

Letter from the Editors

Dear Readers,

We invite you to step in the shoes of those who came before us.

We invite you to consider the value of life in a world unexposed to *intentional* union and progress.

We invite you to think back to all the actions ever taken by human beings to enjoy the love of the moment, hoping always to value the present situation over the past.

We invite you to think as we—students ready to explore the world—grow and prosper, understanding and recognizing always the context of a given movement.

As flame-scorched leaves fall and crisp air pierces all realms of life at the start of every November—after a weekend spent with the family, of course—of every year, the mind strays and gawks forward a few weeks—past final examinations and climactic recitations—to the start of a wonderful time of the year: Thanksgiving. The idea of an oven-roasted, carefully stuffed turkey sitting on a plate garnished with creamy mashed potatoes and marbled cranberry sauce pulls at the senses. Of course it does. After all, weeks of high-intensity homework and sleepless nights leave the body vulnerable to the temptation and enticement of any special occasion, any opportunity to break from the norm of life. For us Massachusetts boarding school students, this one American holiday that celebrates gratefulness and thanks just happens to follow months of separation from home, and it pulls us back into real life. We see relatives we have not seen in years (who always seem to ask the most tension-inducing questions possible), neighbors unable to relate to the youth, and fellow youth unable to relate to us. And yet, it also presents us with the opportunity to step back and relax for once, and of course we take advantage.

To top it all off, stores celebrate this holiday with once-a-year discounts ready to be claimed by children fluffing the line in the parking lot way past their bedtime.

And yet, our modern, mechanized, systematically-functional, overly-and-humorously-decorated, turkey-filled (and thereby stuffing-filled) Thanksgiving has not always existed in the same manner.

Approximately 395 years ago, the first Thanksgiving feast commenced in our home state of

Massachusetts—in case you somehow managed to miss it, of course. While textbooks illustrate, almost creepily, the figures of this era as peace-mongering and enemy-loving socialites with stated objectives of merrymaking and harmony, the dinner was not an occasion of expressive gratitude and everlasting friendships; rather, it was one of practical and pragmatic truce. It is no secret that the natives and pilgrims engaged in conflict quite regularly since the arrival of the European foreigners; after all, the English dissidents wanted to establish their legacy as one of overcoming the odds in a world unknown to humanity. While the natives of the east coast browsed through the land for centuries prior, literature always seems to convey sixteenth-century North America as wilderness belonging to the naturally evil and corrupt, and as the domain of—in the case of the characters of Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible* and hundreds of stories shared by Americans of all British sorts—the Devil. The American narrative has constantly polarized the English and the indigenous, with the former being the saviors of the latter. Along with a deeply ingrained hope to create a “city upon a hill” and a desperation to survive the winters without infrastructure, the pilgrims also happened to bring with them guns and disease, rapidly wiping out the native population. However, the natives were no easy match. They fought back valiantly, and soon it became clear that, if they prolonged this fight, neither side would survive. As a result, on November, 1621, the natives and pilgrims shared what little food they had and “celebrated” the first Thanksgiving. So yes, there was a dinner, but it was not as opulent or congenial as the the popular tradition suggests. In fact, the vast majority of the foods traditionally eaten during thanksgiving dinner today were not accessible in America during the 1600’s.

As students at our respective schools, we know this history by heart. Yet every year we pile our plates high with turkey and pie and use this commemoration of the atrocities that ensued between the pilgrims and the natives as an excuse to gather with friends and family. As Editors, we grappled with what to call this moment when we do something we know is wrong but turn our heads to it so as to benefit ourselves, and together we came up with the concept of intentional ignorance. With Thanksgiving just days away, there seemed no better time to confront our privilege and discuss moments when we practice intentional ignorance. Although Thanksgiving is one of the most obvious examples of intentional ignorance, especially concerning this time of year, we have come to realize that we intentionally ignore things all the time. Through the Ten Thoughts articles, students at our schools have come forward to write about this important topic in order to better understand what, why, and how we ignore the things we do. Our goal for this issue is to bring to light that which we intentionally ignore and to understand both the positive and negative aspects of intentional ignorance.

So before rolling out your trunks underneath your bunkbeds, saying goodbye to your school’s dining service, and heading home to indulge yourself with a nice holiday meal with your family, we urge you to stop by *The Tavern* and take a look at our November Issue in the hearty hearth of our home. Thanks for stopping by, and, as always, we hope you enjoy your stay.

Sincerely,
The Tavern’s 1st Editorial Board