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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters must be received **by noon Tuesday** for publication in that week's paper. Letters may be handwritten, typed or emailed to [don@nantucketindependent.com](mailto:don@nantucketindependent.com). Be sure to include an address and phone number. All letters are printed at the editor's discretion and may be edited.

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## CALENDAR

The calendar section includes free listings and photos of island events. Email your event listing to Gene Mahon, [events@nantucketindependent.com](mailto:events@nantucketindependent.com). Fax: 508-228-4858. Listings and photos for consideration must be received **by 5 p.m. Friday**.

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## ENGAGEMENTS & WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Provide either your own pre-written announcement or fill out one of our forms and we will write it for you. Announcements and photos are printed free of charge. Forms are available at The Independent, and may be faxed or emailed. Call 508.228.1654, or email [sharon@nantucketindependent.com](mailto:sharon@nantucketindependent.com). Announcements and photos must be received **by 5 p.m. Friday**.

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## BIRTHS AND FIRST BIRTHDAYS

Provide us with your child's name, date of birth, name of parents, siblings and grandparents. You may submit a photo or drop by the office anytime during normal business hours and we will take the photo for you. Must be received **by 5 p.m. Friday**. Email: [don@nantucketindependent.com](mailto:don@nantucketindependent.com)

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## OBITUARIES

Provide either your own pre-written obituary or fill out one of our forms and we will write it for you. Obituaries and photos are printed free of charge. Forms are available at The Independent, and may be faxed or emailed. Call 508.228.1654, or email [sharon@nantucketindependent.com](mailto:sharon@nantucketindependent.com). Obituaries and photos must be received **by 5 p.m. Monday**.

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For rates and information about advertising in The Independent or one of our special publications: Gennifer Costanzo or Hadley St. John Dutra, 508.228.1654, [gennifer@nantucketindependent.com](mailto:gennifer@nantucketindependent.com) [hadley@nantucketindependent.com](mailto:hadley@nantucketindependent.com).

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Direct news tips, information and questions to: Don Costanzo, Editor, 508.228.1654, [don@nantucketindependent.com](mailto:don@nantucketindependent.com).

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Direct arts-related information and questions to: Don Costanzo, Editor, 508.228.1654, [don@nantucketindependent.com](mailto:don@nantucketindependent.com).

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## THANKSGIVING

There is a joke going around about a bad parrot whose foul mouth so upsets his owner that, a few days before Thanksgiving, the bird is finally thrust, flapping and squawking into the freezer. A few minutes later, being a bit concerned at the silence, the owner retrieves the parrot to find that he has been made over; he apologizes for his past behavior and is beyond polite. Just as the owner is about to ask the reason for the change in outlook, the parrot says "What did the turkey do?"

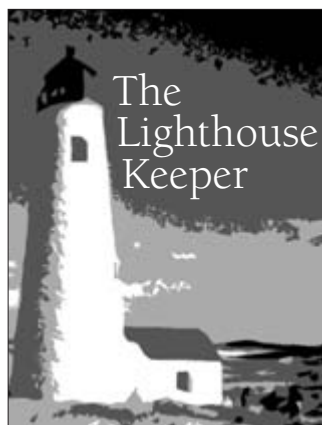
I am not going to go there, either with respect to the turkey in the freezer or to the broader application of the question. While it would be fun to grant first annual turkey awards or something of that sort, after all, it is Thanksgiving and, as the at-home copy editor of this piece every week reminds me frequently, it is far better to be nice.

Thanksgiving seems to have come upon me this year like an oil tanker looming out of the fog. Some how, it snuck up on me. Maybe it was the long and gorgeous fall that Nantucket has enjoyed, lulling me into thinking (hoping?) that it might not end. Maybe it is because some Christmas decorations were going up at the end of October, causing me to adopt the mind set that Thanksgiving was going to be skipped over this year. Anyway, I haven't given a whole lot of thought to things to be thankful for.

Hawkeye was no help. When I went looking for him, he was nowhere to be found. Perhaps he took heed of the parrot's concern, thinking it safer to stay away for the time being in case I couldn't tell the difference between a butterball and a red tail. So, I am on my own.

The celebration of Thanksgiving had its roots not far from here, as we well know, in the Pilgrim times. A few formal Thanksgiving proclamations were issued in the late 17th and early 18th centuries but the regular observation of a national day of thanksgiving only took hold when President Lincoln thought the country, such as it was at the time, needed a boost. In 1863, in the first of a series of presidential proclamations of a day of Thanksgiving unbroken to now, President Lincoln began by saying "The year that is drawing toward its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies." That in the middle of the bloodiest war in which the United States has ever been engaged. That at the end of the year of the Battle of Gettysburg. That at the height of the intramural wars within Lincoln's own administration.

In the face of great adversity, which was certainly acknowledged but not allowed to subsume the optimistic tone of the proclamation, Lincoln emphasized the positive, suggesting even that the plight of "...widows, orphans, mourners, or sufferers..." should be commended to the Lord in the context of thanksgiving rather than mere supplication. The proclamation seems an intensely personal document in its sentiments, but it set a tone as relevant today as it was important in 1863.



BY DANIEL W. DRAKE  
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

First and foremost, of course, those of us blessed with family are filled with gratitude for our spouse or partner and descendants of any degree. Siblings count too, as do nieces and nephews and cousins three times removed. They bring joy to our lives like nothing else. Even the worst of family relationships – and to paraphrase an old Quaker saying, everyone is quirky except me and thee – provides a bond which is tighter than we often realize.

On Nantucket, we are thankful for such a beautiful place to live. Nature provides the setting but humans have

done much to make it what it is today. Certainly the moors and the beaches, the pine woods, the sea and the sky all enter into the equation of our appreciation. Beyond that, however, from the early settlers, who probably thought the island barren and inhospitable but paved the way for generations to come, to those who have worked so hard to capture its evolving character for today and the future, many have put their imprint on the community.

Many people give to the Nantucket community of their time, talent and treasure. Without them, it would be a very different place. We are thankful for them.

We are a nation at war again this Thanksgiving. It is a war which many question. But whether it is "right" or not, hundreds of thousands of men and women have stepped forward to serve the country and many bear the brunt of front line duty. For all of them and to them, we are thankful for their dedication and perseverance.

It isn't always easy to say thank you, but as Lincoln showed us, even in the most trying times it is worth taking the time to come up with acknowledgements. A little thanks can go a long way

At the SHAB meeting last week, convened to discuss the scallop price situation, a cordial and useful exchange of ideas occurred until one person (who deserves a few minutes in the freezer contemplating the turkey) laid into Marine Superintendent Dave Fronzuto. Fronzuto soon decided he had taken enough abuse and picked up to leave. On his way out, though, he stopped and thanked the large crowd of scallopers for coming. The response: a spontaneous round of applause. It was a class act, made even classier as a sentiment expressed in the heat of an unpleasant moment.

Such is my list so far. Much can be added. Fortunately, I have another 24 hours – and so do you. Thanksgiving provides the opportunity to stop and reflect on to whom or for what we should express thanks. If it takes worrying about what the turkey did to bring us around, so be it. Before we get caught up in "Black Friday" and the holiday madness, let's just do it

Happy Thanksgiving! ■

*The "Lighthouse Keeper" reflects the views of the author and does not represent the editorial position of The Nantucket Independent. Please send any ideas or comments to [drake@nantucketindependent.com](mailto:drake@nantucketindependent.com).*

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