



## Look at what's happening at the School

To the readers of the Columbus Gazette

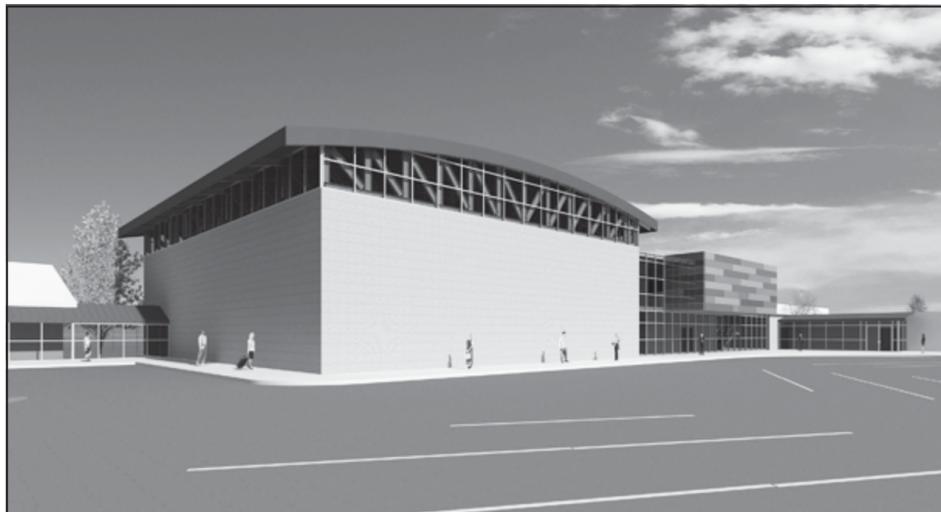
I am fortunate to be in the process of providing design and construction observation services for the construction of two buildings for the Columbus Community School District. Our firm has worked on many similar projects in other districts. It is timely that I am able to take a leading role with a significant project so close to my home. In that context, I want to use that local presence to keep the patrons of the district as accurately informed as possible.

We have been working for the last year with the Board of Education, school personnel and other community members to develop what we believe is a significant project and one that we can afford. It has two main buildings and both will serve to attract and retain students. One is a standalone building that will house two classrooms and a lab to be used by Muscatine Community College as an Outreach Center to their main campus in Muscatine, Iowa. The building will also house the Columbus Community School District Administrative offices. CCSD Administration will provide operation and maintenance of the facility on a day-to-day basis while MCC will use it primarily for night classes.

The other building is an addition to the southwest corner of the high school. It will contain a new practice gymnasium and locker rooms on the ground level with a practice wrestling room on an upper level.

The MCC/CCSD Administrative building will be constructed just north of the row of Pin Oaks in the parking area south of the high school and will be approximately 70' X 100'. It will occupy what would normally be considered the most southerly bay of gravel parking. The addition to the southwest corner of the high school will be approximately 100' X 150'. These two locations have been studied extensively for their impact on total parking, snow removal and storage, sporting events, bus circulation and storm water drainage. Remember, we do not have ample real estate and it was clear early on that there was not support for moving the sports facilities off campus.

With that said, I am confident that the current site plan will blend with the existing campus and create a functional and safe educational environment, one that will make the community look vibrant and attractive to visitors. There will be a big tall building behind the backstop fence on the baseball diamond but it



A view of the new gym as it ties into the fitness center on the left and the high school on the right



The Muscatine College Building which will also house the school administrative offices

won't hinder play or fan visibility. Additionally, an indoor walkway connection to the Fitness Center will create the need to relocate the ticket gate and entry to the track and ball diamonds, but it will be convenient to existing and new parking created by the recent removal of the old sale barn building.

Another important part of this project involves solving the safety issues with the congestion and general lack of parking at Roundy Elementary. Currently 10 district buses load and unload at the same location and time as parent drop off and pick up. This conflict will be solved with additional paving to separate the bus and parent circulation routes. The

project may also have an alternate bid to add an additional bay of about 40 parking spaces if funds are available.

This project is important because the District and community wants to take advantage of the financial offer from MCC to provide a presence in the Columbus Community. In addition, the health and safety related projects are needed, i.e., construct a new wrestling practice room to provide a safer practice environment with good interior access to the weight room and attracting open enrolled student athletes who seek the successful wrestling program offered at CCSD. The District also wants to construct a new practice gymnasium to relieve pressure on the two current

gyms for scheduling physical education, sports practice and competitive events.

And finally, I want to remind everyone that this project leverages future sales tax dollars and does not require an increase of local property taxes. I think the Board has taken advantage of some very favorable interest rates and has taken a conservative approach with the amount leveraged to make a wise investment in the continual improvements that are always required to maintain public institutions.

A successful project would begin construction in the summer of 2012 and be completed in the summer of 2013. **By Al Bohling**

## Meet our New Superintendent

By Sandra Martin

"I truly look forward to serving Columbus Community School District as the Superintendent of Schools. When I was interviewing for this position, I was able to see and feel the pride and dedication that the school and community members held for one another. I, too, have a deep passion and dedication towards rural schools and their communities. I believe in the high quality education a district this size can offer. I believe in the great students that a district this size helps to develop. I believe in the collaborative opportunities that a district this size offers for staff, students, parents, and the community, promoting a true educational family. I am honored that I have been asked to join the Columbus Community School's educational family." These were the words of Dr. Marlene Johnson, after having been selected as the District's superintendent of schools late last Thursday.

Columbus Community Board President Marsha Gerot commented on the choice, "The unity of the focus groups in their support of Dr. Johnson was greatly appreciated by the Board. Everyone seemed impressed with her approach. Constantly, she stressed that her focus will be on kids and empowering ourselves and our students. She referred to the concept of teamwork, seeing the district as a family working together for the betterment of our students. Her answers to questions resonated with her dedication and passion for the task ahead." A native of Hubbard, Iowa, Marlene Johnson is a proponent of the values of small schools and is eager to return to a small school setting.

Her educational background includes undergraduate work at Iowa Central Community College in Fort Dodge and Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa. She earned her master's at Morningside College in Sioux City, her Ed.S. at Minnesota University in Mankato, Minnesota, and her Ed.D. at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, South Dakota.

As an elementary teacher she served in the Dows Community School District, the Northwood Community School District, and the Lake Mills Community School District. She also filled the role of an adjunct professor at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake and at Waldorf College in Forest City. While serving as a teacher, Marlene coached middle school and varsity sports.

Her first principalship was at Manson-Northwest Webster Community School District where she began as the middle school administrator then added the elementary responsibilities two years into her tenure there. Currently, Dr. Johnson is an elementary principal with the Fort Dodge Community School System. She has had extensive experience working with the implementation of the Iowa Core and with special education programs and services within that district. Both districts, where she has served as an administrator, have provided her with many valuable experiences. She has been a pre-school director, has served on the negotiation teams, managed the budget of two buildings, and has worked within the administrative teams to establish fiscally sound budgets.

Her enthusiasm extends to her community as she states, "My husband and I believe it is important to volunteer our time, effort and monies to support the community that we

live in. My husband has served an accumulation of 20 years on city councils and 12 years as a church council leader in the communities in which we have lived. I have served on library boards, church councils, volunteered for Special Olympics, and assisted many other community and district organizations." To that end, she and her husband have also served on a First Responder Team and have been members of Jaycees and Lions Club.

Her experience also includes being a swimming pool manager. "The pool in Dows was going to close for lack of having a manager, discipline issues, and lack of funds to fix the pool and the building. I took the training to be a certified pool manager, kept the pool open and managed it for 3 years. I utilized my leadership skills to move the pool business out of debt mode and into a profit mode, organized a community fundraiser to fix the baby pool and building to be in compliance with Iowa Code, and took care of the discipline issues that were causing low attendance. We saved the pool, and it is still up and running to this day."

Her husband, Bob has been in the printing business since he was 16 years old. He has been employed with Dudley Printing at the Calhoun County Reminder for the past 17 years as a plant foreman and Webmaster. Bob is planning to maintain his employment with Dudley Printing, as much of the printing work is now computer based and can be completed through his home office, which will be established in Columbus Junction. Marlene states, "My husband, Bob, and I feel that living and being involved in the community where I am employed is an important aspect of being an educational leader and role model. We both look forward to establishing our home within the



district and becoming actively involved supporting the community, church, and the school in many different ways."

The Johnsons have two grown daughters, two sons-in-law, and seven—soon to be eight—"wonderful" grandchildren. Their daughter Heather and her family live in Spirit Lake, where she is a licensed nurse and runs a daycare in her home. Daughter Jennie and her family live in Rochester MN; she is a nurse employed at Mayo Clinic.

The couple has many pastimes they enjoy: golfing, cooking, trap shooting and being community and church volunteers together. She also finds pleasure in long distance biking and quilting. At her final interview, Dr. Johnson wore a lapel pin that boldly stated **Believe**. She is charismatic in her beliefs: "I believe that all students can learn. I believe in the positive impact rural schools and the community can make for preparing students for their future. I believe in myself and my ability to listen, learn, and influence."

## Briefly -

### Community Club to meet

The Columbus Community Club will meet this Thursday at Noon at the American Legion. They will be meeting with the CCHS Junior Class.

### Cedarcrest "Dues Rendezvous"

The annual "Dues Rendezvous" will be held at Cedarcrest Golf and Country Club on Saturday, February 25 at 6 p.m. Fingerfoods and beverages will be provided, but feel welcome to bring a dish. All members, and those seeking membership, are invited to attend.

### Class of 1982 plans reunion

Attention Columbus Class of 1982: It's time for our 30-year class reunion. We need to get addresses for all classmates. Parents: If you can help out, call Deb at 319-750-2636 or email me at cpmc\_jp@yahoo.com.

### Open House at Colonial Manor

Please join Colonial Manor in congratulating its new Administrator, Sarah Hand. An open house is planned at Colonial Manor on Friday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012, from 2-4 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

### Habitat Soup Supper

Louisa County Habitat for Humanity will hold its annual Celebration Soup Supper this Sunday, February 19 at the American Legion Hall in Columbus Junction from 5:00 -7:00. Entertainment will be provided by the Columbus Swing Band. Great food and door prizes will be available.

### Conservation Board to meet

The Louisa County Conservation Board will meet today, Wednesday, February 15, 2012, at 5:30 p.m. at the Louisa County Conservation Office.

### Master Gardeners at Historical Society

The Louisa County Historical Society, 609 Hwy 61 N, Wapello, IA, will sponsor a Louisa County Master Gardener program on Sunday, February 19, 2012 from 2-4 p.m. at the LCHS Museum in Wapello. Jim Everett will present the program, "Floating Islands." Grandview and Letts are hosts. All are welcome.

### Lo-Co Bingo at Historical Society

The Louisa County Historical Society is sponsoring Lo-Co Bingo on Saturday, February 18<sup>th</sup> from 1:30-3:30 p.m. Doors will open at 12:30. Bingo begins at 1:30; seating is limited. Refreshments will be available for purchase. No outside food or drink is allowed. Proceeds benefit LCHS building repairs fund.

### Legislative Forum scheduled

A Legislative Forum will take place this Saturday, February 18, 2012, with Senator Tom Courtney and Representative Dennis Cohoon and Representative Tom Sands at the West Burlington City Hall from 9:15-11:15 am.

### Louisa Longbeards Banquet

The twelfth annual Louisa Longbeards Banquet is being held Saturday, March 3. This event is being held at the Briggs Community Building, Wapello. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for guests to participate in games, raffles, review items for silent and live auction, etc. Supper is served at 7 p.m. Any questions concerning the banquet or becoming a member, please contact Todd Shutt at 319-572-1522 or David Boysen at 319-572-1551. New members are always welcome.

### Marr Park hours

In observance of Presidents' Day, the Conservation Education Center at Marr Park will be closed on Monday, February 20, 2012.

### Ham and Beans at Masonic Lodge

The Columbus City Lodge #107 will have a Ham and Bean supper Friday, March 2 at the Lodge in Columbus City. Serving will be from 5:30-7:00 PM. A free will donation will be accepted. The public is invited to attend.

### Shrove Tuesday Supper in Morning Sun

Pastor Ramona Wink and the congregation of the 1st United Presbyterian Church in Morning Sun invites YOU to enjoy delicious pancakes and sausage during their Shrove Tuesday Supper on Tuesday, February 21 from 5-7 p.m. at the church. Come feast on fabulous food, enjoy fine fellowship and share your faith. Proceeds from this event will help area women attend the Women Of Faith conference in Des Moines August 24-25. See you next Tuesday at the 1st United Presbyterian Church in Morning Sun where the SON is always shining!

### Music Boosters to meet

There will be a MUSIC BOOSTER MEETING at 5:30 on Tuesday, February 21 in the High School Music Room. They will be discussing the upcoming high school musical and find out what help is needed; they will be taking a look at the finances of last year; they will be discussing plans with the concession stand. Finally, they will discuss "rules of engagement" for directors to request assistance for the 2012-13 school year. Please let Kim or Jenny know if you have other topics to discuss.

### Free health screenings at school

University of Iowa's mobile clinic program will be giving Free health screenings on Saturday, February 18, 2012, from 10 AM - 2 PM at Wilma Sime Roundy Elementary School.

### Shellbark Club to meet

Shellbark Club will meet Thursday, February 16 at 11:30 a.m. at the Corner Market in Wapello.

### Distinguished Graduate nominations

The Columbus School is now taking nominations for a distinguished Columbus graduate. Nominations are due by April 1st and papers can be picked up at the White House.

### Alumni Banquet scheduled

The Columbus area Alumni Banquet will take place at Roundy Elementary School on June 9, 2012. Social Hour will begin at 5:30 p.m., and Dinner will be served at 6:00 p.m. Special recognition will be given to the 50-year (1962) class and the 25-year (1987) class. Put the date on your calendar now!

### Visual Support Group to meet

The Louisa County Visual Support Group will meet at the Corner Market in Wapello on the third Thursday of the month, February 16<sup>th</sup>. Our meeting will start at 2 p.m. We will be playing large card bingo. For more information, contact Lois Richers at 319-527-2630.