

# The INDEPENDENT

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## Opinion

### It's time to give thanks

Now is the time of year when we stop and take inventory of the many reasons there are to be thankful.

Originally, Thanksgiving celebrated the generosity of others who gave food to some early English settlers who were starving on their own.

If you have food on your table, even if it's much more humble than a big turkey dinner, there is a reason to be thankful.

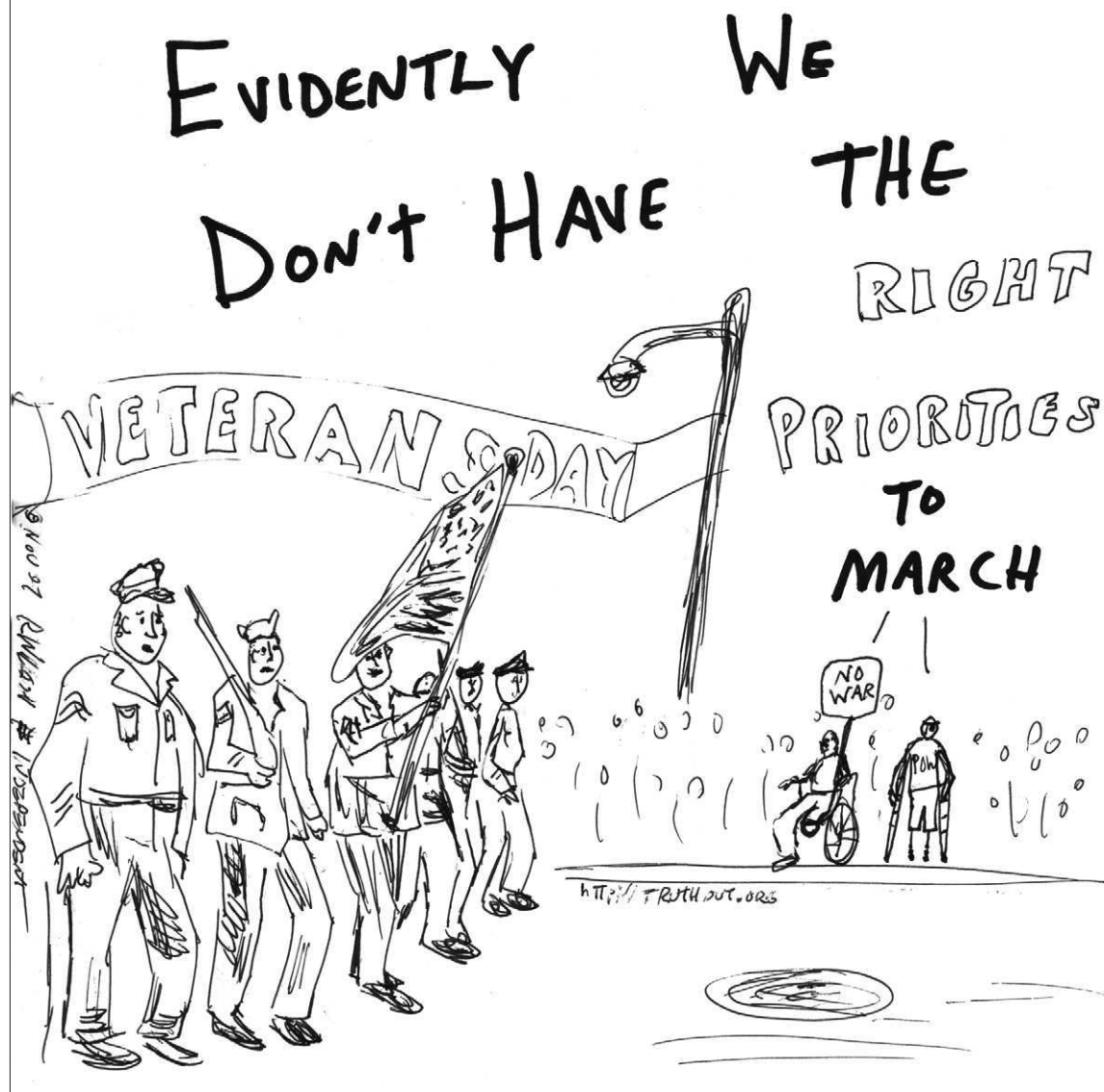
There has already been one power outage and winter is still new. Electricity and all the conveniences it brings, such as hot water, refrigeration, heat and lights are all more reasons to give thanks. It's easy in the world we live in to take such things for granted. There are still many places in the world, undeveloped and warring countries, for instance, where people live without such niceties as safety, electricity, sanitation, clean water, enough food. What a luxury, to have clean water to drink, and even enough water to bathe in and wash clothes.

Got a dry, warm place to live? Be thankful your house wasn't the one that burned down in Vernonia, on November 13. Got a job? Got a car? Got recreational opportunities? Yes, most of us have lots, and lots for which to be thankful.

How about the really important stuff? Got a family and/or friends? This is a good time to tell someone you love them, or at least, that you appreciate them.

Thank you to all volunteers. We won't try to name them all, lest we forget somebody like we did last year. The amount of charity our community (and we mean the whole area; Vernonia, Timber, Mist, Jewell, Elsie, Birkenfeld, Buxton, Manning, and Banks) is capable of showing during times of need is overwhelming. There have been a number of injuries, deaths and fires this year that have brought out amazing generosity and support for the individuals and families involved. People helping people is what community really means, and ours is a great community.

Finally, if all your basic needs have been met, please consider finding a way to give to others. If you can't give lots, maybe just share what you have, whether it's time, money, food or love. And, take time to give thanks.



### Out of my Mind

by Noni Andersen

Setting aside time to give thanks for the blessings we enjoy is fairly universal, but Thanksgiving as a holiday is a uniquely American idea (Canada adopted it in 1879.). A part of that uniqueness, unfortunately, is how we have replaced expressing thanks for true blessings into an opportunity to overeat, followed by a day of equally gluttonous shopping...for Christmas! It is increasingly apparent that one day of giving thanks is about all our culture can sustain.

Speaking of our culture, it isn't surprising that overeating and overspending both bring negative outcomes - one for our health, the other for our economy.

We think of thanksgiving as a fall event, when the crops are in, and red and gold leaves have painted the countryside. But the Pilgrims' Thanksgiving proclamation was actually June 29, 1676. By late November, they were struggling to maintain both food and shelter. We certainly have it easy, not just easier than our founders, but easier than most of the people in most of the world.

When the first national Thanksgiving was proclaimed by President Abraham Lincoln in 1864, he concluded with these words:

*"And I do further recommend to my fellow-citizens aforesaid, that on that occasion they do reverently humble themselves in the dust, and from thence offer up penitent and fervent prayers and supplications to the great Disposer of events for a return of the inestimable blessings of peace, union and harmony throughout the land*

*which it has pleased Him to assign as a dwelling-place for ourselves and for our posterity throughout all generations."*

Lincoln's thoughts about "the inestimable blessings of peace, union and harmony" have considerably more value than a frenzy of eating and shopping.

I don't know who wrote this little poem but, aside from today's often unaffordable health care, it is a far better explanation of reasons to be thankful than those promoted by our commercial culture:

*When we count our many blessings;  
It isn't hard to see  
that life's most valued treasures  
are the treasures that are free.*

*For it isn't what we own or buy  
that signifies our wealth.  
It's the special gifts that have no price:  
our family, friends and health.*

Thanksgiving can be the therapy we all need to remember the blessings and the beauty of living, but only if we apply it.

On a lighter note, there is nothing wrong with humor about Thanksgiving, indeed, laughter is one of God's blessings. So, at the Thanksgiving dinner table when everyone goes around to say what they are thankful for, say, "I'm thankful I didn't get caught" and refuse to say anything more. That should keep the family wondering all year long.