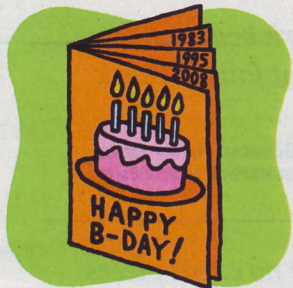


Happy Birthdays

MY BIRTHDAY'S coming up and I can't wait. Why? Because I know something special will be arriving in my mailbox. Every year my



friend Shirley sends me a birthday card. Not just any card, mind you. It's the same birthday card she mailed with a thirteen-cent stamp

in 1977. Every year, I send it back to celebrate her birthday too. Along the way we've added messages to the original Hallmark creation, writing sideways along the folds or in circles in the corner with different colored pens. We always include the date. "Next year is the big 3-0!" I remember writing in one of our first entries. Every year that followed meant another update—about our kids, our husbands, anything! It's a journal of sorts and a way for us to stay connected despite the miles that separate us. We used up all the space on the card ages ago, so we add sheets of construction paper and keep on writing.

Go on, grab a card! It's never too late (or too early) to start this tradition with your friends.

—**BONNIE WILES**, Queensbury, New York

Clip and Share

I'M A COUPON clipper from way back. Every cent counted when I was a new mom. Now my son is grown, but I'm still at it, counting all the coupons from the Sunday circulars. Pennies still matter in these tough times.

That's why I make sure to bring extra coupons when I go to the supermarket. I might not use them, but there's usually someone else in the checkout line who will. Like the college kid with six boxes of cereal in his basket. Or the frazzled-looking young mom carting a family-size tub of laundry detergent and a jumbo box of diapers (I remember those days!). I've also got coupons for the pharmacy, department store and amusement park, and I share those too. Even if it's just a fifty-cent discount, people are grateful.

I know I am. I'm a real-estate agent and I like serving fresh-baked cookies at my open houses. I couldn't do that without my friends, who always pass along their cookie-dough coupons to me. Thanks, guys!

—**CONNIE COX**, Pleasanton, California

KNOW OF A GOOD ACT YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE WITH US? E-mail us at pio@guideposts.org or write to Guideposts, "Pass It On" Department, 16 East 34 Street, New York, NY 10016.

ILLUSTRATION BY AARON LEIGHTON