



Your Award Winning Hometown Newspaper

Vol. 126 No. 48

'Tis the Season - Let the Holidays begin

By Mary Masonholder Wilson

By now the turkey and gravy leftovers are gone, and the realization that the Christmas season is here is beginning to set in. Of course, the Christmas ads have been on TV and the stores decorated for the big event practically since Halloween. However, it is not until after Thanksgiving that the REAL SEASON begins.

You can now OFFICIALLY watch your favorite Christmas season DVD's, such as Chevy Chase's "Christmas Vacation" or Dr. Seuss's "The Grinch That Stole Christmas." In many homes, it wouldn't be Christmas without viewing these two favorites! In our house, the girls have memorized most of the movie "Christmas Vacation," and they say the lines before the movie characters do. But that's part of the fun—to see who can say the line first.

Cookie baking is already going in full force. I've never quite understood how cookies got to be a Christmas tradition, but it's a great tradition and lots of fun, especially if you get together with a group to make them. It seems to be important to keep making the same kinds of cookies each year. That's part of the season, and everyone has his/her favorite to anticipate yearly.

Then there are cheese balls, covered pretzels, chez party mix, and other appetizers, too numerous to mention. Yumm. Christmas brings

out the best in cooking and sharing the bounty, which is all part of this glorious event. Even the smell of a favorite holiday dish can bring back memories of relatives past. Christmas is all about memories, traditions, and family.

Christmas shopping is something that some people love and some people hate. Whatever the case, the spirit of giving is what is important. Then there are the "little" gift exchanges held in schools, club meetings, and other events. Are you old enough to remember the 50-cent gift exchange of long ago? I remember this always meant a trip to the basement of "Ross Dry Goods", a former store here in Columbus Junction, where a gift in this price range could always be found. For this amount of money, a little car, a beautiful handkerchief, a small doll, or even a game could be purchased. Besides just having a reason to go to the basement here during the holidays was a real treat. It appeared this store had "everything," and to me it was a fair-land.

Continuing with Christmases past, downtown stores were always decorated; many of them sported a real greenery wreath with a red bow sold by the local TTT organization. (This group still sells these same wreaths.) Local homes were really aglow. Warren and Jean May always

had a Santa Claus on their roof with lots of lights; Ted and Jane Morrison had the Disney figurines and a wise old owl (later put up by Bo and Kate Morrison); and Sime and Beryl Roundy had a reenactment of the whole Christmas story with statues in real clothes and even some camels in their front yard. Almost all local homes had some kind of lighting display. Cars would drive around town just to look at all of them. The Columbus Business Women awarded prizes for the best-decorated homes, and the competition was keen.

Church Christmas programs were just part of the season. Parts had to be memorized, costumes found, and songs learned, and each year, the birth of Jesus to Mary and Joseph in the stable was reenacted. It was a special evening, and the traditional music and Christmas carols were beautiful and often sung in candlelight. It was just part of the excitement of Christmas.

Then in more recent years, a new Columbus Junction tradition, Family Night, was started. We always had to take our children downtown in Columbus Junction to see Santa Claus and to participate in Family Night. Luminaries, hayrides, bells chiming, carolers singing, good food, viewing all the Christmas trees in each store—all were a part of this special community night. This tradition contin-



ues. Many of these same activities will happen again in Columbus Junction on Wednesday night, December 5th, 2012.

Whether you think about Christmases past or Christmases present, the TIME has come for Christmas 2012. It is time to get into the spirit. It is now time to make this year's holiday memories, for it is the memories that are the most important—they last a lifetime. It is time to bring joy to someone's face, and keep in mind—it doesn't have to be bought with money. It is time to remember the 'reason for the season' and find moments of solitude to ponder this blessed event. Find time to look at the stars at night and think about the heavens.

Enjoy the events of your community, your church, and your family as it 'tis the season.' It only comes once a year. Let the Season begin. Let the Season be celebrated!

Briefly -

4-H LEGO League Public Exhibition scheduled

The L-M Legotronics and Wapello TechnoGeckos invite you to view their robot game and presentations during a public exhibition on Tuesday, December 4th from 6:30-7:30 pm at the Extension Office in Wapello. There will also be time for questions. Questions now? Contact Tessa at 319-523-2371.

United Methodist Women to meet

The Columbus Junction United Methodist Women will meet in the lovely home of Marilyn Thomas on Thursday evening, December 6, 2012, at 6 p.m. for a potluck supper and an evening of fellowship. There will be installation of officers and Special Remembrance.

Colonial Manor Christmas Potluck scheduled

The Colonial Manor Christmas Potluck will be held on Wednesday, December 12, 2012, at NOON in the Resident Dining Room. Meat, rolls, beverages and table service will be provided. Please bring a dish of your choice to share.

Cookies and Kids will be caroling on December 12

Mike and Renea Jay would like you to know that the Cookies and Kids youth group will be caroling on Wednesday, December 12. If you would like to join us, we would love to have you! We will meet at the Senior Center at 6:00 PM on the 12th. There will be cookies and coffee and hot chocolate when we get done! If you know of a friend or loved one, in the Columbus Junction area, who would enjoy an enthusiastic group of carolers coming to sing at their house, please give Mike a call at 319-530-6775. We will do our best to get to all requests.

Elvis to perform at Colonial Manor

Join us on Monday, December 3rd at 7:00 p.m., in the Resident Dining Room, for an evening of fun with Elvis Presley impersonator, Junior Talley, from Monmouth, Illinois. Junior has been impersonating Elvis since 1989 and has raised money for a number of organizations, including St. Jude's Children's Hospitals, Special Olympics, schools, nursing homes, Toys for Tots, and more. There is no charge for the entertainment. We hope you will be able to attend!

Etude Club to meet

Etude Club members will meet at Colonial Estates Assisted Living Center on Tuesday, December 4, 2012, at 6:30 p.m. Please observe the earlier time as the plan is to go Christmas caroling before the regular meeting and chorus rehearsal. Wear your ETUDE shirts. Also, members are reminded of Family Night in Columbus Junction on Wednesday, December 5th. Club members and interested friends and family are to be at the Columbus Community Bank that night to join with Salem, Cotter and other community church groups to sing Christmas music from 6:30 to 7 p.m. Song sheets will be available.

Habitat Volunteers needed

Volunteers are needed to help build the 12th Habitat home in Louisa County. The home is located at 2607 Burlington Street, Columbus City. Weather permitting, work is scheduled for Wednesday and Friday mornings, 8-12, and Saturday 8:00-2:00. If you can lend a hand with the work or with refreshments, please call 319-728-2775 or 319-728-2346 or show up at the work site on a scheduled work-day.

Historical Society's Christmas Program

Join us for the Louisa County Historical Society's Christmas program on Sunday, December 2, 2012, at 2 pm. The program will be held in the church next to the Heritage Center with refreshments served after the program in the dining room.

Holiday Open House at Morning Sun Care Center

Morning Sun Care Center invites the community to celebrate the season at its annual Holiday Open House on Sunday, December 2nd from 2:00 to 4:00 pm at the care center. Cookies, drinks and a visit from Santa will make the event fun for children of all ages. Families are encouraged to bring gifts to place under the tree for their loved one to be opened on Christmas Day. Donations of gifts for other residents are also welcome. Call Angie Smith at 868-7751 for more information.

Amateur Radio examiners to be testing for licenses

The Muscatine Area Volunteer Examiners will be testing for all classes of amateur radio operator licenses on Sunday, December 9, at 1:30 PM at the Flickinger Learning Center, 413 Mulberry Avenue, in Muscatine. (Use the 5th street parking lot and entrance across from Hy-Vee Drugstore.) For more information, visit muscatinehams.org.

City deals with Downtown sewer issues



Once again the streets of downtown Columbus Junction are dug up, this time purportedly for a sewer problem in one of the buildings. Problems often arise due to the age of many of the buildings and their sewer systems.



eXtreme Adventure Offered - Silo Ice Climbing

Louisa County youth, join us for an eXtreme Adventure. Silo Ice Climbing is scheduled for Saturday, January 5 from 7 am-4 pm. We will be traveling to Cedar Falls, Iowa to climb a 60-foot silo covered in ice! This event is for youth in 6th-8th grade and will cost \$50 per person.

Silo Ice Climbing is one of 12 events in the new "eXtreme Adventure" series being offered by Louisa County Conservation. This new, year long, once-a-month series of events titled, "eXtreme Adventure" is aimed at getting youth and young adults outside with fun and exciting recreation opportunities.

Registration is required and space is limited. Transportation will be provided. For more information or to register call (319)-523-8381 or email louisa.county@gmail.com.

If you would like to be added to an email list for all eXtreme Adventure programs send us an email and ask to be added to the list!

Be on the lookout for upcoming information for our February and March programs, Sub-Zero Survival and Hike Wildcat Den!

For further information about this or other upcoming LCC programs please visit www.NaturallyLouisaCounty.com.

Winter Nature Camps offered

Fight the winter blues with a fun nature camp at Langwood Education Center. Three camps are being offered for kids in preschool through sixth grade. Youth in grades 4th - 6th grade are invited to attend Thursday, December 27 from 1:00 - 4:00 pm. Youth in preschool - K are invited to attend Friday, December 28 from 9:00 - 11:30 am and children in 1st - 3rd grade are invited to attend on December 28 from 1:00 - 4:00 pm.

The camps are full of games, activities and crafts. This year's camps are all about wild turkeys. We will be looking for turkey sign as we hike through the woods, learn how to "talk turkey" and much more. We will be in the heated lodge and playing outside.

Each camp is limited to ten children. Pre-registration is required by December 18. We will be sending carpool lists to help working parents get their child to camp and we can be flexible on ages if siblings wish to attend together. Langwood is located three miles southeast of Grandview.

For more information or to receive a registration form, contact Louisa County Conservation at 319-523-8381 or lccb@lccb.org. Registration forms are available at the Louisa County Libraries, online at www.lccb.org under "upcoming events" and at our office. Registration form and payment of \$10/child is required to reserve a spot and can be mailed to: Winter Day Camp, Louisa County Conservation, 12635 County Road G-56 Suite 101, Wapello, IA 52653.

Mary's Musings

By Mary Masonholder Wilson

I spend a lot of time thinking about things and sometimes my thoughts go awry. There are usually a variety of subjects that wander through my brain.

I have been thinking about the new phrase "fiscal cliff." Have you heard about it? I'm sure you

have. It is in all the newspapers and TV broadcasts. It is hard to define. However, simply put "fiscal cliff" is a phrase coined to describe the state of economics in the United States where we are deeply in debt; and "by the end of the year, a mixture of tax increases and federal cuts in budgets will automatically happen if the current Congress and President don't reach an agreement to handle the federal deficit in a more systemic manner."

But in my thoughts, a cliff is a

place. So somehow I got to wondering: If I were to travel to the fiscal cliff, where would I go? If I set a GPS system with the command, "Go to the fiscal cliff", what would happen? Not that I want to go there: B\ut who coins these phrases? Quite frankly, I think it is a pretty good phrase; it just is a bad situation for our country.

Then it is difficult to see some of the "constants" in our lives disappear. People are worrying about the Iowa State Fair. Will this wonderful event be without "Deep fried Twinkies" this year now that Hostess is no longer making them? Hopefully by then, this drastic situ-

ation will be under control, but one never knows.

Now what is going to happen to Elmo? Elmo who? The Elmo of TV's "Sesame Street." You know, the show that taught our children how to count and the alphabet, along with rules for getting along with others. Each character is endearing. Now Elmo, the real person who runs Elmo and appears often on the show (not the puppet), has been charged with some sexual matters and has been dropped from the show. No more Elmo! What is the world coming to? It is a sad situation.

There are some things in life

that are just "hard to swallow." But sometimes you just have to. But I'm still wondering where the fiscal cliff is. I know if I had to drive there, I think I would head to the Grand Canyon. It has some pretty good cliffs. Then I would go out on that "glass" walkway put in by the Native Americans that hangs out over the canyon. Or maybe I wouldn't—I think that would be pretty scary. But the fiscal cliff is pretty scary, so that might just be the place. I know one thing. I am not jumping off this cliff or driving off of it. I hope our country does not either.

