

## GUEST COLUMN

# Thank-you notes important — maybe more than ever

I'm sitting at the dining room table, chatting with my daughter between thank-you notes. She is writing them; I am watching. My daughter recently married, and her post-wedding shower was the other day.

It might seem odd to some — unheard of to others — that she would pen thank-you notes so soon after the event, but this is how she was raised. She knows if you wait for next week, it'll never come. Suddenly, one week has led to two and three and four and, by then, it seems embarrassingly late to send a thank-you note, so you shrug it off as unimportant.

But those who think like that couldn't be more wrong. Especially



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when it comes to sending thank-you notes. While timely is better, it's never too late to extend a thankful note to the giver of gifts.

Imagine the pleasure it would be to receive a note that went something like this, "Dear Aunt Mary, I'm sorry I failed to thank you promptly for the lovely coffee cup you so gra-

ciously sent for my graduation last summer. I hope you will accept this late note of thanks, as it comes from my heart. I use the coffee cup often, and always think of you."

Who wouldn't be happy to receive such a note in the mail, no matter how overdue it might be?

From the time my daughter was old enough to write, she was taught to pen thank-you notes, whenever a gift came her way. I'm sure there were times when she would have rather been doing anything but writing thank-you notes to her relatives and friends. I know this because, occasionally, I caught her rolling her eyes whenever I forced her to sit down and express her appreciation for the kindness of someone else.

As I glance in her direction now, she sits back, stretches her arm, and flexes her hand.

"You want to take a break, sweetie?" I ask. She says no, and presses on. With each name she writes, we talk of that person's kindness, and what makes each one unique. We discuss how special it makes you feel when people go out of their way to choose a gift, just for you.

They spend time thinking about you. They buy a card that expresses how they feel about you. The idea of foregoing thank-you notes, for whatever reason, is simply unthinkable.

I'm grateful my daughter is now quick to reach for a pen and note card, after receiving some act of kindness, and she often reminds me

of things that need to be mentioned. Today is no exception.

"I want to add a special note to the ladies who did all the decorating," she says. "That would be a lovely thing to do," I say.

Why all the fuss, you might ask? After all, there's e-mail and Facebook and texting.

Well, here's the heart of the matter. A thank-you note is the completion of a transaction between the giver and the recipient. If you take the time to remember me with a gift, then I should take the time to acknowledge your act of kindness, by offering one of my own — a handwritten thank-you note.

It's the least I can do, and, in the end, it makes both parties feel better.