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Thanksgiving meal teaches lessons

By KELLY GERLACH

Special needs students at Briggs Elementary School eagerly awaited the arrival of their dinner guests Tuesday, Nov. 24. They’d cleaned, decorated, set the tables. The turkey was carved, stuffing dished out, salad chilling, pumpkin dessert waiting for a dollop of whipped cream.

The students, under the leadership of their teachers, prepared their annual Thanksgiving feast for Briggs staff and special needs pals at Cardinal Elementary School. The feast was held at Briggs.

The Thanksgiving meal actually serves as part of the curriculum for the special needs students. It’s a lesson in independence, manners, food preparation and organization. Students assist teachers in every aspect of the meal, helping with the shopping, baking, planning, setup and cleanup of the meal.

Students develop their writing skills by composing invitations and thank-you notes for the feast. They enhance their socialization skills by welcoming all the guests, serving food, relaying food or beverage needs to adults and simply conversing with each other and



MSP photo by Kelly Gerlach

Lucas Kelly and Laura Coleman pause in their serving duties and show off their Sponge Bob Square Pants aprons Tuesday, Nov. 24.

their guests.

If adults demonstrated half the politeness and caring these students did during the course of the one hour Thanksgiving meal, the world would be a much better place.

“The kids were so excited all morning long. They couldn’t wait for their guests to arrive,” said Gail Hanlon, Briggs teacher associate who helps prepare the Thanksgiving meal.

The kids learn how to properly set the table and made placemats for the occasion. They also have assigned jobs to perform, such as a table captain to see to everyone’s needs and runner who go to the kitchen to refill empty bowls and platters.

The end result – a scrumptious Thanksgiving feast with turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes and gravy, dinner rolls, fruit salad and pumpkin dessert – proves worth the work every year. Simply observing the smiles on everyone’s faces makes the event a success.

Laura Coleman, one of the feast

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Archaeological finds affect bridge placement

By DOUGLAS MELVOLD

Jackson County will abandon its preferred site for replacing a bridge east of Andrew because of archaeological artifacts and instead will study another site.

County Engineer Clark Schloz reported to the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, Nov. 24, on the status of the project to replace the bridge, which carries county road E-17 over Brush Creek one mile east of Andrew.

Artifacts found in a study of an area northwest of the bridge turned up stones that archaeologists said were used to make tools and other implements dating from 8500 to 1500 B.C.

Schloz told the supervisors that after conferring with engineers from IIW Engineers & Surveyors of Dubuque, they determined that continuing to pursue the proposed new alignment for the bridge would carry it too far into the archaeological site, which would require a further archaeological study.

Instead, Schloz asked that the supervisors approve an initial archaeological study of another site, southwest of the present bridge.

The supervisors unanimously approved Schloz’ request to hire Wapsi Valley Archaeology Inc. of Anamosa to conduct the study at a cost of \$1,187.

If the study finds that that area is free of artifacts, Schloz said the bridge could be aligned to fit in that area, although it may require excavation of a portion of a bluff.

If the study finds evidence of artifacts in that area as well, Schloz said he will recommend that that area also be abandoned as a possible site. In that case the bridge would be built at its present location.

Schloz had hoped to realign the bridge slightly in order to improve motorists’ safety by eliminating a curve to the west leading to the bridge.

Engineers also had noted that if the new bridge is built at a new site, the present bridge could continue to be used during most of the construc-

tion period of the new span, greatly reducing the amount of time the road would have to be closed and traffic detoured around the site.

If the bridge is replaced at its present location, the detour would start much earlier and remain in effect for a longer time because the present bridge would have to be dismantled before construction of the new span could begin, Schloz has noted.

The county is planning to replace the narrow 20-foot wide bridge with a 30-foot span. Construction is scheduled for the summer of 2011.

The archaeological study is a condition of receiving federal funds for the project. Federal funds will pay 80 percent of the estimated \$800,000 cost of the bridge.

When artifacts were found in the initial site, the county had the option of ordering a further study of the site to determine if the bridge could be relocated. But Schloz and the supervisors have agreed that the county can’t afford the additional cost.

They noted that the west portion of the Centerville Road project in northern Jackson County already has been delayed because of an archaeological find and the county can’t afford two advanced studies.

Supervisors ridiculed the archaeological findings on the study of the Andrew bridge project when they looked at photos of the rocks that archaeologists said were prehistoric implements.

Supervisors said the stones appeared to be no different than ordinary rocks that could be commonly found in creek beds.

“We figure if they find something (at the new site to be studied), we’ll just leave the bridge in the same place and put it in in the same spot,” Schloz said.

In other business Tuesday, the supervisors hired Karisa Brown of rural Baldwin to fill an opening as administrative secretary.

Brown will begin duties on Dec. 14 and will be paid \$10.58 an hour for 35 hours a week.

She will serve as secretary for three offices,

those of the sanitary landfill, headed by Mark Beck; sanitarian and health board, headed by Frank Friberg, and general relief, headed by Mary Bartels.

Some zoning-related duties may be added to the job.

Brown replaces Jan Ward, who retired in August. Since then, the supervisors have filled the opening with a temporary employee provided by a temporary staffing agency.

Brown, who holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration, also has a nursing certification. She previously was employed at Crestridge in Maquoketa.

She was chosen from among 45 applicants for the post. Supervisors said there were several highly qualified applicants for the job and it was difficult to narrow the field.

Supervisors also noted that Monday, Nov. 23, was the application deadline for the upcoming zoning administrator opening.

Longtime zoning administrator David Manning will retire at the end of the year.

The supervisors received 21 applications for the job, including two who currently are county employees.

Supervisors said they would begin reviewing the applications and scheduling interviews after Thanksgiving.

The supervisors also received a year-end report from county Weed Commissioner Deb Bagby.


Bagby said she received six complaints about noxious weeds during the season and said all were resolved.

“Everybody complied with what I asked,” Bagby reported.

Supervisors Larry “Buck” Koos and Steve Flynn each said they received one call during the year regarding weed complaints.

Bagby’s term ends in December. She has agreed to serve another term and supervisors will make the appointment next month.

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