

The smell of cookies fills the air

By Deb Bean
Gazette Staff

With Christmas upon us once again the smell of fresh baked goodies filled the air.

On December 4th Roundy elementary smelled of cookies baking. 800 of them to be exact! Now a person may wonder, "Why would they need 800 cookies!"

Diane Lauber and Ms. Schenk's 4th grade class at Roundy Elementary have been working on measurements and fractions in their math class when teacher's assistant, Mrs. Prior suggested the kids bake cookies. "What better way to teach the kids about math than by hands on training of measuring, mixing and baking," stated Mrs. Prior. The school provided the supplies and the kids all gathered at the Roundy lunchroom. With the help of some of the kitchen staff and their teachers the 4th graders began their assignment. "Each student measured ingredients and each one of the kids got to crack an egg," laughed Mrs. Lauber. Cookies were shaped and rolled in sugar by all the little hands and then baked.

After baking, they put two cookies in a baggie that had been labeled, "Happy Holidays and Thank You for your service to our country. Mrs. Lauber and Ms. Schenk's 4th Grade Class." 350 packages of cookies were delivered on December 5th by Ms. Schenk's father to the VA Hospital in Iowa City. Then other cookies were shared with administration staff, and other staff at Roundy Elementary.

Just imagine the looks on the faces of the Veterans in the hospital reading the message on the bag. I'll bet a big smile came over their faces knowing that these kids took the time to think of them this holiday season. The 4th graders involved in this activity will have a memory to share with their family and friends of the time they baked cookies for the veterans and how by baking helped them in their math.

Below I would like to share a poem with you that traveled all over



Pictured above are some of the 4th grade students hard at work measuring and rolling out the cookies.

the internet. This poem is an inspiration by all who sent it and received it. It is beautifully written by Michael Marks.

A Soldier's Christmas

Perhaps a Marine, huddled here in the cold. Alone in the dark, he looked up and smiled, Standing watch over me, and my wife and my child. "What are you doing?" I asked without fear "Come in this moment, it's freezing out here! Put down your pack, brush the snow from your sleeve, You should be at home on a cold Christmas Eve!"

For barely a moment I saw his eyes shift, Away from the cold and the snow blown in drifts, To the window that danced with a warm fire's light Then he sighed and he said, "It's really all right, I'm out here by choice. I'm here every night It's my duty to stand at the front of the line That separates you from the darkest of times. No one had to ask or beg or

implore me, I'm proud to stand here like my fathers before me. My Gramps died at 'Pearl on a day in December,"

Then he sighed, "That's a Christmas 'Gram always remembers." My dad stood his watch in the jungles of 'Nam And now it is my turn and so, here I am. I've not seen my own son in more than a while, But my wife sends me pictures, he's sure got her smile. Then he bent and he carefully pulled from his bag, The red white and blue... an American flag. "I can live through the cold and the being alone, away from my family, my house and my home, I can stand at my post through the rain and the sleet, I can sleep in a foxhole with little to eat, I can carry the weight of killing another Or lay down my life with my sisters and brothers Who stand at the front against any and all, to insure for all time that this flag will not fall."

"So go back inside," he said, "harbor no fright Your family is waiting and I'll be all right." "But isn't there something I can do, at the least, "Give you money," I asked, "or prepare you a feast? It seems all too little for all that you've done, For being away from your wife and your son."

Then his eye welled a tear that held no regret, "Just tell us you love us, and never forget to fight for our rights back at home while we're gone; To stand your own watch, no matter how long. For when we come home, either standing or dead, To know you remember we fought and we bled Is payment enough, and with that we will trust. That we mattered to you as you mattered to us."

God Bless the men and women past and present who have served or are now serving our country with pride and dignity. This story is just one of the inspirations of what the Christmas Spirit is all about.

A year to reflect and give thanks

By Deb Bean
Gazette Staff

Imagine a year ago being so sick and not knowing if you would live to see another day. Imagine knowing that at a young age your heart was what was making you so sick. Imagine knowing your only hope of survival was that someone else would have to die to save your life. Local resident, Lisa Reynolds not only imagined all of the above, she has lived it.

November 20, 2008 Lisa was planning on celebrating her one year anniversary from receiving her most precious gift a "new heart". I had visited and spoke with Lisa and had planned on running her story the 17th of November in honor of her one year anniversary so people would know how well she has gotten along. But with life we are dealt no certainties and tragedy struck Lisa's family on November 17th when Dave, Lisa's brother died suddenly at his home in Columbus City. So at Lisa's request we pulled her story. It is now that we write this article and dedicate it to the memory of Dave known to most as Hodgie whom will be missed dearly by Lisa and her family.

"A year ago I was so sick I thought my life was going to be over," recalls Lisa. Now a year out from her transplant and feeling better than ever she reflects on all the family, friends and community support she has received over the past year. "From the nurses, doctors, hospital staff, family friends, donations and support I just can't say thank you enough," smiles Lisa.

It has not been an easy year and personal feelings have also been a part of the healing process for Lisa. "I have received four letters from the family of the man whose heart I received and I have answered every one of them. My hope and dreams are to someday meet them face-to-face and thank them for the gift of life I received. I know it was not an easy decision for them. How hard it is to lose someone you love and at the same time have to make that decision for them to become an organ donor. I just can't imagine how hard that had to be on them," sighs Lisa. "It hasn't been easy for me emotionally because I can't help but think everyday that my life was spared but their family member is gone and I want them to know how grateful I am to them for allowing me to live through him," says Lisa.

Lisa has graduated from weekly and monthly visits to the University to having to go every three months now. She still keeps track of everything in a file and plans on scrap booking everything from the cards, letters and correspondence she has received. She has also kept all her hospital information and faithfully recorded everything for future reference.

This past July Lisa was honored to be chosen as Iowa's heart recipient to speak in Chicago, Illinois at the Sutton Place Hotel to the Patient Advisory Board. A meeting was held with the review panel of doctors and pharmacists regarding a transplant medication called Prograf which is a drug taken to prevent transplant rejection. Insurance companies want to discontinue paying for that particular drug (\$2,000 monthly) and cover



Lisa Reynolds one year after her heart transplant.

a generic drug. The two day informational seminar was a chance for physicians, pharmacists, and heart and lung transplant recipients to discuss the long term effect on the patients if that particular drug was discontinued. "I was on a panel of approximately 15 recipients from all over the United States; we discussed with everyone our thoughts and feelings on why Prograf should not be discontinued and how well we felt we have all benefited from Prograf."

If you know Lisa then you already know she has the 'gift of gab', so speaking at the seminar was not hard for her at all. They chose one person from Iowa to speak and I was honored they chose me. I found I actually liked being able to speak about my experiences over the past year," smiles Lisa.

In September of 2008 Lisa attended a Heart Transplant Picnic in Coralville. At this event there were former transplant patients, doctors, nurses and family members attending. Lisa once again met Tom and Belinda Howland there. Lisa first met Tom on May 18th in Muscatine at a benefit being held for him. Tom underwent heart transplantation surgery at the University Hospital April 11th, 2008.

December puts Lisa one step closer to her dream. Approximately two weeks after Dave passed away and was laid to rest Lisa received a call from Jan, the mother of the gentleman's heart she received. Both Lisa and Jan were filled with so many emotions, they laughed and cried. "Jan is a very nice lady, we talked a long time," smiled Lisa. Since speaking with Jan she has also spoke with her daughter, Terri. The three plan to visit on the phone and by email and someday when weather permits plan on meeting each other in person.

So as the Holidays approach and we all reflect on the things we are thankful for, Lisa gives thanks for the years she was able to have with her brother, Dave and is happy to be able to say she has a new lease on life, new home, and in a new relationship. All thanks to people who sign their donor cards, to families who have to make that final heart wrenching decision, to her family, friends, community, doctors, nurses and staff at the UIHC and for everyone's continued support throughout 2008. "I am looking forward to many, many years ahead of me, Happy Holidays everyone and God Bless," smiles Lisa.

United Fund receives \$20,000 from Diocese of Davenport to aid area flood victims

By John Carpenter
Gazette Staff

Have you ever noticed how the Christmas season brings out the best in people, even in complete strangers? Well, this year is no exception. A couple of weeks ago I received a call from a gentleman representing the Diocese of Davenport informing me that a number of Catholic Churches in the Diocese were interested in helping out families in the Columbus Junction and Wapello areas that experienced losses due to this summer's flooding, and he asked how they might be able to do this. He explained that the money could be used to help people in any way, and the Diocese did not want to know the names of the individuals, nor was it to be directed only to Catholic families. He stated that the donors were interested in helping people, regardless of their faith, race, or economic status. I told him that there was a great deal of help still needed in the area, and said that funds could be directed to the flood relief account established by the Columbus United Fund.

I hung up the phone feeling grateful that strangers were so willing to help, and expected to receive a check in the area of \$1,000 to \$2,500. However, last Friday I was thrilled when I received a letter from the

Diocese that had a check enclosed payable to the United Fund for \$20,000. I immediately contacted the United Fund Board and a special meeting was held last Saturday morning to discuss how to handle this situation.

At the meeting the Board decided to take the following steps: try to determine who experienced losses in the area that were not covered by other programs by contacting county and city agencies and local banks; establish a method in which individuals can apply for help; and come up with a review process where the board can determine how to use the funds in the most effective manner. The Board also emphasized that if a request required items to be purchased, such as appliances, lumber, paint etc., wherever possible these items would be purchased in the county.

Please watch the coming issues of this paper for further details on how to apply for this help, and if you know of someone we should contact, please let John Carpenter at the Columbus Gazette or any of the county banks know. A special Merry Christmas and a heartfelt Thank You to all of the anonymous donors who have come forward to make this opportunity possible. Your generosity will have a lasting effect on many individuals in Louisa County.

Sheriff Curt Braby elected president of Iowa State Sheriffs' and Deputies' Association

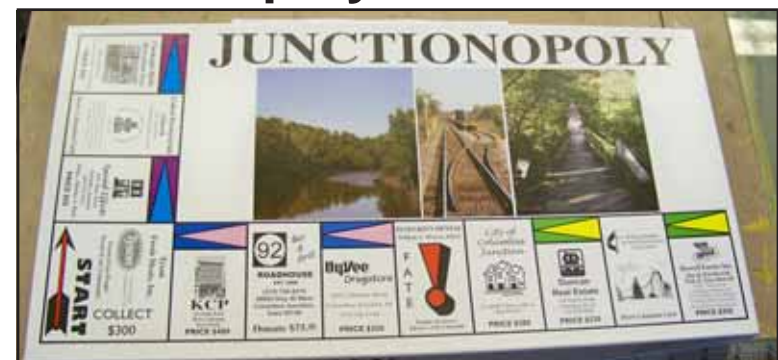


On December 9, 2008, Louisa County Sheriff Curt Braby took office as the President of the Iowa State Sheriffs' and Deputies' Association (ISSDA) in a ceremony at the Association's Winter School held at the Marriott in West Des Moines.

The ISSDA has two thousand members consisting of Sheriffs, deputies, jailers, dispatchers and other Sheriff's Office employees across Iowa. They also have nearly 15,000 honorary members, citizens of Iowa that support their Sheriff's Offices and the works that the ISSDA is in-

involved in. The ISSDA is involved in supporting legislation that improves public safety in Iowa, professional training for Sheriff's Office employees, scholarships for college bound students, Y-Camp scholarships for under privileged kids in Iowa to attend camp at the Boone Y-Camp and we hold places on several statewide committees that deal with subjects ranging from communications interoperability to re-writing the State Code of Iowa.

Junctionopoly Now Available



The Junctionopoly game is in and available at some downtown locations for \$25. Also, if you wish to order one and have it delivered, you can contact Stephanie Duncan at 728-2061, Joy Clark at 728-2654 or Cindy Johnston at 728-5032, or the United Presbyterian Church or United Methodist Churches in Columbus Junction. This would make a great Christmas gift, and also help the Churches' youth groups.