

Writer of Wrongs

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Hand-Shaped Turkey Drawings – The Hidden Menace

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By Doug Hecox, Writer of Wrongs

<http://www.dougun.com>

This week, America will spend part of its annual dance with gluttony giving thanks.

To be sure, Republicans may not be giving as much thanks as their Democratic counterparts, but there will be thanks. For one thing, there are only four years left until President Obama leaves office – the countdown has begun!

Federal taxes remain unchanged for the 11th month in a row and, as icing on the cake, America isn't expected to go over the fiscal cliff for another several weeks.

Hunters and ski areas alike are getting help from early snows, no additional "Twilight" movies are planned and the Earth hasn't yet been hit by any rogue asteroids.

America's ongoing battle with obesity will get a little easier now that Hostess is closing Twinkie and Ding Dong factories in response to possible union strikes. That the snack industry would take such a hit only days after Colorado and Washington legalized recreational marijuana use is especially sad.

In any case, there is much for Americans to be thankful for – with one exception. Public schools may be promoting cannibalism.

Each November, from coast to coast, teachers invite their elementary-aged students to trace their little hands and decorate the resulting image into a turkey. The teachers with whom I've spoken say they are a fun and effective way to help young people learn about art and creativity.

They may be right, but the same could be said of building guns or bombs.

These loathsome little hand-shaped turkeys are misleading young minds. After

all, a hand-shaped turkey can also be seen as a turkey-shaped hand. From there, it's just a hop, skip and a jump to kids eating hand sandwiches.

Though historians remain of mixed opinion about it, hand-shaped turkey drawings could have been a key factor in the demise of the Donner Party. For safety's sake, it's best to assume they were. Nothing says "dangerous complacency" like the hand-shaped turkeys of a child, and no Donner Party member will disagree.

Linking the shape of a hand with a Thanksgiving mainstay like turkey is not unlike what Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov did by ringing bells before his dogs' dinner time. Each time the dogs heard a bell ringing, they grew to believe it was time to eat.

Such behavioral conditioning may lead children to a similar Pavlovian response – namely, salivating at the sight of hands at the end of their arms, or their friends' arms. Nothing could be more sad than kids confusing hands with a popular holiday feast or, worse, as a viable alternative to school lunches.

Thousands of elementary schools throughout the nation are currently decorated with colorful hand-turkey displays, making them little more than minefields of potentially unacceptable behavior. Need proof?

The halls of Highland Hills Elementary School, in Rawlins, Wyo., are currently decorated with 30-40 hand-turkeys. It's even more shameful when you realize that every part of this problem – from the construction paper and markers used by the



students, to the walls of the hallway where these provocative artworks are displayed – is funded by taxpayers like you and me.

Many schools in Cheyenne – Wyoming’s capital city – including Deming Elementary, encourage their students to draw hand-shaped turkeys in their journals. Other schools, like Rossman Elementary, have limited these displays to their classrooms. Still, these attempts to subvert young minds are making public schools a ticking time-bomb of pre-teen cannibalism.

To its credit, Cheyenne’s Hebard Elementary asks its kindergartners to decorate a turkey as a family project, though its first-graders decorate a plate like a turkey – which might encourage an appetite for flatware among young people. Unhealthy to be sure, but much safer for the public than scores of knee-high Americans gnawing on people’s hands each November.

According to their spokespeople, neither the Wyoming Department of Education nor the U.S. Department of Education plans to discourage the promotion of Thanksgiving hand-turkeys. In fact, they each laughed it off like I was crazy or something. With the public’s welfare at stake, it’s up to each of us to call on elected

officials to ban it. The hands you save may be your own.

As the old saying goes, “He who still has his hands after Thanksgiving, laughs best.”

Furthermore, we should be thankful that this issue hasn’t been a threat to any part of our great nation in its 236 years of existence.

Each Thanksgiving, people with kids should be on high alert. Maybe feed them in a separate room with a locking door. Statistically speaking, something unfortunate is long overdue.

However, people *without* kids should be especially thankful this week – primarily for living free from small people trying to “gobble” their turkey-shaped hands at the dinner table.



Doug Hecox is a professional comedian and writer from Rawlins. Visit him at www.dougun.com, on Facebook or @dougun on Twitter. His hilarious CD “Vote For Me” makes a great stocking stuffer! Buy it at <http://cdbaby.com/cd/doughecox>

Have a Happy (and Safe) Thanksgiving!

