

# Viewpoints

## A holiday tale of turkey woe

The kids flew in from California and Tennessee with our granddaughter in tow for the four-day week-before Thanksgiving get-together.

They are gone now. The house is a wreck. I forgot what it looked like when we had kids around, once upon a time.

Our granddaughter, of course, brought everything but the kitchen sink to draw and color with and because of that, we now have new wallpaper throughout the house.

I made the mistake of giving her huge drawing pads from my studio, which are as big as she is, but my, how she can draw. So I guess, the wallpaper is going to stay up for a while.

We thought we were so smart having the kids coming in a week earlier to beat the rush. We thought we'd have the turkey dinner Saturday evening, so prior to that, I cooked everything earlier including the stuffing, ready to stuff the turkey the following morning and reheat all the other entrées before we sat down to eat.

The gold and white china, silverware and crystal gold-trimmed stemware dressed the table up on gold charger plates, with napkins and napkin rings — you know, like you would see on the cover of a Martha Stewart's magazine.

All that was left, of course, was the turkey. We figured the 20 pounder needed six hours in the oven at a very low 310 degrees. I turned the oven on while my husband watched. Meanwhile, we all cheered, "Let's go to the Mall of America!" and off we went.

We spent four and a half hours at the MOA. I had a wonderful time shopping with my eldest daughter while everyone else scattered in six different directions.

My husband disappeared with our granddaughter and her father to the Science Museum. Our cell phones

### Musings of a transplant Maria Stolz

Howard Lake

mariastolz@ix.netcom.com

would be timed and ready for contact. "We'll meet right at this kiosk," etc., and I laughed to myself when the thought occurred to me, "This has all the feeling of a military exercise, going out on a 'search and rescue' mission."

Only the search part was for us girls while the rescue part was for the guys. What is it with men and shopping?

Our third child, who is no longer a child but a young woman, went off on her own to shop while my eldest and I shopped to our heart's content. This was so delightful to me because my eldest never liked to shop, but now seems to enjoy it.

We scoured through and trolled Coldwater Creek for over an hour, trying on just about everything. I don't know who the buyer is, but lately Coldwater Creek clothes have been stunners with color combinations of quality and classy styles of women's clothing. Of course, we did not leave the establishment unscathed. "Don't tell Daddy what we spent," I told her, "He is going to kill us."

Finally, it was time to leave. It was 4:30 p.m., yet it felt like it was 7 p.m. because it was already dark.

Since we came in two cars, our son said he would drive and follow us home. We were absolutely famished by then. "Let's stop at Starbucks to..." "Nope," I said, "I don't want you guys to ruin your dinner. Besides, it will be 5:30 p.m. by the time we get home and the turkey has to come out." I thought it had caved in on itself already.

We couldn't get home fast enough. From the cell phone contact between the two cars, I knew the platoon and I, the captain, were salivating all the way home, thinking of the smell the house would emit the moment we opened the garage door. Finally, we're home.

What? Nothing!

When we all got in the door, the house was cold, the oven was off. It can't be.

My husband and I rushed over to open the oven door. No heat and the skin of the turkey was a pale pink. I couldn't believe it.

I had to feel the cold leg because my lying eyes were telling me it's cooked. The turkey's cooked, right?

Nope, it was cold as a hammer. We're all standing in the kitchen still in our mittens, woolen scarfs, sweater, hats and down jackets. We were stunned.

The oven never went on. Did the power go out? We looked at each other in utter disbelief and then dissolved into helpless peels of laughter. My granddaughter, laughing herself, started crossing her legs saying, "Don't make me laugh; it makes me want to pee!" That just made us laugh louder in gasping gulps.

Well, it's to Sunni's Grille I guess, so off we went, but this time we all crammed into the Honda CRV. Two people had to sit on each other's lap.

Five minutes later we ordered our meals. By then, we were ready to eat the furniture. Our youngest daughter said, "Gee, Mom, I'm really impressed. You didn't freak out or anything."

"It's the drugs," I said.

So now we have a tale to tell about the cold turkey we came home to, which will slip into family lore at future week-before Thanksgiving get-togethers.