

How to share umbrella; sign cards properly

OK, one last time, does the new millennium start in 2000 or 2001? For the last few months, the experts and laymen have been giving us their complicated, scientific and mathematical explanations, each having their own views on the subject.

Well, let me tell you how I came to my simple decision:

Shortly before Christmas, I had gone to the bank with a check. My balance statement was for a large deposit of money, I decided to deposit half of it in my account and take the other half in cash for last-minute odds and ends holiday spending. On a slip of paper I had written out in what denominations I wanted the cash, which included 100 one dollar bills. The efficient teller followed my instructions to the letter.

When I arrived home, I noticed the 100 singles were in a brand new, banded and numerically numbered packet. Flipping through it the numbers ran from 01 to 100. In order for me to

have 100 bills, I had to include the one marked 100. If I would have wanted more I would have had to start all over again with 01, which would be a new beginning. After all, when you are counting something, anything, you always start with a one and not a zero, don't you? So the new millennium starts with 2001!

Still, 2000 does have a magical ring to it, doesn't it? When you think about it, all of our lives whenever we year-dated, was for a large deposit of money, I decided to deposit half of it in my account and take the other half in cash for last-minute odds and ends holiday spending. On a slip of paper I had written out in what denominations I wanted the cash, which included 100 one dollar bills. The efficient teller followed my instructions to the letter.

Nevertheless, whatever your views are on the subject, it is the beginning of a new year so put on your list of resolutions to be more thoughtful, more considerate, more tactful toward other human beings, which is after all, the bottom line and the very essence of good manners and proper etiquette.

Now to some questions.

ETIQUETTE EXPERT

On a recent cloudy day, I was walking with a friend. When it began to rain, I opened my umbrella which I shared with him. It was a little awkward as we both seemed to get wet. What would have been the best way to handle this situation?

When two people are sharing an umbrella, it is best to have the taller one of the two carry it and to walk close together. That way no one will be getting poked in the back with the umbrella ribs or have water running down the back of their necks. If there is a great difference in height, they each should carry their own umbrella.

Interesting thing about umbrellas - when they first came into being, they were rather small and delicate parasols used by women only. They were made of cloth and laces and ribbons and meant for sun protection and not for rain and were a mark of an upper class lady.

Sturdier and stronger

As time went on, umbrellas were made sturdier and stronger and with more rainproof materials. This meant they could also be used by gentlemen. Nevertheless, the first men who used them were laughed at and scoffed. These umbrellas were not sold at stores but rather rented out on rainy days from various shops. As people realized how useful an umbrella was, it became more widely accepted and is now a necessary item in every household.

Umbrella etiquette dictates that you hold your raised umbrella so that you can see someone coming toward you. Large plastic bubble umbrellas are handy as the wind cannot upset them as easily and you can see through them. Also carry your unused umbrella in a vertical position rather than horizontally where you would poke those passing by.

If you are carrying an umbrella with a curved hook on the handle, the proper way to hold it is so the open part of the hook is facing forward and not toward the back as you would hold a cane. Hooking it on the arm is also acceptable. Folding umbrellas can be very efficient if you are carrying several packages.

Nowadays umbrellas come in all different sizes, shapes and colors. However, a large black one should be the choice of any powerful and successful man or woman. It means business and, at the same time, very elegant.

When my husband and I were sending out Christmas cards, we were not sure whose name should be written first. What is the rule on this?

Out of courtesy, the person signing the card should put his or her name second. You would



Margit Erickson

sign "Bob and Amy Miller" while your husband would write "Amy and Bob Miller." If you have your names imprinted or engraved on your cards, the wife's name comes first.

Confidential to WJ: Your letter was a delight. It tells me you are a real gentleman.

Margit Erickson is founder of Margit Erickson and Company. She is the host/producer of *The Elegant Life* on Time Warner Cable Channel 12. Call her with etiquette concerns at 471-6170.

Seminar focus: eating disorders

A seminar on preventing eating disorders will be held 7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 11, at the Costick Activities Center in Farmington Hills.

Presented by the reigning Miss Farmington/Oakland County, Leslie Reinbold, the Helping Others Prevent Eating Disorders (HOPE) seminar will feature two guest speakers from Los Angeles.

Representing the organization edFREE.com are Tita Maboney, director of operations, and Susan D'Angelo, director of Christian services. EdFREE.com is an interactive support program providing an alternative means of finding understanding and support for individuals who suffer from eating disorders.

Reinbold, who has suffered from anorexia, and her mother, Lori, will speak of their experiences with the disorder. A physician from the eating disorders clinic at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak will also address the forum.

The seminar will include danger signs, what to watch for, how to get help, where to get help and literature related to eating disorders. The seminar is open to the public and the community is invited to attend. For more information, contact Leslie Reinbold at reinbold@pilot.msu.edu.

Marriage workshop

Miriam Jerris, Rabbinic candidate with the Birmingham Temple, will lead a workshop and support group to celebrate and strengthen marriages.

The class is open to married couples of any faith, newly married couples, couples married for many years or engaged couples who want to learn the skills necessary for a healthy and satisfying relationship. Cost is \$150 per couple. Classes begin Feb. 29. To register, call Miriam Jerris at 543-7496.

Winter habits of squirrels and hawks

in the winter?

Hawks, especially the red tail hawk, have become opportunists with the advent of roads and freeways. I have sometimes literally counted a hawk, roughly every mile on some of our major highways, while driving on a winter day.

These birds will feed on the wildlife that is either injured or killed by cars on our roads. The trees along the roadsides also give them a terrific perch from which to view their territory.

Unfortunately, some of these magnificent raptors are injured or killed each year while in pursuit of their free prey. They focus so much on their potential dinner that they are easily struck by fast moving vehicles.

These critters, by the way, are one of the ways that nature creates new forests. Most of what gets buried eventually sprouts and a new forest is born.

Why is it that we see many hawks sitting in trees along our freeways

Now since the winter is here, do the squirrels find all of the nuts they buried last fall?

No. Although squirrels may bury many seeds and nuts in anticipation of winter, they only recover a portion of them during the cold months. People in the past thought that squirrels remembered where they buried each and every nut but science has shown this is not true.

I would think that in yards with bird feeders, squirrels simply visit the feeders and do not forage around looking for bird seeds and nuts as they would in areas devoid of people and feeders.

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Grief support for kids

Arbor Hospice announces the addition of a professionally led grief support group for children and teens.

A group for children and teens who've experienced the death of a parent, no matter when the loss occurred, will meet Tuesdays, Feb. 1 through April 11 at Church of Christ, 9301 Sheldon Plymouth. The time is from 6:45 to 8:30 p.m.

A suggested payment for each weekly session is \$30 for one

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