

Forgetfulness has many causes



RENEE MAHLER

Q. My father no longer seems to always be able to remember the names of things or places he has been all his life. This seems to make him depressed and sometimes confused. My mother and their family physician say it's just a sign of age but I think the problem goes deeper than that. Dad is 86. What do you think?

A. Memory loss is definitely not just a sign of getting older. In fact, forgetfulness is experienced in people of all ages, not just the elderly, and one does not experience memory loss just because they are older. The symptoms your father exhibits could be related to a number of illnesses and it is wise to investigate the cause. Sometimes simple things, such as improper diet, can be the reason for the confusion.

Depression itself can cause memory loss, and these causes can be treated and corrected. If the loss is due to Alzheimer's or other dementia, other forms of treatment are in order. Proper diagnosis not only helps the afflicted person but also helps families and friends vital information they can act upon.

Harper Hospital has a Senior Memory Evaluation Center operated by the hospital's gerontology de-

partment. The evaluation includes a complete history and physical examination. The center will review the medications currently being taken — and medications can have adverse effects — do a psychosocial assessment and an assessment of functional ability, and some cognitive testing.

Each person will be evaluated by a geriatric physician, clinical nurse specialist and a social worker. Recommendations following the evaluation will include a medical diagnosis, report on intellectual and functional abilities and skills, appropriateness of living arrangements, and also information concerning community resources.

Often the evaluation is useful to determine if it is safe and advisable for the person to remain in the home setting. If guardianship is being considered, the mental status testing can be used to help determine competency. The evaluation also can differentiate between psychiatric problems and organic diseases.

For additional information call Carol Grubbs, program coordinator, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., at 993-0639. Most of the cost of the evaluation will be covered by Medicare.

Q. Please tell me about the Foster Grandparents Program.

A. Developed in 1965, the Foster Grandparents Program was created to provide low-income older adults

with a meaningful volunteer opportunity.

Foster Grandparents assist children in hospitals, schools, day care centers, juvenile detention facilities and private homes. The job of a Foster Grandparent is to establish a consistent one-to-one relationship with a child needing special help and personal attention. Activities can include talking, reading, playing or taking walks.

Any man or woman, age 60 or over, who also meets the income requirements is eligible to participate. Foster Grandparents are expected to serve at least 20 hours per week. They receive 40 hours of orientation and meet in scheduled in-service training sessions.

The Michigan Office of Services to the Aging and ACTION, the federal volunteer agency, provides funds enabling foster grandparents to receive a small non-taxable stipend. These stipends are not considered income. Transportation assistance, a daily meal, annual medical check-up and insurance are also provided. For information concerning this program in Wayne County call 951-2190, Ext. 228, Monday-Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Renee Mahler is a gerontologist and the director of communications and admissions at a Rochester Hills nursing facility. She is a member of the Michigan State Commission on Services to the Aging. Send your questions to her at Observer & Enterprise, 505 E. Maple, Birmingham 48069.

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FASHION CALENDAR

FRIDAY, MAY 21

Estate jewelry

Estate jewelry collection show of previously owned jewelry from across the United States, dating back as far as the turn of the century and as early as a year ago, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., at Fine Jewelry at Jacobson's Birmingham Apparel Store. Wide array of pins, rings, brooches, necklaces, watches and men's jewelry in gold and platinum.

SATURDAY, MAY 23

Spring/summer

Lee & Sherrin will present spring/summer collection of Ghisotti ready-to-wear 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Bloomfield Plaza, 6536 Telegraph Road, Bloomfield Township.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 27

Afternoon tea

Clothes from Every Bride's Mother in Birmingham are featured in elegant fashion presentation during traditional afternoon tea at the Ritz Carlton, Dearborn. Tickets \$20-40. 3:30 p.m. with traditional modeling 3-4 p.m.

THURSDAY, MAY 28

At Madeline

Informal modeling of Margon Milan suits, coats and blouses 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. through Saturday, May 30, at Madeline, 6614 Telegraph, Bloomfield Hills. Also showing Vivienne of Austin — leather handbags and belts.



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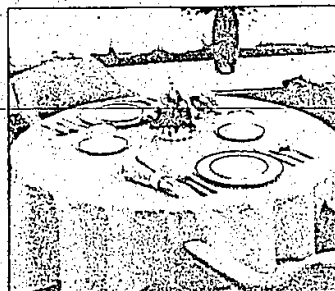
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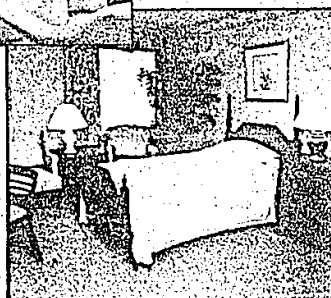
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