

Downtown sports new crosswalks

From the Community Development Center

A group of hardworking volunteers has spent some time each week this summer making Columbus Junction more attractive and safer. The Keep Columbus Beautiful paint team, headed by Jesus Lizarraga and Mallory Smith, recently finished creating crosswalks at Second and Walnut Streets and Main and Walnut.

Paint projects also completed this summer include four crosswalks on Colton and Springer Steets near Columbus Junior/Senior High, Keep Columbus Beautiful stencils along the path to the pool, KCB stencils at Chautauqua Park and KCB stencils at the new quilt garden on Walnut Street across from the Fire Station. Placing the Keep Columbus Beautiful logo in high traffic areas like crosswalks serves as a constant reminder to residents of the importance of everyone pitching in to keep a clean and colorful community.

The design used for the crosswalks is a high visibility pattern often seen in larger cities. KCB volunteers created the pattern by taping off a 3 foot wide path across the street; marking it off in 9 inch intervals and painting with a roller 9-inch white bands evenly spaced across the width of the street. The end of each crosswalk features a multi-colored KCB logo. The resulting crosswalks are easy for motorists to see from a distance and give pedestrians the chance to create their own Abbey Road album cover.

Crosswalks seemed to be a natural venue for the KCB logo which was designed to be used as a stencil. Back in February when the streets might have been covered in snow, work on the crosswalk project began with the submission of a grant application to the Paint Iowa Beautiful grant program. This partnership project of Keep Iowa Beautiful and



A Community Development Center volunteer paints downtown crosswalks

Diamond Vogel Paint provides free paint to a wide variety of public service projects throughout the state.

In the last seven years Diamond Vogel has awarded nearly 5,000 gallons of paint to over 200 projects in 100 communities. An application was submitted for twelve gallons of parking lot paint to create crosswalks with KCB logos. The application letter pointed out the uniqueness of the project when answering as question about the facility to be improved. Rather than a building, the facility in this case was the streets and sidewalks.

The application correctly antici-

pated youth interest in the painting project stating, "The school district recently implemented a silver cord community service program that recognizes volunteers at graduation. We anticipate this will help to attract young volunteers."

Although what ultimately attracted so many volunteers was the tenacious recruiting effort put forth by the volunteer recruiter. Lizarraga used facebook postings, texts, emails, newsletter help wanted ads and simply calling out to people as they drove or walked where the crew was painting.

Volunteers who helped with the

project are Abbey Acosta, Dylan Perez, Jennifer Estrada, Adriana Lopez, Claudia Lopez, Alexandra Valenzuela, Megan Leyden, Jocelyn Aguilar, Katherine Seitz, Jessica Martinez, and Diego Zacarias; assistance with traffic control was provided by Police Chief Donnie Orr.

The project has been very well received by local residents and business people who have been very good about stopping to complement the painters. Keep Iowa Beautiful was also impressed with KCB's efforts and has a photo of one of the paint crews on their web site as well as in their monthly newsletter.

Former area residents featured in PEOPLE Magazine

By Mary Masonholder Wilson

Connie Gray and Gordon Hankins both graduated from Conesville High School in the late 50's, early 60's. They married each other and moved away, living in such places as South Korea. They now live in Naperville, Illinois, and are retired. They both still have lots of family here and visit often. Now they are featured in the July 4th, 2011 edition of PEOPLE magazine on page 84. This page is for "Heroes Among Us".

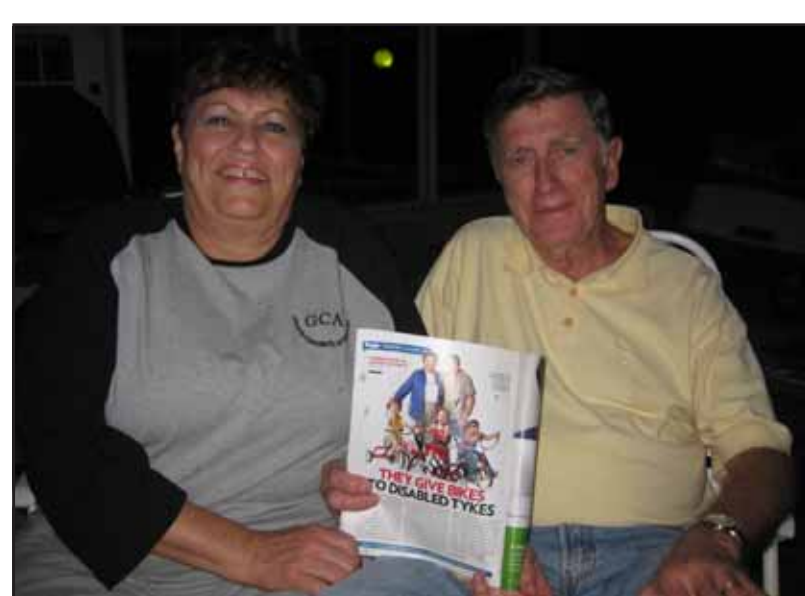
Gordon and Connie, who have two grown daughters of their own, cared a lot for children. Connie was a nurse and saw many children suffer, and often held the hands of anxious children as they awaited surgery.

When Gordon and Connie retired, they knew they wanted to help children, especially those with special needs. They soon became co-chairs of the Therapy Oriented Tricycle (TOT) project

(pioneersvolunteer.org). Since 1998, they have spent over a hundred hours a month working on used tricycles to revamp them with special parts for disabled children. The customized tricycles especially help children with illnesses such as spinal bifida or cerebral palsy. A tricycle may be changed to have upright handlebars, supportive seat backs, or other special parts.

Connie and Gordon often deliver the trikes to area Chicago children and love seeing the joy on the faces of the children as they experience a childhood activity that has been beyond their reach. Connie says that many of the parents often cry as they see their children being successful and achieving a "freedom" for the first time that they have never had.

In PEOPLE magazine, Connie and Gordon are pictured with three children on the tricycles. Connie said that the children loved posing for the picture and one little girl kept asking



for more makeup, more makeup. Connie laughed, but reported the little girl's requests looked lovely with her cherry red dress. Gordon and Connie Hankins both remember and revisit

their rural roots here. Perhaps it is this background that gave them such caring and nurturing ways. Whatever the case, PEOPLE magazine considers them "Heroes Among Us".

City Council deals with residential sidewalk issues

By Jim Rudisill

A step forward in upgrading Columbus Junction's sidewalks will mean stepping back from a volunteer program that has not lived up to expectations. That is the assessment Columbus Junction Community Development Center (CDC) Director Mallory Smith and council member Hal Prior made in developing a blueprint for a new mandatory program. The two presented their plan to the city council during its regular July 13 meeting.

Smith said the volunteer plan had been launched a few years ago, but needed to be replaced with a new plan that would establish a stronger sidewalk improvement framework. "An all-volunteer sidewalk effort hasn't worked to create an adequate sidewalk system, which is really what we want to do," Smith explained in a handout.

She said that has contributed to the current system that causes the entire community to suffer. "Everyone is adversely affected by the town having an unkempt image," Smith pointed out. She also reminded the council it already had the power to require repairs and construction of

sidewalks in the community and to assess the cost of those improvements to the abutting property owner.

While the new proposal would maintain the old system's cost sharing policy, it would replace asking residents to participate with a new plan that would more closely following the existing ordinance and require sidewalks to either be constructed or repaired. Although Smith said the committee did not want the city to become as heavy-handed as the ordinance allows and actually assess properties for the sidewalks, she indicated residents needed to know the council was serious. "We'll ask the council to decide where we want a sidewalk," she said, adding the committee felt installing new sidewalks would take priority over getting the old walks repaired.

Although details on the new plan have not been finalized, Smith said the first step would be to designate high priority routes and notify owners along those routes to either install new sidewalks or repair their old ones. The program would have annual goals, with the entire project phased over at least a five-year period.

Prior indicated some residents were already supporting the new program, even without some of the details. "Some residents have already expressed interest and we might start with them," he reported.

In the meantime, city officials will begin investigating the possibility of creating a plan that would allow residents to pay installments for their sections of sidewalk instead of having the cost assessed to their property. City officials said that would help the city with cash flow and keep owners' property taxes more stable. For the time being, officials indicated the new plan was focusing on sidewalks to the downtown. Smith said the committee had also discussed a different cost share formula for commercial and residential, but had not finalized anything. Wilson recalled sidewalk repair in the downtown commercial district had been discussed several years ago but dropped because of cost. Smith said a more detailed plan would be presented to the council at its August 3 meeting.

In other action, slow action on implementing efforts to upgrade the city's levee system and water plant relocation continued to chafe city of-

officials. Both projects have already been awarded federal and state funding assistance and were given the green light last year. However, officials have complained about the slow progress in engineering and other design work being done by the project-engineering firm, French-Reneker Associates, Fairfield.

Mayor Dan Wilson told the council he had talked with lead engineer John Meyer and said Meyer had assured him the company was working as quickly as possible. Wilson said Meyer had reported regulatory staff with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and Corps of Engineers were working on flood projects in western Iowa and there had also been a delay with completing a wetland mitigation plan. "(Meyer) assured me we were not on the back burner," Wilson said. Wilson will contact Meyer and ask him to attend an upcoming council meeting and discuss the project's status.

In final action, the council approved granting an easement to Louisa Communications to install a connection across city property. The council agreed to move forward with updating the area's comprehensive

Briefly -

Community Club to meet

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

Alzheimer's Support Group to meet

The Alzheimer's Association Henry County Support Group will meet on Thursday, July 21st at 3:00 pm at the First Presbyterian Church in Winfield. The topic this month is Family Caregiving. For more information please call Peggy Beatty or Angie Ebeling at 319-257-3303.

Talent Show at Crooked Creek Days

This year's Winfield Crooked Creek Days celebration will include a Bill Riley Talent Show on Saturday, August 6th at 8:30 a.m. in the high school gym. The contest is open for ages 2 years - 21 years with two divisions, Sprouts, ages 2 yrs. - 12 yrs. and Seniors, ages 13 yrs. 21 yrs. Due to a time restraint the number of entries will be limited, therefore acts will be included on a "first come, first served" basis. For more information and to register contact Sharon Jennings at 319-257-6632 or email smjen@iowatelecom.net. Following the talent show contestants may ride on the Bill Riley Talent Show float in the parade, which will begin at 10:30.

EGGS to meet

EGGS! Let's get crackin'. We are gathering for dinner and cacklin' at 6:00 pm on Wednesday, August 3rd at the Thirsty Camel. So mark your calendar and be ready to jump out of your feathered nests to be there. Any questions, call 319-728-2826.

FFA Alumni tractor ride

The Columbus FFA Alumni will holding their 2nd annual tractor ride on Saturday, July 23, 2011. Registration forms and details can be picked up at the Columbus Junction State Bank, online at www.hs.columbuscd.com/FFA under the "forms" link, or contact Brenda Wilson at 319-212-0529.

Grandview/Letts Lions Blood Drive

The Grandview/Letts Lions Club is sponsoring a blood drive on Thursday, August 4th from 1:30-6:30 p.m. at the Letts Library-Community Building. To donate, contact Marvin or Margaret Thomas at 319-726-3286. Please eat before donating and bring Photo I.D. Last date to donate elsewhere: 6-9-2011. The Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center is giving a \$50 gas card away each week to a blood donor. Come to the Lions Blood drive and you just might win free gas!

Support L-M Junior Wrestling Club

Show Your Support for L-M Junior Wrestling Club at Pizza Ranch on Monday, July 25, 2011 from 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. The boys will bus tables and receive a percentage of the proceeds, and any tips that night for the L-M Jr. Wrestling Club. The address is 106 Ford Avenue, Muscatine, IA 52761.

Enjoy Fair Kick-Off Supper

St. Joseph's Catholic Church will host the Louisa County Fair Kick-off Supper after the fair parade on Sunday, July 24th. The menu will consist of grilled pork loin, potato salad or potato chips, baked beans, cherry or apple pie or brownie and ice tea or lemonade. Hope to see you there!

Blood Checks at Senior Center

On Tuesday, July 26, 2011, cholesterol and glucose blood tests, and blood pressure checks will be done at the Columbus Community Senior Center from 9 a.m. until 11 a.m. We need to keep check on our health and this is a great way to do it. There is no charge and you are given your results so you can them to your physician. Sometimes in the summer we get busy and forget to keep check on our health. Please stay healthy with monthly blood checks.

Shellbark Club to meet

The Shellbark Club will meet on Thursday, July 21st at 11:30 a.m. at the Button Factory in Muscatine. Please meet at the Weber and Huston parking lot at 10:45 to car pool.

Spring Run Ice Cream Supper

The Spring Run UMC will hold an Ice Cream Supper on Tuesday, August 2nd. Serving begins at 5:00 p.m. Menu includes chicken and hamburger sandwiches, potato salad, pie and ice cream. A Free will donation will be accepted.

Fair Books Available

Sew It - Grow It - Show It! Is the theme for the Louisa County Fair July 24 - 30, 2011. Fair books can be picked up at Columbus Junction State Bank, Community Bank, Columbus Gazette, Agriland FS Inc., Special Effects, City Hall and the Library. Hope to see you at the fair.

Fair Updates

The Louisa County Fair is ready for Sew It - Grow It - Show It! kick-off on Sunday, July 24, 2011 at 7:00 - 9:00 a.m. is breakfast with a free will donation, 9:30 a.m. Community Church Service, 3:00 p.m. Parade line-up under viaduct by Community Bank, 4:00 p.m. Louisa County Fair Parade ending at the fairgrounds, 5:00-7:00 p.m. supper at the fairgrounds by St. Joseph's Catholic Church. The fair will start July 25th and ending on July 30th. "See you at the Fair!"

This week at the Farmers' Market

Fridays from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the American Legion parking lot, now until 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.

It tabled final action on a contract with the Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission for the update to give officials time to contact Columbus City to determine if that city wishes to participate. Columbus City and Columbus Junction developed the original five-year plan about five years ago.

The council also agreed to reschedule its second meeting in July from July 27 to July 21 because of conflicts with the county fair. Wilson also told the council the city is still searching for a replacement for

C.P. Pierce, who resigned last month after moving outside the city limits. "No one has volunteered, he said, reminding the council it has 90 days to fill the seat by appointment. That deadline goes until early August, he said. If no one volunteers, the city would be forced to hold a special election, which officials said they hoped not to do because of the cost. In addition, the person either appointed or elected in a special election would need to run in the regular election in November.