

The Not So Great Gatsby Is Thankful ... and Not So Thankful



All the many tidings of the season to you and yours! I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving and gobbled up your share of turkey. 2013 was such a great year for me personally. I had so many new and strange and wonderful experiences that it was nice to spend a couple days reflecting on how fortunate I am. There is a saying, "The harder you work, the luckier you get." So, I've been lucky a lot lately, but I'm working harder than ever. And I love every minute of it.

At Thanksgiving dinner we go around the table, and we each say what we are thankful for, but we also get to name something for which we are not thankful. What made you feel grateful this year? What made you cringe? Something I am thankful for is Rhode Island passing the marriage equality law. It's really difficult to be progressive and yet simultaneously ass backwards policywise, but somehow little Rhody pulls it off. I am thankful they got this one right only about 13 years after Vermont.

I am thankful that Rhode Island kept its stores closed on Thanksgiving. Only in America can we follow up a day where we give thanks for the things we have by trampling over folks to buy something we really don't need. I am glad that the shadow of Black Friday didn't encroach on us eating until we pass out on the couch in front of a football game, the way God intended.

I am thankful for the incredible farm to table movement in this state. By acting locally and buying from area farmers, you know who grew your food, and under what conditions. Remember last week how it was 16 degrees one day and 60 degrees the next? Well, these folks have to grow vegetables and livestock in that weather. Want to know more about how free your free range chickens are? Head up to the farm and take a look. Think the Perdue people would let you do that? Besides being better for the environment and local economy, groups like Trace and Trust and Farm Fresh RI have made it pretty easy to get the food onto your table. And the farmers market on Saturday morning is a great way to start your weekend, and much more fun than pushing a cart under florescent lights with the rest of the zombies. Don't feel like cooking? You can find local ingredients all over town from Nick's on Broadway (you should follow Chef Derek Wagner on Instagram immediately) to Farmstead to Cook and Brown.

Something I am less than thankful for this year is the political power grab in the state. There was a time, not long ago, that our youngster aren't old enough to remember, when politicians ran for office to serve the people of that city or state. If elected, they told you what they were going to try to improve, and they usually at least made an honest attempt. Then, if successful, their constituents urged that

person to run for higher office. The politician had a track record and had earned the trust and, dare I say, admiration of the people he or she served. I guess what I am saying is that I wished that someone in this state would take a stand against the status quo and accomplish something before attempting to run for a higher position. Leave an office better than how you found it. Rhode Island has one-eighth the number of people of New York City. Connecticut has three and a half times as many people. It's difficult for me to accept that a state with our resources and potential can't get things turned around unless there is something fundamentally wrong with the leadership. I hope to add this to the thankful list in the coming years, but something will have to change drastically.

No matter our station in life or how low we get, there is something amazing about the human spirit that allows us to be grateful for how good we have it. Things could always be worse, and while it is sometimes difficult to see when you are staring right at it, being grateful gives you perspective, and from perspective it is easier to have some hope that things can and will get better. During the holidays, make sure you tell the special people in your life how much you care for them, and look out for those who may not have anyone else. By performing a random act of kindness, you may be surprised who ends up the grateful one. Happy holidays, Old Sport.

Sincerely,

Gatsby