



THE WHITE HOUSE

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

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President Bush Pardons "May and Flower" in National Thanksgiving Turkey Ceremony

Rose Garden

 [Thanksgiving 2007](#)

10:23 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. (Applause.) Welcome to the Rose Garden. Thanks for coming. We're glad you're here at the White House. Each of you is taking part in a tradition that goes back to the days of Harry Truman. And to paraphrase Harry today, we have a message for our two feathered friends: You cannot take the heat -- and you're definitely going to stay out of the kitchen. (Laughter.)

I want to thank the representatives of the National Turkey Federation who have joined us -- the Chairman Ted Seger. Appreciate you coming, Ted, thanks. Ted brought his mom. Glad you're here -- seven brothers, and over 30 family members, I think it is. No wonder there are so many people in the Rose Garden. (Laughter.) But we're glad you're here. Welcome.



I also want to welcome President Joel Brandenberger. The turkeys in today's ceremony come from the Seger family farm in Dubois, Indiana. So I guess you can say they come with the Chairman's seal of approval.

I also thank everybody who voted online to choose the names for our guests of honor. And I'm pleased to announce the winning names. They are "May" and "Flower." They're certainly better than the names the Vice President suggested, which was "Lunch" and "Dinner." (Laughter.)

The national observation of Thanksgiving goes back to the days of our founders. They asked Americans to give thanks for a nation that Benjamin Franklin famously compared to a rising sun. Over the years, Americans have found much to be thankful for. We still see our country the way Franklin did -- or, as the poet Carl Sandburg put it: "In the crimson light of a rising sun fresh from the hand of God."

This Thanksgiving, we are grateful for a harvest big enough to feed us all -- and millions more. We're grateful for citizens who reach out to those who struggle, and for neighbors in need -- from neighbors in need to the strangers they've never met. We're grateful for working Americans who have given us the longest period of uninterrupted job creation on record and a prosperity that lifts

our citizens. And we are grateful for one blessing in particular: the men and women of the United States military. They've worn proudly the uniform of our country. They have offered their lives in our defense. And each year, thousands more volunteer to join their noble ranks and to keep us safe. And so on this Thanksgiving, we keep our -- we keep their families and their loved ones in our prayers and in our thoughts.

(Turkeys gobbling.) (Laughter.)

Thank you. (Laughter.)

America's children also have a special place in our thoughts during this season. Don't you agree? Today we're proud to be joined from youngsters from the Camp Fire USA. We're glad you all are here. It's a nationwide organization that helps children become caring and confident future leaders. One of the things Laura and I have been most thankful for over the years is the chance to meet children from across the country and to hear from thousands of others. Some send photos. Some offer prayers. Some of them ask about Barney. A second-grader from California once asked me, do you ever get a headache? Not really -- only when I have a press conference. (Laughter.) Some children send letters with the same -- with the simple phrase, "God bless America." Others write about relatives serving in the war, and they hope I remember them.

Earlier this year, a little girl in Oregon sent me a picture she had drawn. It's a large American flag -- and it stood in the glow of bright orange sun. The spirit that inspired Franklin and Sandburg and other generations of America lives in the heart of this child. She sees America in the light of a rising sun. And so do I, and so do millions of our citizens. It's hard to be anything but grateful when you live in a country full of compassionate and decent citizens -- a land our fathers always knew was blessed by the Almighty God.



And so now I have a task, and that is to grant a full presidential pardon to May and Flower. They'll be shortly flown to Disney World, where they will serve as Honorary Grand Marshals for the Thanksgiving Day Parade. I hope that honor doesn't go to their head. (Laughter.) May they live the rest of their lives in blissful gobbling. And may all Americans enjoy a holiday full of love and peace. God bless you all. (Applause.)

END 10:29 A.M. EST