Left: Handwritten letter to a group of children from Laura Ingalls Wilder, Feb. 14, 1945. Right: Handwritten letter by Civil War soldier to his father, dated Nov. 9.

Dear bother This morning the raw of building between & W. bords hate and safe of in about two hours it on her firmed and sign in about two hours it on her firmed and it was party hurdwork the barns in the rear Batara Novy 1863 been thildren, an answering you all in one letter and I hope you don't many great all in one I am very gold that you enjoy reading you or there will not read you in these order. They are all one along, you have not keep all one in the works when you have not keep all one interesting you have not they are not so interesting after have and they are need they are first. When you need the send first. the have in the rear hardwork in the land of a buyged farming had one in the shape of a buyged we have sended what to call it, so you this land you menus of this land you mercane of this land the hand my orly is 1300. I think you have being and at white at the people feel or they are the they are the they are the they are the they are they are they are they are they are they are were recovered her night but she to from or large. For will read all about my on the their books. the out ones of the family Thombalains better de Viloris attende Viloris aller & sent Hell. I did like Prince and Lacky and Story and museum photos by GRACE GROGAN there some day; very well, but not so strong them some day; very well, but not so strong the six sight opens the today and I make the six sight the 7th. So again see you seemed a sight the 7th so write many letters. can set support us to write many letters. the part the bound of the second of the seco Oforer smeerely Kilder

orld Letter Writing Day, Sept. 1. was founded by Richard Simpkin in 2014 to pay tribute to the happiness of receiving a handwritten letter. Simpkin encourages children to step away from social media and handwrite a letter. The website WorldLetterWritingDay. com shares tips and information on the importance of handwriting for fine motor skills and details on making connections through the World Letter Writing Pen Pals

History of handwritten letters

The first recorded letter (on paper, not a clay tablet) was handwritten by Queen Atossa of Prussia in 500 B.C. It wasn't until April 4, 1889, that then U.S. President Benjamin Harrison sent the first typewritten letter from the White House. Technology makes handwriting unnecessary in many areas. However, one cannot read historical documents and letters without being familiar with cursive handwriting. That's just one example of the importance of knowing how to read and write using cursive.

Today, many U.S. school systems emphasize keyboarding skills. They stopped teaching cursive handwriting, which went out of fashion in the 1980s. By 2010 only six states were teaching cursive. The impact of its loss became apparent. According to the National Education Association, 21 states now require cursive instruction.

In the work environment, I witnessed the impact of not learning cursive. In 2013 a new attorney, having completed four years of college plus three years of law school, could not decipher handwritten notes. His primary school district did not teach cursive. Educators believed everything would be computerized and cursive unnecessary when students graduated high school. This young attorney lacked basic penmanship skills and couldn't read handwritten notes from co-workers and clients.

Our ancestors cherished written correspondence. They saved bundles of letters, re-reading them to maintain an emotional bond between themselves and the sender. When retrieving your mail, what catches your interest and makes you smile? Is it junk mail? The bills? Of course not! It is a handwritten envelope from someone you know that touches the heart.

Young people without cursive instruction will miss this pleasure, plus the ability to read historical documents, including the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. When I was visiting a history museum this summer, the first page of a Nov. 9, 1863, handwritten letter from a Civil War soldier to his father was on

display. How many young people will do I know? Because my love of letter glance over that exhibit, unable to read the cursive handwriting?

In addition to World Letter Writing Day, there are three other special times each year for recognizing the significance of cursive handwriting. Celebrate and restore this fading skill by connecting with others through these events. It is more personal than an email or a social media post. The recipient will appreciate the time you take writing the letter, addressing the envelope. applying postage and placing it in the mail.

National Letter Writing Day's purpose is similar to World Letter Writing Day. Taking place every December 7, the idea is to set aside electronic communication and handwrite a letter. The origin of the day is unknown. One theory is it began in Japan, where there is a letter-writing week and a letter-writing day on the 23rd of every month

National Handwriting Day was established by the Writing Instrument Manufacturers Association in 1977. It is observed every year on John Hancock's birthday, January 23. Studies show children who take handwritten notes develop a better understanding of the subject matter. Teachers can have students honor the day by writing on paper with a pen or pencil.

National Card and Letter Writing Month was initiated by the U.S. Postal Service. Celebrated in April, it honors the significance of the mail service, especially the importance of mailing handwritten cards.

Celebrate all letter-writing days by sending a letter to an elderly relative, distant friend, deployed soldier, incarcerated person or grandchild. Children can participate by drawing pictures and signing their names or by writing short notes. A grandparent would be thrilled to receive a letter from their grandchild and will likely write back, beginning a tradition. How

writing began with sending letters to my grandparents, and they always wrote back. When I was about 11 years old, I joined the International Pen Friends Group (ipfworld. com) still in existence today, with 300,000plus members in 192 countries. At one time, I had around a dozen pen pals. My first pen pal. Waana, lives in New Zealand, She and I are still in contact via Facebook. I'm glad we've remained in touch.

Today I live and travel full time in an RV. I send handwritten notes on postcards to each grandchild and my adult children. Both families save the correspondence in postcard albums. The children like looking through them to see where I've been.

When writing your letter or card, explain how handwritten correspondence is at risk of becoming obsolete. Remind them how thrilling it is to receive a handwritten note instead of a text message or an email. Encourage them to "pay it forward" by surprising someone they know with a handwritten note. Send a letter to someone you love today!

Grace Grogan is a freelance writer and photographer. She and her partner Paul roam the country in their 35-foot motorhome.

Mansfield Messon Dear Nade, What you for your mine letter written on such pretty note paper. It reems stronge that grow fick up stones on the shore of lake 12 pm where I plugge as long age when I was a little the stones are so pretty and it is such from a peak them up. With love Your friend Lause Ingalls Wilder

Snail Mail Pen Pal Companies

International Pen Friends 300,000+ members in 192 countries.

ipfworld.com

Letter in the Post, Old-fashioned letter writing.

letterinthepost.com

Global Penfriends Find international friends

globalpenfriends.com

Geek Girl Pen Pals. Snail mail and letter writing

geekgirlpenpals.com

Michelle Houts 52 Letters in a Year Challenge Ideas/tips for writing 52 letters/year

michellehouts.com/52-lettersin-a-year

The Letter Exchange. Newsletter subscription for snail-mail pen pallistings

letter-exchange.com

Snail Mail Letter Subscriptions

Snail Mail for Kids. Receive a letter in the mail every week. snailmailforkids.com

Suze's Happy Mail Project Snail mail sent to you at no cost.

happymailproject.org

Letters from Afar. A monthly letter with handwritten illustrations

lettersafar.com

The Flower Letters. Two letters per month that tell a story.

theflowerletters.com

Writings from the Wild. Monthly letters with illustrations, etc., about wild animals writingsfromthewild.com

Handwritten thank-you letter, dated Aug. 20, 1950, from Laura Ingalls Wilder.