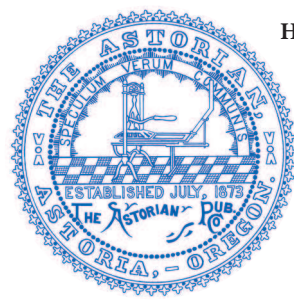


THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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OUR VIEW

Neighbors helping neighbors — it's what we are all about

Happy Thanksgiving to all our readers. As we gather around the dining table with our families today, it is fitting to acknowledge that we have much to be thankful for.

In a nation deeply divided by political differences, with so many facing agonizing economic struggles, we can still focus on the good that unites us.

Thanksgiving has its origin in the 1621 feast staged by those Puritan settlers who fled persecution in England, endured an arduous ocean journey, then survived the first year of the Plymouth Colony. They joined with Native Americans to celebrate the first harvest, and set the table for every celebration that followed. George Washington proclaimed a day of thanksgiving for victories in the revolution that created our nation. And Abraham Lincoln solidified the regularity of the celebration during the Civil War.

While in modern times it has morphed into a holiday that combines family gatherings, turkey dinners and televised sports, it retains its deeper meaning.

Many families enjoy a tradition of going around the table and asking each person to mention what they are thankful for. Young and old verbalize their appreciation for America's freedoms, relationships, pets and the plenty on the table.

On this day, we savor that tradition, too, by considering the many people and things for which we should be thankful. Firstly, it is fitting that we reflect on the contribution of soldiers, sailors, air crews and Marines serving overseas while expressing hope for their safe return.

And spare a thought for those here on the North Coast who are not spending the day with their families.

Right now, police officers and firefighters throughout Clatsop County are on duty, serving and protecting as they do 24/7, year-round, to keep us safe.

Medical personnel are working at Columbia Memorial Hospital, Providence Seaside and Ocean Beach Hospital in Ilwaco, Wash., providing the continuity of care that our ailing neighbors need.

Members of the U.S. Coast Guard are risking their lives to protect mariners traversing one of the most treacherous ocean bars on the planet. Their service enriches our community.

Many groups of professionals in our community may be taken for granted. They touch our lives and truly make a difference. But how often do we applaud them?

Fishermen of the Northern Oregon commercial fleet based in our community provide stores and restaurants with the bounty of the ocean year-round, frequently enduring life-threatening conditions to bring in their catch. We thank them.

In classrooms from Seaside to Knappa, teachers are shaping our nation's future generations with knowledge and the ability to think. Their efforts are rarely recognized at the time, although it is common to hear adults attribute their success to dedicated mentors who shaped their upbringing.

In addition, we should be thankful for the gorgeous environment in which we spend our lives. No big-city sprawl and daily chaos here. Instead, our small-town, rural North Coast communities are surrounded by spectacular natural attractions, from Saddle Mountain to our ocean beaches, plus the relentless beauty of the Columbia River. Let's never take that for granted. And the best way to demonstrate our thankfulness is to protect it year-round, keeping it free from litter and other man-made spoils.

Our nation offers some freedoms that we should cherish, for they are the envy of the world. The First Amendment to the Constitution — the greatest words ever penned by modern man — guarantees free worship, free assembly and free speech. Those of us in the communications business are especially thankful for the latter, because it drives our very existence. It isn't reserved for the press, however; it applies to everyone.

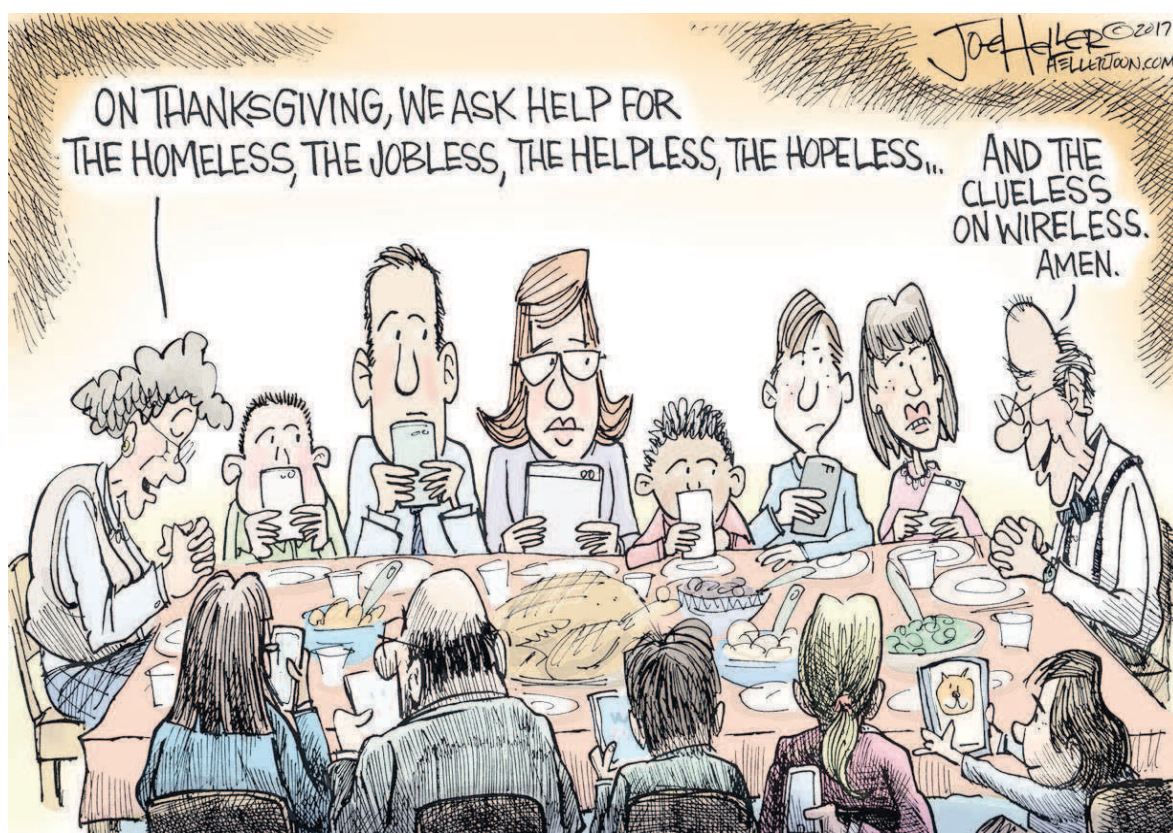
As we celebrate all these aspects of our nation of plenty, we should pause to commend those in the North Coast who are doing their part to help the less affluent among us with the basic necessities of life.

There can be few higher callings than providing shelter from the storm, offering nourishing food and a helping hand to those for whom the modern times are a daily struggle for existence. Our less-fortunate neighbors are part of the fabric of our North Coast community. The manner in which we treat them is a reflection of the depth of our caring.

There is so much more. Those round-the-table Thanksgiving pronouncements often feature the smaller things that make life grand — libraries, live music and art. All contribute nuanced pleasure to modern life's finery. And there are less tangible assets, too, like laughter and smiles. How gloomy life would be without them. Perhaps it is timely to share more?

Anyone who has traveled outside our borders likely has returned with a simple realization that this country offers a combination of more freedom, hope and choice than any other. Today, let's set aside any differences and worries and instead focus on the good.

We on the North Coast have much to be thankful for.



In celebration of Thanksgiving

A selection of American writings about Thanksgiving from the Library of Congress.

Thanksgiving transcends cultures

The American custom of Thanksgiving transcends cultures and stands as a truly American tradition. In the following excerpt, Herman Spector tells the story of a 1939 Jewish Thanksgiving in New York City. The story foreshadows the grim realities of World War II, yet to come:

We don't exactly have seasons here, but holidays are important. Before "Simkas-Torah" — that's the holiday of rejoicing in the giving of the Torah — they use ducks. During the Passover holidays the best of all poultry is used — all the luxury items; capons, turkeys, and the finest chickens. This past Thanksgiving — not a Jewish holiday, of course — but I believe more Jews bought turkeys than ever before. Why? In my opinion, it's due to particular world relations at this time, to conditions of oppression abroad and the desire to give thanks for living in America. During Chanukah week they prepare fat for the Passover, so specially fattened geese are brought to the city then, like the ones you saw outside. With the devout housewife, not to be able to have a genzil (goose) for the holidays would be a tragedy of the first order.

A Thanksgiving sermon

In African American communities in the late 19th century, Thanksgiving was celebrated in church with special Thanksgiving sermons.

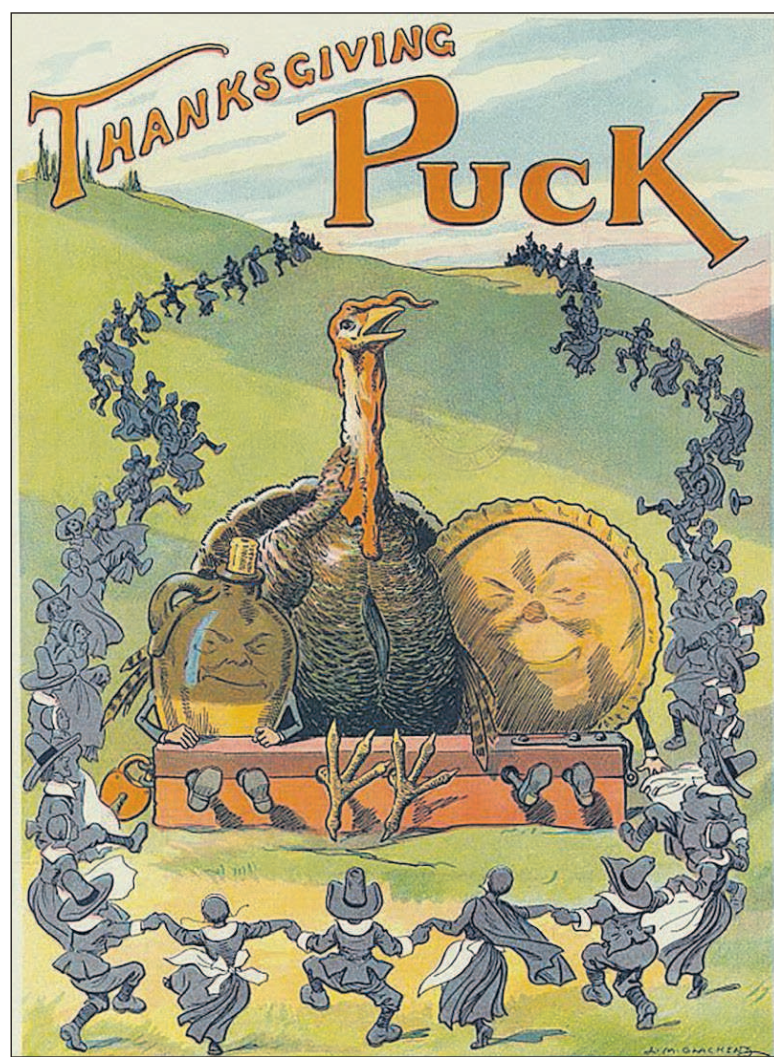
The Rev. Benjamin Arnett was a prominent AME cleric in the Ohio AME Church.

In his Centennial Thanksgiving sermon on Nov. 30, 1876, Arnett reflects on the triumphs and failures of American history and projects a promising course for America's future:

Following the tracks of righteousness throughout the centuries and along the way of nations, we are prepared to recommend it to all and assert without a shadow of doubt, that 'Righteousness exalted a nation'; but on the other hand following the foot-prints of sin amid the ruins of Empires and remains of cities, we will say that 'sin is a reproach to any people.' But we call on all American citizens to love their country, and look not on the sins of the past, but arming ourselves for the conflict of the future, girding ourselves in the habiliments of Righteousness, march forth with the courage of a Numidian lion and with the confidence of a Roman Gladiator, and meet the demands of the age, and satisfy the duties of the hour. Let us be encouraged in our work, for we have found the moccasin track of Righteousness all along the shore of the stream of life, constantly advancing holding humanity with a firm hand. We have seen it 'through' all the confusion of rising and falling States, of battle, siege and slaughter, of victory and defeat; through the varying fortunes and ultimate extinctions of Monarchies, Republics and Empires; through barbaric irruption and desolation, feudal isolation, spiritual supremacy, the heroic rush and conflict of the Cross and Crescent; amid the busy hum of industry, through the marts of trade and behind the gliding keels of commerce.

And in America, the battle-field of modern thought, we can trace the foot-prints of the one and the tracks of the other. So let us use all of our available forces, and especially our young men, and throw them into the conflict of the Right against the Wrong.

Then let the grand Centen-



Library of Congress

A Puck cartoon cover imagines a Thanksgiving holiday dance of plenty.

nial Thanksgiving song be heard and sung in every house of God; and in every home may thanksgiving sounds be heard, for our race has been emancipated, enfranchised and are now educating, and have the gospel preached to them!

On the prairie

Frontier life in the 19th century offered challenges to pioneers, but also provided opportunities to give thanks.

In the 1930s, George Streter remembers his father, a preacher who tried farming in Nebraska in 1873. The Streter family celebrated a memorable Thanksgiving when their livestock ate a crop of rotten onions:

Father said we'll have to have something beside vegetables to eat, so he decided to butcher the cow. She had gone dry anyway (probably because of eating so many onions) and was nice and fat and would make prime beef and enough to last all winter.

We children all shed a few tears when Old Broch was killed, for she was a family pet, but we had to have something to eat. That was the day before Thanksgiving, and the next day mother planned a real Thanksgiving feast — a large roast of meat with potatoes and carrots laid around it. Something we had not had for years. But there was a peculiar odor that filled the house while it was cooking. Mother said she might have spilled something on the stove which in burning, caused the stench.

The table was set and the roast brought on and how delicious it looked, and father, after giving thanks for the prosperous year and the many blessings that we had enjoyed, carved the roast, placing a liberal helping of meat, carrots and spuds on each plate. Mother took a bite and looked at father; he took a taste and looked at us kids. I took a mouthful and my stomach heaved, and horrors of horrors, there was that familiar taste of rotten onions. So our dinner was entirely spoiled and all we had to eat was johnny cake straight with nothing to put on it or go with it. Still father did not say any cuss words and though sorely tried, was still able to say 'Well, well, that surely is too bad.' Well we took the remains of Old

Broch and buried them out in the field, and my little sisters laid flowers on her grave. Father decided then and there to quit farming, and although this all happened over 60 years ago, to this day I just can't say that I'm very crazy about sorghum or onions.

Civil War feast

From Civil War diaries we know what the troops ate generally and on special occasions. For holidays, organizations solicited donations of food including poultry, mince pies, sausages and fruit. One account notes that the Sanitary Commission put on a feed in the field that consisted of turkey, chicken and apples — but a day late. A soldier noted, "It isn't the turkey, but the idea that we care for."

In the University of Iowa's collections of Civil War Diaries and Letters, Asa Bean, a surgeon in the Union Army, wrote describing his Thanksgiving dinner on Nov. 27, 1862:

"There has been a surprise party here to Day for the Benefit of Soldiers and Nurses they were furnished with a Thanksgiving Dinner roast Turkey; Chicken & Pigeon & Oysters Stewed. ... I had a good dinner of Baked Chicken & Pudding Boiled potatoes, Turnip, Apple butter, cheese butter, Tea & Trimmings ... we live well enough, but cannot Eat Much without being sick."

— Ellen Terrell, *Library of Congress*

A close call

In 1938, Mrs. Hulda Esther Thorpe remembers the dangers that settlers faced on the prairie in the 1800s, and the many reasons settlers had for giving thanks:

One of the best Thanksgiving dinners we ever knew of was when a family of settlers had their nice wild turkey dinner taken by the Indians, who came in silently and just shoved the folks back and eat it up.

They did not harm the white people though and after they were gone the women made a big corn bread and with what few things the Indians left, they had a feast, the best as the daughter tells, that she ever eat. This was because they were so happy and thankful that the Indians spared them.