

# Memorial Day - a weekend of contrasts

By John Carpenter  
Gazette Staff

Mother Nature may have begun Memorial Day weekend on a bust, but she certainly ended it on a high note.

Saturday was a day of contradictions, as the day began with fog, clouds, and occasional rain drops, but the day ended with the sun peeking through, with temperatures hovering around the 70 degree mark.

Sunday saw a tremendous rain and lightning storm hit the area in the morning, but as the day progressed the weather moderated, and by afternoon again periods of sun were poking through. Temperatures climbed into the 80's.

However, on Monday Mother Nature gave us a true Memorial Day Holiday. The day began with sun, and sun continued throughout the holiday with temperatures into the 90's. All Memorial Day activities came off without a hitch. Pictured is the annual Avenue of Flags at the Columbus City Cemetery.



# Gazette Editorial - review of school long-range plan

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A couple of weeks ago we published a school board story describing a long range plan that a committee of citizens presented to the board. The plan was quite comprehensive, and since we wanted to also include other agenda items discussed at the meeting, we were unable to devote much space to the plan's concepts. So I decided to visit with the school administration to find out more particulars on what are the plan's goals, and how it is to be financed. The plan consists of these five points:

The first point, which I am very passionate about, is the construction of an outreach building for Muscatine Community College. This building would be located on our school campus, and would allow our high school seniors to get some college credits while in high school, and most importantly, would allow our graduating students to have an opportunity to have an affordable way to begin their college education. As one who began his college career at a community college, I am an ardent supporter of community colleges. Muscatine Community College has committed \$600,000 towards the construction costs.

The second point is the construction of a new wrestling facility near the high school. We have a very successful wrestling program, one that I would suspicion gives us some open enrollment students. I remember the facilities when my boys wrestled, and they were pretty rough

then. I can only imagine what they are like ten years later. I have always felt that if the school says they need something, they probably do. This new facility would certainly be safer, cleaner, and would add to our overall athletic facilities.

The third point is the purchase of 40 acres of land, possibly along Highway 92, for the future construction of an athletic complex. This becomes necessary as room is an issue on the present campus, and the feasibility of completing the other steps of the plan hinges on this purchase. Only the softball field would be located to this complex at the present time, with the baseball, football, track and soccer facilities in the future.

The fourth point is the construction of a new concrete road to Roundy Elementary running north of the bus barn location. This road would connect to the high school parking lot near where the sale barn stood. This would allow a one-way road to Roundy, and a one-way road from Roundy. With the amount of traffic that goes to and from Roundy every day, this makes very good sense.

However, in order to construct this road, the fifth point of the plan would need to be accomplished, moving the softball field to the new athletic complex. The proposed new road would need to go directly over where the present softball field stands.

The cost of the five-point plan is estimated to be in the area of \$2.9 million.

At the same meeting the commit-

tee also proposed a three-point plan that would purchase the 40 acres for a future sports complex, use the financial help from Muscatine Community College to build the college outreach building, and construct a new wrestling facility near the high school. The cost of this plan would be \$2 million.

So the question arises, "How do we pay for this?" The administration assured me that property taxes would not be used for this project. Unlike the Roundy Elementary, which took a bond issue and special property tax, these improvements will be paid by the 1cent sales tax we currently receive. With this sales tax, the school district receives a portion of the sales tax from not only Louisa County, but state wide. Overall, the district receives about \$700,000 yearly from this sales tax for improvements. In the past the district has used these funds to replace all of the roofs at the junior and senior high school, replaced lockers, funded the geothermal heating and cooling at the high school, and air conditioned the junior high. Also, the auditorium was refurbished. These proceeds would now be used to fund this project. The voters approved a "Revenue Purpose statement in 2005 to receive these tax moneys, and a new one will be on the ballot at the next school board election.

At a time when many small school districts are wrestling with budget issues (Columbus currently has a positive cash balance of over \$2.5 million), declining enrollments,

and outdated facilities, we are in a position to make plans that represent a period of growth. And because of the financial management of the administration and school board, we can consider items like the possible establishment of a community college building, new athletic facilities, and improvements to our existing campus with very little to nearly no tax burden to the public. How could we be in a better situation? Admittedly, the plan is long range and won't be accomplished for many years, but it is doable, and affordable.

The school board plans to take this item up as an action item on Monday, June 6<sup>th</sup>, and I would urge the board to adopt the plan (they particularly need to move quickly on the community college portion before we risk losing the financial commitment from MCC.) When completed, it will be something our community can be very proud of, and will certainly position Columbus schools for the future, as well as enhancing our community's strength and health. Over time I've come to the conclusion that there are only two directions you can go, either become visionary and move forward, or remain stationary and move back, staying the same isn't an option.

We have always been a community of vision and resilience, and I'm confident that our school board, as well as the patrons of our school district, will continue our tradition of progress when reviewing this new path for our schools. It is progressive, and it is doable.

# Jesus Lizarrage returns as Community Development intern

The Community Development Center is glad to once again welcome Jesus Lizarrage as an Administrative Assistant intern. Jesus previously filled the position in 2009 as part of his School-to-Career program at Columbus Community High School. He also helped city marketing efforts last summer by staffing a booth at the Johnson County Fair to promote Columbus Junction businesses, events and attractions.

Jesus graduated this May from Muscatine Community College with an Associates of Arts degree and will be transferring to the University of Northern Iowa this fall to major in Business Management with an emphasis in Human Resources. Interning at the Community Development Center allows Jesus to develop communication and organizational skills that have helped him at college and will be useful in his career.

Jesus will have various intern projects this summer including coordination of a new initiative seeking Farmers Market Sponsors. The project allows the Community Development Center to highlight local businesses during weekly farmers market on Friday afternoons. Jesus will also be working with Keep Columbus Beautiful, where he will be leading a group of volunteers in painting the KCB logo in crosswalks throughout the community. He will be working with LIFE Microlending and ISU Extension to offer Youth Marketplace business classes for sixth graders and will also look into recording some of the city's events and uploading them to the local access cable channel for the public to enjoy. The recordings will consist of highlights of events with special interviews. Jesus is an ambitious intern; "I'm really looking forward to this a summer filled with fun events!" he states.

If you're interested in being a Farmer's Market Sponsor or have any questions about other community projects please feel free to contact Jesus Lizarrage at [lizarrage-j@hotmail.com](mailto:lizarrage-j@hotmail.com) or contact Mallory Smith and Nitza Castillo via email at [cdc@columbusjunctioniowa.org](mailto:cdc@columbusjunctioniowa.org) or by phone at 319-728-7971.

# Keep Columbus Beautiful sculpture in the park



Talk about unique! What Columbus Junction has, is a one-of-a-kind set of metal sculptures of birds and flowers by Steve Tomfeld of Letts. They brighten up the Downtown Park and help make Columbus beautiful. You too can get on the Colum-Bus and help Keep Columbus Beautiful. Submitted photo.

# 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.

## Benefit for Peter Saxon

Peter was in a car accident August 29, 2010. He has a spinal cord injury (C5-C6) leaving him without use of hands or lower body. There is limited movement with his arms. There will be a benefit on Saturday, June 11, 2011, at the Twin Lakes Recreation Center, Clark Avenue, Winfield, IA. The cost is a \$5.00 cover charge. At 6:30 P.M. food is served. At 8:00 P.M. there will be KUSTOM KARAOKE/DJ - Jolene Norcross. The menu includes: Maid Rites, Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, Potato Salad, Chips, Baked Beans and Dessert. All proceeds go to the benefit for medical expenses, assistive equipment and other expenses related to Peter's recovery.

## Half Hour Club to meet

Half Hour Club will meet on Wednesday, June 8th at the Riverside Casino for breakfast. We will meet at the Weber & Huston parking lot at 7:30 a.m to car pool. Please note the change of day and time.

## Museum to offer Alumni Banquet hours

The Columbus Community Heritage Museum in Columbus Junction (old library building-122 Maple Street) hours for Alumni Banquet weekend will be Saturday, June 11th from 9:00 a.m. to Noon, and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and Sunday, June 12 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

## CCHS Alumni Banquet date

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.

## Cruise Night on the Square

The Corn Country Cruisers from Washington, Iowa are conducting Cruise Nights On The Square, (Washington, Iowa) on June 11<sup>th</sup>, July 9<sup>th</sup>, and Aug 13<sup>th</sup>. All dates are 5:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. There will be a 50/50 Drawing at 8:00 p.m. please enter on southwest side of square/no entry fees. For additional information please contact Randy Farrington at 319-694-5603. The American Legion Post 29 will provide food.

## Ice Cream Supper in Conesville

Conesville Methodist Church will be having a homemade ice cream supper on Thursday, June 9, at the Conesville Community Center. The menu includes: creamed chicken on a bun, loose meat hamburger, potato salad, baked beans, cake, beverages, and homemade ice cream. Serving begins at 5 p.m. There will be a free will offering.

## County Fair dates set

The Louisa County Fair will take place July 24-30, 2011. Kick-off will be Sunday, July 24<sup>th</sup>. Fair will start on Monday, July 25 ending on Saturday, July 30. Hope to see you at the fair!

## FFA Alumni to meet

The Columbus FFA Alumni will meet at Nancy Howell's house at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 1st.

## Fish-N-Fun Day cancelled

Louisa County's biennial Fish 'n Fun Day, scheduled for June 18, has been cancelled due to a severe winterkill of fish in the pond at Langwood Education Center. According to Iowa Department of Natural Resources biologist Chad Dolan, fish die-offs in farm ponds have been a common sight the last few years. Heavy snow and ice cover, especially for extended periods of time, mean aquatic plants don't produce oxygen. In the meantime, oxygen is still being used and eventually levels get so low that fish cannot survive. Sometimes the number of dead fish seen in the spring can be deceiving and the population left in the pond could still recover. However, the fish kill at Langwood appears to be quite severe and will require restocking to get a viable population. Once there are catchable fish, the event will be re-instated. A previous winterkill occurred in 2001 and at the next Fish 'n Fun Day in 2004, a record number of fish were caught. For more information contact the Louisa County Conservation office at 319-523-8381 or email [lccb@lccb.org](mailto:lccb@lccb.org).

## 6th Grade Entrepreneurs sought

If there is a student in your life that just finished 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, don't let them be bored this summer! Instead let the Community Development Center, LIFE Microlending and ISU Extension help them start a business and learn how exciting it is to be your own boss and sell your own products for a profit!! Youth Marketplace, and ISU Extension Curriculum will be taught on Monday and Thursday afternoons thru mid-July in the Civic Center by Columbus Grad and Community Development Intern Jesus Lizarrage. Youth Marketplace is an exciting hands-on entrepreneurship series. Together, groups of students create, market, and manage their own businesses. Students learn valuable business skills and can even earn profits in the process. There is no fee for this summer opportunity, but there are registration papers. To learn more please attend a Parent/Student Info night at the Civic Center on Wednesday, June 8<sup>th</sup> at 6pm or call the Community Development Center at 319.728.7971