

# Bringing a new business concept

By John Carpenter  
Gazette Staff

As Henry Ford once said, "Success knocks on everyone's door, but most people don't recognize it because it comes dressed in work clothes." Well, work clothes are what we have seen next door to the Gazette for the past few weeks as Freda Sojka is presenting a new business concept to the Columbus Community. The Sojkas have operated Simply Soothing at 211 Main Street for the past several years, but they are now expanding their business to include other individuals with items to market.

Over the past few weeks the Sojkas have been working to gut their business building, remove walls, install a new ceiling, and are now painting the walls to offer booth space for other entrepreneurs. As Freda explained, "There are a lot of small entrepreneurs and artisans with things to sell, but they don't or can't take on the expense of their own business building. We hope to be able to offer a low cost store front space for them to operate from."

The following press release from Simply soothing sums up the business model: Do you, or someone you know, make beautiful hand crafted items, but need a place to sell their creations? Do you want to be part of an exciting new concept of retail perfect for small towns? Are you tired of run of the mill, made in China, products? Do you want a



A view of the interior of Simply Soothing during the remodeling process

chance to buy as gifts unique, locally made items? Do you want a chance to continue to buy many of the items sold at the local farmers' market? Would you like an opportunity to promote entrepreneurship? Would you like to keep tax dollars local? Would you like an opportunity to bring out of town business into our town?

Would you like another opportunity to bring people downtown? If so, 211 Main Street is currently being remodeled to handle such a concept. We are looking for energetic, enthusiastic partners to develop and promote our new idea for an artisan marketplace. For information, contact Freda Sojka at 319-728-7581

(phone), 319-850-0020 (cell), or email to simplysoothing1@yahoo.com.

After visiting with the Sojkas last week as they were painting and hauling out debris, if what Henry Ford said is accurate, a very successful business idea is soon to come to life on Main Street Columbus Junction.

## Briefly -

### Legion Auxiliary dues now due

American Legion Auxiliary Members: Your dues of \$17.00 for 2011 are now due. Please mail to: Earlene Lekwa, 213 Springer Avenue, Columbus Junction, IA 52738.

### FCCLA to host blood drive

Mark Your Calendars. The Columbus FCCLA will be hosting a blood drive on Wednesday September 22, 2010 from 1:30 to 6:30 p.m. The FCCLA will be calling to schedule appointments this week. Please give and save lives. If you would like to sign up call Lois Mincks at CCHS 319-728-2231 ext. 3332.

### Cookies Plus Kids

An Informational Meeting for all Columbus Community High School Students (Parents are encouraged and welcome to attend) on Wednesday, September 15 at 6:30 p.m., at the Columbus Senior Center. Questions, please call Mike and Renea Jay at 319-530-4010 during evening hours.

### Coffee Fellowship at Hope Bible Church

The Hope Bible Church ladies invite you to a Coffee Fellowship every Friday morning from 8:30 to 10 a.m. in the church kitchen/base-ment. Enter by the east door at the front side of the building. This is an informal time of fellowship where we can encourage one another in a godly walk.

### City Council meets tonight

The Columbus Junction City Council will meet tonight, September 8, 2010 at 5:30 p.m. at the Civic Center/City Hall.

### Washington County Conservation Board to meet

Washington County Conservation Board will hold a regular meeting today, September 8, 2010

### Ice Cream Social at Columbus City United Methodist Church

The Columbus City United Methodist Adult Fellowship will hold an ice cream social and cake walk on Saturday, September 18th from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Columbus City Masonic Lodge. A free will offering will be taken. Everyone is welcome. Ice cream and toppings, cakes and pies. The cake walk tickets will be 5 for \$1.00. Come and enjoy some old fashion fun!

### Half Hour Club to meet

The Half Hour Club will meet on Tuesday, September 14th at 12:30 p.m. for a salad luncheon at Columbus City Methodist Church. The officers are hostesses. Roll call will be Summer Highlights. The program will be new books with Kay Perkins and Samaritan's Purse Shoebox projects. It is time to collect dues.

### Shellbark Club to meet

The Shellbark Club will meet on Thursday, September 16th at 9:00 a.m. at So Dear To My Heart Bed and Breakfast on the Whiteway Road. Please note time change.

# Running Wild participants enjoy great day at Port Louisa



Local runners, walkers and spectators enjoyed another great day at the Running Wild trail race at Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge near Wapello, Iowa.

Racers chose between three- and five-mile courses that wound through wetlands filled with egrets, herons, deer, turkeys and other wildlife. They were also treated to a glorious show of summer wildflowers in full bloom.

In addition to the longer races, children as young as three took part in the Farm Bureau Kids' Fun Run.

Racers, and other visitors wanting to learn more about life at the refuge, viewed educational displays, including the "Conservation Station" provided by the Iowa Learning Farm. Another popular exhibit had aquariums filled with wet land critters including fish, tadpoles, frogs and in-



sects.

The winners of the three-mile race were Jack Walker, Wapello, with a time of 23:03 and Kalynn Stecher, Muscatine with a time of 23:07. The winners of the five-mile race were Mark McSorley, New London, with a time of 34:13 and Becky Eserhaut, Muscatine, with a time of 47:07. The overall winners and winners in each category received hand-crafted

oriole feeders. Complete results and photos are available at [www.RunLouisaCounty.com](http://www.RunLouisaCounty.com)

Monsanto employees, along with their friends and family, won the team competition.

Sponsors for the event included Monsanto Company, Great River Health Systems, S&J Tube, River Products, Louisa County Farm Bureau, MidAmerican Energy, Tyson

Foods, and Louisa Communications. More than 25 volunteers helped on race day or supplied homemade cookies for the runners.

Proceeds from Running Wild go to support conservation efforts in and around Louisa County through Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation. For more information about programs and natural areas in Louisa County, visit [www.NaturallyLouisaCounty.com](http://www.NaturallyLouisaCounty.com) or

call 319-523-8381.

Pictured are the Employees of the Monsanto Company, along with family members, won the team competition at Running Wild 2010. Also pictured are the Running Wild participants listening as staff from the Iowa Learning Farm demonstrates the effects of different cover types in reducing soil erosion. The Conservation Station offered visitors several hands-on exhibits at the event.

# Park Committee reviews plans for various city parks and Swinging Bridge Area

By John Carpenter  
Gazette Staff

The City's Parks and Recreation Committee met in June to review possible additions and improvements to the various parks in the community. The committee devised a process where each park and recreation area was examined listing the various pros and cons of each, and then arriving at recommendations. Following were their findings:

**Chautauqua Park - Pros:** Free public access readily available; many trees on the grounds, multi-use and multi-age facilities available; public restrooms available.

**The Cons included:** limited playground equipment, many dead or dying trees, no set rules for usage, historic jail in middle of play area, standing water in play area.

**Recommendations:** Establish a set of rules, consolidate playground equipment, place signage for park name, relocate jail, thin out some trees and anchor picnic tables to cement platforms.

**Swinging Bridge- Pros:** Free public access, tourist attraction that draws many visitors, historic site.

**Cons:** Frequently vandalized, no visibility from Third Street or Highway 92, dead or dying trees, some wash-out on west side.

**Recommendations:** Establish and post bridge usage rules and guidelines, install surveillance equipment, thin out trees for visibility and preservation of deck boards.

**Monkey Run Park - Pros:** Free public access, large open play areas, possible soccer fields that can be shared with the school, room for volleyball and basketball courts.

**Cons:** Limited play areas, limited access, field not level, standing water in areas, little or no trees, no benches, no set rules for usage, particularly hours and alcohol.

**Recommendations:** Establish and post park usage rules and guidelines, upgrade field area, install signage listing park name, and rules, add benches and designate parking areas.

The committee will continue to

discuss these items with the city and solicit public input. Plans as to how improvements can be made and financed will be established using a priority system.

There are a number of items that need to be addressed, and it is hoped that over time all of the projects can be accomplished. Our city parks and the Swinging Bridge are what draws visitors to our city, and provides recreational facilities for our citizens. They play a very important role in the quality of life in the Columbus Community.

Pictured at right, above, is the Monkey Run Park soccer area, and at right, bottom, are the playground equipment at Chautauqua Park.

The Park Committee members are: Mike Pavey, Jose Estrada, Fred Lukavsky, Steve and Pam Tomfeld, Todd Salazar, Nate Carlson, Jim Gabriel, Hao Prior and Jeff Carey. If anyone has suggestions or comments, please contact any of the Park Committee members or City Hall. They would appreciate your input.

