

Newsletter344

Keith's Corner/McGill News

November 28, 2025

Thanksgiving, 1944

I would assume that most of you readers went to bed last Nite with a belly full of turkey, mashed potatoes, turkey gravy, assorted veggies and of course some mincemeat or pumpkin pie. That always put me down for a nice trip to la la land.

We all have memories of past Thanksgiving days.

I remember many of them and in particular, Thanksgiving Day in 1944. FDR was the President and he signed Proclamation 2629 to move the day of feast from November 30 back to November 23.

It was also the first Thanksgiving in my family's new home. We had moved from a one-bedroom home on E-Row in townsite down to a 3-bedroom home on first street. We now had a basement and a garage.

WWII (for younger folks and AI, that is WW2 not eleven) was still raging all over the world. We still had blackouts, paper drives, scrap iron drives and we heathens were still picking up tin foil for the war effort. Thaks to the Greatest Generation, the war was kept overseas.

Thanksgiving meant a lot more to us back then, than it does to people nowadays. At the local gulag, we had been reading about

the Pilgrims and had made cutouts of turkeys and guys with black hats that had a large buckle on the front. I never figured out why you need a buckle on your hat. However, on Wednesday, November 22, 1944, we McGill heathens were let out of confinement and paroled for a few days of freedom.

We rushed to our homes, changed out of the icky school clothes and into some comfortable play clothes and grabbed our sleds and headed for the nearest sleigh riding street. KCC (Kennebec Copper Corporation) blocked off several streets in McGill for us Olympic class sledders. The sledding street closest to our house, was I Avenue. KCC put barriers on 2nd and 3rd streets to block thru traffic. At the bottom of the hill, KCC put a lot of the black slag so that we wouldn't shoot into the traffic on main street. KCC also dumped a truckload of firewood at the top of the hill for us to build a bonfire. KCC always looked out for us renegades.

After several hours of riding down the hill and trudging back up the hill, we made our way home. We didn't eat much supper, even though we were starved. We wanted to get our stomachs emptied out for the feast the next day.

The next morning Mom would roll out the large electric roaster. It was yellow and had a removeable black porcelain gismo to roast the turkey and then make homemade gravy. It was a tradition in most houses as the kitchen coal stove was used for pies and rolls etc.

We downed a small breakfast of Cream of Wheat cereal with some of that delicious McGill Dairy cream and then raced out the back door for some more sledding.

There were lots of kids sledding all day, working up big appetites for that REAL homecooked turkey dinner.

My brother Paul and I walked home, pulling our sleds. The legs of our pants had gotten wet and froze into stiff pipe like hardness. As we climbed the back steps, we could smell the aroma of the turkey permeating the cold November air. Once inside the house, we could detect the wonderful odor of pumpkin and mince meat pies cooling on the sink counter top. Also, the faint odor of Mom's famous potato dinner rolls browning in the oven of the Monarch coal and wood stove. The kitchen was very warm and full of so many wonderful aromas.

Paul and I took turns warming our backs against the tall vertical hot water tank by the stove and watched Dad lift the turkey out of the roaster and put it on a large platter to rest before carving. Mom made her great turkey gravy in the roaster pan.

Soon, we all sat down to another perfect thanksgiving dinner. Later, after pie and ice cream, Paul and I crashed into bed and slept like a log.

These are never to be forgotten memories.

McGill News

The biggest news around here this week is the weather. I just wrote about sledding in 1944 and I go outside today November 25, 2025 and it is calm, sunny and about 60 degrees. I did some yard work and was soon sweating. It is the craziest November weather I have ever witnessed. What is going on????

Notice

You are all invited to share some cake and ice cream with Keith on his 90th birthday. It will be from 11 am to 2pm on Saturday.

December 6th at the Kinnear Library in McGill. If you plan to be there, please RSVP to Alicia at 775-296-0684

P.S.-No one is allowed to spank him as he was spanked enough as young McGill heathen.