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Thanksgiving

In the United States of America, the people have a celebration called Thanksgiving that is held on the last Thursday in November. The first Thanksgiving was a harvest celebration a few hundred years ago. The American Indians and the Pilgrims shared a bountiful meal together to rejoice and indulge because they were glad and thankful to God for the good yield of food over the summer. It also seems to signify the changing of seasons from fall to winter, as it was their last abundant meal until the winter was past.

When I think of Thanksgiving, I think of certain foods--turkey and dressing, corn-on-the-cob, sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, and all kinds of other garden vegetables, cranberry sauce, rolls, banana croquettes, and pumpkin pie, which are all traditional Thanksgiving foods. At today's celebrations, family--and sometimes, friends--gather 'round the table at one person's house to eat an extreme abundance of food and to sit back and talk and reminisce after the meal. Most everyone gets off from work on Thanksgiving Day because it's a national holiday. The kids usually get together and play indoor

or outdoor games with some of the adults, while most of the overly-full adults like to sit around on the couch and watch TV or sit at the table to talk.

After a few hours, the guests say their goodbyes and vow to keep in touch more often. Yet this is a relaxed day, much different from the sometimes harried ones experienced in their everyday lives.

On November 26, 1987--our Thanksgiving Day--we had our traditional celebrations. Wednesday afternoon everyone was dismissed from class here at Western, and my roommate, Angela, and I headed to our homes, which are located about ten miles south of Bardstown, Ky. We planned on eating plenty of good home-cooked food and lounging around most of the weekend.

The next day I got up and ready to go to my aunt and uncle's house in Bardstown for Thanksgiving Day lunch at noon. Mom and dad were hurrying me and my fifteen-year-old brother, Jeff, because they wanted to get there a while before the meal started to chat.

When we arrived, everyone was already there--my Aunt Margaret and Uncle Gerry and their eight-year-old son, Patrick, Grandma Cecil and her sister, my Great-Aunt Frances, and my Great-Uncle Carl, and their daughter, Carolyn--who is pregnant for the first time--and her husband, David. We said hello and then lined up in the kitchen, picked up a plate, and helped ourselves to any of the foods that we wanted. She served an incredible amount of food including

turkey, cranberry sauce, pistachio salad, yeast rolls, homemade gravy, mashed potatoes, broccoli casserole, corn, tea, and pumpkin pie for dessert. Most of the family sat at the kitchen table, but Patrick, Jeff, Gerry and I sat at the card table in the living room. We ate, watched the football pre-game and my discussed college and my uncle's favorite places to eat near campus, since he is a Western alumnus.

The meal was delicious, and --as everyone else--I proceeded to eat too much. I confiscated the bean bag in the living room to watch the football game and doze. Gerry, Carolyn, David, and Uncle Carl also decided to watch TV and relax, while the others sat in the kitchen discussing their jobs and matters such as whether there should be Social Security or not. These sometimes resulted in funny and telling stories or heated arguments. Jeff and Patrick played ping pong and air hockey in the basement, and baseball and Trac Ball in the backyard.

Eventually, everyone wandered into the living room and sat in a large circle and talked to each other. There was a very nice, warm atmosphere that made me feel good to be near these people that I care about and do not get to see often enough. Saying our goodbyes and invitations to visit, we left at about 4 p.m. because it was time to eat supper at Grandma Ball's with the other side of the family.

At Grandma and Grandpa's house, they had just finished eating because they knew we would be full when we arrived.

We sat around and talked in the kitchen for a couple of hours, then my family ate. Grandma had fixed turkey, ham, cranberry sauce, 24-hour salad, dinner rolls, banana croquettes, sweet potatoes, green beans and some other foods. Aunt Jan and Uncle Kurtis and their four-year-old daughter, Jessica, and their one-year-old son, Dustin were also there. We talked for an hour or two, then the rest of my family decided to clear off the table and play cards. Playing poker when the family gets together is a tradition on my mom's side of the family. We all played for a few hours and then went home.

During Thanksgiving I recognized the differences between mom's side of the family and dad's. Dad's side of the family has mostly college graduates, but there are none on mom's side. And, with the different family backgrounds, different topics are discussed. At Margaret's it seems college is discussed more--so are job happenings and the economic state of our country. At Grandma's, life problems and our childhoods are mostly what is discussed.

This holiday serves the purpose of bringing family together for an unrushed time to share in each others lives, and find out what's been going on. You eat a good meal, celebrate the holiday and have a day to relax and enjoy the company of friends and relatives.