

# Yanks know how to celebrate Thanksgiving

Read the 'On the loose' column by Murray Townsend every second Friday in the Lifestyles section.

I'm the type of person who wishes things were the way they used to be.

Well, except for computers... and television... and, well anything technological, for that matter.

Okay, so I'm the type of person who wishes a few things were the way they used to be.

These nostalgic thoughts came to me on the recent American Thanksgiving, my favourite holiday other than Christmas. Americans don't do everything better than us, but they know how to celebrate holidays, and being part of the television generation, I got hooked at an early age.



## On the loose

with MURRAY TOWNSEND

I loved that day when I was a kid. I saved up all my pretend sick days for that one occasion each year. My mom's rule was the same as most mom's at that time —

if you don't have a temperature, you're not sick, so get to school.

But, I would do anything to stay home on Thanksgiving. I once tried sticking the thermometer against a light bulb, so I knew that didn't work, but I could fake a cough with the best of them, and it's not that difficult to stick your fingers down your throat and gag.

My mom worked at home, typing up court transcripts for the Supreme Court of Canada, but in the afternoon, she would watch at least one soap opera while she had her lunch.

But on American Thanksgiving, they

weren't on, so that was something I could use.

Back to bed, if you're so sick, my mom would say. So, I'd go to my room, bide my time, and then about an hour later drag a pillow and a blanket up to the living room and plop myself down on the couch.

There's no way you're lying there all day, my mom would say. That's when I would inform her that her soap operas weren't on anyway, because it was American Thanksgiving. That seemed to disappoint her, every single year, but it got me a stay on the couch for the entire day.

First up was the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade. I'd get caught up in the excitement and anticipation as we all waited for the first big balloon cartoon character to come into view.

Then there would be the floats, the clowns, the marching bands and cut-ins to a couple other parades, including taped coverage of the Santa Claus Parade from Toronto. The big balloon characters were the highlights, but everything that passed the camera was an event in itself.

And all this was just the preliminary to two football games, one right after the other.

I would have to get off the couch to change channels maybe once all day. It was like heaven.

Around lunchtime, I would inform my mother that maybe, just maybe, I could try to eat something because I was feeling slightly better.

Whatever she made me was a welcome change to the squashed peanut butter and jam sandwich I would have had at school.

I kept up my Thanksgiving tradition in high school and even as an adult I'd call in sick that day or take a day of my holidays. Since I've been working at home, I always try to find time for the football games, if not for the parade.

One year, I even cooked a turkey for dinner, which isn't easy if you've never cooked a turkey before.

So, anyway, this year, I decide that I'm going to enjoy this Thanksgiving the whole day, since I've missed too many parades in recent years. A traditional fake Thanksgiving.

So, now we get to the point where it made me wish things had remained the same. It's taken a while to get here, yes.

I sit down to watch the parades and learn immediately that they've ruined everything.

Instead of letting us just watch what's going on, and maybe giving a few facts about certain things, they now have some "bla bla recording artist" who lip syncs a song in front of the camera while standing on the float, and while others dance around it.

Hello? I can watch that on Much Music. The floats are hardly mentioned, while we have to wait for the singer to finish their dumb song, which I could hear on the radio, and then wait for the next float and the next singers and dancers.

The whole parade coverage now revolves around the television audience and the ability to stop in front of the cameras and put-on a show.

I turned off the TV in disgust.

The football games weren't so great later either, so my whole Thanksgiving was ruined.

So, like I said, I'm the type of person who wishes things were the way they used to be.

I'll keep my computer and VCR and microwave, thank you, but give me back my parade.

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