

Don't Be a Scrooge

Written by L.A. Plume

Tuesday, 06 December 2016 14:41



Dear Ms. Plume,

We have a neighbor out here on an island who we refer to as Ms. S, which may be the initial of her name or one of her less than attractive personality traits. During the hurricane clean-up she was inordinately proud of the fact that she stiffed a crew of nice young men who were helping her, and bragged on about it. She can well afford to pay for any goods and/or services she wants or needs, but apparently a new sidewalk was something she considered should be a gift. What she finds boast-worthy, I find shameful, and don't want to now be faced with her braggadocio about the discounts she will wrangle out of people for her holiday shopping, and what she expects to get (surely not the coal she deserves, although I briefly thought about a gift from the dog park instead). I find her behavior and attitude toward those who work hard for their money so repugnant that I do not care to even grace her new sidewalk with the presence of my foot print. Can I just ignore her or do I owe her an explanation?

Flipped Off

Dear Flipped,

Wow, talk about someone who isn't in the Christmas spirit; your neighbor deserves the coal train. On so many levels the hurricane and aftermath brought out salient qualities in people that hadn't really been revealed before – on both ends of the spectrum. It seems that this isn't anything new for your neighbor and if you haven't been friends in the past, you don't owe her anything; it's your choice to share your feelings or not. If you think telling her might change anything then that might be your Christmas gift to the neighborhood, but don't expect her to thank you for it, apparently that's not in her vocabulary.

Don't Be a Scrooge

Written by L.A. Plume

Tuesday, 06 December 2016 14:41

L. A. Plume

Dear L. A. Plume,

With the holidays and accompanying guests coming to visit, how can we set boundaries about what is reasonable for them to request? For instance, my brand new aunt visited over Thanksgiving and requested her favorite food, chicken tenders. My mother was happy to oblige but there were quite a few guests and my aunt insisted on their being cooked in olive oil instead of our usual, vegetable oil. My mother didn't have enough olive oil in the house so not only did she have to run out to the store but also incur the added expense of olive over vegetable oil. We don't want to offend a guest, but shouldn't the guest take the hostess into consideration, too? She could have made this request ahead of time or even brought the olive oil.

Violet

Dear Violet,

You are absolutely correct, and I think back to the letter last summer where a guest ate an entire pound of butter in one day that the hostess thought would last the weekend. On the other hand, perhaps your new aunt only uses olive oil for cooking and didn't think the request was odd or burdensome. I guess if someone new is coming to visit, the reasonable thing to do is to inquire of them ahead of time if they have any specific food requests, or allergies, of which we should be aware. Perhaps your mother could have said, "Oh dear, I don't have any olive oil and this is the way we always cook our chicken fingers – I'm sure you'll love them." One should always expect the unexpected in guests; believe me I know. I've had them all from the couple who used twelve towels in one weekend and smeared the pillowcases with lipstick, to those who bring the most delightful gifts and take me to dinner and fix the cocktails and cheeses and crackers they've brought with them. Guess who gets invited back? When you're the guest, try to be the one that your host will want to invite back.

L. A. Plume

Don't Be a Scrooge

Written by L.A. Plume

Tuesday, 06 December 2016 14:41

Dear Readers,

Best wishes for the holidays and Christmas; be kind, be thoughtful, and enjoy!

xoxoxo,

L.A.P.