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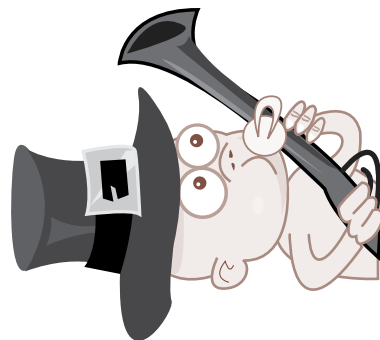


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NOVEMBER 2006 NEWSLETTER

Thanksgiving Thoughts

By Jim Stavis

I'm not sure if it's me, but the years seem to be passing at breakneck speed these days. Months feel like weeks and years feel like months. 365 days just are not what they used to be. In this month's newsletter we explore Thanksgiving, the holiday which acts as the pre-game warm-up for the Christmas season. For when this holiday ends, and the turkey dinner is eaten, the Christmas shopping season kicks off.

I've often wondered about some of the words associated with the Thanksgiving holiday. Anyone thinking about football can go carve their turkey. The first Thanksgiving was a bash thrown by the Pilgrims to give thanks for surviving their voyage to the New World, and their arrival at Plymouth Rock. They were thankful that the Indians did not scalp them upon their arrival. Aside from all that we think we know about the Pilgrims and the first Thanksgiving (funny hats and a

(Continued Inside)



Thanksgiving Thoughts

(Continued from Front)

fondness for turkey), perhaps the most surprising fact is that the Pilgrims did not label themselves as Pilgrims. That term was only applied to them 200 years later when Daniel Webster used it in a speech extolling “Our Pilgrim Fathers” on the bicentennial of their arrival. The first “Pilgrims” were early Christians who made a journey of religious devotion to the Holy Land or Rome. The name was later applied to those

early settlers who made their journey to the New World —The Americas.

Then there is the question of turkey. This tradition is one often asked about as to why our feathered fowl shares a name with a country that doesn’t know Thanksgiving from the 4th of July. The logical answer would seem to be that turkeys, the birds, come from Turkey, the country, except that they don’t. According to the Merriam-Webster New Book of Word Histories, the birds we call turkeys were first domesticated

by the Aztecs and Mayas in Mexico. Europeans, at this time, had been dining for centuries on different birds, which they knew as “turkey cocks”, imported from the Ottoman (Turkish) colonies in Africa. Evidently the birds found in the New World bore a strong resemblance to the African “turkey cocks” and eventually were shortened to be called “turkeys”. This became the fowl-du-jour for the Thanksgiving holiday.

Which brings us to another often raised question, the origins of to “talk turkey” when we all know that turkeys can’t talk. To “talk turkey” has meant since about 1830, to speak directly, without beating around the bush (another president, another time) about serious and unpleasant matters. Just where the phrase came from is a bit uncertain.

One explanation recounts the tale of a frontiersman who went hunting with an Indian companion, their agreement being to divide the spoils of the hunt equally. In the course of the day, the two shot several turkeys as well as a number of crows, but when the time came to divide the day’s take, the white man began to give the Indian nothing but crows, keeping the turkey for himself. Halfway through the process, the Indian protested, “You talk all turkey for you. You only talk crow for Indian.” This tale, not surprisingly, bears all the hallmarks of being made up long after “talk turkey” became popular in order to explain the origins of the phrase. Still, it makes for a good story at the Thanksgiving dinner table.

2006 Project of the Year: Wolfgang Puck’s CUT

Our clear choice for our Project of 2006 was our fabrication and installation on Wolfgang Puck’s CUT restaurant in Beverly Hills. Kudos to John Pavacik, Scott Pace and their entire fabrication group who made it all possible. To see the project, you can visit the projects section of our Web site (www.paragonsteel.com), or visit the Wolfgang Puck Web site (www.wolfgangpuck.com) and scroll to the fine dining restaurants in Los Angeles sections. It is a project that we are most proud of. The food’s not so bad either.

A Letter to Santa Claus

Dear Santa,

I thought I would drop you a line ahead of all the others who typically procrastinate for your help until the last minute. And yes, I know it’s been awhile since I last wrote, but I could use your help. You see at Paragon Steel we are plagued by this holiday problem each December. Invariably our sales volume goes down the chimney (to use an analogy you can relate to) in December which sometimes can spoil our entire year. And unfortunately, this is the time of year that we have to give gifts to our best customers, reward our employees for their hard work with holiday parties and the like and still put on a happy face. I’m not one to rag on the spirit of the holidays, because I realize it’s a joyous time for most, but there’s no joy in losing money if you get my drift.

So here is where you could help us. We know we have a loyal following of readers who receive our newsletter each month. We get a great amount of kudos for the educational and entertainment value that it provides. Often times we ask our readers why they never give us an inquiry or order, but still enjoy reading the newsletter. Many say that they are loyal to their existing steel vendors or that they rarely buy steel. To those I say, “Bah Humbug”. If they don’t give us an opportunity to do business, how can we afford to keep providing such a clever mailer each month? Last time I checked, the U.S. Postal Service hasn’t dropped their rates in a while. So Santa, you have to encourage these loyal readers to throw us a bone every now and then so that December can be joyous for us too.

I know you have a lot on your one-horse-open-sleigh, but there is something in it for you should this be a motivator to our customers. In fact, perhaps when you go to malls to get all the “wish lists” from the children, you could pass out some Paragon Steel business cards or direct them to our Web site. I’m sure your efforts could make this the best holiday season ever.

Sincerely, Jim Stavits