student handbook changes. The final vote on the curriculum coordinator's position was 3-2 in favor, with board members Dan Peters and Polly Prior opposing it.

Peters and Prior had indicated they felt a job description for the position encroached on the administrative staff and could curtail the time the school's principals spend in the classroom. Proponents disputed those claims and said the job description would allow for more collaborative efforts between administrators and teachers.

The board also

* accepted with regret the resignations of long-time teachers Kathleen Almelen and Diane Olson. Almelen has taught art in the district for 38 years, while Olson has worked in the district for 22 years, most recently as a junior high language arts teacher. Other resignations accepted by the board included Chris Baker, high school science; Troy Kowalski, instrumental music; Jennifer Scorpil, junior high football cheerleading sponsor; and Wendy Watson, high

school student council;

* accepted a bid from Columbus Lumber to provide material for the Family Consumer Science Remodeling Project;

* agreed to hire an assistant cross-country track coach, a decision that was opposed by board member Sandra Martin;

* accepted a recommendation to set student academic progress goals for next year. The new goals call for increasing reading, science and math proficiency in the district's 5th and 6th grades. In the 2010-11 school year, the reading proficiency of 5th and 6th graders dropped by 1.8%, when compared with the previous year, while science proficiency fell by 5.63%. However, 5th and 6th graders showed a 3.95% increase in math proficiency during that period;

* received a detailed report from district resident Bob Reid, who questioned if service agreements for various maintenance work had been properly approved. Reid said board policy might have been violated in some of the contract awards. Later in the meeting, Bridenstine acknowledged some board policies had not been followed, but said all state laws had been obeyed. He said the policy mixup occurred when the Iowa Association of School Boards failed to notify the district of some changes.

Gazette begins milestone year

Yesterday, May 17th, began the Gazette's 125th year of publication. The first issue of the Columbus Gazette appeared on the streets of Columbus Junction on May 17, 1887, and an issue has been produced every week since. Throughout the year we will have various features celebrating our legacy, and we will have some type of event planned next May for our 125th anniversary. At the present time plans are in the early stages, but if any readers have suggestions for stories, have memories of the Gazette that they would like to share, or thoughts on how to celebrate our 125th anniversary, please feel free to let us know. And rest assured, if the good Lord is willing, and the creek don't rise, we have every intention on continuing to produce an issue for the next 125 years.

Briefly -

Relay For Life golf tournament

4-Person Best Shot Tournament to benefit Louisa County Relay for Life - American Cancer Society will be held on Saturday June, 4, 2011 with 8:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. tee times at the Cedar Crest Country Club, 14547 County Rd X-17, Columbus Junction, Ia. 52738. There will be hole prizes, 50/50 drawing and drawing for prizes. Teams may consist of 4 men - 4 women - or any combination (co-ed). Entry fee is \$100.00 per team, please contact Cedar Crest Country Club to sign up and reserve your cart, phone 319-728-8461.

Alzheimer's Support Group to meet

The Alzheimer's Association Henry County Support Group will meet on Thursday, May 19th at the First Presbyterian Church in Winfield from 3-4 p.m. The topic this month is on behavior issues. This is free and open to the public. All caregivers and family members are encouraged to attend. For more information please call Angie Ebeling or Peggy Beatty at 319-257-3303.

FFA Alumni to meet

The Columbus FFA Alumni will meet at 6:00 p.m. in the Ag Building today, Wednesday, May 18th.

Colonial Manor Remembrance Service

You are invited to attend a Remembrance Service on Wednesday, May 25th, at 3 p.m. in the Colonial Manor Activity Room. We will be remembering: Ray and Sadie Coleman, Ralph Cummings, Marie Duncan, Donna Eden, Marilyn Kanellis, Margaret Linville, Earl Martin, Mary Meeker, Margaret Quigley, Norma Schweitzer, Helen Wagner, and Karolee Wirt. Pastor Al Coffin will officiate.

Alumni Banquet set

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.

Pool opens this Saturday

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.

Celebrate Community Action Month

You are invited to celebrate Community Action Month on Thursday, May 19, 2011, from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. at Louisa County Community Action, 205 East Access Road, Suite D, Columbus Junction, IA. Refreshments provided.

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 get reservations by calling either Fran Morrison at 319-728-2319 or 319-631-0682 or Rose Wagoner at 319-728-2027 and 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 Catering. See you there.

Farmers' Market this Friday

Fridays from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the American Legion parking lot, May 20th 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.

Conservation Board to meet

The Louisa County Conservation Board will meet on Tuesday, May 17, 2011, at 6:00 p.m., in the Louisa County Conservation Board Office.

Lions Club Breakfast

The Columbus Junction Lions Club will again be holding their Pancake/Sausage Breakfast on Saturday, May 28, and Sunday, May 29, 2011, at the Columbus Junction Community Senior Center, 125 E. Walnut Street. All you can eat sausage/pancakes/eggs/coffee/juice and milk will be served from 7:00 to 11:00 a.m. both days. Cost is \$6.00 for adults and \$4.00 for children under age 12. We invite everyone: local residents, visitors, bikers - anyone who likes to enjoy good food and fellowship. Proceeds will go towards our many Lions charitable endeavors.

Mother-Daughter tea in Conesville

The Conesville Methodist Women will be having a Mother-Daughter Tea at the Church in Conesville on Thursday, May 19, 2011, beginning at 7:00 p.m. Rosemary Harris from Columbus Junction will be presenting a program entitled, "Through the Water." It will tell about Noah's wife and her side of the story. Refreshments will follow the program. Everyone is welcome.

Next week is Poppy Week

Poppy Week in Columbus Junction is May 23rd - 28th. Please remember our veterans and the sacrifices they have made in order to preserve our freedom. Honor them by wearing a poppy this week. Disabled veterans make these poppies.

Shellbark Club to meet

The Shellbark Club will meet on Thursday, May 19th at Mi Pablo Real in Mt. Pleasant at 11:30 a.m. Please meet at Spring Run Church at 10:45 a.m. to carpool to Mt. Pleasant.

Blood checks at the Senior Center

There will be Cholesterol, Glucose, and Blood Pressure checks at the Columbus Community Senior Center on Tuesday, May 24, 2011, from 9 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Please come and have your blood checked and stay healthy.

Community Club meets this week

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