

## Season celebrated in local hospitals

By John Koopman

The idea of spending Christmas in the hospital ranks right up there with being a Marine in Beirut. Lincoln-area hospitals, however, try to keep the Christmas spirit for those who are patients during the holidays.

All four hospitals in Lincoln, Bryan Memorial, St. Elizabeth, Lincoln General, and the Veterans Administration Medical Center, will serve special Christmas meals. The meals will include the traditional turkey and dressing and some will include favors such as napkins with a Christmas design and nut cups.

Mary Baker, development coordinator at Lincoln General, said the hospital itself is not planning anything special for Christmas. Rather, Lincoln General relies on various church groups to come to the hospital to sing carols and cheer up the patients.

At St. Elizabeth, beside the usual decorations and carollers, the employees will have a party at the

hospital where Santa Claus will go to the pediatric and burn wards to deliver gifts to the children.

Director of Public Relations at St. Elizabeth, Carol Dahl, said Christmas is a time when the hospital has a low population because anyone who needs to have elective surgery waits until after the holidays.

According to Patti Wieser, communications editor for Bryan Memorial, that hospital decorates and plans special Christmas meals for its patients, also. She said the volunteer services section dress up all the newborn babies with Christmas decorations, such as red and green blankets and bows. She said the babies get to keep the ornaments when they go home.

Director of Volunteer Services at the Veteran Administration Medical Center, Jim Wittacker, said the recreation section is planning a party for patients which includes movies, drawings, refreshments and bingo. He said that during December various Veterans Service organizations give parties for the hospital patients.

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