

Ida's Notebook

by
Ida Risser



December must surely be a busy time for the mail carriers. Most people send Christmas greetings to friends and relatives. Some of us send more than others. By this time a roll of stamps for \$34 is not quite enough. And, I have post cards from long ago when one cent was sufficient postage. However, I mail cards and letters all year long. My daughter gave me a box of 50 cards a few months ago and most of them

have been sent. One problem is addresses as today people are constantly on the move. From Indiana to Maine, from Virginia to Delaware and even from one place in Georgia to another in the same state.

Just the other day, a letter that I sent to Baltimore in June was returned to me. Now that is definitely poor service. Of course, I don't think about all the times that letters are delivered on time.

They say letter writing is almost a lost art since we have telephones and E-mail. At one time people lived closer to their relatives and could keep in touch easier. They could simply ring the bell on top of their house if something happened that needed immediate attention.

We are staying close to home

Babies To Receive Free Hearing Test

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — The Pennsylvania State Grange congratulates the Pennsylvania General Assembly and

Governor Mark Schweiker for the passage of SB 100. This legislation allows for all newborn babies born in Pennsylvania to have a hearing test free of charge.

"We feel newborn hearing screening should be considered standard of care," Brenda Shambaugh, legislative director stated. "Three to four children out of every 1,000 births in the U. S. is born with a hearing loss. These babies will not be able to hear and it will most likely be undetected until they are 2 to 5 years old."

Hearing loss is the most common newborn birth defect. It is often considered an invisible handicap. If detection is denied, significant speech, language, social, and emotional delays may result. Technology has advanced and a simple test of newborn hearing can be done prior to the infant's discharge from their birth hospital quickly and reliably.

It was once thought that hearing loss in newborns only pertained to those infants in the neonatal intensive care nurseries that had risk factors for hearing loss. We now know that 50 percent of the infants identified with newborn hearing loss are from newborn nurseries with no risk factors, and hearing loss was not supposed to exist.

"We now know better. Every baby deserves a hearing screen," Shambaugh said.

"Data collection is essential to measure the strengths and weaknesses of newborn hearing screens. This bill is not just about newborn hearing, but tracking infants with hearing loss to ensure intervention and identify health care needs," Shambaugh concluded. "As a result of universal newborn hearing screening, new technologies will develop and will affect society as a whole. Creating new technologies for implantable hearing devices, better improved hearing aid technology, hair cell regeneration, and cochlear implants that will impact each and all of us."

The PA State Grange is a rural, grassroots community service organization with 20,000 members in 66 counties. The Grange has a Deaf Activities Department, which advocates deaf services for all Pennsylvanians.

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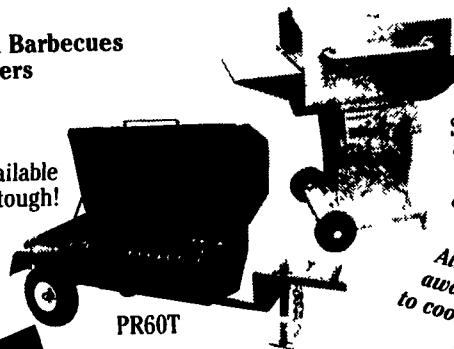


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