

## OBLIGATIONS & PAY BACK

by Mike Harris

In our society there are certain rules, rules of civility. We open a door for a handicapped individual, we give up a seat to an older person, etc. These obligations are usually acknowledged with a smile and a thank you. It denotes proper upbringing.

Then there are greater obligations that are offered that, if we accept them, demand payback in kind. One may be offered a ride to an event, to share a meal. Here Ben Franklin comes to mind: "Never a borrower nor a lender be." These good deeds carry a larger pay back. The obligation, for example, does not go away with the reciprocal action.

The last two years since I came to Denver, acquaintances, friends and family have showered me with helpful good deeds. Due to circumstances beyond my control I have accepted some of these good deeds, and because life is constantly changing I find myself unable to reciprocate. I no longer drive or own a car, so no way can I offer a ride to pay back for a pleasant visit to a museum or offer to pick up a missed purchase at King Soopers

Then there are the offers of family. In coming to Denver I expected to be able to live independently! Well, man proposes but God disposes. Since coming to Denver, due to poor judgment, I have had four operations from which I seemed to be recovering and then I took a bad step and broke a hip. Family and friends stepped forward. Now I am well on the road to recovery but the burden of obligations is overwhelming. I find I can't sleep. By my standards there is no way for me to reciprocate. How do you pay back someone who steps forward with 24/7 nursing care upon my release from the nursing facility? When I offered to pay I was told, "Do not be insulting!" Yes a lovely Christmas gift could partial show my appreciation but it would not do much for the obligation I feel and carry.

A friend at this point stopped me and said, "Mike why don 't you just say thank you, stop trying to put a monetary value to your obligations. Say thank you. I really appreciate all of you stepping up, so again, thank you, thank you!"