

What's Going on Here?

By John Carpenter
Columbus Gazette

On page two of this week's issue you will find two letters to the editor addressing serious issues in town.

One letter refers to the rash of burglaries we have experienced. I have to admit that the letter does chastise the Gazette somewhat for not reporting further on these break-ins. I'm not prepared to comment on this yet, but I can assure the writer that our staff will discuss the matter here in the office. However, the writer does give a good point in the fact that these are becoming more frequent, and we need to do what we can to aid our local law enforcement in tips to help apprehend these individuals.

The second writer discusses a recent problem with graffiti sprayed on her property. Although this problem isn't new, it seems to be an increasing situation. If one looks closely, graffiti can be found in a number of areas around town. It is a constant problem at the Swinging Bridge area, recently there was a story in the Gazette about graffiti at Chinkapin Bluffs, it is found in areas in the business district (the Gazette building has been a target), and it now appears to be spreading to the neighborhoods.

In addition, it was reported to the Gazette on Tuesday morning that some of the supports for the handrails at the Swinging Bridge have been broken off. This not only puts visitors at danger, but may possibly cause the bridge to be closed until they are repaired.

I know that it is easy to say,



Damaged handrails at the Swinging Bridge

"Where's the Police?," but it's not that simple. Our Police Force can't be everywhere, and I'm pretty sure that the perpetrators have a look-out on hand when they are doing these acts.

The answer is you, our citizens. It is our responsibility to keep our eyes open for any suspicious activ-

ity, and report it immediately to our law enforcement agencies. It is our responsibility to let people know that this isn't something we will tolerate in our community. It is our responsibility to set an example to our young people so they learn the seriousness of these acts while they are at an age that it is effective.

We are presently in a community-wide program to beautify Columbus Junction and surrounding areas, but acts like these can hamper or even destroy all of the work. So please, become a part of the effort in stopping these acts. This is your community, and your help is needed. If you see something, report it.

Local Deputy Sheriff receives Sullivan Award for Valor

On November 12, 2009, four Iowa Deputy Sheriffs received the Sullivan Brothers Award for Valor in a ceremony held at the State Capitol. The awards were presented by Governor Culver and DPS Commissioner Gene Meyer.

Louisa County Chief Deputy Adam Caudle entered the flood stage Iowa River two times to rescue a woman who had jumped from the bridge.

Jones County Deputies Brian Eckhardt and C.J. Sullivan rescued a child from a car that was overturned in flooded Buffalo Creek west of Anamosa.

Bremer County Deputy Sean Hartman along with a Waverly fireman entered a burning house to rescue an elderly woman.

In total, eleven law enforcement officers and fire department personnel were honored. Each of these men risked their own safety to help and we hope that you will join us in thanking them for a job well done.



Pictured left to right Public Safety Commissioner Gene Meyer, Jones County Deputy Brian Eckhardt, Bremer County Deputy Sean Hartman, Governor Chet Culver, Jones County Deputy C.J. Sullivan and Louisa County Chief Deputy Adam Caudle.

School Board reviews school calendar

By Jim Rudisill

It will take another month before the Columbus School District's 2010-2011 school calendar begins to take shape, after the school board agreed during its November 16 meeting to ask Superintendent Rich Bridenstine to develop three alternate schedules. Under current state law, school districts are required to provide a minimum of 180 days of student instruction, with classes beginning no sooner than a day during the week in which September 1 falls. School districts do not have any leeway on the 180 days of instruction, but may opt to begin classes during a different week provided the school board holds a public hearing.

Last spring the board approved a calendar for this school year that started classes on August 13, raising the ire of several parents in the community who complained the early start conflicted with the Iowa State Fair and other activities. Although the board held a public hearing on that proposal, board member Sandy Martin said residents who attended that hearing felt they had been ignored.

"(They) felt it was a done deal," she said.

Board president Marsha Gerot however said that was not the case

and that board members had kept an open mind.

"You're not coming here thinking a decision has been made," she assured Martin.

During Monday's meeting, Superintendent Rich Bridenstine initially asked the board to decide if it wanted him to prepare a draft that started school on Monday, August 30, the first day that would be allowed for classes under the current state rule; or a different week that would require a public hearing.

He acknowledged the controversy caused by the decision to begin classes early this year and suggested this year's decision would not be easy. "(This) is probably the toughest decision I'm going to ask you to consider," he told the board.

"It would be a lot easier if the board tells me when we start and then work from there," he explained.

However, he also pointed out he could develop three separate proposals that would provide an early start, another that would begin classes late and a third proposal that would land somewhere between the two extremes. That option appealed to board member Dan Peters who hinted he wanted to look at a calendar that would have the first semester ending

before Christmas.

Bridenstine said that could be an option, but it would conflict with the state fair again.

"Was it controversial enough to avoid it this year?" he asked.

In the end it apparently was not and Bridenstine said he would have the three calendar options ready for the board next month.

In other action, the board agreed not to offer an early retirement program for the district's teaching staff this year. The district has offered a program for the past two years and board members agreed there was little benefit to the district to offer another one this year.

Bridenstine said 10 teachers would be eligible this year and all ten had turned down the same proposal last year. Martin, a retired teacher of the district, cast the lone vote in support of offering the program.

In final action, the board approved several athletic and club fundraisers. Under new guidance from the district's auditors, the school board must now approve all fundraising requests. The only request that generated any concern was one from the high school football team to raise money for new uniforms.

Briefly -

United Fund to host CJPM

The Columbus United Fund will be hosting a CJPM this Thursday, November 19th at the American Legion. The CJPM will begin at 4:30 p.m. Come and enjoy visiting with other community members, and help kick off the United Fund Campaign. The public is invited to attend. Refreshments will be available.

City Council to meet tonight

The City of Columbus Junction will hold a regular Council meeting today, Wednesday, November 18, 2009, at 5:30 p.m., at the New Civic Center/City Hall.

Community Club Blood Drive

The Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center announces that the Columbus Community Club is sponsoring a blood drive today, Wednesday, November 18, 2009, from 1:30-6:30 p.m., at the American Legion Hall, 99 2nd Street, Columbus Junction. To make an appointment to donate call, Kirsten Shellabarger at 319-728-2414. Walk-ins are welcome. Donors who last gave blood on or before September 23, 2009 are eligible.

Benefit for Jim Bell

Jim Bell is fighting Stage 4 Small Cell Lung Cancer. He is presently undergoing treatments. Jim is the son of Boone and Marian Bell of Columbus Junction. A benefit to help cover Jim's expenses will be held at the Circle of Pride Rodeo Grounds on Saturday, November 21st. A Silent Auction will be held from Noon to 4:30 p.m. with food served from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Music will be from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. There will be a 50/50 drawing, raffles, silent auction and bake sales. For more information or to donate call Becky Johns at 319-725-6612; Crystal Petersen at 563-260-8155, or Pam Tomfeld at 319-726-5322.

Visual Support Group to meet

The Louisa County Visual Support Group will meet Thursday, November 19th at 1 p.m. We will meet in the East room of the Corner Market, located at 340 North 2nd. Susan Howard from the Dept for the Blind will lead our group. Refreshments will be served. We welcome new members or anyone just starting to have vision problems. Any questions, please call Lois Richers at 527-2630.

Legion Soup Supper

Legion, Auxiliary, and Son's Legion members are invited to join in our annual chili and cheese soup supper on November 21st at the American Legion, starting with a social hour at 5 p.m., and supper at 6 p.m., followed with a short program. Please plan to attend!

Shellbark Club to meet

The Shellbark Club will meet on Thursday, November 19, 2009, at the Frontier Family Restaurant in Washington, at 11:30 a.m.

Community Club to meet

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

Family Night on December 2nd

Mark your calendars for Downtown Columbus Junction's Family Night on Wednesday, December 2, 2009. More information will be available as plans are finalized for this annual Holiday Kick-Off.

Thanksgiving Service in Morning Sun

Join us for a special community Thanksgiving worship service this Sunday night, November 22 at 7 p.m. The service will be held at the 1st United Presbyterian Church in Morning Sun. Pastor Ramona Wink of the Morning Sun Presbyterian Church and Rev. Scott Smith of the Morning Sun Methodist Church will lead this special worship service. A special offering will be taken for the Mt. Union Methodist Church. That church recently suffered damage from heavy rains. This is a Thanksgiving service for the Christian community. We pray that YOU will join us to GIVE GOD THANKS!

Integrity Dental opens new clinic in Columbus City



Integrity Dental moved into their new facility in Columbus City on November 9th. The dental office was previously located in the medical facility building in the lower Main Street area but was evacuated during the flood of 2008. Dr. Wever decided at that time to build a new facility, so the offices were temporarily located in the Contel Building while a site was found and construction could be finished. Congratulations to all of the staff at Integrity Dental on a wonderful new office.

Additional work continues in Columbus City as dirt is being moved at the location for the Regional Medical Health Facility. The facility will be located at the corner of Highway 70, directly north of the Farm Service Offices. Regional Medical Health presently is located in temporary offices across Colonel's Drive from the Day Care Facility. The Gazette will keep you updated on the progress of this project.