

COMMENTARY

Cookie-selling gives much to chew on

Sandwiched between Christmas and Valentine's Day like peanut butter between shortbread cookies, lies a tradition as old as old as the very concept of door-to-door sales. It's an annual event that finds young girls taking to the streets, gas stations, and grocery store entrances, to sell ... cookies.

Now I'm not knocking the cookie sale thing. It's a tremendous fundraiser for a program that nurtures the strength and confidence of young girls, helping them grow into strong-minded, secure women. It's just that there are a few little things that make me wonder.

Kicking off the sale, the girls get this packet of information. On the cover are a mother and daughter standing together in the sun, smiling gleefully as they embark on their quest.

I don't know where this picture was taken, but it doesn't accurately depict conditions the girls face in Wisconsin in January and February.

Why winter? Cookies aren't the sort of item you can sell by phone. I can't see Daughter No. 1 with a headset, saying, "Good evening, sir or madam. How are you tonight? In the mood for a treat that satisfies your sweet tooth and supports local Girl ... (click) ... hello?"

No. It's out into the arctic air we go, with layers upon layers

R.J. Foster
For The
Post-Crescent



R.J. Foster is a Darboy resident.

of clothes, gloves and hats, and no less than 37 writing implements to replace those that fall prey to the frigid air.

And it's not just the sellers who are victims of this climate. A potential buyer answers the doorbell in a bathrobe and bare feet, while a 211-pound dog barks and jumps, trying to greet his guest with a hearty knocking-down and covering of the face with slobber.

With one foot quickly freezing to the front porch and the other straining to hold back the saliva-bearing welcome wagon, Daughter No. 1 feverishly fills out the order form. And as the door swings closed, she shouts, "Thank you very much!"

"Wow, Daddy," No. 1 says, "she bought eight boxes!"

It's a good thing too. She'll be looking for a snack while she's home with the pneumonia she caught ordering them.

Not every house is an eight-boxer, though. In fact, there are

many that don't want to buy any cookies at all. That's OK. Reasons for not buying can be entertaining and annoying.

"Daddy," No. 1 says, "she says she can't have cookies on a fixed diet."

OK, I can buy that — from an elderly person.

"He says they already bought a bunch," says a disappointed No. 2.

All right, who says "a bunch"? Fibber!

"Sorry, I already bought from my nieces and nephews."

Well, Uncle Fibber-pants, be sure to save a box for your "nephew" to take to therapy, where he talks about wearing a green skirt and beanie!

Worse than the "no-sale" houses, are the "no-answer" houses. How am I supposed to respond to Daughter No. 1's

observation, "Daddy, I hear voices inside but nobody's coming to the door."

Or when Daughter No. 2 says, "Daddy, I hear someone playing the piano."

"Well, kids," I suggest, "maybe they just forgot to turn off the TV before they left."

It's a tough sell, though, when we look into the open garage and see a car, with the trunk open and half-full of groceries.

In a way, I understand the hidiers. How can I possibly say "no" to a bundled-up little person asking if I could find it in my heart to support her club?

"Sure," I would answer, "can I get bulk pricing?"

I think it's because the girls are always smiling. I don't know if it's because they find joy in raising funds for their troop or

because their faces are frozen in what appears to be a grin.

I do know I can't help but smile when my chilly little salespeople come at me from either side of the street and exclaim, "L-l-look, D-d-d-daddy, two m-m-more b-b-b-b-boxes!"

It's that joyful moment that I try to recall when my living room is transformed into a cookie warehouse and the family truck into a delivery wagon for boxes upon boxes of precious patties, scrumptious sandwiches and skinny mints.

And as we bundle up to begin our deliveries, I look upon my daughters, amazed by their unwavering enthusiasm, and I wonder to myself:

"Seriously! Why can't we do this in the summer?"

R.J. Foster can be reached at rcletters@postcrescent.com.

Serving the Public

Grand Meridian
Call Now
968-2621
2621 N. Oneida | Appleton
N. Oneida at Northland

Friday Fish
4pm-9:30pm

Sunday Brunch
10am-2pm

Available for Banquets, Receptions, & Meetings

**Connecting
people with
community
resources**

2-1-1™

Get Connected. Get Answers.

United Way Fox Cities