

Five candidates vie for three School Board seats

Five candidates are running for three open school board seats this year. Each candidate is running for a four year term, with no election scheduled for next year. As our district is an at-large district, all of the candidates are eligible for each of the open seats.

The Columbus Education Association, in conjunction with the Columbus Gazette, held a meet the candidates forum last Thursday evening. The candidates fielded questions from the audience that ranged from long term goals that each candidate sees for the school to a discussion on early starting dates. Nearly fifty community members attended the Forum.

Pictured from left are candidates: Mike Braun, Joy Lekwa, Marsha Gerot, Sandra Martin and Polly Prior during the Forum. Please turn to page six for a profile of each candidate.

The election is set for Tuesday, September 8, 2009 with the polls open from Noon to 8:00 p.m. The polling place will be the American Legion.



School Board reviews effects of early start date

By Jim Rudisill

Although at least one parent does not feel the Columbus School District's new start process was worthwhile, most district staff and administrators would disagree. The school board heard both sides during its regular meeting Monday. According to Superintendent Rich Bridenstine, teachers met for in-service training from August 10-12, then met the next two mornings in their classrooms with their students. In the afternoon, teaching associates escorted the students to various sessions while the teachers met in teams to plan and strategize for the upcoming year.

Parent Stephanie Duncan, who also works as an associate at the school, said she felt the split days affected students and did not provide a good example in the district. "We all got letters on how important attendance was, yet it was okay for our teachers to miss school," she told the board.

Duncan also said the absence of the teachers during the day could lead to future discipline problems. "The teachers were not present to reinforce the rules," she said.

Staff members however said the extra time to coordinate teaching efforts was important. "I know the classroom teachers did not want to be away from their students, but they appreciated having the time," district librarian Tera Rees said.

Special education teacher Christina Schenk agreed. Schenk said she was able to meet with other special education teachers and better coordinate how they would conduct student pull-outs from the regular classroom. In the past when teachers conducted the pull-outs, they often inadvertently affected another teacher's plans for the same student. Schenk said she expected the additional coordination to lessen that impact.

Elementary Principal Dan Vogeler, who initially was skeptical of the new arrangement, said he was convinced the new procedures was beneficial. "I felt it was really productive," he said, adding he also received a lot of positive responses from students.

Curriculum coordinator Tara Pugh said a survey she conducted of teachers confirmed most felt the process had worked well.

According to a survey report, 40 of the staff members who were asked if they felt the two split days had been professionally worthwhile responded favorably. There were no negative responses. In written replies, the staff members said the two days provided time to schedule "much needed academic and ESL/Title I time."

Other comments included time to discuss schedules and routines, time

to talk with students about expectations and plan meeting times with students. "We were able to accomplish a lot of team planning," one staff member reported.

A second survey report also showed most staff did not feel there had been any negative effects on students from the split days. According to the report, 38 students did not believe there had been any negative effect, while two staff members said there had been. "Our students loved it," one staff member claimed.

However one staff member reported some concerns. "I think I would prefer and the students would have preferred spending the first two days completely together," the staff member commented.

The staff members were also asked to provide examples of student comments. Most were either positive or neutral, although one staff member said some students had complained about not getting a recess on August 14.

Paul said a lot of the staff support was because the teachers themselves had helped to develop the process through earlier planning efforts.

School board president Mike Braun said he felt the process had been worthwhile. "I think it served its purpose," he said.

In other discussion, Duncan also urged the board to keep the swimming pool open longer in the year and develop additional efforts to attract more users. School officials said increased support from Columbus Junction would help.

In other action, high school principal Matt Kingsbury outlined a proposed open campus policy to the board. Kingsbury said seniors would qualify for open campus privileges by maintaining academic standards, good attendance and staying out of trouble. Under Kingsbury's proposal, seniors who had a 2.80 grade-point average (GPA) the prior quarter and maintained a 3.00 cumulative GPA would qualify academically. An initial proposal to allow a student to have three unexcused absences was rejected by several board members, who suggested only one unexcused absence would be allowed. Students could also not be tardy more than twice to any class the previous semester. The final policy will be presented to the board next month for action.

The board also approved several personnel changes. New teachers hired included Molly Keese, ESL at Roundy; Jorge Malagon, high school Spanish; and Steve Riley, high school English, Yearbook, Newspaper and junior high cross country coach. Other new hires included several teaching associates.

A special education instructional delivery system was also reviewed by the board and a committee appointed

to develop the system. The Iowa Administrative Rules of Special Education requires school districts to develop the system, which will guide the delivery of special educational services in the district.

Bridenstine also asked the board to consider offering free flu shots to the district's staff this year. Bridenstine said this offer would only extend to regular flu and not the HINI

flu. He estimated the shots would cost \$20 each or a total of around \$3000. The board will act on the request next month.

The board will also act next month on another recommendation from Bridenstine that would allow all classified staff in the district to purchase health insurance through the district. The district would not pay the premium.

Community Bank - Peoples Partners return from European trip



Pictured are ten members of Community Bank's Peoples Partners Club while visiting Venice, Italy. This group recently traveled to Europe for a 12-day cruise, hosted by Joe and Carol Ann Howell. The group had a wonderful time visiting ports of call in Dubrovnik, Croatia; Athens and Santorini, Greece; Naples, Rome, Florence and Venice, Italy; Nice, France; and Barcelona, Spain.

Community Health Center meeting set to review plans

Ron Kemp, CEO of Community Health Centers of Southeastern Iowa (CHC/SEIA), and members of the Columbus Junction Community Health Center Advisory Committee will host a meeting on Thursday, September 3 at 7:00 pm at Roundy Elementary School Library to present plans for the new Louisa County Clinic to be built in Columbus City starting this fall. The new facility, located at the intersections of Spring and Columbus Streets will replace the modular unit that CHC/SEIA currently operates across from Colonel's Kid's Day Care. The construction

represents a \$1.6 million investment in Louisa County, all sourced from state or federal funds.

The new facility will be part of the Community Health Centers of Southeastern Iowa's healthcare system which has five locations in Iowa and Illinois. The Louisa County clinic provides local access to federally subsidized medical, dental and mental health services for low income families as well as services to the general public. Residents are urged to attend this meeting to learn more about the clinic and share their ideas. Translators will be available.

Learn Salsa Cooking at Farmers' Market

Learn salsa recipes and secrets from local experts. On Friday, August 28 at 5 pm Dennis Shepard of Wapello and Lisa Smith of Oakville will demonstrate their award-winning salsa making skills at the Columbus Junction Market at the American Legion parking lot, 99 Second St. Shepard has been a winner at the Louisa County Salsa Making Contest the last four years. His fruit salsa was named judges' favorite at this year's contest held on July 31st. Smith entered for the first time this year and won the medium category. Shepard and Smith will share a variety of recipes and samples will be served. The event is free, open to the public and requires no advance registration. Please bring a folding chair.

The Columbus Junction Farmers Market is held on Fridays from 4:30 to 6:30 at the American Legion parking lot. For more information contact Mallory Smith, Columbus Junction Community Development Center, 319-728-7971 or cdc@columbusjunctioniowa.org.

Briefly -

Columbus City seeks candidates

The City of Columbus City will have the following seats up for election this year: Two Council member seats and the Mayor. If you would like to run for election, please pick up nomination forms from the City Clerk starting August 24, 2009. City Hall is open on Monday nights from 4-6 p.m., or you may call Lisa Hills at the Columbus Junction State Bank at 319-728-2436. Last day to file for office will be September 17, 2009.

City Council to meet tonight

The City of Columbus Junction will hold a regular Council meeting today, Wednesday, August 26, at 5:30 p.m. in the New Civic Center/City Hall.

Lions Club to hold breakfast

The Columbus Junction Lions Club will hold two pancake, egg and sausage fundraiser breakfasts on Saturday, September 5 and Sunday, September 6, from 7-11 a.m. both days, at the Columbus Community Senior Center at 125 E. Walnut Street. This will be in conjunction with the "Thunder in the Sand" motorcycle event being held at the Circle of Pride Rodeo Grounds. However, everyone is invited to attend - local residents, visitors and bikers. Cost for all-you-can-eat is \$6.00 for adults and \$4.00 for children under 12. Menu will include pancakes with flavored syrups, scrambled eggs, sausage, coffee, milk and fruit drinks. Proceeds help support Lions' projects locally, statewide and internationally.

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. There will be a kickball tournament at 4:00 PM. The meal will take place at 6:00 PM. Bring the family. For further details contact Shannon (Story) Hampson at shannon-hampson@uiowa.edu or 319-360-8256.

EGGS-citing news

EGGS-citing news...let's get cacklin'! Let's all meet Wednesday, August 26th for 6:00 P.M. peckin' and eatin' at The 92 Roadhouse. Expect egg-cellent company, scrambled chatter and a really good time. Spread the word. You know egg-sactly who you are. Contact Gail if you have any questions. Mark your calendar!

Habitat schedules trip

Louisa County Habitat For Humanity is taking a fall trip to the Kane County flea market on Saturday, October 3. We will leave the Wapello Museum at 7:30 A.M., pick up at Grandview if needed, then pick up at Muscatine HyVee parking lot 8:00 A.M. Last day to reserve is September 29. Cost is \$60 per person. Send checks ASAP to get your name on the list to: Ruth Yakle, 110 N. Pine Street, Wapello, IA 52653. If we don't have at least 40 people for the trip, it may have to be canceled. Everyone welcome to go!

Radio Club to meet

The Muscatine Amateur Radio Club will meet on Monday, September 14, at 7:00 pm at the Flickinger Learning Center, 413 Mulberry Avenue in Muscatine. (Please use the 5th street entrance.) All amateur radio operators, and those interested in learning more about amateur radio, are invited to attend. For more information, visit muscatinehams.org.

Open House for Kathy Vance

Join us in thanking Kathy for her years of service as the Louisa County Extension Director and wish her well in her new assignment. The Open House will be held on Monday, August 31st from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the ISU Extension Office, 317 Van Buren, Wapello. Refreshments will be served.

Hamfest in Muscatine

The Muscatine Amateur Radio Club and the Washington Area Amateur Radio Club will present the 25 Annual Southeast Iowa Hamfest on Sunday, October 4th at the Muscatine County Fairgrounds in West Liberty, Iowa. The hamfest features indoor and outdoor flea market, commercial vendors, license testing, food and drink. Gates open at 7:00 am. All tickets are \$5. Children age 14 and under are admitted free. For more information, visit www.muscatinehams.org or call Tom Brehmer, at (563) 263-3097.

Fredonia seeks Candidates

The city of Fredonia is seeking an applicant for a city council seat. Deadline to apply is Monday, September 14, 2009. Contact Mayor Al Sonderberg for details.

County Tractor Ride scheduled

MORNING SUN, Iowa - The 5th annual Louisa County Tractor Ride is planned for Sunday, Aug. 30. There is a 10 mph minimum. The unloading area is at the Morning Sun elevator. Tractors and drivers should meet at 8 a.m. at the Morning Sun Care Center four blocks west of the elevator. The Morning Sun Care Center staff will provide a continental breakfast. Roll out begins at 9 a.m. There will be stops at area care centers along the 44-mile route. Lunch will be provided by Elder Implement and served by the Louisa County Cattlemen's Association. For more information, call Lee Harris at 319-868-7872; Dwight Schaper at 319-728-8961 or Dan Harris at 319-850-8188.

Train Show in Washington

The Washington Model Railroad Club will hold its annual Train Show and Swap Meet on Sunday, October 4th, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., in the Knights of Columbus Hall, 606 West 3rd Street, Washington, Iowa 52353. All scales represented. Admission is \$4.00 for adults, children 6-12, \$1. Early arrivals \$5.00. Swap tables to rent: \$18 each. A food stand will be available in building. For information, contact Mike Worley at 319-653-3782.

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 Nitzza at 319-728-7971.