

consumer mallbag

Is cheap aspirin as good as the name brand kind? I take two aspirin every four hours for arthritis pain. It's getting a little expensive but I'm afraid to change brands.

M.B., Garden City

Aspirin, acetylsalicylic acid, is the same whether it is a house brand or a name brand. The only difference among standard 5-grain brands of aspirin tablets is the price.

The higher price for a name-brand aspirin reflects several million dollars worth of advertising to convince the public that they offer something better than plain old aspirin. But what they actually offer in many instances is a fancier package which adds nothing to the effectiveness of the aspirin. Large doses of aspirin and other over-the-counter drugs should never be taken for prolonged periods of time without the advice of a physician.

Will an energy saving thermostat help me save money on my heating bill if I already turn the heat down manually?

J.J., Troy

It doesn't matter how the thermostat

is regulated, automatically or manually, the result is the same, a savings on your fuel bill. However, automatic thermostats do have one advantage: they don't forget to do the job.

If you are constant in your dialing down you get the same results, but forgetting even once or twice a week can make a difference.

ECO-TIP: An open invitation to attend Concern's 10th anniversary annual meeting is extended to Consumer Mailbag's regular and faithful readers. For five of those 10 years this column has been answering your questions on consumer and environmental subjects.

Now we ask you to join us and help answer some of our ours at an informal roundtable discussion: "Reflections and Projections: Concern's Second Decade." It will take place beginning at 10 a.m. March 9, at Unity Temple 17505 Second, Detroit.

A pollack luncheon will follow the meeting and a dish to serve six or so is the only admission charge.

For reservations, call the Concern office at 879-1333.

— Grace R. Gluskin
executive director

Need is great

Peer counselors can listen

volunteers

Dear Jo:

My mother, who was widowed last year, has received a great deal of help from another widow who is a peer counselor. We heard about this service through our church. What exactly are peer counselors?

R.J.

Peer counselors are lay people, both male and female, who have been trained in basic counseling skill. They help others who are usually of the same age and social background. Counseling is usually informal and is often done in the client's home.

Employing widows in this manner has been very successful in many areas around the country. The widow giving the counseling can readily understand the concerns of her widowed client and therefore can be of help. A sense of trust and acceptance comes more readily to the client through knowing that this person of the same generation and social background has also experienced this great loss. Through peer counseling, the newly widowed person comes to understand that her grief is not an illness but a normal reaction to her loss; a reaction experienced by many.

The counseling is more of a listening nature rather than advice-giving. The peer counselor supports the newly widowed through her grief by encouraging her to talk about herself and to make some decisions.

The need for peer counselors for widows is great. Twenty percent of women over the age of 75 are widows. It has been found that widows spend as much time being widowed, an average of 18.5 years, as they did raising their children.

Peer counselors help the newly widowed through probably the single most difficult adjustment that a married person must face in life. They help the widowed to deal with their grief work and to master the task of living alone and building a new life. Peer counseling programs for widows or for any other counseling can be arranged through many channels such as churches, senior citizen organiza-



gerontology

A. Jolayne Farrell

tions, geriatric clinics and through other community services.

Dear Jo:

A friend of mine who has the same illness as I do has offered some of her left-over medication. Her doctor prescribed this medication for her and it was quite expensive. I'm not sure whether I should take it or not.

Mrs. G.

Do not take it.

Taking medication that are prescribed for someone else is a serious mistake. Her prescription was written for her on the basis of her age, her weight and her physical condition, not yours. As well as the possibility of this being the wrong medication for you, drugs do lose their effectiveness with age. Only your doctor can determine what medication is best for you. He decides how often and how long you should take it.

Sharing medication is quite common among the older people. One study reported that 20 percent of older people shared their medication.

The Oakland County Volunteer Bureau has weekly listings of volunteer opportunities. Further information about these and other volunteer needs at over 200 agencies may be obtained by call the bureau at 642-7772. Any non-profit organization needing volunteer assistance may call the bureau.

SPEAKERS — Do you have knowledge to share on a topic such as nutrition, careers, financial management or health care? Speakers are needed by the Robert W. Groves Center in Royal Oak, which provides drug and alcohol information, treatment and counseling.

CONFERENCE AIDES — Continuing education programs at the Institute for Advanced Pastoral Studies need volunteers to greet students at check-in and give out room assignments and work charts. The commitment is short-term. The program is located at St. Bede Catholic Church, Southfield and 12 Mile Road.

ARTS AND CRAFTS — Volunteer who like arts and crafts and older people could help with activity programs at Cambridge Nursing Centre South in Birmingham. An hour per week is asked, and the program could be good after-school experience for a teen-ager.

COMMON GROUND — Volunteers with good communication skills are always needed at Common Ground in Birmingham. Persons 18 years and older can help the agency provide information and referral services or crisis intervention. Extensive training provided. Day or evening assignments are available, and a commitment of one four-hour shift each week for one year is asked.

YWCA
picks
its new
officers

Jessie Liddle of Detroit is the new chairman of the board of management of the Northwest Branch YWCA, 25940 Grand River, Redford Township.

Shirley Tolan of Birmingham is first vice-chairman, and Karen Ross of Novi is second vice-chairman. Cecile Schand of Detroit is recording secretary and Juanita Watts, also of Detroit is corresponding secretary.

Board members elected include Margaret Buswell of Northville, Violet Cre-mer of Southfield, Irene Engwall of Livonia, Faith Garon of Redford,

Josephine Freeman of Farmington and Mary Halsted, Julie Kughn and Esther Brewer of Detroit.

Members remaining on the board are Ella Baker, Georgene Hendrix and Elizabeth Williams of Redford, and Frances Hensley, Mary Lou Hore and Alice MacDonald of Livonia.

Representing Farmington is Patricia Landsberg. Representing West Bloomfield is Irene Matheson. Detroiters are Marian Biggers, Beryl Ehrhardt, Betty Gailther, Marie Harding, Marion Kelly, Carole McLean and Bessie Nesbitt.

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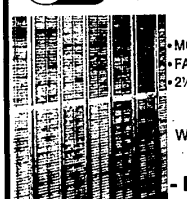
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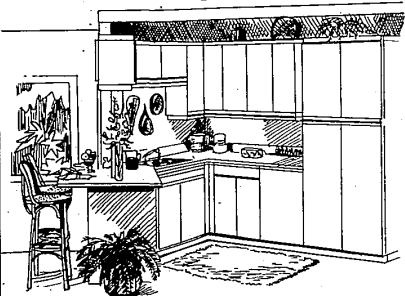


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