

lifestyles

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ANNIE S MAILBOX

Kathy Mitchell
and Marcy Sugar

She can't demolish wall surrounding her

Dear Annie: My divorce will be final in two weeks. For the past 18 months, my two sons and I have been on our own. Actually, I've been on my own for the past 10 years because my ex-husband is an alcoholic. I haven't dated anyone since I told him he had to leave. I did all I could to help him until I had nothing left to give.

I recently met a very nice man who seems to see a future for us. The problem is the emotional scars I have from the past 10 years. I work two jobs seven days a week and my ex is dodging child support. I have built a brick wall around myself that I cannot seem to demolish. I honestly do not know if I am capable of having a serious relationship. The thought of someone else in my space turns me inside out. I'm afraid of losing the control I have and need.

Should I let this person into my life? Could a new relationship help me heal? Or should I heal first and wait until I'm emotionally able to handle a relationship?

— **Afraid to Let Go**

Dear Afraid: *Healing first is usually a better way to approach a relationship, but there comes a point where you are simply hiding. The need to control every aspect of your life is often a form of insecurity. Still, your separation is fairly recent and if you aren't ready for a relationship, you shouldn't feel pressured into one. If, after another six months, you don't feel your emotional health has improved, you might look into counseling to help you get back on track.*

No gift required

Dear Annie: My brother-in-law's wife, "Anna," is pregnant, and her mother is hosting a baby shower next month. I will not be able to attend because I will be almost eight months pregnant myself and a six-hour drive is too hard on me. Neither my mother nor I received invitations to Anna's shower. We only know about it because we read the information on her MySpace page.

Are we still required to give Anna a gift even though we aren't invited? I know my mother-in-law is giving her a gift because the baby will be her grandchild, but I don't see the point in my mother and I doing so.

I am very upset at getting the cold shoulder from Anna and her family. You would think her mother would have the sense to invite us. What is the proper etiquette? I told my mother-in-law that whatever you said to do, I would do.

— **No Name and No State**

Dear No Name: *It's possible Anna and her mother thought you would prefer not to receive an invitation since you were unable to come, but that is unintentionally insulting. You are not obligated to send a gift to an event to which you are not invited, but this is your sister-in-law and you should do it anyway. (Your mother does not have to.) It needn't be anything elaborate, but a small gift would be both appropriate and gracious. At the very least, you should send a card wishing her well. It will show that you are the bigger person.*

Response might backfire

Dear Annie: This is in response to "Aching Heart," whose divorce was hurting him and who didn't know how to respond to people asking about his ex-wife.

When I divorced my wife, I answered that question by saying, "She's still a little upset about that house falling on her sister, but other than that, I hear she's doing fine." This little bit from "The Wizard of Oz" answers the question with some humor, explains how you feel about her and ends the inquiry.

— **Been There in Florida**

Dear Florida: *Quite amusing — provided, of course, they get the joke. Otherwise, they might be terribly concerned about her sister and bombard you with more questions. (Surrender, Dorothy.)*

2007 Little Jill and Little Jack crowned

Elaylyn Mayberry, Harlem Walker win titles in Dec. 3 contest



Winners in the annual Jack and Jill contest sponsored by the Ladies' Progressive Club were (l-r) Harlem Walker, first runner-up for Little Jack; Elaylyn Mayberry, 2007 Little Jill; Omarion Jefferies, 2007 Little Jack; and L'Kiya Black, first runner-up for Little Jill.

The Ladies Progressive Club held its annual Jack and Jill contest Monday, Dec. 3, at 7 p.m. in the cafeteria at B.D. Lee Elementary School. There were six four-year-olds competing for the titles.

Elaylyn Mayberry, daughter of Deon and Evay Mayberry, won the 2007 Little Jill crown while Omarion Jefferies, son of Tabitha Burris and Harold Jefferies, was named 2007 Little Jack. First runner-up for queen was L'Kiya Black and first runner-up for king was Harlem Walker.

Other contestants were Kei'ahna Lashay Putman and Makiya Shifty.

The program was titled "Christmas Spirit." Floree Smith, club president, served as mistress of ceremonies. Scripture was read by Josephine Wood and prayer was offered by Kathleen Littlejohn. The welcome address was presented by

Annie Beard while club highlights were read by Jewette Patterson.

A talent presentation was presented by the praise dancers of Bethel and Limestone Baptist churches. Presentation of participants' gifts was by Jacquelyn Graham.

The 2006 Jack and Jill, Tamyia Studyvance, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Studyvance, and Jefferies Fernanders, son of Thomasina J. Fernanders, made their final stroll.

Rubye C. Sanders introduced the 2007 contestants and gave the financial report. The winners were crowned by Floree Smith and Olga Littlejohn. Contestants were recognized with gifts by Annie Beard and Lorraine Wray. Olga Littlejohn gave the contestants their pictures.

Marian Powell served as the program chairman.

The Legend of the Christmas - m a s

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This heart-warming article is provided by Scrapbook columnist Jack Allison. It first appeared in *The Ledger* during the Christmas season of 1950. Jack requested that it be reprinted in *The Ledger* today for all to see how it relates to the present world situation.)

Mayor calls for candles to be burned

Mayor J.N. Lipscomb yesterday called on the people of Gaffney to burn candles in the window of their homes from Friday night through Christmas night as a "show of devotion of God."

The mayor issued the following statement: "This morning I received a Christmas card from one whom I have known all my life. Enclosed was a copy of the legend of the Christmas Candles, a beautiful story of prayer, faith in God and burning candles. Our faith in God, as ever, is now our salvation, in a world torn by war, strife, atheist totalitarian warlords.

"I would like very much for the people of our city to join together during this holy season in united prayer for peace on earth and for our men and women in uniform the world over. A show of devotion to God by placing a burning candle in a window of our homes starting Friday night of this week and lasting through Christmas night is suggested. These will be a reminder to us in our homes and those passing that a gracious God exists and that through prayer and faith in Him whose birth we honor at Christmas all things are possible and that our troubles can be solved if only we believe.

"As for me, a candle will burn in my home. Won't you please join me and my good friend whose suggestion I appreciate and feel will be of untold good to all of us."

A copy of the "Legend of the Christmas Candle" to which Mayor Lipscomb referred follows:

Once upon a time, many, many years ago, an old cobbler and



his wife lived in a tiny cottage at the edge of a village in Austria. This humble shoemaker had few worldly possessions; but whatever he owned, he shared with others.

Symbolic of this generosity and love of mankind was the lighted candle he placed in the window of his cottage. Every night this light would shine forth as a welcomed sign of hospitality to any weary traveler who might be in search of shelter.

Over a period of several years, war, famine and near destruction fell on this little village - but never once did the little candle fail to send its beams as a message of hope and cheer to all.

Hardships and losses came to the village as a result of the war. Loved sons were killed in battle; crops failed and animals starved for want of grain.

And yet, through, all this trouble, the little cobbler and his wife suffered far less than the other villagers. It seemed that there was a magical charm guarding these two. Discouraged and weary, the village peasants gathered together one evening to discuss the cobbler's fortune.

"Surely there is something special about him; he is always spared from our misfortunes. What does he do that we do not do?"

"Perhaps it is his little candle," said one of the villagers. "Let us put a candle in our window, too, and see if that is the mysterious charm."

Now it so happened that the day of the peasants meeting was the day before Christmas and the first night that a candle was lighted in the window of every home was Christmas Eve.

The candles burned all that night. When morning came, it seemed as though a miracle had occurred. A soft mantle of snow covered all the village and an air of hope and contentment filled the hearts of the villagers.

Before the first ray of the morning sun had cast its first gleam upon the new fallen snow, a messenger rode into the village to bring the great news - peace had come!

Tiny silver church bells chimed as the people knelt in prayer on this most wonderful morning. Never before had there been such a feeling of Christmas glory and joy as there was on this day.

The peasants were awed: "It was the candles," they whispered. "They have brought an answer to all of our prayers. We must never again fall to light our candles on His Birthday."

And now, many, many years later, this beautiful custom has spread all over the world - until today millions of candles flicker all over the world, sending forth a message of love, hope and cheer that will never grow old.



Dr. J.N. Lipscomb