

1996 Charity Gin Tournament

"Three-Peat" for Brother Peter

Paul Voykin

The annual Gin Charity Tournament on March 25 began after a delicious lunch at Hackney's in Wheeling. This year, I won't bore you with minor details as I've done in the past. Stuff like, Who fell asleep? Who went to the lunch buffet three times (Wally and I)? Or, Whose wife kept calling our group wanting to talk to her darling husband, insisting he went to Hackney's to play gin? No, this year, I will go straight to the final game between Dudley Smith and Brother Peter.

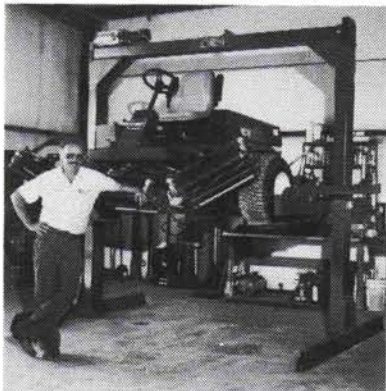
The play between the two finalists was slow, deliberate and defensive. It was close, a good, serious game. Then, toward the end, a smile appeared on Dud's face. Peter had dealt him three pairs, queens, nines and threes—a break for any gin player in a tight game; and it came at a crucial time. Dudley knew all he had to do was wait, and soon it would be all over and he would be our new champion. That's exactly what happened...but not to Dud. He flipped Peter a card. Peter grabbed the card and called with a nine and caught his old friend with 60 points and went out in all three games. This was a third-

time win for Peter. Later, when he was interviewed by the news media, Peter straight out told the reporters that he had always had an easy time with Penn State graduates.

Now comes the very serious part; and I warn you, it is heart-breaking to read. So if you would rather do something else, please do so. You're not going to feel very good after reading this except that I hope you might want to send a check. It's tax exempt, and it might make you feel a bit better. Let Dudley, the best writer in our Midwest

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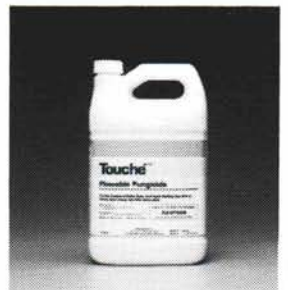
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Charity Gin Tournament
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Association, tell you the story. I quote from his letter:

I have just returned from an eye-opening experience. I went to Westgate to meet Ron Austin and give him our gin summary proceeds and inquire about his daughter, Rebecca. Rebecca is 9 1/2 years old (10 maybe in September). Her younger sister, Rhonda, is 4. Becky had epileptic seizures at 18 months and went to Christ Hospital emergency. She was put on a machine for 29 days and developed pneumonia. Her tiny lungs failed, turned into leather, perhaps brain damage occurred then also. Today, Becky is a total wreck: mentally retarded, crippled, fed through a tube, 24-hour nurse care and diapers.

Becky lives at Mark Finch Children's Home on Lake Street by Medinah Country Club. On Friday nights, Ron picks her up in a wheelchair and takes her to Tinley Park (home) for the weekend, returns her Sunday night. Today, Becky does not recognize her father's voice anymore or the Easter Bunny. Doctors' bills are over 2.5 million dollars. Insurance companies have canceled Becky's health insurance. Want some more? Sister Rhonda now has seizures, same as her older sister, Becky. This Ron fellow is a saint, works 7 days as a greenkeeper. Ron's wife is a nurse. Today when I went over with John Lebedows to meet him, Ron was covered with mud working on a pipeline in his pump hose. Our \$1,500 was a token contribution. This guy and his

wife should have tickets to *Showboat*, lobster at Nick's Fishmarket and a check for \$25,000 to put a smile back on his wife's face. God! Are we fortunate, Paul. This guy needs our help and is very gracious and thankful. I was unaware, and he is only three miles away.

Keep the faith,
The "Dud"

Dudley, we are all aware now. Please send your checks to Dudley or to me. Make them out to Ron Austin, Benefit for Rebecca Austin. Put Account No. 230055236 on your checks. Thank you. ■

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