

# Five Vie for two School Board seats

(Five candidates will be in the running for two school board seats in the September 13th election. Incumbents Polly Prior and Danny Peters are seeking re-election, and are joined by Eric Totemeier, Dave Duncan and Bob Reid in the quest for the two at-large seats. Following are responses from the candidates to a questionnaire sent by the Gazette. Also voters will be asked to approve a revenue purpose statement allowing sales tax funds to be used for school infrastructure purposes, allowing for property tax relief. A more detailed explanation of this statement will be in next week's Gazette.)

## Polly Prior

I'm Polly Prior candidate for Columbus Community School Board. My husband, Harold Prior and I moved to Columbus Junction 12 years ago with a commitment to become an asset to the community. Being originally from North Carolina - I have now adopted Iowa, and Columbus Junction as my Home. I believe I have the life experiences and skills to continue to be a positive, proactive member of the school board.



for 15 years, traveling to nearly every state in the U.S. Previously I worked for approximately 25 years in hospital management and physician's office administration/financial management.

I currently serve as treasurer for the Columbus Community Senior Board and a member of the Louisa County Fair Board, in addition to my School Board position.

Reason for Running: I want to continue to contribute to our community and school system. The young members of our community are the future leaders of our community. We need to continue to strive to give them the foundation to become community leaders and contributors to our community. Since we have diversity in our community and school we need to reach out and work with families to help them to better understand the school system, its importance, and

how it will benefit their families. We currently have a good school, but it can be better, and we should never be complacent, and not strive to do more to improve our school system. Our community has a wealth of talent that can be tapped into as needed to help us. We should reach for high goals of being the best.

I have no children, grandchildren, or family members in Columbus Community schools and thus have no bias, or personal agendas to bring to the board, only a fair open mindset to continue to make the correct decision based on need. Many will tell you I will never back away from facing difficult challenges, or making tough decisions and will work to solve them in a logical, common sense manner. I believe strongly in fairness and equal treatment of all administration, teachers, students, groups, and organizations

irregardless of social status or any other factor.

I believe there must be a mutual respect between staff and the students. Disrespect or bullying in either direction only creates problems to solve. I strongly believe in being proactive in problem solving - solving small problems quickly before they become large problems. Lastly - if re-elected to the school board I will be ready to listen to your recommendations or complaints from, administration, teachers, students, and community members, all in a confidential manner, working to solve them to the best of my ability! I want Columbus to adopt the military motto "Be the Best You Can Be!" and provide the leadership necessary to achieve such. As a board member I will not take the easy path and let our schools future be held hostage by the past.

## Danny Peters

My name is Danny Peters. I am currently a paramedic and have been serving the people of Louisa County in Columbus since 1992. This has been a very fulfilling part of my life. This has allowed me to be part of this community's triumphs and some very hard decisions while caring for the people in this community.



you to judge your culture superior to anyone else's. I hope that I can have an intelligent conversation with most anyone in our district and work toward a mutual agreement that benefits all. I think that the diversity in our district is a plus and serves our clients well for their future. I am a veteran of the regular Navy, serving during the Vietnam conflict. While I was in the Mediterranean for my entire enlistment, it was still wartime for our Navy and tensions were high with the Soviets, and the long-standing bitterness between Turkey and Greece. I lived with Greeks on the beach and had many ideas changed while there.

I grew up in Cotter, 7 (or so) miles west and as a small child a million miles away from C.J. My experiences at Cotter were some of the best,

and it was truly scary to come to Columbus to finish school. My first year in kindergarten was not in Columbus, but in Cotter Consolidated District, which then joined Columbus to help pay their bills (was the talk.) Welshmen were tight with their money unless it was their children involved. Most of the people here were my relatives, I was once related to 8 of the 10 Homecoming Royalty which I thought was special, I found out it wasn't - so were a lot of others!

My wife, Twyla (Carey) Peters has lived here all of our married life, we are on our third house, raised two children within our district and will be most likely watching our grandchildren also graduate from Columbus, as our daughter, Mackenzie and her husband, Sam live here and are raising their family here. Columbus

has changed since I graduated, and much more from when our children graduated. Our school is in transition, and we will emerge a stronger and more viable school district with our growing diversity. We are a forward thinking community that honors our traditions and welcomes meaningful change to improve and do it better.

I want to be part of the transition to make our education at Columbus as meaningful to our students as possible and have the best facilities for their education. As a school board member, I can be a part of this as I was part of the committee to plan for our future. Whether I see the future as we agreed would be good for Columbus or not, at least I was part of the growth that will cement Columbus as a vital district in SE Iowa.

## Marion Robert Reid

Hi I'm Marion Robert Reid Jr. but most people know me as Bob. I'm running for the school board in the Columbus Community School District and I would be very grateful for



your support.

I have been placing ads in the paper to give you my views on some topics I feel strongly about and intend to address if elected.

First for those who don't know me I'm a life long resident and a graduate of Columbus Community, married 36 years to my High School sweetheart Sue, and we have two children, Holly and rob. Over the last 25 years we have owned and operated our own businesses from general construction work, Laundromat, subshop

and arcade, commercial rental properties and currently Reid's Mechanical our plumbing and heating business. Over that time period I worked for L&W Farm Service for 4 years as their feed mill manager and 4 years for IBP as their building and ground supervisor and storeroom manager. Over the years I have volunteered on the Columbus Fire Dept. as well as our ambulance service. I was on the Fredonia City Council, as well as serving as Mayor. In my spare time I enjoy working in the yard, fishing,

watching old westerns and being with my family.

The reason I'm running for school board is I feel I have the knowledge and experience to give to the district that can help to improve efficiency and cost savings; the foresight to keep Columbus schools in a strong running for its future, if needed. I realize that I won't win every battle, but I understand that we're here as School Board Members to do what's in the best interest of our students and taxpayers.

## David Duncan

My name is David Duncan and I am running for the Columbus Community School Board. I am a 1984 Graduate of Columbus Community High School and completed my Bachelor's Degree in business administration at Iowa Wesleyan in Mt. Pleasant. I have worked for IBP now Tyson Foods for 23 years. I have worked for the company in Nebraska, northern Iowa and about 5 years ago was able to move back to Columbus Junction. My wife Stephanie and I



wanted to raise our four girls here and be close to both sides of our family. Our oldest daughter Aimee is a graduate of CCHS, Lizzie is a sophomore, Emily an Eighth grader and Aubrey is in Fifth grade.

I have served the Community of Columbus Junction as a City Councilman for the last four years. I have gained a respect for public service and getting involved from my parents and grandparents, all long time residents of Columbus. I have also served the Louisa Development Group, Community Chest, and Muscatine-Louisa Red Cross Community Boards. My family attends the United Presbyterian Church in Columbus Junction and Stephanie worked hard to develop a school supply drive to help children in our community.

Communication has been a weakness in our district. Only after much pressure from many avenues in our community did our school start to disseminate information. It is important for our district to continue to find ways for more transparent communication with not only the community but also most importantly the parents. Getting parents involved and excited about their children's education through a Parent Teacher Organization is another opportunity that a group of parents in the community has been working on with little support from the school. I will listen and do my best to keep parents informed and build community pride in our school.

We have many strengths in our school system and this starts with our teachers and staff. Even though ev-

ery school has turnover in the teaching ranks, we have had a good core group of teachers at Columbus for many years. Our school is in good financial health, but we need to better determine if this is good management, or just higher taxes than other districts and use that information to develop long term financial planning for our district.

As I said at the "Meet the Candidates" event, each time I take on a new challenge I think about the time it will take away from my family. In this case I believe the time spent attending and working on school board projects is an investment in my children's future and the future of our Columbus Community. Thank you for giving me your time and remember to vote on September 13.

## Eric Totemeier

My name is Eric Totemeier. After growing up in the Columbus Junction community and attending Columbus Community Schools, I attended Iowa State University and in 2001 received a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Studies. Upon graduation I returned to the area and immediately began building my farm business. I moved back into the Columbus Community School District in the spring of 2005 with my wife Kelli and have since had two sons, Drew (4) and Gabe (2) and we are expecting triplets in January. I am currently serving on the Agriland FS



board of directors, and am an active member of the St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Columbus Junction. This past spring I planted my 10<sup>th</sup> crop and calved out 90 cows. My business has changed immensely since the beginning, and I feel my ability to adapt, change, and use forward thinking are qualities that have helped me to be successful and are qualities I would bring to the Columbus Community School Board.

I feel the Columbus Community School District has many strengths, one of the largest being community support. I think this was evident in the large turnout and support for the back to school event. Another strength would be that our facilities are in the forefront of the minds of our administration and future planning is already taking place to improve upon what we have. The fact

that our student body has the diversity it does needs to be looked upon as strength as well. What a better way to teach respect, tolerance, and understanding to students at an age so impressionable on these topics.

One weakness that I find especially troubling is the fact that we are teaching limited science and social studies to some of our students. To someone who uses science every single day helping feed the world's growing population that is a hard pill to swallow. I honestly cannot accept the fact that it is okay to only focus on subjects, which will be evaluated by standardized testing. Overall better test scores for the school in a couple of subjects to me doesn't equal passing on the brightest most well rounded students to the future. I feel we are doing a great disservice to our students.

One of the biggest reasons I want to run for school board is that I feel there are changes that need to be made. I am humble enough to know that change takes time and with my election things won't magically be perfect. I personally am sick of the negative light surrounding our school system. Instead of sitting around talking about things that we don't feel are right or things we would like to see different I need to do something to set the ball in motion. All of us have an opinion, all of us want things to continually improve but if no one steps up and takes action then it is all just talk. I want to take action; I have the 5 best reasons in the world that in the next 5 years will be depending on the Columbus Community School District for their education. Why wouldn't I want to have a hand in making that the best experience possible?

## Briefly -

### Pride of Iowa to host CJPM

Pride of Iowa Marketplace and Simply Soothing will host a CJPM on Wednesday, September 7, 2011 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. at 211 Main St., Columbus Junction. Appetizers, sandwiches, desserts and iced tea will be served. The store will be open for browsing and shopping. Odessa Vineyards will be hosting a wine tasting, and bottles will be available for sale.

### CCHS Class of 1971 plans reunion

CCHS Class of 1971 will be holding their 40th class reunion on October 8, 2011 starting at 5:00 p.m. at the Cedarcrest Country Club in Columbus Junction. Please RSVP to Randy and Nancy Orr by September 24<sup>th</sup> by calling 319-728-3189 or email [Randy\\_nancy71@yahoo.com](mailto:Randy_nancy71@yahoo.com) also see us on facebook.

### CCHS Class of 1976 plans reunion

Members of the CCHS Class of 1976: Reserve the dates of Friday and Saturday, September 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. We will be having our 35<sup>th</sup> class reunion! Letters will be sent to you and you can get updates at <https://sites.google.com/site/cchswildcat1976>.

### Columbus City Hall holiday hours

The City Hall at Columbus City will be closed on Monday, September 5, 2011 in observance of Labor Day.

### Columbus City nomination papers

The City of Columbus City will have the following seats up for election this year: Three Council: 4 year term and Mayor: 2 year term. Nomination papers can be picked up at City Hall on Mondays, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. or contact Lisa Hills at the Columbus Junction State Bank from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (319-728-2436). Nomination papers must be turned back in by 5:00 p.m. on September 22, 2011.

### Emma Beckman Chapter to meet

Emma Beckman Chapter 445, Order of the Eastern Star will have their regular meeting on September 6, 2011, at 2:00 p.m. due to the Labor Day holiday.

### Emma Beckman and Mason Supper

Emma Beckman Chapter 445, Order of the Eastern Star, will be serving a spaghetti supper to the Masons and their families prior to the Mason's regular meeting on September 15, at the Masonic Center. Serving starts at 5:30 p.m.

### Etude Club to meet

The Etude Club will meet at Colonial Estates on Tuesday, September 6<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. New members are welcome. For more information, call Dorothy at 319-728-2066.

### FCCLA Fundraiser

Thursday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, join the Columbus Volleyball Team for a "Pink Out" against Pekin. The FCCLA will be selling Columbus Wildcat Pink Power t-shirts for the game for \$10. Pre-order by Friday, September 16<sup>th</sup> to make sure you have your shirt for the game. All proceeds will go to the Gary Hamilton family. Order forms can be found in the Gazette or you may pick them up at the Columbus Junction State Bank, Columbus Community Bank, or at the Columbus School Offices. Questions call Lois Mincks at CCHS 319-728-2231 ext. 3332.

### Howell Reunion planned

A two-day schedule of events is being planned for the 75<sup>th</sup> annual Howell Reunion on September 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. Members of the Howell family are invited to attend a catered lunch beginning at 11 a.m. followed by a social time and fun golf outing on Saturday the 3<sup>rd</sup> in Bettendorf, Iowa, at the Palmer Hills Golf Course Pavilion (which is the previous site of the John and Ida Howell Dairy Farm.) Then, on Sunday the 4<sup>th</sup>, a potluck lunch will be held starting at noon at the Chautauqua Park cabin in Columbus Junction. Any questions, please contact Jay Moore at 319-728-4050.

### Lions Club breakfast

The Lions Club will serve a community sausage, egg and pancake breakfast Saturday and Sunday, September 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> at the Community Senior Center from 7:00 to 11:00 AM. Adults all you can eat - \$6.00, children under 12 - \$4.00. Menu will include milk, juice, coffee, and flavored pancake syrups. Come and support this fundraiser. Funds raised help support annual scholarship awards to local high school seniors as well as free vision screening for local young children and financial assistance for individuals with vision and hearing impairments.

### Postal closing meetings set

The U.S. Postal Service is holding a community meeting with the public in regards to the closing of the Grandview, Fruitland and Conesville Post Offices. This meeting will be held 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 1, 2011, at the Grandview Community Bible Church, 206 W. Monroe St. Grandview, IA 52752.

### United Methodist Women to meet

The United Methodist Women, Columbus Junction, will meet in the church Wednesday, September 7, 2011, at 1:30 p.m. Devotions and Leader will be Marie Greene. Election of officers will be held. Hostesses are Marilyn Thomas and Florence Harbison.

### This week at the Farmers' Market

Fridays from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the American Legion parking lot, now until October 14<sup>th</sup>. 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.

### Early Childhood Board to meet

The Des Moines/Louisa Early Childhood Area Board will be meeting at the ISU Extension Office, 317 Van Buren, Wapello, IA, on Wednesday, September 7, 2011 at 10:00 a.m.

### Visual Support Group to meet

The Louisa County Visual Support Group will have their meeting on the 2nd Thursday of September (8<sup>th</sup>) at 1 p.m. We will meet at the Corner Market, which is located at 340 North 2nd in Wapello. This month we are having 'Big Card Bingo' and would welcome anyone wishing to have a fun afternoon to join us. For more information contact Lois Richers at 319-527-2630.

### Gazette Early Deadline

Because of the Labor Day Holiday the Gazette deadline for news and advertising will be Noon on Friday.

The Gazette and the Columbus Education Association would like to thank all of the candidates and the public who attended the Meet the Candidates Night last Wednesday. Your show of support for our schools was very evident, and is always appreciated.