

STEVEN P. DINKIN A Path Forward

GRANDPA FRANK, COUSIN FRANNY, A DRAMA-FREE HOLIDAY

For many Americans, Thanksgiving is a favorite holiday. We have treasured traditions: football and food, the Macy's parade, a midafternoon nap.

This year, our meal is expected to cost more than it ever has — 20 percent above last year. Apparently, inflation, supply-chain snags and bird flu are to blame, according to Axios' Kelly Tyko.

Still, there's a big reason to be grateful. With the worst of the pandemic behind us and vaccines and testing readily available, we can safely gather with loved ones.

But let's be honest: COVID wasn't the only source of contention in families and among friends. For some of us, a feeling of dread this time of year is nearly as inevitable as overeating. We think about Thanksgivings past and we ponder: Will things be better this year?

In my Thanksgiving column three years ago, I described a scene that may sound familiar to you: a gathering of family and friends that begins with an air of cordiality — even joy — as greet-

ings are exchanged.

It starts with an embrace of Grandpa Frank, whose favorite holiday pastime is insulting Cousin Franny's liberal views. You know she has a knot in her stomach, anticipating the inevitable. But the never-shy Franny comes prepared to lecture all on a cheery topic like the demise of the planet due to climate change.

You begin doubting whether you can once again follow your mother's lifelong guidance and hold your tongue.

The cast of characters is anything but unpredictable. This year, your only real uncertainty is whether Grandpa Frank will insist on wearing his MAGA hat at the dinner table. He's already shared his excitement that former President Donald Trump has announced his candidacy for 2024. Cousin Franny will no doubt sport her favorite "Black Lives Matter" T-shirt.

Nobody wants to fight the next Civil War over their Thanksgiving meal. Even with differences of opinion among your guests, de-

corum is achievable. So, in an effort to keep your holiday rift- (and indigestion-) free, I'm reprising the tips I shared in 2019.

Tip 1: Discard the contentious notion of "right vs. wrong." Your opinions and emotions are valid; so are Grandpa Frank's and Cousin Franny's. Let go of your ego and try to be thoughtful. Remember that there is no single truth.

Tip 2: You don't have to hold your tongue, really, but do take time to think before you speak. Don't let anger cloud your mind and degrade the way you express your ideas. Katie Krimer, a licensed social worker and psychotherapist in New York City said, "We must hold ourselves accountable for civility and lowering emotional intensity even in the face of open hostility."

It can be hard to do. If you do find yourself drawn into an argument, or sense intense anger coming on, step away from the table.

Find a quiet place where you can breathe deeply, quiet your

mind and maybe see both sides.

Tip 3: Listen with a goal of hearing and understanding what the other person is saying. That's very different from pretending to listen while you are actually thinking about and rehearsing your next response. You may be surprised to learn that the person across the table has something beneficial to say.

Tip 4: Try to determine how your tablemates came to their viewpoints. Be curious and ask open-ended questions such as, "What leads you to think that?" Conflict occurs when underlying needs are not met or even recognized. When questions are asked in a genuine and thoughtful manner, needs can be revealed.

Tip 5: Respond respectfully by restating ideas accurately to demonstrate that you heard and understand (even if you do not agree). This can be the most critical point in any conflict resolution process. We can't change another person with sheer force of will or a screaming match. When an argument is repeated over and

over, it means that a person feels they have not yet been heard.

Tip 6: Show humility by acknowledging that everyone makes mistakes in action and judgment, including your side. No person is perfect. This acknowledgement will lead to a collective sigh of relief, building empathy and paving the way for all to come together.

Tip 7: Celebrate a shared value and revisit a favorite memory. You may not agree with your relatives about the outcome of the midterms. But you, Grandpa Frank, Cousin Franny and the others love your country in equal measure.

So, instead of feeling dread, let's gather this Thanksgiving with the idea that the exchange of diverse viewpoints is as American as apple (or pumpkin) pie.

Dinkin is president of the National Conflict Resolution Center, a San Diego-based group working to create solutions to challenging issues, including intolerance and incivility. To learn about NCRC's programming, visit ncrconline.com



K.C. ALFRED U-T FILE

A paddleboarder and a boat share Oceanside Harbor with a few sea lions out for a swim.

SEA LIONS

FROM B1
docks. The beasts grow to be 7 feet long and weight up to 800 pounds. They can be especially frightening to a live-aboard boater headed for the marina restrooms in the middle of the night.

Some physical contact is allowed such as spray from water hoses and, surprisingly, paint-ball guns are approved, Nguyen said.

"Nothing that would physically hurt them," he said. Various types of fencing or netting are allowed,

also noisemakers such as horns, bells, whistles, clapping, banging and even a starter pistol, and visual deterrents such as pinwheels, flags, streamers, flashlights and strobes.

"The no-go's are the use of firearms or any projectiles that can hurt them," he said. Also prohibited are sharp, pointed objects, entangling devices such as loose webbing, and aggressive tactics like striking the animal with a bat, a hammer or impact tools. And no tainted bait, poison or guard dogs.

Federal fisheries officers

can't patrol the Oceanside harbor, so local police or state Fish and Wildlife personnel might need to do it, he said. Also, anyone who has evidence of a violation, usually in the form of recorded video or a photograph, can send that to the NOAA Fisheries office for potential enforcement action.

Harbor Division Manager Ted Schiafone said he and his employees have found one sure-fire way to get sea lions off the docks — a broom handle.

"We regularly need to chase sea lions off of our docks because of the

weight," Schiafone said. "What our staff has been doing has been very effective. It is simply a broom, upside down, creating the vibration on the dock and a little noise. It's been very effective every time. It's never not worked."

Harbor employees built a special platform for the sea lions several years ago in an effort to keep them off the boat docks.

However, even though the platform usually has a crowd, a few of the persistent pinnipeds continue to block the docks.

philip.diehl@sduniontribune.com

DELIVERY

FROM B1
view. "Same thing in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the same with the Cobras."

Since 2010, there have been 349 modern variants of the Huey and Cobra added to the Corps' helicopter fleet. While that run is now over for U.S. forces, H-1 manufacturer Bell will continue to produce the helicopters for U.S. allies, the company said.

Still, the Marines plan on flying the helicopters for the next 20 to 30 years, according to Marvel.

"By no means is this the end of an era — it is the next chapter in the great legacy of the H-1 and the U.S. Marine

Corps," Marvel said in a statement.

The helicopters changed the way the Marines fight, according to Mike Deslatte, the H-1 program director at Bell in Amarillo.

"The first production lot of U.S. Marine Corps H-1s was ordered in 1962, and they changed the way Marines fight today," Deslatte said in a statement. "Completing the AH-1Z and UH-1Y deliveries to the U.S. Marine Corps adds one more chapter to the legacy of the H-1 platform."

Both variations, the Huey and Cobra, have been upgraded over the years as military technology evolved. Modern upgrades in the AH-1Z include a four-blade rotor and modern electron-

ics and communications. It's armed with a Gatling gun and rockets, as well as air-to-air and air-to-ground missiles, the Marines said.

The last modern UH-1Y Venom, or "Huey," was delivered to the Marines in 2018.

In battle, the helicopters offer close air support for infantry units on the ground as part of a Marine Air-Ground Task Force. They can operate from ships at sea or land bases. It's not uncommon for Cobra pilots to bed down and spend time with the ground troops they support, Marvel said.

"I can land right next to a Marine, or Marines who need food, supplies or extradition," he said. "We come when they call and will be there, on station, as long as

we're needed."

MAG-39, based at Camp Pendleton, includes four squadrons flying UH-1Y and AH-1Z helicopters. Two MV-22 Osprey squadrons, a training squadron and a logistic squadron also fall under the aircraft group.

While Lockheed Martin and Bell are competing to provide the U.S. Army with a next-generation attack helicopter, the Marine Corps is not yet shopping for its own, according to Forbes.

In the meantime, the Cobra cockpit will continue to be filled by future Marines, Marvel said.

"I would not be surprised if my son, who is 6 years old, flies it," he said.

andrew.dyer@sduniontribune.com

AQUARIUM MOVES 5 LITTLE BLUE PENGUINS TO CINCY

CITY NEWS SERVICE

SAN DIEGO

Mere months after arriving at the Birch Aquarium from Australia, five Little Blue penguins recently moved 2,000 miles from La Jolla to the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden, it was announced last week.

These well-traveled penguins are part of an international Species Survival Plan that works to maintain the genetic diversity of certain species in zoos and aquariums. The Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego opened its Little Blue penguin exhibit in July with 15 of the tiny flightless birds, who arrived from facilities in Australia and Dallas.

SSP coordinators recommended that the Birch's penguins — Sheldon, Squid, Craig, Odette and Bo — become part of new breeding colonies at the Cincinnati Zoo.

"Collaboration with other institutions is essential to maintaining a healthy and thriving penguin population across the U.S.," said Jenn Nero Moffatt, senior director of animal care, science and conservation at Birch Aquarium. "And now, for the first time, we will transfer five of our Little Blues to another institution. We have been fortunate to provide a temporary home to these seabirds throughout our exhibit opening and busy summer months."

The Beyster Family Little Blue Penguins habitat brought the world's smallest penguins to the West Coast for the first time. It was also the first seabird exhibit in the history of the aquarium. The 2,900-square-foot exhibit allows people to come face-to-face with the adorable animals as they "waddle, swim and glide about their

new home," according to the aquarium. Ten of those seabirds will remain in San Diego including Magic, Cornelius, Reka, Nero, Katie, Persimmon and Azulito.

The Cincinnati Zoo is home to the largest and most successful breeding colonies of Little Blue penguins in North America. Their new habitat, Roo Valley, which houses Little Blues and two species of kangaroo, opened in 2020. The zoo started with six Little Blues in 1999 and has hatched over 100 chicks since then. The current habitat is home to 34 Little Blue penguins.

In preparation for the trip, Birch's veterinary team examined each seabird to ensure they were in good health before getting on a flight to Ohio. Veterinary staff members gave physical exams, took X-rays, blood samples and a variety of tests.

Kayla Strate, assistant curator of birds at Birch Aquarium, knows every penguin by name and personality. She said some are shy while others are gregarious. She knows their temperament, how they walk, and what each one likes to eat.

"We will all miss these penguins very much," Strate said. "You get quite attached to the animals in your care, but it is so important to the health of the population to participate in these transfers."

The Beyster Family Little Blue Penguins habitat features an 18,000-gallon lagoon, cozy burrows, sandy beach and native plants that mimic the coast of New Zealand and Australia, which the penguins are native to.

The penguins measure under a foot tall, weigh between 2 and 3 pounds when full-grown and are known for their slate-blue plumage.



K.C. ALFRED U-T FILE

Magic, a blue penguin, swims in the new Beyster Family Little Blue Penguins habitat at the Birch Aquarium on July 11.

SMOLENS

FROM B1
who lost went running around insulting people who might otherwise have voted for them," Nehring said. "Purges are a weird general election strategy."

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell had a similar take.

"We underperformed among independents and moderates because their impression of many people in our party, in leadership roles, is that they're causing chaos, negativity, excessive attacks. And it frightened independent and moderate Republican voters," McConnell said, according to NBC.

What's being said, if not directly, is that for brighter days ahead, the Republican Party needs to move past Donald Trump and candidates that not only pay fealty to him, but mimic his divisive and harsh commentary.

Suggesting election results be ignored with veiled or open

threats of violence was not a winning issue.

Granted, there were other factors that helped Democrats — the Supreme Court overturning the constitutional right to an abortion perhaps being the biggest one.

But with all the jubilation from Democrats and grousing from Republicans about how things turned out, let's not forget that the GOP did win a House majority, if not a big one. The Democrats may have retained control of the Senate, but the still-slim margin gives Republicans some leverage, certainly with the filibuster.

Nehring emphasized that Republicans won elections in different parts of the country — and especially noted that the GOP flipped three Democratic seats in New York.

He often goes back to his theme about the need to appeal beyond a political base in competitive races.

"My friend @GroverNorquist describes the correct technique as 'one fish, one hook.'" Nehring said

on Twitter. "You only need to find ONE reason to bring someone into your coalition. You don't need 18 areas of agreement — just one."

Among the worst trends he sees is arrogance in politics, and he has many thoughts about that:

- "Arrogance is a self-sabotaging quality and we have seen way too much of it on the Republican side lately, particularly among losers. Arrogance stunts learning, and growth. Learning requires humility and the admission there are things you do not know, or could do better."

- "Arrogance leads to idiotic slogans like 'own the libs.' We're not here to own the libs. We're here to put conservative ideas into action to improve people's quality of life. Many of those running around 'owning the libs' — got owned on Election Day."

- "Arrogance leads to thinking you can substitute intensity for majority. An intense minority is still a minority. In a democracy you need to get to a majority, which means finding reasons to bring

people into your coalition, not kicking them out."

On the tactical front, Nehring said discouraging voters from using mail ballots was a big mistake by Republicans. Trump has been the main culprit here. Several states for years have voted largely by mail with few problems. The notion that there is widespread fraud in mail-balloting — or in voting overall, for that matter — has been proved time and again to be false.

Such claims have given Democrats a distinct advantage. It hasn't been that way in the past.

"For decades, Republicans in California spent millions of dollars working to get Republican voters to vote by mail in advance. This was, and remains, a sound tactic," Nehring said, but added that the mail-balloting timeline and counting should be condensed.

Mail ballots also can stretch campaign resources.

"A ballot received by mail is logged, and the (parties) can check a voter off as having voted.

We don't have to spend time and money still communicating with that voter — we can focus on those who haven't voted yet," he said.

Longtime San Diegans remember when Republicans were ahead of Democrats in adopting the expanded use of "absentee" ballots.

Democrats "in competitive San Diego races would feel ok being 'only' 12-15 points down after absentees because the (Republicans) had such a superior vote by mail program," Jimmy Jackson, now a biotech executive, said on Twitter.

Wise up, Republicans. That comes from a former Democratic campaign staffer.

Tweet of the Week

Goes to Matt Blaze (@mat-blaze), professor.

"The Twitter meltdown is distracting me from fully enjoying the FTX meltdown."

michael.smolens@sduniontribune.com