

news in brief

Armed Force Day Banquet set

American Legion Dubuque Post 6 has announced its 12th annual Armed Forces Day Banquet for Saturday, May 16.

The banquet will be held at 7 p.m. at the American Legion, 1306 Delhi St. A social time is planned from 5:30 to 7 p.m. The \$9 tickets must be purchased prior to Friday, May 15, at the American Legion.

Everyone is invited to attend the function, which honors all members of the Dubuque-based military units — Army Reserve, Iowa Army National Guard and Coast Guard.

The featured speaker is Hempstead High School student Rachel Splinter. Her father, U.S. Army Maj. Christopher Splinter, originally from Platteville, Wis., was killed in action on Dec. 24, 2003, by a roadside bomb north of Baghdad.

Paraprofessionals, district come to terms

The Dubuque Community School District and the Dubuque Association of Edu-

university of dubuque graduation

Busy mom, happy grad



KORI NEWBY • TH photo

Suzanne Heber, a non-traditional student, jokes with UD's Phyllis Garfield before she graduates with a nursing degree at the University of Dubuque Chlapaty Recreation and Wellness Center on Saturday.

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Busy mom, happy grad

Single mother of 3 teenagers realizes a long-held dream

BY COURTNEY BLANCHARD TH STAFF WRITER

 LISTENNOW



Photo by: Kori Newby

Suzanne Heber, a non-traditional student, jokes with UD's Phyllis Garfield before she graduates with a nursing degree at the University of Dubuque Chlapaty Recreation and Wellness Center on Saturday.

Suzanne Heber is proof that a single mom with three teenagers can go back to school and make it out alive.

"A lot of people say it's not the right time," Heber said. "It's never going to be a good time. You just have to do it."

Heber, 47, graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing Saturday afternoon at the University of Dubuque's Chlapaty Recreation and Wellness Center.

For the past four years, she's juggled part-time jobs and active teenagers while opening her home to a Taiwanese student and taking a full course load. On Saturday, her oldest son flew from college on the East Coast and Yvonne Wu, 28, originally from Taiwan, flew from China with her husband, Vega Hung, to watch Heber march across the stage.

Heber always wanted to earn a nursing degree and enter a field where she could help people. In 2005, she decided to defy the obstacles that stood in her way -- time, money and children who are old enough to immerse themselves in dozens of after-school activities but not old enough to drive. She thanked her parents, teachers, fellow students and her very understanding children, Luke, 18, Shannon, 15, and Tyler, 13, for helping her through the process.

"There were days that I've broken down and cried, saying I couldn't do this anymore. But my kids said, 'You can do it,'" Heber said.

Along the way, Heber welcomed Taiwanese student Wu into her life. She attended cultural events with Wu and invited her over for Thanksgiving Dinner. The two last saw each other in 2007.

Wu and Hung, newly married, traveled to Chicago, New Orleans and Disney World for their honeymoon, making a stop in Dubuque.

"I promised her I'd come back for her graduation," Wu said.

Graduation doesn't mark an end to Heber's hectic four years in school. She must pass the nursing board exam and find a job in a tough economy.

But she's looking forward to returning to work.

With more free time, Heber said she wants to become more active in her children's schools, her

University of Dubuque's 157th commencement

Where: Chlapaty Recreation and Wellness Center

Undergraduate degrees: 263

Graduate degrees: 50

Seminary degrees: 35

Speaker: Laura Palmer Noone, president and CEO of Piccolo International University.

Memorable quote: "Don't bother trying to change somebody else, because you can't. Live your life as an example to others and only then can you be able to assist them in making their change." -- Noone

church and volunteer for the American Red Cross.

Of course, there's also an option that's been out of reach lately.

"A vacation would be really nice," she said.



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