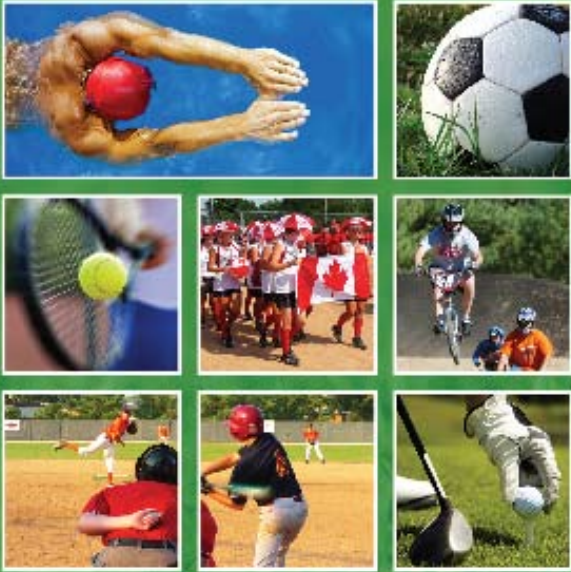



ANNUAL MEETING RECAP AND YEAR IN REVIEW INSIDE . . .



2009 ANNUAL MEETING
monday, June 15, 3:00 pm
visitors center conference room

**how sports tourism
is fueling the economy**





As always, it was standing room only! Mayor Fred Armstrong got things off to a rousing start with a tribute to Terry Whittaker, recipient of the Unexpected.Unforgettable Award

Terry Whittaker



EVERY TOWN NEEDS A TERRY BY MATTHEW JACKSON

*an original poem written to commemorate
Terry Whittaker's unexpected.unforgettable award*

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every town needs a Terry

for over thirty years

he is a Beat

surging the downtown artery

pulsing to the rhythm of arts

& bringing blood to literacy—

my imagination courses my veins—

since I was 14

Terry has opened doors for me

to fantastic places

like rescuing Princesses on Mars

with John Carter & Edgar Rice Burroughs

explored the darker side of Maine with Stephen King

& this past winter, he led to every dank dive bar in LA

with Charles Bukowski

every town needs a Terry

like Twain coursed the Mississipp'

or War & Peace requires a bookmark

every child deserves a Hogwarts trip

& a city needs life in its heart—

like every town needs a Terry

no, not everyone can be Terry

not everyone can be Tom Waits fire-hot

& subtly Iron & Wine cool all at the same time—

with beard almost as awesome as mine (unforgettable, unexplainable)

he is a captain—

stoic against floods of the White River, the Mill Race pond,

& Amazon.com—pumping sustenance downtown—

a Grand Marshal of independence

independent book reviews—fiercely independent views—

an out-of-the-box example of

hey, wake up!

grab some coffee & inspire someone

like yourself



Susan Williams, President of Indiana Sports Corporation, chatting here with Warren Baumgart, was guest speaker, and focused on the positive economic impact of sports events on local and state economies. Warren Baumgart, President of the Visitor Center Board of Directors, highlighted the impressive accomplishments of the Visitors Center the past year.



Major Michael Brady and Colonel Barry Richmond received a spontaneous standing ovation when receiving the Unexpected Partner award. Here they're greeted by Cindy Frey, Associate Director. Unfortunately, Sergeant First Class Scott Hardesty was preparing for deployment to Iraq.



USSSA 2008 Girl's Softball World Series

Jim Dietz, Director of Sports Tourism, highlighted the impact of the 56 sports events this year, the two national recognitions by sports organizations received by the Vistors Center, and the exciting changes yet to come.



Ed Curtin, Columbus Redevelopment Commission, and Sharon Renfro, Board Member and Treasurer, chat with Lynn Lucas, Visitors Center Executive Director



Becky Pinto, of Columbus in Bloom, with Joyce Orwin, Volunteer and Tour Coordinator, and Julie Schroeder, Executive Assistant



Judy Lahr, First Floor Staff, and Susan Whittaker, First Floor Manager, chat with Pat Zeigler.



Wilna Braun (r) received the Volunteer of the Year Award; here, she is chatting with Terry Whittaker and Polly Verbanec, the newest member of the first floor staff



John Myers, of Power House Brewing Company/Columbus Bar, generously dispensed beer samples. John also had loads of insight on craft beers, explaining here the characteristics of Diesel Stout to Brooke Hawkins.



From top left : Sam Pentzer, Pentzer Printing, and Alice Curry, Columbus Indiana Philharmonic; Visitor Center Board Members Randy Royer and Kim DeClue; Helmut Meng and County Council Member Bill Lentz; Chuck Wilt, Director of Columbus Parks and Recreation and Visitor Center Board Member, and Jim Dietz, Director of Sports Tourism



From top left : Sam Simmemaker and Gordon Lake, White River Broadcasting; Tom Vujovich, Pentzer Printing and Columbus Redevelopment Commission, with Corey Carr, Economic Development Director and Visitors Center Board; Associate Director Cindy Frey, Laura Garrett, Columbus Parks and Recreation, and Linda Nay; Tom Dell, Terry Whittaker, and Spencer Dell

**THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF OF VISITORS CENTER INC.
RECOGNIZE THE EFFORTS OF THE FOLLOWING "HALL OF FAMERS"**

COLUMBUS AREA ARTS COUNCIL

Warren Baumgart, Donna Stouder

CRUMP THEATER

Rovene Quiqley

FAIR ON THE SQUARE

Sande Hummel, representing Columbus in Bloom

PENTZER PRINTING

Sam Pentzer and Tom Vujovich

UNEXPECTED PARTNER AWARD

Colonel Barry Richmond, Major Michael Brady, Sergeant First Class Scott Hardesty

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Wilna Braun

ABOVE AND BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY AWARD

Terry Whittaker



**THE "HALL OF FAME" AWARDS,
EXCERPTS FROM AWARD PRESENTATIONS**

HALL OF FAMERS : WARREN BAUMGART AND DONNA STOUER

The important work of the Columbus Area Arts Council includes: raising money for arts groups locally (through the United Arts Fund drive), distributing and monitoring grants for 8 southern Indiana counties as a regional partner of the Indiana Arts Commission, providing arts education for young people with disabilities through VSA Indiana, and delivering local programming. I want to focus on some of the programs that impact residents and visitors alike. As a board member, I must tell you the arts council has faced its share of challenges recently.

Arts Programming is critical to establishing downtown as a destination. The downtown comes to life with many events like Neighborfest and the Block Party. Some of the other events we treasure include: Block Party, Rock the Park, Visual Arts Exhibits at the Phi gallery (at Hotel Indigo), live music for the Farmer's Market, Bad Hair Day, the Iron Pour, Anti-freeze offbeat programs that get us through the winter months, and Ethnic Expo.

Despite the challenges of operating a nonprofit in the current environment, the Columbus Area Arts Council continues to deliver quality programming, such as the Tree Cozies and the Public Art Sculpture Invitational. When our visitors drive over the bridge and see the large sculptures, along 2nd Street, they get the message right away: There's something different about this place.

Most cities the size of Columbus don't have the range or quality of arts programming we enjoy in Columbus. Many of the events are free thanks to the generosity of local sponsors, making the arts accessible to all. No matter what the event, if the Arts Council is behind it, you can trust that the event will be outstanding.

(excerpted from the introduction by Cindy Frey, Associate Director)

HALL OF FAMERS : CRUMP THEATER, ROVENE QUIGLEY

2008 was quite a year for concerts at the historic Crump theater:

During the past year, The Crump was the location of 20 concerts for young people, including, in September, the Stage 3 Film Company from Philadelphia filming a John Mellencamp concert. The tape of the concert was used in the Biography Channel's special, "Back Where We Started." Mellencamp had last played at the Crump in 1976. The concert was attended by 700. Attendees paid \$350 to \$700, and profits went to local flood relief.

In November, Tim Grimm organized and performed at the "Hoosier Dylan" concert at the Crump and 285 attended. In May 2009, Tim Grimm's "Hoosier Springsteen" Concert attracted 185. Finally, on June 20, "Let's Hear it for the Crump" benefit will feature 10 bands that will perform for 10 hours. The Crump has earned a reputation for concerts – but also has another reputation: The Crump is getting famous for its ghosts! Ten Paranormal groups spent the night at the Crump and 200 attended an Indiana PhenomCon 2008 at the Crump.

(excerpted from the introduction by Lynn Lucas, Executive Director)

HALL OF FAMERS : FAIR ON THE SQUARE, SANDE HUMMEL, REPRESENTING COLUMBUS IN BLOOM

If you haven't been to the Fair on the Square, you are really missing something. This is the ongoing effort of Columbus in Bloom, the group that was responsible for the successful America in Bloom award in 2006 and the entry into the International Communities in Bloom a year later. Every Saturday, at 6th and Washington, the market takes place from 9 a.m. to noon. The first two weekends this year have featured over 40 vendors and drawn steady crowds.

The live music, the local artisans and the produce vendors create an authentic Columbus experience and a great vibe. You can buy local wine, honey, coffee, fresh cut flowers, organic meats, eggs, breads, and sweet baked goods. It's a gathering place where you can visit with neighbors and buy plants for your garden; the sites, sounds, smells, and tastes are fun for the young and the young at heart.

It's a great addition to the downtown on Saturday mornings. The crowds downtown bring customers to downtown shops and restaurants. We love to tell our visitors about it. We want to say a special thank you to Columbus in Bloom and have asked Sande, market manager, to represent this group of dedicated volunteers.

(excerpted from the introduction by Cindy Frey, Associate Director)

HALL OF FAMERS : PENTZER PRINTING, SAM PENTZER, TOM VUJOVICH

We want to recognize Pentzer Printing's assistance with a couple of tourism-related projects during 2008. First of all they were terrific supporters of the 2008 Historic Homes Tour. Homes Tour Chairman Linda Nay praised their help this way: "They provided all of our printed materials including rack cards, brochures, tickets, plus all signage...Sam Pentzer and Pentzer Printing were invaluable to the Bartholomew County Historical Society in making the Homes Tour of 2008 a fantastic success!" We also know Pentzer was very helpful to the 2006 Historic Homes Tour committee.

Second, they supported the new Sports Indiana organization's new statewide publication. Jim Dietz, our Director of Sports Tourism, worked on the project and described Pentzer's help: "...like most startup organizations, Sports Indiana found itself with limited funds and resources when we wanted to produce our new presentation brochure. When the call went out throughout the state for a printer to help with the piece, Pentzer Printing stepped to the plate and hit a home run for us. Copies of this award-winning piece have now been given to all state legislators and key decision makers in the amateur sports industry."

By the way, congratulations to Pentzer Printing – the book was awarded "Best in Category" at the annual 2009 Pinnacle Print Awards sponsored by the Printing Industry of Illinois/Indiana.

(excerpted from the introduction by Lynn Lucas, Executive Director)

UNEXPECTED PARTNER AWARD : CAMP ATTERBURY, COLONEL BARRY RICHMOND, MAJOR MICHAEL BRADY, SERGEANT FIRST CLASS SCOTT HARDESTY

Once a World War II military base, Camp Atterbury is now Indiana's premier training and mobilization site for all branches of the United States military, the U.S. Army Reserve, and the Indiana National Guard. The 30,000-acre camp has deployed 50,000 troops in support of the global war on terrorism, plays a unique balancing game between tight security and public awareness, and have warmly opened their doors to visitors. Not only are they great tour guides, but the revenue generated in our hotels by soldiers in training and their visiting friends and family have boosted our revenues during very challenging economic times. As of December 2008, we have hosted more than 100 tours, and 5,000 visitors, at the base. Camp Atterbury was a recipient of the Lieutenant Governor's Hoosier Hospitality Award for support for Indiana Tourism.

Camp Atterbury is our Unexpected Partner because . . . when the tornado hit last summer, we were certain we would need to cancel the tour bus that was scheduled for the next day. The staff at Atterbury insisted we continue the tour despite the major cleanup efforts – they always go above and beyond to make tours possible for our visitors.

There are three people that played a vital role in this unique partnership in 2008: Colonel Barry Richmond, who has been promoted to Deputy Commander of Camp Atterbury and Muscatatuck Urban Training Center Complex Operations, and is also second year President of the Scottish Festival (he even has a camouflage kilt!); Major Mike Brady, who arrived at Camp Atterbury in 2004 and has worked closely with the Columbus Visitors Center in opening the base for public tours and will leave this summer for his assignment in Afghanistan; and Sergeant Scott Hardesty, who was not able to attend today as he is currently preparing for his new assignment in Afghanistan.

(excerpted from the introduction by Lindsey Skeen, Director of Sales)

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR : WILNA BRAUN

Wilna Braun came to Columbus in 1999 to be closer to her daughter and family. Columbus became richer that year when she came to the Visitors Center and said, "I want to do something to be of help to the community."

Of course, we had a place for her. She took tour guide training in 2000 and started her long career of telling others the unexpected and unforgettable things about Columbus. She didn't stop with that. She helps meet and greet people, stuffs bags to help supply visiting groups with information, assists with third-grade tours, helps as a sports volunteer for the many tournaments that come to Columbus, and the list could go on and on...

You name it, and Wilna has been a part of it. She is a very willing volunteer for the Visitors Center and other areas of the community.

Wilna, you are family. We thank you for coming to Columbus to be with family! Congratulations!

(excerpted from the introduction by Joyce Orwin, Volunteer and Tour Coordinator)

ABOVE AND BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY AWARD : TERRY WHITTAKER

Terry Whittaker has been recognized by the Community Brand Committee's unexpected, unforgettable award today. And Matthew has shared a Terry Whittaker poem with us, but that isn't all ... now the Visitors Center wants to present our Above and Beyond the Call of Duty Award to Terry.

Married to Susan Whittaker, our First Floor Manager, Terry has assisted us in many ways, including:

- Staffing our gift shop on a couple of occasions
- Loaning some items to hang gift shop merchandise
- Assisting with problems with the video room projector
- Delivering a cake for a staff birthday party
- Volunteering as a guide for the 7 Wonders Walking Tour
- Transporting display racks for the exhibit room and gift shop

(excerpted from the introduction by Lynn Lucas, Executive Director)

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST YEAR, BY BOARD PRESIDENT WARREN BAUMGART

- Another record- breaking year, 2008 was the highest innkeepers tax collections in Visitors Center's history
- Completed a new community video, shown in our Video Room and on our website
- Introduced a cell phone tour of downtown
- Recipient of two state tourism grants:
 - Developing artisan trail with Bloomington and Brown County
 - Developing glass trail with Kokomo, Anderson, Hamilton County, Muncie, and Indianapolis partners
- Other significant partnerships:
 - Indianapolis Museum of Art – partnering to offer tours of the Miller Home and Gardens (starting in 2011-2012)
 - Indianapolis Convention and Visitors Association – participating on steering committee for Drum Corps International competition
- Continue leadership role for Community Brand Committee – Projects included development of banners and signage at Columbus airport and supporting bike rack project
- Continue leadership role for EcO15's Hospitality and Tourism 10-county project

(continues below ...)

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST YEAR, CONT.

- Technology
 - 300,000 visits to website during 2008
 - New tour reservation system on website
 - Sent e-blasts to 10,000 subscribers
 - Using Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to reach new audiences
 - Created an Unforgettable Women group on Facebook with 275 members; plus a mini website, Chicks Click Here
 - Utilizing click-through ads on Facebook and Google – delivering as many as 1000 visitors per month to website.
- Media coverage:
 - National Geographic Traveler named Columbus 11th of 109 historic destinations worldwide
 - Worked with travel writers - articles in Washington Post, Nashville Tennessean, Louisville Courier Journal, Cincinnati Enquirer, national Elks magazine, and Indianapolis Star
- The focus of this year's annual meeting is sports tourism, here are a few of the Visitors Center's sports highlights:
 - Hosting 2 USSSA world series in 2008 and 2009 – girls fastpitch and boys baseball
 - Two national sports awards presented to Columbus Visitors Center in 2008 – NASC (National Association of Sports Commissions) and USSSA (United States Specialty Sports Association)
 - Announcement of new indoor sports complex
 - Continue a leadership role in Sports Indiana organization

OUR ADVOCATES

Hundreds of local individuals, businesses, and organizations support tourism in the Columbus area each year. Columbus area residents, companies, and organizations brought conferences, meetings, tour groups, sports activities, and other events to Bartholomew County during the past year or partnered with the Visitors Center to encourage visits to our area :

Kent Anderson

Lynn Bigley

Pat Bippin

Rod Blasdel

Rhonda Bolner

Jeff Brown

Cathy Burris

Becky Church

Chad Cockerham

Ed Curtin

Ted Dawson

Spencer Dell

David Doup

John Elwood

Mark Elwood

Laura Garrett

Tim Grimm

Bob Gustin

Geri Handley

Tom Harmon

Brooke Hawkins

Erin Hawkins

Ryan Hou

Rick Johnson

Mark Jones

Jim Kreutzjans

Keith Maddox

Jeff Maiani

Gretchen Sigmund Marks

Harry McCawley

Shelby McGaughy

Helmut Meng

J. Irwin and Xenia Miller Family

Tony Moravec

Linda Nay

Pia O'Connor

Chip Orben

Mark Pillar

Beth Poor

Tracy Souza

Barbara and Bob Stevens

Kelsey Van Arsdall

Ben Wagner

Chuck Wells

Tom Wetherald

Chuck Wilt

Laurie Wright

Ray Zeigler

OUR PARTNERS

Bad Hair Days
Canstruction
Elderhostel
Electric Lights Parade
Ethnic Expo
Historic Homes Tour
Hope Heritage Days
Hospice Concert
Hot Rods & Rock 'n' Roll
 Car Show/Concert
Neighborfests
Pops on the Plaza
Rock the Park Concert
Salute Concert
Scottish Festival
Tree Cozies
BMX
Columbus Express Soccer
Columbus Girls Fast Pitch
Columbus Parks & Recreation
 Department
Columbus Rugby Football Club
Columbus Youth Hockey
Donner Swim Club
Fall Foliage Hockey Tournament
FFY Triathlon
Girls on the Run Run

Hope Ride
Indiana Select
Jody's Gymnastics Zone
Lincoln Center Figure Skating Club
Martin Luther King Ice Competition
Midwest Open Tennis Tournament
Mill Race Race and Mayor's Walk
Otter Creek Golf Course
Possum Trot Bicycle Boogie
The Girlfriend Ride
Timbergate Golf Course
TLAC Junior Tennis Open
Tour de Trails
Atterbury-Bakalar Air Museum
Blue's Canoe Livery
CERAland
Edinburgh Premium Outlets
Elsbury's Greenhouses and Garden
 Center
Exit 76 Antique Mall
FairOaks Mall
kidscommons
Hamilton Center
Nichols & Dimes Antiques
 & Collectibles
Not Just Popcorn

Simmons Winery & Nortonburg Wine
 Gardens
Strawberry Fields Mercantile and
 Auntie Amiee's Country Tea Room
Step Back in Time
Yellow Trail Museum
Yes Cinema
Zaharakos
Barbershoppers IN/KY District
Bartholomew Consolidated School
 Corporation
Bartholomew County Auditor
Bartholomew County Commissioners
Bartholomew County Council
Bartholomew County Treasurer
Bartholomew County 4-H Fairgrounds
Bartholomew County Historical
 Society
Bartholomew County Parks Board
Bartholomew County Public Library
City of Columbus
Columbus Area Chamber of
 Commerce
Columbus Area Economic Growth
 Council
Columbus Brand Project Committee
Columbus City Council
Columbus In Bloom

OUR PARTNERS, CONTINUED

Columbus Indiana Archives
Association
Columbus Indiana Philharmonic
Columbus Learning Center
Columbus Municipal Airport
Columbus Parks Board
Columbus Parks Foundation
Columbus Redevelopment
Commission
Columbus Symphony Orchestra
Columbus Young Professionals
Community Education Coalition
Cummins Inc. Foundation
Dancers Studio Inc.
Downtown Columbus Independent
Restaurant Association
EcO15
Economic Development Board
Foundation for Youth
Heritage Fund
Heritage of Hope
Hope Area Chamber of Commerce
Irwin Sweeney Miller Foundation

IUPUC
Ivy Tech Community College
Lincoln Central Neighborhood
Scottish Bagpipers
Senior Center
Vision 20/20
Bakers Fine Gifts and Accessories
Circle K
Cummins Inc.
Farm Bureau
Hope Star Journal
Irwin Management Co. Inc.
Irwin Union Bank & Trust Co.
Jackson County Bank
Johnson Ventures
Mann's Harley Davidson
Salin Bank & Trust Co.
Smith's Row
Southeastern Indiana Health
Organization
The Fork
Tre Bicchieri
Q-MIX

White River Broadcasting
Ashley Bed and Breakfast
Best Western Horizon Inn)
Blue Bird Ridge Cabin
Charwood Suites
Comfort Inn and Suites
Courtyard by Marriott
Days Inn
Hampton Inn
Hilton Garden Inn
Holiday Inn Conference Center
Holiday Inn Express
Hotel Indigo
Knights Inn
Motel 6
Red Roof Inn
Residence Inn
Ruddick-Nugent House
Sleep Inn & Suites
Super 8 Motel
Twin Creeks Cabin

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Chuck Wilt *

* executive committee



To view the slide show that was playing before the meeting began, click [[HERE](#)]



To view Jim Deitz's slideshow about the sports initiatives happening in Columbus, click [[HERE](#)]

THE END





columbusindiana

visitorscenter