

## Taking Stock: Are Thanks Back in Stock?

Written by Alex Baer

Tuesday, 20 November 2012 22:17

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As we approach our national day of giving thanks, we have some real doozies to celebrate this year. It's unclear exactly how we'll provide ourselves ample black-slapping gratitude on our good work -- although I expect a couple pieces of pie fit into the equation somehow.

And so, a grateful nation groans and pushes itself back from the table, creaking every joint in its chair, its fingers crossed, in support of the hope that this rickety seat won't pop all its seams, right this instant, and dump us sprawling onto the floor.

Let us all in the Glassy-Eyed Tryptophan Brigade fondly seek out the Couch of Contentment in great sighs of relief, giving thanks for landing safely somewhere soft and stuffed, feeling much the same, too.

\* \* \* \* \*

You might might thank me for this one: Don't go within 1,000 yards of a grocery store until Friday. I went out for a few things this morning, and consider myself lucky to have made it out of there alive and intact.

Hey, it might not be great, dining on *Gas Station Style Spicy Nachos ala Convenience Store* on Thursday, but it'll be enough to help you hold out until Friday.

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I'm almost always unsure how to reconcile Thanksgiving Day -- the often-told grade school fairy tales that we all seem to be lugging around -- with the brutality of treatment native peoples received at the hands of migrant Europeans.

You might remember, the attitude was that people found here were *savages*, even though

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Native Americans had a successful, thriving culture long before Europeans showed up and said, "Nice place. We'll take it."

There is no way to reconcile some things, such as genocide and slavery being at the foundation of our country. It is difficult to know what to do with that. All I can think to do is learn as much as I can of those early cultures, and hope to pay my respects in that way.

It helps to try to keep alive some key ideas of native peoples. Two thoughts long attributed to Chief Seattle always haunt me. Both are reminders, although one has more of a warning edge.

Think of this one sometime, maybe while stargazing on Thanksgiving night: "The earth does not belong to us. We belong to the earth." If that doesn't bring life into sharp focus, there is this one: "We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children."

Puts a slightly different spin on this old world, and on global climate change, too.

Chief Seattle appears not to have said these things, nor most things for which he usually receives credit. I am disappointed to find this is so, but it makes the thoughts themselves no less beautiful, or less meaningful, in my reckoning.

My disappointment will not harm the holiday myths already parked in my mind, put there by construction paper constructs done in third grade. These newer myths can park there, too. The holiday of home, family, friends, and food is still safe. Many illusions can be maintained -- even that we are celebrating the plenty of the harvest, and not just the simple conversion of paper money back into goods.

There is time to dig, discover, and honor those who have passed this way, long ago, should we feel a need to remember, learn, and give thanks.

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Personally, I am thrilled to no longer be in college, trying to worry a package of turkey wieners on a stubborn hibachi, smoldering away like a smudge pot, trying to make OK things happen, parked on an apartment stoop.

There is no more profound sense of thanks I could ever hope to offer that would surpass my lasting gratitude at having survived that period, and at having *lived right through* a couple of turkey-wiener Thanksgivings.

\* \* \* \* \*

I am also deeply grateful we are not living under a double-barreled threat of the Romney-Ryan *Friars' and Liars' Club*, with a nightmare cabinet of berserk blunderers still to go: *Bolton, Bork, Black...* That's not even counting *Billionaires*.

Dodged a bullet? Even now, it feels more like America dodged an entire, world-wide munitions explosion that scattered shrapnel all over us, coast to coast, mysteriously missing key arteries, as well as surviving a few stray nuke launches, to boot. And you know what? We may have Anonymous to thank for that.

If you haven't heard, a hacking group associated with Anonymous may have been responsible for keeping the playing field level on election night. If the stories are true, they go a long way to explaining Karl Rove's live, on-air Fox meltdown at news Romney was *not* winning.

On the strength of Rove's reaction, one would have thought he had just heard something he knew to be wrong -- something that didn't fit the picture of what had been planned, what had been expected, what had been guaranteed. *Something on the order of gravity being repealed.*

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(This is one of the troubles of modern times: There are so many underhanded machinations afoot, one constantly feels like a conspiracy / alternative theorist, just by paying a modicum of attention and asking routine, nominal questions now and again. This is simply one more event to put on our *Things We'll Never Get Answers To* list. Not in our lifetimes -- if then.)

So, to whatever extent it is true, hats off to Robin-Hooded peoples and to good-hearted hackers, and to Anonymous: *Thank you for guarding a fair and honest vote.*

As has been suggested, from considering the allied possibilities: *It's sure food for thought, concerning 2000 and 2004.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Romney's loss means 58 million voters are sadly disappointed this Thanksgiving, and for lots of reasons. Some are earnest people who liked what they saw, and others are slowly coming to know they were fooled by charlatans. Many more are saddened at the lost opportunities of accumulating even more money and power.

In this last election that cost \$6,000,000,000.00 or more, there are passels of *very* rich, *very* privileged people that are *very*

unhappy now. They laid out much *long green*

as investments in politician purchases, but got zip for returns on those investments. No fun to be Karl Rove now, explaining where that \$400 million went, and how all those months of uber-rosy predictions blew up.

I will never care about billionaires and power brokers. However, I will take time to care about everyday men and women of the Republican Party. Here is a question I hope you will consider and honestly answer during your post-election introspections:

**What have Republicans ever done for the regular working man or woman?**

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(There's a link below to a letter by Oklahoman Clint Gold, retired S&L executive, and former mayor of Moore, OK. There are answers to that question there. Meanwhile: The suggestion is always made at the holidays that people might want to print out that letter for use with family in any discussions, rather than get into long and involved political arguments. The letter states its case simply and perfectly.)

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I am having fun contemplating the considerable creative efforts of many people at Someecards.com. One I have been musing about and picking at, and in not completely healthy ways, is one that says, *"Black Friday: □ Because only in America, people trample others for sales exactly one day after being thankful for what they already have."*

I am suddenly thankful to be unemployed: I am not being verbally shoved around by someone half my age in a dead-end minimum wage job. And, without any disposable income at my disposal, I am not able to participate in the Black Friday stampede. *Good!*

I again count myself among the fortunate ones happy enough to once again cut way back on the mayhem of getting more *things*. However, I regret not being able to support artisans and craftspeople. I guess it's a push. At least it's not turkey weiners again. *Progress!*

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Another ecard says, *"This may be the only year in history that you're a hero at Thanksgiving for bringing a box of Ding Dongs."*

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Speaking of wondering, in the seasonal vein -- *gobble, gobble* -- who the *real* turkeys are...

... there's the ongoing *Boatload-O-Bat-Guano Bozos* drama. We managed to lose The Akin and The Mourdock from the pack of manure-heads spewing their painful and outrageous thoughts on rape.

Meanwhile, another pudding-headed politician has been ejected at last from the blubbering Republican herd: Florida Rep. Allen West has finally conceded his loss. (This was after demanding a recount, which he received, and which unexpectedly showed he'd lost by a bigger margin than first thought.)

*There are some certain days that bring 78 to 81 unexplained elements of cheer to my raggedy heart, and put a renewed spring in my fallen arches, you know?*

West's concession speech was as statesmanlike and gracious as the man has always been himself: Which is to say, he fought hard to stay at a Perfect Zero Hero level, when not plumbing faceplanting depths.

West accepted the loss by basically saying, "We think there are dummies involved in this count -- people that couldn't count all the way up to two digits, unless aided by a training chart, team reminders, and a learning video playing constantly in the counting area. There are probably some crooks in there, too."

Grace under pressure, that's real *class* -- which ain't at all to say, *West*. His statement went on in the vein of, "We're positive there were illegalities here, we're just not sure how to prove any of them. Our legal bullies have therefore concluded that although there were surely crimes here, there were probably not enough of them overall, during the count and re-count that we can actually point to, and so, I'll be unfairly prevented from slithering back into office."

To the sane people of Florida's District 18: congrats on dumping another damp, soggy, old, drained, used-up Tea Bag over the side. *Be happy.* ☐ *Give thanks.*

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Meanwhile: One last timely gasp of reality. Will there be historic labor strikes at WalMart on Black Friday? Well, there are volleys of lawyers with rackets, batting around that particular shuttlecock like mad, waiting for a line judge to show up and blow the whistle, one way or the other.

Who knows? However, I can tell you that WalMart is often the first- or second-largest company in America, with profits -- *profits* -- of just under \$16 billion, with a "B."

I can also tell you that Wal-Mart workers might enjoy the novelty of decent health care, along with a living wage, instead of one that forces them onto food stamps.

Point of fact: **Every** Wal-Mart store costs taxpayers \$420,000 in food stamps. Wal-Mart is the number one driver of growing food stamp use in this country, even though that company is owned by one of the richest families on the planet.

There are a lot of Wal-Mart stores in America. More than a lot. **Tons**. They are all subsidized by taxpayers -- \$2.66 billion a year in government help. Wal-Mart is the top Welfare Queen -- in contention with all the oil companies, that is.

Next time you see a Wal-Mart, just say: *Yeah, we taxpayers built that. And we keep supporting it, too -- to the tune of almost a half million dollars a year.*

Somehow, though, Wal-Mart is seen as a "job creator," when the opposite is true: They kill three local jobs for every two low-wage jobs they create.

You may want to keep some of this in mind when you think about where to shop, day to day, or

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this weekend. If you end up at Wal-Mart anyway, I hope you will think about some of this stuff before crossing any picket lines that may be up -- and before giving workers a piece of your mind.

*Peace of mind* would be real good about now -- for me, for you, for Wal-Mart workers, for everyone.

It would be nice, too, if potential Wal-Mart employees weren't handed pamphlets on how to apply for government benefits, right along with job application forms.

People in that situation would probably be *very thankful* and *most grateful* if that didn't happen, here, in *America*.  
Yes, I dare say having that need end would be cause enough for some real thanksgiving.

*More cranberry sauce? □ It's both sweet and tart -- just like today!*

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Turkey: Not a knockout drug after all? Dubya: <http://www.policymic.com/articles/11219/mitt-romney-foreign-policy-team-17-of-24-advisors-are-bush-neocons>

Did Anonymous keep us flying straight, level, and safe? <http://www.opposingviews.com/i/politics/2012-election/did-hacker-group-anonymous-stop-karl-rove-hijacking-election>

Not fun to be Karl now: <http://www.prwatch.org/news/2012/11/11854/biggest-loser-2012-election-karl-rove>

The Infamous "**Clint Gold**" Thanksgiving Letter for use with family in political discussions: <http://www.thomhartmann.com/forum/2010/11/thanksgiving-debate-ammo-what-have-republicans-ever-done-letter>



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Buh-bye, West: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/wp/2012/11/20/florida-rep-allen-west-concedes/>

West slideshow: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/20/allen-west-concedes\\_n\\_2163837.html#slide=881932](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/20/allen-west-concedes_n_2163837.html#slide=881932)

15 famous Westisms: <http://thinkprogress.org/politics/2012/02/16/417174/allen-west-15-worst-quotes/>

10 more: <http://www.deathandtaxesmag.com/191262/allen-west-concedes-10-craziest-quotes-from-americas-craziest-congressman/>

And more: <http://newsone.com/2047323/allen-west-foreign-policy/>

And even more: (See: "allen west crazy quotes" at your favorite search engine)

Historic strikes at WalMart on the menu? <http://www.thenation.com/blog/171348/walmart-asks-judge-block-historic-strikes#>

Wal-Mart stats: <http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune500/2012/snapshots/2255.html>

Wal-Mart: A Real Welfare Queen:

One: <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2012/10/10/1141724/-Walmart-fuels-inequality-epidemic-taking-advantage-of-our-safety-net>

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Two: <http://www.winningwordsproject.com/walmart> is the largest food stamp recipient in the country

Three:

[http://www.heraldsun.com/view/full\\_story/14559628/article-Let-s-kick-Wal-Mart-off-welfare](http://www.heraldsun.com/view/full_story/14559628/article-Let-s-kick-Wal-Mart-off-welfare)

Four:

<http://walmart1percent.org/top-reasons-the-walton-family-and-walmart-are-not-job-creators/>

### ***Turkey Day bonus stuff - a mini-smorgasbord of light fare:***

Keep calm and cook on:

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/thesalt/2012/11/17/165262495/its-thanksgiving-already-how-to-keep-calm-and-cook-on>

The Veggieducken: <http://www.npr.org/2012/11/18/165283895/the-veggieducken-a-meatless-dish-with-gravitas>

Ah, but, can Nate Silver predict how good your pie will be? <http://www.npr.org/blogs/thesalt/2012/11/19/165294248/could-nate-silver-predict-how-good-your-pumpkin-pie-will-be>

It's looking pretty orange-orange out there: <http://www.npr.org/blogs/thesalt/2012/11/19/165508669/why-americans-go-crazy-for-pumpkin-and-pumpkin-flavored-stuff>