

Twin Peaks

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WHY WRITE LETTERS?

TODAY we look at letter writing as something old fashioned and time-consuming for those who do it. Why? It is easier to telephone or tap out a quick e-mail. If speed is the primary object in communicating, these approaches are certainly the efficient choices, but I question whether that is a viable reason to shun a centuries-old means of communication.

Throughout history, letters played major roles in our social, economic, and cultural growth. The written word can be expressed eloquently and preserved in the form of letters. True, before the advent of telephones and computers we did rely heavily on letters, but why should such an antiquated method not be shelved in favor of the speedier methods of today's technology? Let's look at what a letter is and, more importantly, what it can do.

A letter substitutes for face-to-face encounters where information is conveyed or requested. It provides documentation of the writer's thoughts and is, in a sense, a diary. Whether business or personal, a letter is a record of something; a bit of history in one's life.

Letters may provide comfort, offer hope, extend praise, and affect both writer and recipient in a variety of ways. Other methods may accomplish the same end, but a letter is more personal and can offer a unique touch. There is no doubt that there are times a telephone call has a vital place and undeniable value. In time, however, a telephone conversation may lose its impact, but a letter can retain the immediacy of its original intent. Why would an e-mail message be less apt to elicit the same response as a letter? For one thing, the signature at the end of a letter is a very personal expression of intent on the part of the writer; a better indicator of sincerity in the thoughts expressed within the letter; the main thing that adds validity to what is written. How much more vital is a letter that expresses love than is the memory of a telephone conversation in which the same words were spoken?

Letters that are kept by the recipient provide a glimpse into the lives of two people. A family's history is enhanced by letters exchanged by family members over the course of lifetimes and few other records can reveal the details of day-to-day activities as well as such letters.

When I write a letter, I do it while I am relaxed and under no pressure to hurry. If I am going to put my thoughts on paper for someone else, then I want those words to be spontaneous and not colored by extraneous influences. I often reread what I have written to be certain that my thoughts are clearly stated and leave no doubt as to my intention.

Children who are not taught the value of letter writing will probably find it to be a handicap later in life. As parents, shouldn't we teach our children that not every piece of mail is a bill or an advertisement, and let them experience the fun of writing and receiving letters? Certainly, we should. And if we want to make a good impression on our friends and relatives, there is no better way than to write a warm, friendly letter.

*A letter is a
Good way to
keep in touch.*



THE ORGAN STOOL

By
Delores Miller

My mother, Alma Lembke Zillmer was born the fourth child of a poor family in central Wisconsin in 1904. She coveted an organ, pump style, popular when she was a teenager. Worked as a "hired girl", saving her money to buy her organ, which included the stool.

It probably was a big disappointment because then she could not afford the lessons, and in the Lembke family's many moves, the organ disappeared. She never said what happened to it; probably too many painful memories.

But the ornate, glass claw footed organ stool remained in her family. My brothers and I twirled round and round. It had a geared mechanism that raised and lowered the seat, just high enough for small children to go about, hours of entertainment.

It was put away in the attic, and in a spurt of housecleaning I found it, brought it down, scrubbed off the years of dust and grime. When the eight grandchildren come at Christmas, they can twirl round and round the same way three generations of my Mother's progeny have done for the last 85 years. #