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New Asset to Fair and Community

By Mary Masonholder Wilson

As I entered the new Youth Center Building and campground area at the Louisa County Fairgrounds on the evening of its dedication, July 11, 2013, I said to myself, "I knew this would be nice. I did not know it would be THIS NICE."

Approximately 300 people attended the dedication ceremony on a night that the weather made perfect for a gathering, especially at the fairgrounds. The new building has an outdoor seating area covered by a roof and a floor made of cement, complete with picnic tables. Folks can visit here and it is obvious this will be a favorite place during the fair next week and it was a favorite place that evening.

Then one enters the building and is greeted by cool air. Imagine a place at the fair that is air-conditioned! What a great asset this is. The interior is very beautiful with floor tiles and sidewalls that give a natural "stone" feel. One corner has a raised stage area, and at the back is a mirrored wall complete with donor names. There is room for serving tables and the room will hold over 250 people.

Kathy Vance, Louisa County Extension Director, opened the evening with a welcome and Earlene Lekwa offered prayer. Vance then recognized donors and supporters by categories. Kris Fish Kuhlman, representing the 4-H association, told how this building would benefit the youth and how 4-H benefits those who give.

Bob Schlutz, overseer of the project, who explained the building design, told the funniest story of the evening. It seems in the beginning, the project was to build new restrooms at the fairgrounds. When Schlutz found out the cost to build restrooms, he said, "At this price, why not construct a building around the restrooms." Soon the fairboard was sold on the idea, and in a year and a half they had raised over \$600,000 in a county with a population of 12,000. That money, along with several grants (often written by Mallory Smith, Community Development Director) was the basis for this wonderful new structure.

Schlutz explained that the outside walls are 12-inch block, hollow inside, but then filled with insulation. There is no drywall on the interior walls. The building is 7,860 square feet and the front porch is 2,800 square feet. There are 32 speakers for the sound system, and a geothermal heating and cooling system. There is also a security system and

WiFi connection for Internet users. There are restrooms outside on the building for campers or fairgoers to use and hookups for campers are available now on the fairgrounds.

Columbus Junction Mayor, Dan Wilson, spoke of the benefits this new building will bring to both the fair and to the community of Columbus Junction. "This facility will bring more people to the fair and to our town, and this building and improvements mean more than a million dollars has been invested so far. The levee improvements, new city pumps, and the trail improvements within our area that will connect the fairgrounds, the former Hoover nature trail, and Chinkapin Park will add up to another million dollars here."

Bill Northy, featured speaker of the evening and the Iowa Secretary of Agriculture, started with, "There is no more special time in Iowa than fair time. Fairs are one of the most important things a family can do together. Fairs are a sharing of the community, and fairs let non-ag folks see what the ag people are doing." Northy felt the new building would be a great asset and showed what people working together can do.

Bryan Townsley, president of the Louisa County Fair Board, recognized the Fair Board and congratulated them for all they had accomplished with this new building. Fair Board members are Townsley; Tony Humiston, Vice President; Susan Pretz, Secretary/Treasurer; Richard Beard, Royce Bonnicksen, Tom Bonnicksen, Larry Boysen, Virgil Chapman, Roger Edwards, Wade Edwards, Brian Fletcher, Bryan Hayes, Scot Humiston, Harold Humphreys, Johnathan Huston, Joseph Huston, Mark Huston, Steve Martin, Rocky Phillips, Linda Pierce, Troy Pugh, Cary Rutt, Robert Schlutz, Greg Soy, Ronnie VanAuken, Tim Whittaker, and Sam Williams.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony with Bob Schlutz and 4-H members Aliah Lawrence, Kortney Orr, and Jarrett Lekwa concluded the formal part of the evening. The meal of steak, cheesy potatoes, green beans, cole slaw, and dessert was courtesy of Tyson Foods, the Louisa County Fair Board, and the Louisa County 4-H Clubs.

Delaney Howell, 2012 Louisa County Fair Queen, said, "This is such an exciting accomplishment for the fair. I think this building will be a great symbol of what Louisa County has accomplished and what it has in store. I am so grateful to have been a small part of it."



Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northy and Marillyn and Bob Schlutz



Jarrett Lekwa, Kortney Orr and Alia Lawrence 4-H County Council



Ribbon Cutting for new 4-H Youth Center

Afterwards when Bob Schlutz, overseer of the project who received a standing ovation from the audience, was asked for a comment, replied, "It's people who make it happen, and in this case THEY made it happen." Schlutz was very appreciative of the work of all the people, organizations, businesses, the fairboard, and all those who made it happen. He also appreciated all the donations and grants given and the work done by

Mallory Smith to write grants (the Vision grant was \$37,000 and the Wal-Mart grant was \$44,333), to do press releases, print programs and donor invitations, and put together a power point presentation of the project from beginning to end.

Everything came together for a wonderful evening at the new building. And who knew it all started with the restrooms! Go to the fair next week and see for yourself!

Columbus Junction acquires resident Catholic Priest

By Donna Carpenter

The road to Columbus Junction has been a long and winding one for Father Joseph Sia. Officially, as of July 1, Father Joseph, newly appointed administrator of St. Joseph's Catholic Church, began settling into his new home on 2nd Street. A familiar face to parishioners at St. Joseph's, Father Sia had previously been parochial vicar at both St. Joseph's and St. Mary's and Mathias in Muscatine for the past five years, sharing duties with Father Jason Crossen.

Father Joseph has had an extraordinary journey to the priesthood. He was born in Manila, Philippines, where his parents reside. He has one sister, who lives in Singapore. Having acquired a medical degree in the Philippines, he practiced as a physician for approximately two years. He was also a research assistant in a new born screening program in the Philippines. Moving to Iowa City to pursue a PhD in genetics at the University, he studied in that program for a year. Having considered becoming

a priest since high school, Father Joseph prayed daily about this vocation. After attending Mass on Pentecost Day in 2003, he felt a strong desire to pursue the priesthood. He contacted the vocation director from the Diocese of Davenport as well as talking with the priest at the Newman Center at the University of Iowa. To his surprise, the diocese was holding a dinner for men interested in the priesthood that very day, arrangements were quickly made so that he could attend. He completed an application. Interestingly, Father Joseph had just signed a lease for one full year of housing, which was a concern, as he was obligated to fulfill it. Just days later he received an email from a person in the Philippines who was planning on attending the University of Iowa and was looking for housing, so he was able to sublet the apartment to her.

St. Ambrose University was Father Joseph's next home for a year, as he studied philosophy. Entering Mundelein Seminary, he studied theology for four years. On May 10, 2008, he was ordained at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Davenport, his new assignment being parochial vicar at Saints Mary and Mathias Parishes.

Father Joseph's current assignment includes not only the parish in Columbus Junction, but also St.



Father Joseph Sia

Joseph's in West Liberty. He will have Spanish Mass at 12:30 in West Liberty each Sunday, as well as a Mass in English once a month at 5:30. He shares duties with Father Greg Steckel, administrator of the West Liberty church, and parochial vicar in West Branch.

He is looking forward to settling in here and exploring the area further as he lives here on a full time basis. He commented that he would like to become more involved in Wildcats First, and in other community activities. He's currently busy coordinating the Religious Education pro-

gram, as well as other sacramental programs. One of his goals is to establish a library at the rectory, so that parishioners can borrow books pertaining to Catholicism, as he owns an extensive collection. He also wants to create a faith formation office for religious education. In addition to the 7:00 A.M. Masses on Wednesdays, he has added a 7:00 P.M. Mass on the first Friday of every month.

We welcome Father Joseph as a resident of Columbus Junction and hope that he has a long, fulfilling stay as his journey continues.

Briefly -

Class of 1973 sets Reunion

Attention CCHS Class of 1973: We are having our 40-year class reunion at the Thirsty Camel on Saturday, October 12, 2013. Happy hour, supper and a DJ to follow. Please R.S.V.P. to Cindy Clark Skubal at 319-430-0068 or cindyskubal@gmail.com. Please pass the word on to all our classmates.

Class of 1983 sets Reunion

The CCHS Class of 1983 will hold their 30th class reunion on Saturday, July 27th starting at 6 p.m. at the Thirsty Camel. Happy Hour starts at 6 p.m. and the group will eat at 7 p.m. At 9 p.m., Hambone will be running Karaoke. Please R.S.V.P. if you plan to attend to: Charla Larkin Howard (319-653-1768) or Lisa Hills 319-212-0718.

Class of 1988 sets Reunion

Attention CCHS Class of 1988: The 25-year reunion for the Class of 1988 is set for the weekend of October 11-12. Friday Night Family Fun at Chinkapin Park. Ride the float in Saturday's parade and supper at the Thirsty Camel. For more information and to R.S.V.P., contact either Nikki McFarland at 314-680-8899 or Theresa Hall at 319-461-9122 by July 31st.

Community Club to meet

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

Fair Schedule change

4-H Bucket Bottle Calf Show date moved to Thursday, July 25th following the Beef Show. Will start at approximately 1 pm.

Farmers' Market on Fridays

A Farmer's Market is held every Friday afternoon through October 11 at the American Legion parking lot. Produce, plants, baked good and crafts for sale. WIC coupon, SNAP and senior nutrition coupons accepted. New vendors are always welcome.

Animal Scramble and Mutton Bustin'

The Columbus FFA Chapter will be hosting the annual Animal Scramble and Mutton Bustin' at the Louisa County Fair. It will all start at 6:00 P.M. Wednesday, July 24 in the show barn. Please come out and join us for an evening of fun. Kids ages 0 to 3 can participate in the coin dash. The animal scramble: Kids ages 3-5 can catch a chicken and kids ages 5-7 can capture a rabbit. When the child catches the animal they get to take it home. We ask that each child only participate in one activity. Mutton Bustin' will be after the Animal Scramble, weather permitting. Hope to see you Wednesday at the show barn!

Habitat in search of Volunteers

Habitat For Humanity needs workers every Saturday starting at 8 am. Please come and help at Philadelphia St., Columbus City. Habitat will be serving pie and ice cream at the Louisa County Courthouse lawn on Thursday July 18th from 5-7 pm. Habitat will be co-hosting the teen dance Friday July 19th, downtown Wapello 8-11 pm. To help with meals for the workers, call Trish Woepking 319-212-0187. To help with the building, please call Jeff Everett 563-554-1864.

Pie Judging at Fair

Come one, come all! It's fun to bring your homemade pie to be judged at the Louisa County Fair on Thursday, July 25th at 9 a.m. After judging, the pies will be auctioned off by local auctioneer, Bob Duncan. Proceeds go to the new building.

Historical Society Car Cruise

Step back into time at the Louisa County Historical Society's "Hot Summer Nights" Car Cruise, supper, and variety show on Highway 61 in Wapello on Saturday, August 3, 2013. There will be lots of cars on display starting at 4:00 p.m., serving of grilled pork sandwiches, hot dogs and all the trimming will begin at 5:00 p.m., and the variety show at 7:00 p.m. Lots of talent from around the county will provide entertainment in the stage room. Come out for a night of fun, food, and fellowship.

Live Well Louisa Challenge

Columbus Junction and Wapello will be battling it out to see which town is the healthiest. Starting on Chief Wapello Days and going through Columbus Day, residents of Wapello and Columbus Junction will compete to see which town can record the most weight loss, activity minutes and participants. It's not just for people trying to lose weight though. If you just want to become more active you can just sign up for the physical activity challenge. The losing town will donate the number of pounds lost to the winning town's food pantry. Participants will log their weight and activity minutes monthly and prizes will be awarded to individuals in each town for most weight loss and most activity minutes. Participants can also sign up to get weekly newsletters with healthy living tips. Visit www.columbusjunctioniowa.org to register.

School Board to meet

The Board of Education for the Columbus Community School District will hold a rescheduled meeting on Monday, July 22, 2013 at 6:30 PM at the new building. A public hearing on the disposal of the administration building, and that will be held at the regular August board meeting.

Spring Run Ice Cream Social

Spring Run Church, rural Winfield, will host its annual Ice Cream Social on Tuesday, August 6th. The menu again will include their famous hot chicken sandwich, beef burgers, baked beans, potato salad, pies, cake and, of course, homemade ice cream. Serving will be from 5-7 p.m. in the air-conditioned church. A free-will offering will be accepted for the meal.

Take 24 Performance

A performance put on by the summer theater program, Take 24, is being held in the Columbus High School Auditorium on Friday, July 19th at 6 p.m. There is no admission, only a free-will donation. The young starlets consist of one fourth grader, three sixth graders, and one eighth grader. Several high school volunteers have also been very involved in this program and will be there as well. The kids have put a lot of time and hard work into this and would love to see you there with your support!

Wednesday Walks with CJ Striders

Join fellow community members for weekly walks on Wednesdays at 6:30 PM. We will meet in the Civic Center parking lot and walk various routes and distances each week. A regular walking schedule can help you lose weight, reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease, type II diabetes and cancer, strengthen your muscles and even improve your mood.

Letts UMC Fun Days

Fun Days are being planned for students K-6 at the Letts United Methodist Church. The day will begin at 9 a.m. and end at 2. Lunch will be served. Activities, crafts, games, snacks, and music. Registration forms at the church office or call office in the a.m. M-F at 726-3641. Fun Days are scheduled for August 1 and August 8. No fees. For questions, call Pastor Marsha Gerot at 319-725-6722.