

Nothing To Be Thankful For Today? Think Again

My late husband and I moved from Sacramento to W. Texas in June 2006. Every year I would go to No. California to spend Thanksgiving with my family – except my daughter and husband who live in the Denver Metro area. John would spend turkey day with our best friends here in town. On Christmas I stayed home alone with the dogs while he spent a week or so up in the Denver Metro area where his son, daughter and grandchildren live.

Five Years ago (which seems like yesterday) the Permian Basin where I live (between Midland/Odessa and Lubbock, TX, and nearly all the way to El Paso) was hit with a massive and *very dangerous* ice storm. OMG, it was unreal. I wasn't able to leave (I don't fly) until three days after my planned time to get to Oroville for Thanksgiving.

By the time I battled the weather along the way and my delayed departure, I ended up in a hotel in Chowchilla, California, off Hwy 99. A few hours south of Sacramento and still about 5 hours north to Oroville where my mother and brother live. I could drive no further. It was late. It was Thanksgiving, everything was closed so my Thanksgiving dinner in my hotel room was some crackers I had in my SUV and bottled water.

No, I didn't cry or demand taxpayers pay for counseling because I was sad I couldn't make it on turkey day. I got to mom's the next day and spent a precious week with family. And, the leftovers were delicious!

Today I am alone with my two doggies. My husband passed away Feb. 6, 2016. Three months later I had to put my beautiful West Highland Terrier, Muffin, to sleep; massive kidney failure. My wonderful vet simply couldn't save her. It wasn't

easy, believe me.

My brother has been 100% disabled since an industrial accident 22 years ago. In late August, Richard had back to back strokes that nearly killed him. As his legal guardian I had to drop everything and get out to California which is very expensive. Rent SUV (have to save the miles on my SUV), put my babies (that would be my doggies) in boarding, hotels (no, not five star anything), meals and gas runs into a ton of money.

So, that pretty much killed my finances for Thanksgiving. Like millions of other Americans, I just couldn't afford another trip so soon. My brother barely survived and he will never be the same; neurological damage. Even though I can't be in Oroville today with my 90-year old mother, my brother and little sister, I am truly thankful to Almighty God for sparing my brother's life. I would love to have been able (weather permitting) to take the northern route home (Hwy 80), head down 25 and visit my dear daughter as I haven't seen her since July 2016, the last time I visited John's grave. He is buried at Ft. Logan National Cemetery in the Denver area.

But I thank God every day for keeping my Brandy safe, her husband, and yes, her furry friends for life. A 23-year old cat, Miss Sophie, a 6-year old cat she found in the gutter as a kitten, Iggy, and her rescue dog, the smart and sassy, Darby.

We all have family. We all have sorrows and joys. Politics aside, we each have a story in our lives either about us or our families. Politics aside, we the people of these united States of America still have much to be thankful for even though we live in the most dangerous time for our republic since the Revolutionary War.

Once again mother nature wreaked horrific devastation from hurricanes Harvey & Irma. Hundreds of thousands of our fellow Americans lost much. Either their homes outright destroyed, a

loved one lost, jobs lost because businesses were destroyed; some not re-opening for months due to damage which means no paychecks. Thousands of drowned dogs and cats. The list of sorrows is too long. But we should be thankful many more lives were **not** lost.

Up in Northern California, *thousands* of homes and businesses were destroyed by massive fires less than two months ago. Again, huge loss of jobs, destruction in the Napa Valley wine industry. Beloved animals like horses and domestic pets burned alive as well as *dozens* of human beings. Families devastated by the death of their loved ones. Concurrently two more terrible fires were underway in the Southern California area that could have been much worse, but that doesn't take away the hurt and pain for our fellow Americans who lost everything.

And yet, even as their own homes were destroyed, our first responders and civilian volunteers, locally and from other states, went into the affected areas to help save fellow Americans. I did not see ONE news report of any white rescuer refusing to help or save any individual because their skin is a different color or any other factor. It was Americans helping and saving Americans. The best of our best.

As we also saw after the savage slaughter in Las Vegas and the church here in Texas. [After Massacre, a Small Texas Cemetery Strains to Bury So Many Dead](#). All those lives and now all the sorrow their families will feel the rest of their lives. But each time I thanked God for those who survived and pray for the victims and their families. I'm home alone today but all those families have one or more empty seats at the table today as do families who have lost an active duty military member.

Right along with the forgotten caregivers out there and by that, I mean wives (and sometimes husbands) who care for their military husbands (or fiancée or boyfriend) who have returned from hell holes like Afghanistan broken, maimed or permanent

brain damage from stepping on an IED.

Unless you live with and care for someone disabled (my late husband was 100% disabled by 2008; his left leg was amputated mid-thigh to save his life in March 2014; after that was confined to a wheel chair until he passed away), most people have no idea what's it's like. Either for the caregiver or their loved one no longer able to do simple things like take a shower or feed themselves. God bless you all and those you care for so lovingly.

We should all be thankful for acts of kindness which reflects on we as a people amidst much hate, anger and violence rampant in this country. **Kindness that doesn't make the national news but goes on in this country every day of the week:**

['We were his family': High school in Massachusetts holds a funeral for homeless veteran, 68, with no family or friends,](#) Nov. 19, 2017. None of the students knew John T. Fitzmaurice, but they honored him after Our Father called him home; Fitzmaurice was buried with full military honors.

If not natural disasters, every day in this country lives are heartbreakingly destroyed or altered forever. Loved ones die in car accidents, from cancer and other diseases. Loved ones murdered by illegal aliens. The list is endless and so is the pain. Too many to count who don't find much to be thankful for today – especially those alone or forgotten. But we can remember them by simply including all our fellow Americans in our thoughts and prayers today. *There really is power in prayer.*

So, yes, I'm alone today but no pity-party for Devvy, thank you. I have my girls, Missy & Maddy, who I love dearly, even when they're being bad girls like digging in the backyard. While it's hard each month to make my mortgage payment, I have a roof over my head, heat in my home and I made creamy potato soup for my dinner today. I am so very thankful for what I

have and for my family members who are still alive. I will see them another day, God willing.

I am thankful for my dear friends where I live who care about me and I them. I am thankful for my truly excellent health except for my spine problem which is manageable.

Today, millions in our country either have nothing or close to it – like heat today. Yeah, in this country we have Americans who die during winter because they can't afford to pay for heat vs buying food. *Today, all our fellow Americans who lost so much this past year as it seems every year here in America – know there are people who do care about you and we do our best when the need arises.* Like hundreds of thousands of us do through various charities when disaster hits.

Let us all thank God for what we do have and try our best each day to make America better. God's blessings to you and yours on this day.

[If you want to know the true story of Thanksgiving, Rush Limbaugh, [gives it in this short video](#). Don't throw the baby out with the bath water! Okay, you don't have to like Limbaugh, just listen to the truth. It is our history and I think worth a few minutes of someone's time.]

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