

MY VIEW

Loved even far from home



RACHEL PEARSON

Everyone was as fed and taken-in as I had been this Thanksgiving. It is a rare thing, and wonderful, to be so cared for far from home.

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My family is a bit spread out this year, so I spent Thanksgiving here in New York. I was all geared up to be sad and eat popcorn in my apartment, but my friends and Nick's family just wouldn't let that be.

On Wednesday, I ate turkey with my good friend Caitlin Sweet's family, who live very close to me on 111th Street. It was a hilarious meal with all three of the beautiful Sweet sisters in attendance, plus one boyfriend and one uncle and myself. After the meal we walked down to 79th Street to watch the floats being blown up for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

Each of the floats takes from one to five hours to inflate by air-compressor. There were tons of people there in the cold and the darkness and the rain, with police directing traffic around the enormous pink rhino, the clown that's bigger than my house, and the six-story Scooby Doo.

The event is called "the inflation," and apparently it's a New York tradition to go see it. Once, Caitlin's sister Olivia saw Kevin Bacon there.

In the morning, Caitlin and I went to a breakfast party at the house of an old professor of ours from UT. He lives on Central Park West, and his balcony opens up over the street where the parade passes.

The floats were so close that I could have leaped out onto them. I found that the marching bands exhilarated me in the geekiest way; I kept pumping my fist and dancing when they went past.

I spent the afternoon writing, then ate Thanksgiving dinner with the New York branch of Nick's family. Dot, his step-grandmother, had invited me, and I was about to ask whether I should bring pecan pie or a sweet-potato casserole when she gave the name of the restaurant we would eat at—it's a fine place off Union Square, where Nick's cousin Sean is the sous chef.

As you know, dear readers, Nick is back in England. So I took the train alone down to meet Dot and Norman and various cousins. The restaurant is a vast glittering place, with candles and smooth cup-shaped booths. There is jazz music in the basement, and a coat check, and black-coated attendants in the bathroom who pass you stiff white towels to dry your hands with.

We sat in a booth on the inner balcony. Sean came up in his clean white chef's coat and sat with us a while. He told us which wine to get, then disappeared down towards the kitchen and sent up crab claws and sweet-potato stuffing. And we had a gorgeous meal. (Though it was not quite as good as my mother's Thanksgiving cooking, especially her cranberry sauce and her apple pie.)

We ate until we were ridiculously full, and Dot and Norman told stories about their children. Then at the end of the night they kissed me goodbye and bundled me off towards my subway stop.

I walked six blocks through the drizzle, in the night-lit shiny New York streets, buoyed by love. And then on the subway I sat among the drifters and the beggars, the Harlem punks and the families going from meal to meal, among the sturdy mothers and the girls in heavy coats, the children holding hands and the man with all his things in his duffel bag, the heavy beards and work-hard hands.

And I hoped, I wished, that ev-



Poinsettia pickup

Maudine Butler picks up her poinsettias from a truckload of the flowers in the parking lot of the Family Center IGA on Saturday, Nov. 25. The poinsettias were being sold to benefit Project Graduation.

STAFF PHOTO BY DAN PARKER

KPAB holiday party is Dec. 11

Laughter and mayhem will accompany food and fellowship at the annual Keep Port Aransas Beautiful (KPAB) Christmas party.

It has been scheduled for Monday, Dec. 11, at 6:30 p.m.

Members and prospective members will gather at the Community Center, 408 N. Alister St. to party.

"Bring a finger food, a wrapped white elephant gift and a sense of humor," said spokesman Joan Snyder.

"We will play our bingo shuffle and fight over the best gifts, in a good-spirited way," she said.

Drinks will be provided.

"It is not necessary to be a member to attend. If interested in KPAB, come see how we play, then join us when we work," Snyder said.



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