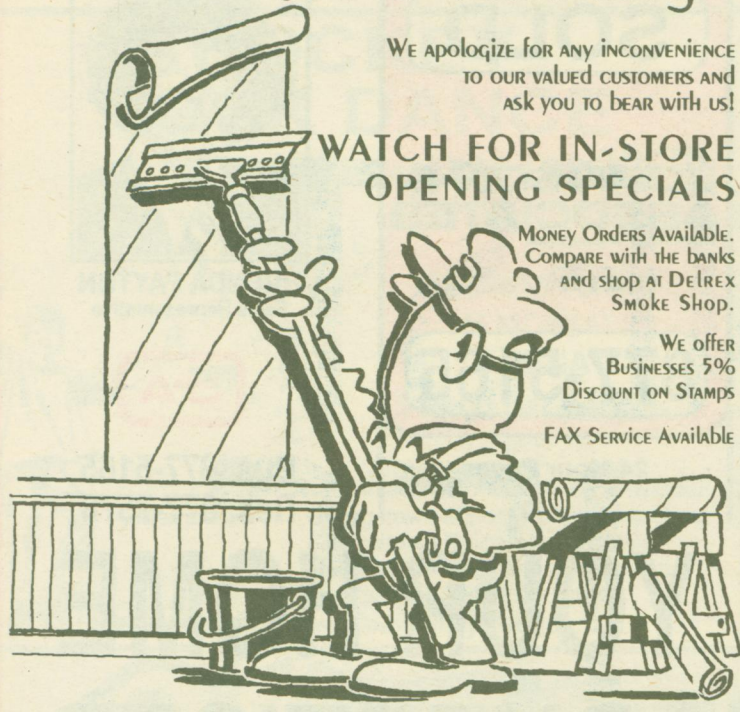


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Toddlers in Public Places Can Disappear in a Flash

By Abigail Van Buren

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DEAR ABBY: Today my husband and I had the worst scare of our lives: We became separated from our 2-year-old daughter while attending an outdoor festival in a park.

Abby, no words can describe the panic that takes over when parents discover their child is missing! Minutes of searching seem like hours. We were among the lucky ones — we found our child within 20 minutes. Not all families are that lucky. Every year, someone's child will be kidnapped, sexually abused, tortured or killed.

In warm weather, more children and their families enjoy group activities: amusement parks, fairs, concerts and festivals. In order to prevent tragedy, please advise your readers to:

1. Dress their children in distinctive clothing so they will be more conspicuous.
2. Be vigilant; children are naturally curious and incredibly fast.
3. If you are in a park or facility that has a public address system, use it immediately if children become separated from you. This

will minimize the distance they can go.

4. Act immediately to help search for someone else's child. You may be the one who saves him/her.

THANKFUL IN MINNESOTA

DEAR THANKFUL: Good advice, but emphasize emphatically the importance of watching young children — especially toddlers who should be restrained in harnesses. Also, never rely on an 8-, 9-, 10- or 11-year-old child to "look after" a toddler.

DEAR ABBY: Please advise brides that it is not true that they have a year in which to thank those who have sent wedding gifts.

This is the third time I've been told that anytime within the year of the wedding date is considered a proper length of time to get written "thank-you" notes out.

The person who told me this said she had read it in Dear Abby's column. True or false?

NEEDS TO KNOW

DEAR NEEDS: Absolutely false. I quote from my booklet, "How to Write Letters for All Occasions":

"It is imperative that every wedding gift received be acknowledged as soon as possible, even if you have already thanked the donor in person."

And from another booklet, "How to Have a Lovely Wedding":

"Thank-you notes should follow within a month, whether the donors have been thanked in person or not."

"A new innovation — the bride and groom share the writing of the thank-you notes! She writes to her friends and family, he to his."

'Nuff said!

DEAR ABBY: I read in your column about "Baffled in Beaverton, Ore.," who was rebuffed by a woman for holding a door open for her.

I had a similar experience when a woman actually cursed me as I held the door open for her. I replied, "I'm sorry. I mistook you for a lady."

R.R.M. IN MINNEAPOLIS

DEAR ABBY: Yesterday, a friend called to tell me that her husband said he had heard some vicious gossip about me at the club — and he defended me.

What really bothers me is why on earth she would tell me this. She never did tell me what was supposedly said about me, or who said it.


Abby, I have befriended this woman on numerous occasions and am confused by her actions. Why in the world would she tell me that?

M.I.B. IN TUCSON


DEAR M.I.B.: I don't know. But it's a pretty safe bet that it wasn't because she wanted to make you feel good.

Everything you'll need to know about planning a wedding can be found in Abby's booklet, "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." To order, send a long, business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$3.95 (\$4.50 in Canada) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, Ill. 61054. (Postage is included.)

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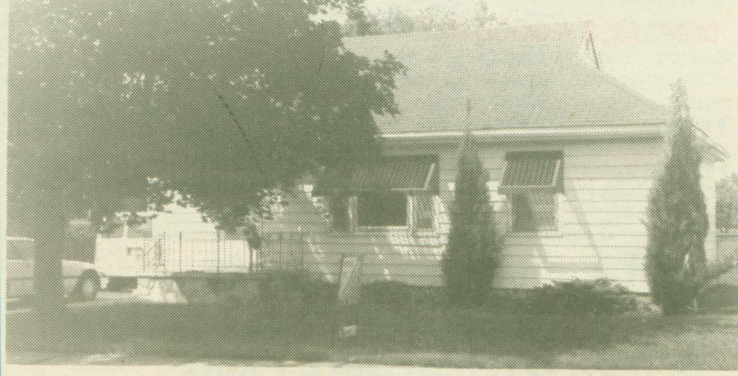
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