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Roses and Thistles: A fine way to give thanks and honor Linda Bisignano

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Linda Bisignano

Written by
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A **rose** to friends and family who have pledged to carry on **Linda Bisignano's** tradition of providing free Thanksgiving meals this year. Bisignano, who died last week from breast cancer at the age of 64, owned and operated Chuck's restaurant. Chuck's is a bedrock of the Highland Park-Oak Park neighborhood on Des Moines' north side, but this family-owned restaurant has drawn from across the metro area for more than a half century. Thanksgiving dinner for those less fortunate has been a longstanding tradition, too, and last year more than 3,500 people were served. Before her death, Bisignano had been looking for a new owner to take over the restaurant who would continue that tradition. According to the Register's Lee Rood, plans are to carry on this year with a feast that will be the biggest in history. That

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would be a fitting memorial for Linda Bisignano.

A **thistle** to those within the **ethanol industry** who went overboard in attacking an Associated Press report on the environmental cost of converting food into fuel. The AP story drew a connection between federal ethanol mandates and increased corn production on farmland that had been protected by conservation programs. The ethanol industry responded with point-by-point rebuttals of the story, which is fair. But ethanol groups launched an aggressive campaign, including fill-in-the-blank form letters to the editor and press conferences where the report was variously called a “smear,” a “hatchet job” and “more Dumpster fire than journalism.” A Renewable Fuels Association official said, “There is probably more truth in this week’s National Enquirer.” The AP has stood behind its reporting and said it welcomes a discussion of the issues the story raised. That should happen, but first the ethanol industry should drop the scorched-earth tactics.

A **rose** to documentary filmmaker **Samuel Koltinsky** for pushing Iowa to carry on the conservation legacy of Register cartoonist “Ding” Darling. Koltinsky, a Kentuckian, was in Ames recently for a screening of his film, “America’s Darling: The Story of Jay N. ‘Ding’ Darling.” He used the opportunity to pitch the idea of establishing a center at Iowa State University dedicated to Darling’s work on environmental stewardship. Newspaper cartoons drawn in the heat of current events do not typically age well, but Darling’s environmental cartoons are timeless. He was a pioneer of the modern conservation movement with duck stamps and wildlife refuges. Iowa State would be an ideal place to keep Darling’s spirit alive.

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