

Thanksgiving (and how to survive it)

Well, it's the time of year when I let my belt out a couple of notches and put my nose to the grindstone to create a list of four-word phrases you can use that are guaranteed to bring Thanksgiving conversation to a screeching halt. "I voted for Trump" is a perennial favorite.

This season, however, is going to be different. America has had a lot with which to contend this year. From the global stage to our own back yard, issues have popped up to tie our stomachs in knots. And for a holiday basically designed to stuff our stomachs and be thankful for our many blessings (though we might lose sight of them from time to time), that just will not do.

My qualifications to opine on this issue are many. You know the crazy Uncle who brings up religion and politics each Thanksgiving, putting a sour taste in everyone's mouths? That used to be me. However, I have had a change of heart; kind of like the Grinch, except his dog is named Max.

With that in mind, here are some tips to keep the peace next Thursday without seeming like a scold, in order for you to enjoy the turkey without the side dish of discord.

Instead of pre-heating the oven, consider this a precursor to defuse dissenters. This is achieved by a group email setting ground rules for the Thanksgiving feast. Nothing nasty; just an agreement to leave talk of news, politics and religion on the

welcome mat. Friends and family are welcome — contentious conversations are not.

Next, arm yourself with a list of positive topics to add to the meal. Catch up on what those close to you have been up to since last year. Movies and music are good subjects, as well. Keep sports talk light; leave the heavy-duty smack talk at home. If you are a fan of our Cincinnati franchises, that should be simple.

A great topic of discussion are activities, especially if children are present. This is the time of year for school plays and church cantatas, sporting events and recitals, and the weather. There is always the weather. I would refrain from medical conversations; "Does this look infected?" tends to put one off of their appetite.

Finally, have an escape room. If the weather is good, the back porch is the perfect spot. If it is rainy or snowy, the living room is an option. Just have a space available in case your Sister's adorable children (of course, all children are delightful) get a little bit rambunctious. And they always get rambunctious.

Fun fact: Thanksgiving is six hours out of 8,760 in a year. That is not too long to drop the pettiness and enjoy good food and good company. And, while you have the chance, take some time to be thankful. You can go back to throwing elbows and profanities on Black Friday.



ROBERT ROE

Wearing Capris

The Postscript by Carrie Classon

I was weeding through my closet, as I need to do much more often than I do. I bring my used clothing to my parent's house, up north, because they have a very nice thrift store that employs the developmentally disabled people. It appears my old clothes find new owners quickly, so I don't feel as bad about dumping my ill-considered clothing choices.

I brought the latest batch up north right before leaving for Mexico when I realized I owned about six more pairs of capris than I would ever wear. I had them in sizes that didn't fit and colors that didn't match, so I piled them all into a duffel, along with a blue sweater that I thought my sister might like. I thought I'd wear the sweater while writing, but it has big, bell-shaped sleeves, and I discovered trying to type with giant sleeves was not practical.

So my mother kept the duffel until the next time my sister and my niece, Isabelle, came up to visit. This was Isabelle's last visit before she went to Argentina for the year. My mother dutifully had my sister try on the blue sweater with the large sleeves, and my sister said that, while it was a nice sweater, it made her look exactly like Paddington Bear, so she passed on the sweater. My mother kept one pair of capris.

"Don't you want to try on some of these capris?" my sister asked Isabelle.

Isabelle just graduated from college. She is, and has always been, a very fashionable person, and I could have told you that she was not going to be excited about her aunt's hand-me-down capris, but I was still surprised when my sister reported to me what she said.

"I have never worn capris," Isabelle announced, "and I'm not about to start now!"

I had absolutely no idea that capris were old women's clothes until this was pointed out to me.

I went to New York just a week or so later, and I scanned the crowds. Coming from the Midwest, I am at a disadvantage when it comes to knowing what is or is not in fashion, but I knew New Yorkers would be a reliable source of information. I was there for three days, and I walked from Midtown to Soho, surveying the legwear of the women I saw, and I am here to report that Isabelle was right. No capris!

This is the thing about getting old. You don't realize you are doing it until it's too late.

I am now in San Miguel de Allende. No one comes to SMA, as folks call it, for spring break. It takes too long to get to, and it is too far from an ocean. This means that the people who are here have plenty of time to come and go and are not particularly interested in beaches. In other words, they are old.

One of the nicest things about SMA for me is that here, I am pretty young for an old person. Most of the old people are older than I am, which makes me feel youngish. Yesterday I was walking around town a little earlier than usual, and there were lots of women on the streets. It was a beautiful sunny day, and I noticed—I could not help but notice—that every single woman in my line of sight was wearing capris. Every single one.

Of course, Isabelle is right. Capris are totally out of date. The good thing is, here in San Miguel, so are we.

'Til next time,
Carrie



CARRIE CLASSON

Remembering Grandma Mast

Submitted by Gloria Yoder

All 39 of us cousins were there as we stood to sing. It was special, but also teary — our dear grandma had passed on to her eternal home. How we rejoiced, despite our grief. Grandma Mast was a singing individual as she and Grandpa raised their five children. In family gatherings it is evident that the trait was passed on down the generations. I am touched when I see her great-grandchildren singing together as they play. Now in Heaven, I can only imagine how she must be singing before the very throne of God.

We had arrived at the visitation while the Mast family was eating. My parents offered to go with the children and me, as we would then have ample time "with Grandma." My children listened soberly as I told them that this is now much more like Grandma looked when I was their age and would spend time with her at their house.

Grandma was one of those people that left deep prints in my life. In my early childhood years, I loved going with Mom to spend the day at Grandma's, and on occasions I even got to spend the night with her and Grandpa. On one such opportunity she had made a nightgown for me as a surprise. Looking back, I marvel how she always had time for me. She would sit down and play a game of memory with me, and when I was ready to wash the dishes after a meal, she would say, "No, you are on vacation!" Never did I feel belittled or less than ideal by the way she treated me; her words of life brought many a smile to my face, and, most of all, she believed in me.

Now, as I wept over her it just didn't feel right to think of not having her anymore. The thought of a graveside seemed cruel. That is when the words

were softly spoken to my heart, "She is not there, she is here." I was comforted, the reality went deep; she is with her Maker, all I need to do is to continue to serve Him. Not only will I see her one day in Heaven, but in the meanwhile, I can pass on the genuine love that Grandma had for me that gave me another picture of God's love for me.

A week prior, when my mother received a message that her mom was about to come to the close of her days, she immediately left for Ohio where she joined her two sisters by Grandma's bedside. They took it as a privilege to care for their mother through these intense times. At all times someone was next to Grandma as they talked, sang, and prayed.

I knew it would not be possible for me to go to be with her, so I gave Mom a message to pass on to her. At this point she was unresponsive. A monitor to track her heartrate was the only way they could tell when she heard what was being said. I was delighted when Aunt Rhoda told me that Grandma's heartrate went up when they gave the message that I loved her and she was

special to me. Grandma knew that already, but somehow it was precious to know she heard. She doted over me as her oldest granddaughter, and yes, in her final lap of her earthly journey, it felt good to know that I could give her a message of my love in return.

When the time came to gather at the graveyard our hearts were at rest, and a number of us grandchildren took turns gently covering the grave. We sang several songs which Grandma had asked to be sung at her graveside, including her old time favorite, "There Is a Happy Land."

I traveled home with my six children that night. In a way it didn't seem right to go on in life

without her. Then I kept thinking of the Lord's love that He pours into our lives. In turn we get to pass it on to others — like Grandma, drop our work to look someone in the eye and show the value they have. Even the apparently unlovable are waiting for someone to accept them just the way they are. The week of the funeral I got to spend a few days with my family, including 23 nieces and nephews. The memories of my girlhood days with Grandma were so fresh, it motivated me to love on other little ones I was surrounded with. No, I'm not Grandma, and I could never take the place of my dear mother who dotes over her grandchildren, I'll just love with

my Auntie love. And once I'm caught up on my sleep, I'll be filling you in on the events of our family gathering in an Airbnb large enough to comfortably host all of us.

For tonight we'll be wrapping up with a recipe Grandma was known for in the years she was her energetic, confident self before dementia set in. With apples in season, if you can, be sure to give it a try!

DANISH APPLE BARS

Dough:
3 c. flour
1 tsp. salt
1 c. Crisco
1 egg yolk
2/3 c. milk
Filling:
7 c. shredded apples
1 c. crushed cornflakes

1 t. cinnamon
1 cup sugar
1 egg white, beaten stiff
Glaze:
1 cup powdered sugar
1 teas vanilla
3 tablespoons water
Mix together flour and salt. Cut in shortening. Beat egg yolk and milk together, mix and add to flour mixture.
Divide dough in half. Roll thin. Put in 10" x 15" pan. Sprinkle with cornflakes and apples mixed with cinnamon and sugar. Roll out other half of dough and cover apples. Brush egg white over crust. Sprinkle sugar and cinnamon on top.
Bake at 375° until golden brown. Spread with glaze while still warm. Cut into squares and enjoy.

DID YOU KNOW?

LOCAL NEWSPAPERS and newspaper websites are relied on more than any other media for information about public notices and local government.

59% Local newspapers/newspaper websites

32% Local tv/cable

26% Word of mouth/friends/relatives

25% Local radio

24% Government websites

15% City newsletters

11% Public bulletin boards

7% Non-government website

5% Other



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