

Opinion

What kind of Thanksgiving will your household have?

By LYNDON ZAITZ

The holiday season kicks off next week. Due to how the November works this year Thanksgiving seems very early though we will celebrate on the fourth Thursday of this month.

I don't lament stores creating Christmas displays or rolling out merchandise; I don't lament radio and internet stations playing Christmas carols—if people wrote good, catchy Thanksgiving songs, we could hold off *White Christmas* and *We Three Kings* for a few weeks. We could be humming along to songs with titles like *Grandma's Coming to Dinner* or *I Smell Turkey* this week, but I guess Thanksgiving doesn't elicit the same creative juices as Christmas.

Thanksgiving has morphed into a strange holiday in America. It is a holiday with one meal at its core. We bake for days before, we rise early to prepare a feast that will end up as leftovers in the refrigerator for many days after. We clean and decorate our homes for the benefit of any guests we invite to dinner.

Many Americans decide they must share themselves with more than one home on the holiday. Blended families can result in a stop at one parent's home (with their spouse), a stop at the other parent's home (with their spouse) and perfects a few other stops. That's quite a progressive dinner.

Everyone has their favorite Thanksgiving tradition or memory. Who didn't grow up with a kid's table at Thanksgiving at some point in their life? In many homes getting dressed in one's Sunday best is the tradition; other households opt for a more casual come-as-you-are mode. It is quite a sight to see children, all spic-and-spanned, dressed in their finest, waiting patiently for a plate full of turkey and fixings.

The best memory of Thanksgiving takes place mid-morning when the aromas of the meal start wafting from the kitchen: a turkey roasting, pies baking, Brussel sprouts simmering. The aroma of a Thanksgiving has to be right behind cinnamon rolls as man's favorite scent.

There is the tradition of the sitting down to the meal. A reverential saying of grace followed by the obligatory sounding off of what each person is grateful for. The answers to that are as varied as the

people sitting around the table—some are profound, some are obvious. Whatever anyone is grateful for is as viable as anyone else's. It's too bad that we don't normally think of what we're grateful for except on a day dedicated to feasting. Gratefulness is a trait that should be encouraged all year 'round.

Me? I'm grateful for my family. Mom and dad are still traveling and enjoying life. My Los Angeles brothers doing well and are a ready source of inspiration and intellectual material. My Oregon brother continues to be a dynamo. My extended family of nephews and nieces are a source of familial pride, none fell far from the Zaitz tree.

There has not been a true Zaitz family Thanksgiving celebration in years, being spread out as we are and involved with our lives, we mark the day in our own way. When I was younger I swore to myself that I would never eat at a restaurant on that day. My how things change as one gets older. Opting for a restaurant for Thanksgiving makes so much sense to me now—no cooking, no dishes. What's not to like? Some of my favorite Thanksgivings were spent with friends. Those dinners are memorable because the dinners became a haven for friends without family in the vicinity. The camaraderie was heartwarming.

It is a day of thanks that is marked on a Thursday with rituals that supposedly go back to the time of the first settlers in the new world. The day is mixed up with tales of a meal enhanced by the contributions of the local natives.

It doesn't matter how anyone celebrates Thanksgiving, there is not one right way to do it. Turkey doesn't even have to be the main course. It is day about families getting together in all their blended, colorful glory—screaming at a football game on television, napping, gaming, cleaning up and for some, being thankful they have Friday off from work.

This week begins the six-week holiday season. The people who enjoy the holidays most are those who embrace them with all their absurdities, crassness, benevolence and hope. That's what I'm going to do.

(Lyndon Zaitz is publisher of the *Keizertimes*.)

on my mind



Clash shows how polarized we are

By DEBRA J. SAUNDERS

President Donald Trump and CNN reporter Jim Acosta were made for each other. Both are masters at kicking up outrage.

Acosta is a very likable guy, but he rarely asks actual questions. Instead, he uses press conferences and briefings to argue with Trump or press secretary Sarah Sanders.

Acosta started his non-question at Wednesday's postelection press conference in the East Room by saying he wanted to "challenge" Trump.

"Here we go," Trump muttered.

Acosta then informed the president that it was wrong to use the word "invasion" to describe the migrant caravan heading toward our southern border. "You demonized immigrants in this election," Acosta added.

It was the kind of moment Trump relishes. He got to mix it up with a CNN reporter whose politics are unquestionably on the left—which no doubt is why Trump called on him. Every time Acosta interrupted the president of the United States, you just know the GOP base seethed inwardly.

When Trump told Acosta to put down the microphone, Acosta did not comply. An intern tried to take the mic from Acosta. She went into

his space; he resisted. A torrent of outrage on Twitter was spawned.

Later, the White House yanked Acosta's White House press pass. The White House, Sanders said in a statement, will "never tolerate a reporter placing his hands on a young woman just trying to do her job as a White House intern."

Sanders also tweeted a video apparently edited by the right-wing conspiracy website Infowars to back the claim that Acosta placed his hands on the intern.

On the left, there was outrage at the White House for manufacturing an excuse to punish Acosta. On the right, partisans fumed that Acosta used a karate chop on the intern.

The whole episode showed how polarized American partisans have become. It was a quick collision. Nobody was hurt. Yet people were fuming.

In 2018, the best way to get ahead is to be a victim.

Trump keeps mixing it up with reporters who wear their liberal politics on their sleeves precisely because he wants to don the mantle of victimhood.

For his part, Acosta has increased his visibility by sparring with Sanders and Trump. The more the White House tries to check him the brighter the CNN star shines.

When the White House Corre-

spondents' Association protests—it had to do when the administration pulled Acosta's credentials—the Trump base translates that protest into the belief that the White House press corps is monolithic and anti-Trump.

In 2012, when reporter Neil Munro of the right-leaning *Daily Caller*, shouted out a question to President Barack Obama as he spoke in the Rose Garden, *Politico* reported the episode as a "surprising breach of etiquette" in which a reporter heckled the president.

Reporters just didn't treat Obama that way. On the other hand, Obama generally treated the press with respect, unless they worked for Fox News.

That's no defense of the White House's decision to pull Acosta's pass.

As someone who covers this White House, I know that Trump often rewards reporters who shout questions with long answers. This sudden umbrage at Acosta is too arbitrary. Methinks Trump picked a fight with the CNN reporter because the GOP lost the House and Trump wanted to lash out.

But if this stunt works this time, it will be used again—perhaps to punish someone for asking inconvenient questions. And if Trump can do it, the next president can do it, too.

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The wrong way to operate a university

"Wrong way Corrigan" stories stir the imagination. Douglas Corrigan was so nicknamed in 1938 after he flew from Long Beach, California to New York City. But then, although his flight plan was a return trip, he flew instead to Ireland.

Remembering Corrigan's story was inspired by news out of the University of Oregon where the Board of Trustees announced an increase to President Michael Schill's annual salary of \$60,000—on top of his \$720,000 base—along with a three-year retention bonus of \$200,000 and annual performance bonus of \$200,000. His housing and car are free while he enjoys a sizable staff to act on his university duties and responsibilities.

So, what's "wrong way" about this news? The way his salary was determined and bonus, too, was likely based on findings by Schill's own staff, not by a recognized research business with reputation for integrity. The fact is UO ranks at #102 among other U.S. universities; hence, that President Schill's salary and bonuses must rise to a level equal with the highest-ranked in America is bogus.

The University of Oregon is a public-owned university, supported in large measure by the taxpayers of Oregon. However, the people of Oregon have no control over it. The 14-members of the Board of Trustees are appointed by Oregon's governor: the Trustees advise the UO president who actually tells them what to do while regularly he wines and dines them. This makes the governance of UO a political enterprise and a sham. Research finds about half the Trustees are wealthy, meaning \$60,000 is probably "peanuts" to them. The others, about half work directly or indirectly for UO.

What reasons justify big taxpayer dollars to the UO office of the

president? A UO write-up on reasons for Schill's salary inform us that he provides "incredible leadership" while the Board of Trustees is "thrilled with the vision, enthusiasm and stability he (Schill) has brought to the University." This writer is an avid reader of Oregon media: Not one word about Michael Schill's contributions to UO or to the people of the state of Oregon is known.

The per annual median household income in Oregon is less than \$60,000, meaning education beyond high school is unaffordable unless one is willing to incur debt and, depending on a student's area of study, possible unemployment upon graduation. Meanwhile, interviews with degree holders finds them reporting that their university education had no impact on their careers, except to secure interviews. What's become most important to graduates is their acquired written and oral communication and critical thinking skills. In other words, skills that could be learned without going to an ever-increasingly expensive university.

Modern day universities are anachronistic, including the UO. The university in America was a place for scholars; however, since it was popularized and everyone expected to attend, hardly anyone goes now for that purpose. Instead, they go to become a "professional" and thereby secure a high-paying job. It's argued that a general education could be satisfied by high school daily attendance, going to class and committing time to studies.

Those Oregon youth and young adults who want to learn how to do something to earn a middle class income and embrace the American dream should enroll in one of the state's community colleges. The few who seek a profession will likely find a university appropriate but one that's relevant-to-our-time-and-challenges-enough to make the time and cost pay off in graduate pursuits such as medicine and law. The "wrong way" is too often gobbling up the available dollars which now too often go to support the president's office, its Board of Trustees, and athletic field glories.

(Gene H. McIntyre shares his opinion frequently in the *Keizertimes*.)

