



Moving forward, yesterday, today and tomorrow

By Mary Masonholder Wilson
Gazette Staff

In the summer of 1969, the people of Columbus Junction received a big "present", which was a town swimming pool. No more drives to Washington, West Liberty, or Muscatine. Columbus Junction had its very own pool!

Yes, you all have heard the story of the beginnings of our pool and how it was a community project done by many people. Russell and Margaret Newell, Tom and Alice Huston, and Warren and Connie Lewis were some of the "movers and shakers" of getting this off the ground. Many other businesses and contractors donated their time and materials, such as Bell Ready Mix, Kenny Peters plumbing, Bobbie Kemp, Bob Harris, Joe Howell, and so many, many others.

However, this article is mainly about something else, the company that supplied the basic frame of our pool. The head of this company was Ken Bishop of Carlisle, Iowa. Bishop had a business that had made stainless steel products for military use. Military requests were slowing, and Bishop wanted to come up with a different use for his machinery. Somehow he got the idea to create the basic forms for swimming pools out of stainless steel.

Bishop put together some forms and took a display to the Iowa State Fair. Tom Huston happened to be walking through the Varied Industries Building there and saw this display. His attention was immediately caught and he started visiting with Bishop as to how this kind of pool worked.

Soon Bishop was selected to create the Columbus Junction pool. He also was selected to do other pools in Iowa. The pool hole was dug in CJ and soon Tom Huston, with a very young son, Mark Huston, was driving the family truck to Carlisle to get the big pieces. John "Jack" Bell of the then Bell Trucking also drove one of his big trucks there.

According to Huston, "Bishop



The pool under construction. Notice the variety of ages working on the project

wasn't real organized; everything was disjointed. Parts and pieces of pools were everywhere." Huston went on to say, "Sometimes it was very disappointing to get all the way back here and find out we had the wrong pieces or the pieces to someone else's pool." So back they went to get the right pieces, and as mentioned before, the community efforts made it all work, and a beautiful pool was built.

This story does, however, have a very happy ending. This ending is that our basic pool structure is in excellent shape even after 43 years of use. This stainless steel frame has held well, whereas, many other area pools have leaked for years. The other pools in Iowa made by this method of Bishop's are also in excellent condition. We are very fortunate we have not had to replace our original pool, and it is hoped it will last several more years. A new pool would cost upwards of \$1 million or even more.

Credit must also be given to the managers over the years of the Co-

lumbus Pool. Some of them have been Mike Fulton, Steve Fulton, Bob Curtis (who managed it for years and years), and now Scott Denler. Bob Curtis was meticulous in maintaining and painting the basic pool structure as it aged and now Denler is carrying on.

The Columbus Community School must also be given credit as the city turned the pool over to the school to be managed and staffed. Money leftover from the pool building, which was estimated to be around \$11,000 was then given to the school, but those funds ran out long ago.

Right now, the pool area does need some basic improvements. A new bathhouse is needed and cement decking around the pool needs to be replaced. There is currently a basic plan to deal with these needs. The city is considering a pledge of around \$100,000 and the school is also considering a donation. A grant is being written to the Southeast Iowa Regional Planning to pay for the rest of

this project. You might remember that Columbus Junction has done very well as the recipients of these grants. Southeast Iowa Regional Planning awarded us the grant money towards our Civic Center/City Hall/Library, our water plant, our joint sewer project, and for the Youth Center at the Fairgrounds.

Mark Huston feels these improvements will "really freshen up our pool area." Huston also stresses, "We need to make sure the pool stays here. This pool has been a great asset in this community for over 40 years. Think how many youngsters have learned to swim here, how many youth have been employed here (many of them earning college money), and how many families, and individuals have enjoyed swimming here and cooling off in the heat of Iowa summers."

Columbus Junction's pool may have started out a bit disjointed, but it has held together for many years, and with a little work, it should hold together for a lot more years.

Fair Board comes through to continue legacy of C.J. Racing

By John Carpenter
Gazette Staff

Racing has been a tradition in Columbus Junction for as long as most residents can remember. However, it is a sport that is always subject to financial issues, such as weather conditions that rain out races, attracting cars which in turn attract spectators, and estimating and purchasing concession items.

This year the Fair Board decided

that it was necessary to keep the races alive, so they took over the operation. First they hired a promoter to handle the actual race operation, and then they called on the Board members to help with ticket taking, track and grounds maintenance, and selling of concessions.

The Fair Board did have some advantages in taking over the races because they have always maintained an insurance policy which covered

the grounds, and it was less expensive for them to add racing to the policy than it would have been for an independent operator. Also, the members are very loyal, and hours of volunteer work keeps coming forward. According to Huston, if a call is made, someone will be there.

This venture has proved to be very successful. The crowd has continually grown to where now each night will have over 550 people in

attendance.

The number of cars racing also has grown to nearly 100 cars. Fair Board member Mark Huston reports that the races have been profitable, and he is very pleased with the results so far.

Congratulations and a big thank you to everyone on the Fair Board and those in the infield area for stepping up and keeping a long time tradition in Columbus Junction alive.

Community Club receives update from SEIRP

By John Carpenter
Gazette Staff

Mike Norris from the Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission visited the Community Club last Thursday to update the members on the various projects that the SEIRP has been involved in and is presently working on for the community.

Norris told the group that the SEIRP was successful in helping the

town receive nearly \$4 million dollars to relocate the city's water plant; \$700,000 to build levees around the downtown and business district, \$87,500 for new sidewalks, \$600,000 to acquire the Community Health Facility in Columbus City; and \$230,000 to help improve the city's water distribution system to Columbus City.

Other dollars that have come with the help of SEIRP is \$285,500 in flood recovery help, \$3,750 to complete the city's Comprehensive Plan, and \$150,000 for improvements to Chautauqua Park.

SEIRP was also involved in helping to get nearly \$3 million dollars a few years back to create a three-city sewer system with Columbus Junc-

tion, Columbus City and Fredonia. He said that the organization is now working on obtaining funds for the city to acquire and improve the Monkey Run Park area.

"We are here to help in any way we can," said Norris, and he encouraged city leaders to contact his office for any projects that appear worthwhile.

County Fair Memories

By Mary Masonholder Wilson
Gazette Staff

As a child growing up in Columbus Junction, each summer I could NOT WAIT for the Louisa County Fair. It was really a BIG deal!

Preparations were made at our house in advance of the big event. First on the list was we were members of the CJ United Methodist Church. The women of this church always had a food booth under the grandstand. The main feature menu item was creamed chicken on bread. Thus my mother, Jeannette Masonholder, would have my dad, Paul Masonholder, behead some chickens, and we would dress them and cook them for the church fairbooth. Mom wanted to make sure the broth was especially golden and the kitchen would get hot with all the boiling. Then we had to debone the meat and thicken the broth. Other women were doing the same jobs in their homes and Maxine

Goble also provided a lot of the chickens and many women went there to prepare.

Once the fair opened, a rigid schedule was kept on working the church stand. Ocie Moran always managed it. The back of the stand faced west and it got mighty hot stirring that creamed chicken in the booth. But I liked this job because I could watch all the people coming and going, and there were a lot of them. This area, under the grandstand, was full of booths. Some were politicians or county people. Many of them were businesses that had a game (specially a guessing game), something to give away, or a few chairs for many people to just sit and chat. This was always the coolest area at the fairgrounds and sometimes a few fans were running. I couldn't wait to get my free-giveaways".

Obviously the most fun part of the fair was the Midway. So many rides! The Ferris wheel, Merry-Go-Round, Octopus, Tilt-A-Whirl. There were booths to win something—pick up the duck in the water, use a crane to get a toy, or win a teddy bear. In my very young years, there were

fortunetellers and a big hammer to see how far you could make the bar rise when you hit the base. Often the midway, especially in the evenings, was so crowded you could hardly move and you had to wait in line to get on a ride. Young couples could be seen holding hands, and I remember the first time, as a teenager by then, a boy asked me to go on a ride with him. The fair seemed magical, no matter what my age!

Then there were the animal buildings and nervous 4-Her's brushing and prepping their livestock. Many of them had a grand time camping and hanging out at the fairgrounds. There was always somebody at the fair to be with. I didn't even have to call a friend; they were just there. It was THE place to be and we were there!

When I became older and joined 4-H, I had my own projects to prepare for the fair. Quite frankly, this wasn't always my favorite part. My mother had to stand over me to make me refinish furniture, sew a skirt, or bake a cake. I usually was glad I had done it, super happy if I won a blue ribbon, and proud of my accomplishments. Preparing our club booth was a great group project and just part of the camaraderie felt at the fair. Demonstrations were nerve racking, but a

great exercise in communication skills. My mother spent a lot listening to them and trying to learn new ideas for the house. I, on the other hand, just ran around the fair and had fun! (Maybe that is why even today, I do not like housekeeping jobs or cooking; I just want to have fun!)

My mother also spent a lot of time in the Floral Hall, looking at exhibits and watching the judging. The Louisa County Fair had been a big part of her family, the Helmicks's, as a child. The Helmick's, way back to Samuel Helmick, entered garden produce, etc. and were very competitive with their neighbors, especially the Chet Pierce's. (Mom also told me how mad she was as a child one day at the fair, when her mother, Anna Helmick, came running to find her because the threshers were coming later that day, and they had to leave the fair to go home and cook for them.) My mother also often entered some antiques, and she liked to see how they did. I remember the flower division and the pride with which Paul Grouwinkle carried in his beautiful dahlias.

My dad liked to visit with the farmers, many who stood around the equipment displays. Often the fair hit the time when the oats needed to

Briefly -

Film Festival in Ainsworth

THE AINSWORTH OPERA HOUSE WILL HOLD THEIR 14TH YEAR OF BRINTON FILM FESTIVAL ON FRIDAY, JULY 27TH AND SATURDAY, JULY 28TH. DOORS WILL OPEN AT 7:30 PM. As always some of the oldest films in the world will be shown. Historical information about the films and magic lantern slides will help you enjoy the unique experience. The Ainsworth Opera House is the only place in the world you can see these films and slides. Come eat Dairy Mart ice cream and goodies before the films and have a relaxing evening of entertainment for the 19th century. Ainsworth Community Center/Opera House is located at 284 Railroad St. Ainsworth, IA. Cost is free will donation and all proceeds are for the upkeep on the building. Hope to see you there.

Class of 1977 plans reunion

The Class of 1977 will be holding their 35th reunion (Yes, 35! Wow), on Saturday, August 11, at the Thirsty Camel at 6:00 pm. We will order off menu (everyone paying for own meals), we will be dancing to Crusin' at 9:00. We have a number of classmates that we have been unable to contact. Any help, with contacting them, from other friends or relatives, would be so very much appreciated! We would welcome any former teachers who would like to attend! If you have questions or contact info please contact Cindy Runyon Baker at: Randyncindy@iowatelecom.net or Mike Jay at: mikejay59@gmail.com or text or call 319-530-6775.

Class of 1982 plans reunion

Attention Columbus Community Class of 1982 (and parents): Some of us have been making plans for our 30th year class reunion. We still need some addresses; if you can help – that would be great! We want to find as many classmates as possible. Our plans are: Columbus Day Weekend – Friday, October 12th at 7 p.m. meet and greet at Rumors and Excuses; Saturday, October 13th watch parade at Rumors and Excuses, 5-8 p.m. dinner at the Thirsty Camel, then go to excluded location for a night of fun. Any questions or addresses please call Deb (Sands) Halstead at 319-750-2636.

Cross Country Fundraiser

The Columbus High School cross country team is hosting two fundraising races at Chinkipin Bluffs Recreation Area. They are at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, August 2, and Thursday, August 9. The distance is 3 miles for walkers and runners. There is also a 1-mile run for kids age 12 and under. Cost is \$5. For more information, call Coach Steve Riley (319-217-0130) or you can download an entry form at <http://www.runlouisacounty.info>.

Community Club plans blood drive

The Columbus Junction Community Club will host a community blood drive on Wednesday, August 1st from 1:30-6:30 p.m. at the American Legion Hall located at 99 Second Street, Columbus Junction. To donate, please contact Kirsten Shellabarger at 319-728-2414 or e-mail her at: Kirsten@horakinsurance.com. Walk-ins welcome! Potential donors must be at least 17 years of age (16 with parental permission form available through www.bloodcenter.org) and weigh more than 110 pounds. A photo I.D. or MVRBC Donor Card is required to donate. To schedule an appointment for donation, please call the Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center at (800) 747-5401. Donors who last gave blood on or before June 6, 2012 are eligible to give blood at this drive.

Grandview/Letts Lions blood drive

The Grandview-Letts Lions Club is sponsoring a blood drive on Thursday, August 2, 2012, from 1:30-6:30 p.m. at the Letts Library/Community Building. To donate, contact Marvin and Margaret Thomas at 319-726-3286 or email them at: mmthomas@iowatelecom.net. Please eat before donating and bring photo ID. Last date to donate elsewhere is 6-7-2012.

Great Beginnings Open House

An open house will take place at the Great Beginnings Preschool on Tuesday, July 31st from 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm at the Columbus Junction United Methodist Church. Come and visit with the staff and see what is offered for your preschooler for the 2012-2013 school year. Informational packets will be available. The preschool is now accepting student applications for the 2012 – 2013 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. Everyone is welcome!

Relay For Life date set

Louisa County's Relay For Life has been set for Saturday, August 4, 2012 at the L-M High School.

Bill Riley Talent Show in Winfield

Winfield's Crooked Creek Day committee is looking for area talent to participate in their CCD Bill Riley Talent Show. The event will be held at 9:00 am, Saturday, August 4th in the Winfield High School gym. Contestants are asked to arrive by 8:15 am. Winners will be eligible to advance to the Iowa State Fair. There are two categories, Sprouts: ages 2 through 12 years, and Seniors: ages 13 through 21 years. Acts are limited to three minutes. The committee welcomes a variety of acts and will accept a limited number of acts on a first come-first serve basis, as the time is limited due to the parade, which will follow the talent show. We invite local youth to come and showcase their talents at the annual Winfield Crooked Creek Day celebration. For more information call Sharon Jennings at (319) 259-6632 or email smjen@iowatelecom.net.

be cut, straw baled and mowed. My brothers, Lan and Richard Herrick, wanted to get this job done so they, too could attend the fair. Cars were stopped to pay outside the gate to the fairgrounds and once my brothers got a job collecting the entry money there. I thought it was pretty "Cool."

We were always excited to see what entertainment would be in front of the grandstand. It was always packed, often hot, but nobody cared—we just wanted to see the show! Races—both horse and cars, musical concerts, circus acts, plays; it was all fun. Yes, the fair was THE PLACE to be. I wouldn't take anything for these memories, and sometimes I wish I could just step back in time for just one of these days. I just want one more Ferris Wheel ride as a child, one more cotton candy or snow cone, one more night of lights on the Midway, and one more day just to run around and see people and all the sites of the fair. It can't happen, but I can always dream. Anybody got some fun-nel cake I could taste? Yes, even at today's fair, there are memories that can be made. Enjoy the fair!

