

She's embarrassed by trembling hands



RENEE MAHLER

Q. My mother's hands shake so badly that she is ashamed to go anywhere where she feels that people will make fun of her. She can barely hold her own glass or use a knife and fork without spilling something. This really bothers her and I hate to see her keep herself isolated in her apartment.

A. While I am not a physician and wouldn't presume to make a true diagnosis, I came across an article in the September/October American Society on Aging's newspaper, Aging Today. This article specifically deals with what they refer to as a condition called essential tremor (ET). It certainly is worth discussing ET with her own doctor.

Essential tremor, according to the article, is one of the most common movement disorders and can affect people of all ages. It appears to disappear, unlike Parkinsonian tremor, when the person is relaxed.

Strangely enough, it also may disappear or become greatly reduced when small amounts of alcohol are consumed. However, once the effects of the alcohol wear off, the tremor returns and may be more severe than before. Little is known of the cause of ET and the condition appears to be unstudied and underrecognized. There is, however, an organization, the International Tremor Foundation, that has been established to provide information about tremors to those

suffering from them and to the general public.

The ITF will act as a referral agency. It has a quarterly newsletter and eventually hopes to be able to fund research projects. For additional information, write to: ITF, W. Superior, Box AT, Chicago 60610 or call (312)644-2344 during normal business hours.

Q. I am 76 years old and have severe arthritis. It is difficult for me to get out to go shopping. I order many things from catalogs that come through the mail. My children tell me that I am paying higher prices than if I went to the stores. This is so easy for me that I hate to give up the convenience but I am concerned about the cost.

A. Shopping by mail is convenient and easy. Sometimes you can get bargains but at other times you will be paying extra for the convenience. It may pay you to compare the prices of the items you wish to order with the prices in stores and also in other catalogs. When you do this comparison, make certain that you also include the cost of shipping and handling. These additional fees add to the price of the merchandise.

Some additional safeguards: Will the company you are ordering from refund not only the cost of the item but the shipping charges? They are satisfied with the merchandise guaranteed and how long will you have to wait for your order? Remember, too, never to send cash through the mail. A check or money order, if you are not using a credit card, is the safest way to handle these transactions.

Renee Mahler is a gerontologist and the director of communications and admission at a Rochester Hills nursing facility. She is a former member of the Michigan State Commission on Services to the Aging.

To leave a message for Mahler, from a Touch-Tone phone, call 953-2047, Ext. 1869. Send your questions to her at the Observer & Eccentric, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009.

Partners don't always get along



WOODY BOYD

If nearly every player never made mistakes and prided himself or herself as the perfect partner, then we few who do blunder and are far from being the perfect table mate would indeed be true martyrs.

To be a part of this humble confessional set, it is important to never fear criticism when you are right and never ignore it when you are wrong.

I have determined there are certain periods of the year when partnership antagonism peaks. Usually February, April, May, June, October and August, but also be ever so careful in December, January, July, March, September and November, for those are stormy months too.

Unquestionably, the most infictive single partnership day is April 1, and I religiously abstain from play on that date if at all possible. It seems the fool in we humans shows itself in some discernible way most often on that day.

Last year, the 92nd of this century on the 92nd day, I witnessed a terrible altercation between two palookas of modest talent and considerably less behavior restraint. Let's pick it up at the point where manners had vanished.

Ego, sitting North, after his partner had gone down in a contract that was much below marginal expectations, said, "This may sound like good news, but I'm sure you're not as stupid as you seem to be in your bidding and play." Ego Freddy sitting South replied, "If you knew how to bid, we wouldn't have been overboard in the first place, but that's asking too much of a nasty-mannered partner who hasn't a friend in the game because of his tongue, nor will there ever be hope that you will."

Ego Eddie: "If I quit playing with an imbecile like you, which I intend to, you wouldn't last a day in this game."

Ego Freddy: "Oh, yeah! If I quit you and played with a partner who knew what he was doing, my expertise would be immediately apparent and we'd be winning every week."

E.E.: "I could play with my hands tied behind me and use only a fraction of my wits competence, and this limited input alone would make any new partnership I chose immortal."

E.F.: "I have a friend who's been pleading to play and our success and subsequent fame would live through infinity and eventually we'd be the premier partnership in the bridge universe."

E.E.: "I don't want you to take this the wrong way, but go shuffle your stuff with some nut in never-play-well land."

E.F.: "That does it. I'm finished with you for good and that's final. If you make one more rebukative crack about my talent."

And so ended another April Fools Day episode in the continuing saga about ugly egos and inarticulate partnerships. Now for the hand that caused this untidiness.

W	EE	E	EF
-	-	-	2NT
-	3A	-	3+
-	6NT	Passed out	
N/S Vulnerable	97		
	J 8 7 5		
	K 9 5		
	A K 6 4		
10 5 3	Eddie	Q 8 6 4	
Q 10 9 2	W	9 3	Q J 10 2
8 4 3	E	6 5 3	
Q J 2	Freddy		
	A K J 2		
	A K 4		
	A 7 6		
	10 9 7		
	W. Led the H. 10		

Each argued the other was at fault, for they didn't have their bid, and make so. It was close, but that wasn't consequential. South was in an extremely delicate contract and the question remains, could he have succeeded?

I invited one of our most able preceptors, Dr. Willie Winokur of West Bloomfield to comment on today's hand in our column.

W.B.: "Dr. Winokur, your thoughts on the bidding."

W.W.: "Well, it got them to where they were going. I might have approached the problem differently (C - 1H - 2NT, etc.) but any aggressive pair would have landed it the same slam. Often these 30 pointers are a lay down, but at first glance, this seemed to be an almost hopeless challenge."

W.B.: "You mean to tell me there's a play for 12 tricks?"

W.W.: "Most certainly there's always a play, but that doesn't guarantee a successful result. The more I examine the lay out the better the chance seems to be. I'd try for three hearts, four spades, three clubs and two diamonds or any combination thereof, I'd be delighted to win. The heart suit is crucial, for that matter spades and clubs are too. Maybe there's a diamond, spade squeeze on East. Let's see. At (1) I'd win dummy's heart jack and play to my king and when East followed, I would be sure that I could correct the count by playing two more hearts, but not yet. First the club nine and if East didn't cover, I'd let it ride. If he did rise, I'd win and play a spade at trick (4) to the jack. If East didn't cover my club nine I'd play my club 10 to dummy's king and then the spade finesse. Next I'd play my heart ace. At trick (6) and (7) the last two clubs and at (8) I'd throw West in with a heart which would squeeze East in spades or diamonds. Whichever suit East unguards you have your 12th trick in that suit."

W.B.: "Dr. Winokur, that's very good."

W.W.: "Thank you. Sometimes these less than five percent slams aren't especially rewarding challenges, but I'm sorry it caused such a stir between Eddie and Freddy."

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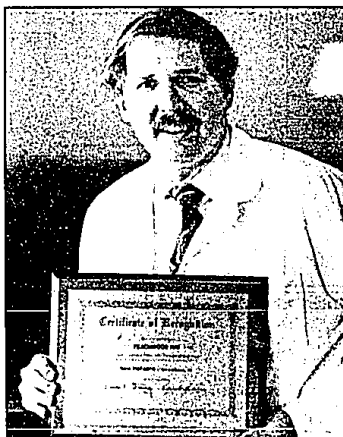
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