

# Exemplary Service and Courage

*Firemen perform dangerous water rescue*

By John Carpenter  
Gazette Staff

What does a volunteer fire department do? I would imagine if you asked most people they would respond, "They put out fires." And although that answer is somewhat correct, the last few weeks have given me a much more appreciation for these volunteers. I have been a trustee for the fire department for twenty plus years, but I also sometimes fall into the rut of simply taking these people for granted. I know if I have a fire, I can call and they will come. I attend a monthly meeting, we review the business of the fire department, then I go home and that's it until the next meeting.

But a few weeks back, when the community experienced a rainfall of 5 plus inches, the true dedication and courage of these volunteers became evident. Two cars were stranded on Highway 92 late in the night in a low area adjacent to Roadhouse 92. Eleven people were in the cars, including an infant. The current was too swift for the use of boats, so the firemen tied ropes to each other and waded out to rescue the individuals. Water had reached the windshield wipers on one of the cars. I'm sure that many of these firemen were experiencing their own difficulties at home as a result of the heavy rain, but they came anyway.

Then a few days after this situation there was an accident on Highway 92 east of Columbus Junction. Apparently a motorist swerved across the centerline and hit a semi trailer truck. No one knew the extent of the injuries that were sustained, but our firemen responded immediately and stayed on the scene until those involved were evacuated



Area on Highway 92 where water overtook two autos during heavy rain.

and the area cleared.

And on last Friday night I was driving by the fire station and saw a number of cars parked there. They belonged to our firemen who gave up their time to take emergency vehicles to the races in the event of a problem. Undoubtedly some of the firemen wanted to see the races, but also some of them probably had other things to do. However, the community wouldn't have been able to hold the races without the involvement of our fire department.

The point that I am making is that we need to take a minute and reflect on how fortunate we are, as with many small communities, to have individuals who are willing to donate their time and skills to help in a wide array of very difficult situations. When called, they have no idea what

they will find. Possibly the accident that I mentioned earlier could have had a casualty. Possibly the flooding incident could have become a disastrous situation. Every fire has the possibility of causing injury or worse to a fireman. But they respond without question, and do their job to the best of their ability.

And the dedication extends beyond calls. The firemen meet at least twice a month to undergo training, maintain equipment, and deal with an endless stream of governmental regulations. Many weekends they are at the station working on trucks, the building, or firefighting equipment. Last year our fire department was an invaluable resource during the flood. And after the waters receded, the firemen went immediately to work cleaning the station so emergency re-

sources could be restored. And in addition to the station, the trucks were available to help clean out other damaged areas such as the buildings at the fairgrounds.

The list of what our firemen do could go on, and I'm sure that I've left out many other situations that we never think of. But what must be remembered is that these men serve without pay, they leave their paying jobs and respond when called, and they never expect a thanks. They just do it out of a sense of duty to their family, neighbors and community. So I'd like to ask you, the next time you see one of our firemen in town, take a moment and tell them that we appreciate all that they do. Our community is a better place because of their commitment, and we can all sleep better knowing that they will be there to help when called.

# City moves forward on Beautification plans

By Jim Rudisill

Columbus Junction city officials are hoping community groups and organizations will begin stepping forward to help develop community projects, which will meet short- and long-term activities identified last month during a series of community planning meetings. Mayor Dan Wilson told the council during its regular June 10 meeting a list of the activities was developed by Keep Iowa Beautiful (KIB) and Keep America Beautiful (KAB) representatives following the planning meetings. Wilson said the representatives returned to the community in early June to present a summary of the proposed activities to community leaders and organizers.

"We're not to the point of specific projects," Wilson told the council, but the list of activities could be used to begin galvanizing community support. Wilson said several activities drew the spotlight during the May meetings, including calls for increased youth activities in the community; additional neighborhood de-

velopment efforts; and additional community connection projects, such as sidewalk and trail development.

While Wilson acknowledged that additional trails and sidewalks were worthwhile projects, he said some of the concepts developed through the KIB/KAB meeting were not as long-term and he suggested it might be better for the community now to focus on a shorter-term objective. He said a \$20,000 donation from KAB would give a short-term project a good start. "There are things we can do short-term," he told the council.

Council member Dave Duncan agreed. "I think we need to do something and show some physical progress," he said.

Wilson said a group of local residents could be organized to come up with a specific project in six or eight weeks. "We have to step up," he said, adding he did not want any projects to be driven by city officials. "We need more community involvement," he said.

Wilson pointed out the city's development board, a volunteer group



Area behind Medical Facility that is being improved to enhance the town's entrance.

that works on community development efforts, had already began looking at signage into the community and that could be one short-term effort that would show residents progress was being made. He indicated he would talk with community members

about the general ideas generated during the KIB/KAB meetings.

(If anyone is interested in becoming involved in a project, they are encouraged to contact City Hall. Many volunteers and ideas are needed.)

# Parade and Kick-Off Activities to inaugurate 2009 Louisa County Fair

New for the Louisa County Fair this year is a kick off day, Saturday, July 25th. The plans are not all finalized yet but here are just a few things. A fair parade starting at 4:00. The parade line up will be at 3:00. The parade route will start at the United Methodist Church and ending at the fire station. Any groups or individuals are welcome to join in the parade. Following the parade the St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Columbus Junction, will be having a supper at

the fairgrounds from 5-7, kids bounce houses will be from 5-8 (\$5 wristbands), the Fair Queen and Princess along with the 2009 contestants will be on hand doing dunk tank, the L&M FFA will have a petting zoo. To finish up the evening there will be a free outdoor movie night for the whole family to enjoy in front of the grandstands. Look in next week's paper for the final plans and for what movie will be showing.



Members of the Wayland Tractor Club toured downtown Columbus Junction last Friday morning.

## Briefly -

### Thursday free coffee to be held in Columbus City

The 2nd Thursday Free Coffee will be held at the Meal Site in the City Hall at Columbus City, beginning at 9:30. Check the Gazette for the time and place for the 4th Thursday Coffee. Until the Senior Center is remodeled, our Thursday Coffee will be held in Columbus City.

### Ainsworth Opera House breakfast

We will hold a breakfast at the Opera House in Ainsworth on July 11th from 7am to 10 am. Cost is \$7 a person. 10 and under are free. We will have our usual biscuits and gravy, sausage, bacon, scrambled eggs, hash browns, and much more. This is a fundraiser for the Opera House. Opera House is located at 284 Railroad St., Ainsworth, IA 52201. Hope to see you there!

### Legion Auxiliary to meet

The American Legion Auxiliary will meet Tuesday evening, July 14th, at 7 p.m. There will be installation of new officers. Elizabeth Miller will be the hostess.

### City Council to meet tonight

The City of Columbus Junction will hold a regular Council meeting today, Wednesday, July 8, 2009, at 5:30 p.m., at the New Civic Center/City Hall.

### CCHS Class of 1994 to hold reunion

The CCHS Class of 1994 will be having their 15-year class reunion on Saturday, August 29 at 3:00 PM at the Mary Marr Lodge in Marr Park, Ainsworth, Iowa. The meal will take place at 6:00 PM. Bring the family. There will be a golfing at Cedar Crest at 10:00 AM for those interested. Please contact Vanessa (Van Auken) Proehl at 712-250-2250 or [spiritedchic@hotmail.com](mailto:spiritedchic@hotmail.com) to sign up to golf. For further details contact Vanessa or Shannon (Story) Hampson at [shannonhampson@uiowa.edu](mailto:shannonhampson@uiowa.edu) or 319-360-8256.

### CCHS Class of 1999 to hold reunion

The class of 1999 will be holding their 10-year reunion this summer. The dates for the reunion will be July 31st and August 1st. There will be chances to get together on both days. Plans for the reunion will be sent to classmates through their email or phone. Class of 1999 members can send their email addresses to [kasey\\_keltner@hotmail.com](mailto:kasey_keltner@hotmail.com) or phone numbers to 319-728-3032. Otherwise, we will try to contact you. If there are any questions you can send them to the same email address or phone number.

### Fair books available

The fair books are in for the Louisa County Fair, July 27-August 1. Locations in Columbus Junction to be picked up are: Columbus Junction State Bank, Community Bank, Plants and Things, Special Effects, Columbus Gazette and City Hall.

### Great Beginnings Preschool

Great Beginnings Preschool is now accepting student applications for the 2009 - 2010 school year. Great Beginnings offers quality care and education for children ages 3, 4 and 5. The school also provides transportation to and from the preschool. For more info please contact the preschool at 728-2669 or Beth Hills at 728-3157.

### Honor Tour donations accepted through July 15th.

The American Legion Post # 100 of Columbus Junction and Wapello VFW Post # 5166 are very proud to announce that donations to the WWII Honor Tour in Louisa County are approaching \$21,000.00. Any individual who wants to make a donation to the tour, are encouraged to do so by July 15th. At that point in time, we will publish a formal thank you, and a complete list of contributors. The next scheduled trip to Washington DC is September 28th, and any WWII veteran who wants to become part of the tour should contact Sam Bell at Post 100 in Columbus Junction.

### Master Gardeners plan events

The Louisa County Master Gardeners have two events planned for July. On Tuesday, July 14, 2009 at 6:30 PM the LCMG will meet at K&K Gardens (23085 V Avenue, Conesville, IA) to meet with Kay Hill to learn more about Daylilies and tour her gardens. Daylily orders can be placed that night for your favorites. On Wednesday, July 29, 2009 at 6:00 PM the LCMG will meet at the Muscatine Island Research Farm (111 North St., Fruitland, IA) to tour the "Home Demonstration Garden" with a sampling table provided. Master Gardener spouses/significant others welcome. Call a fellow Master Gardener to car-pool. Please remember to bring "Garden 4X4 Bounty Basket" items to each event for delivery.

### Poker run and Benefit for MDA/Lou Gehrigs Disease planned

4th annual Poker Run and Benefit for MDA/Lou Gehrigs Disease in memory of Robin Laughlin. Sign up 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Tweety's Highway in Keithsburg; last vehicle in by 6 p.m. \$10. Best 5-card hand - 60% prize money, 2nd prize - 40% and 3rd prize entry fee. 80% of proceeds go to MDA.

### Shellbark Club to meet

The Shellbark Club will meet on Thursday, July 16th, at 11:30 a.m., at the Button Factory Restaurant in Muscatine.

### Farmers' Market this Friday

Fridays 4:30 to 6:30 at the American Legion parking lot, through October 9. The market offers fresh produce, baked goods, homemade noodles, jams and jellies, frozen meat, plants, iced tea and lemonade, crafts and even dog treats! Buy fresh and local - taste the difference. Support the local economy. For more information including how to participate as a vendor contact Mallory or Nitza at 319-728-7971.