

points of view

City must practice housing plan

BIRMINGHAM, WHICH HAS been on the hot seat for having so few blacks living there and for a series of racially-charged incidents, this week made it unlawful locally to discriminate against anyone who wants to buy a home in that community.



Judith Doner Berne

The city commission unanimously passed a Fair and Open Housing Ordinance which prohibits discrimination on the basis of color, religion, sex, marital status, age, national origin, handicap or sexual orientation. It targets anyone selling or renting a house or apartment, be they a real estate agent, owner or landlord.

a huge bite, compared to the humiliation of knowing you aren't wanted, but at least a deterrent. Also, it would guess, that a conviction on the local level might form the basis for a more potent state or federal civil rights suit.

The ordinance has emerged from a steady flow of incidents beginning several years back when a few skin-heads surfaced at local high schools. Then there were several occurrences of racially and religiously-charged graffiti and the most recent incident of a black teenager being threatened by a white doctor in the parking lot of a Birmingham high-rise. The doctor was later acquitted in a jury trial.

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Although Birmingham enacted one of the area's first open housing laws 25 years ago, just 44 percent of its population is African-American. Of 20,000 residents, as one commissioner said, it was more a statement than an ordinance and needed to be "given some teeth."

Birmingham has been encouraged to take a stronger stand against discrimination by the NAACP, the Oakland County Open Housing Center and the Birmingham-Bloomfield Task Force on Race, Relations and Ethnic Diversity.

It is politically incorrect these days to speak out against most minorities, although the ethnic slurs and stereotypes are still routinely heard and the area country clubs stay lily-white. So, in general, the series of commission meetings and the public hearing at which the ordinance was discussed only evoked helpful and supportive comments.

has ever known a homosexual person very well. If they had, they would have known how each one, until he or she learned to accept or at least live with their homosexuality, agonized daily if not hourly over something they only wished they had the power to alter.

"That was the case up until Monday night and the proposed addition of the 'sexual orientation' part of the ordinance, which gay rights activists had asked for following the public hearing.

Luckily, those who evoked myth were overshadowed by an equally vocal group of people who spoke based on truth and from the view of what a community should be.

THEN, I AM afraid some members of the community invoked religion and morality for their own purposes.

It was well summed up by commissioner Dante Lanzetta, who said: "I guess maybe I missed something in church. . . We have no intention of encouraging behavior. We have been asked to protect people against discrimination. I can't see anything wrong with it."

A Baptist minister trotted out the Bible to say that homosexuality "is an abomination." A female attorney and mother of three young children said the city should not "protect a class of persons most people think is wrong. . ." and "If we find we cannot discriminate on housing, what about two men fondling in Shain Park?" And another male resident called the issue "a moral question not a civil rights question."

Now, it will take the efforts of Birmingham residents — particularly its real estate community — to put it into practice.

Judith Doner Berne is assistant managing editor for the Oakland County editions of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

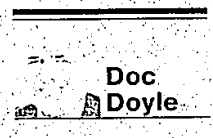
Adult ed can help non-readers

QUESTION: How good is that phonics program designed to improve reading? If it is so great, why don't school districts use it? I have a non-reader adult who is thinking of buying the program.

team by the International Reading Association to critique the program.

ANSWER: The program is a series of eight audio tapes with phonics drills set to music. Consumers hopefully memorize letter combinations for 44 basic sounds in our language. There are five soft cover workbooks. There are thousands of other such products on the market, many of much higher quality, but without the benefits of the highly intensified, murga back media brain-wash.

THE MOST common problem found by the experts was the program's failure to provide any simple stories or sentences in proper context. They asked, "Why would anyone want to subject people to go through all the audio tapes and read pages of word lists and then totally unrelated sentences?"



Doc Doyle

Dr. Chall, the phonics advocate who works with illiterate adults, said, "Non-reading adults will buy it and not send it back because to order it was a great step for them and to not learn is a greater shame. They feel stupid, and they are not stupid."

customers as requested by the International Reading Association team of experts.

One New York school teacher contends that the product produced results in "just a few weeks." But company officials did not respond to repeated requests for the telephone numbers or addresses of any of those

In between we have the majority of experienced teachers and reading consultants of sound mind and body who know that it is a combination of approaches that leads a child or adult to proficiency in reading.

TO ME IT'S the same old story. Some educators, public or private, look for the simple answer. In this case, it's a total phonetic approach. Turn the coin over and some educators say let's all get on the Whole Language approach. That is, children are bored with fundamental instruction and will pick up the fundamentals through readings they enjoy by osmosis

John Shanahan, Gateway phonics program president, says the program works and those who disagree are just expensing "sour grapes" because it threatens the publishing and tutoring business.

Tell your non-reading friend to get into an adult education program for non-readers. There he will receive a pre-assessment, balanced instruction and hopefully the most important ingredient — the skills and emotional support of a caring teacher.

James "Doc" Doyle, a former teacher/school administrator/university instructor, is president of Doyle and Associates, an educational consulting firm.

The sky is falling and we must act

"THE SKY is falling," cried Chicken Little as she frantically dashed to alert her barnyard neighbors of impending disaster. "The sky is falling," she shrieked in their faces as they walked right past her unheeding, absorbed in their own frustration. "The sky is falling," Chicken Little howled to the wind as it swept on by her on its way to important doings.



Jeffrey Miller

As a columnist fairly new to the trade, I find myself identifying strongly with the children's fable Chicken Little. Always on the lookout for material, I watch television — pen in hand, scan several newscasts simultaneously with the remote changer, ever ready, read countless papers and periodicals and fill numerous scraps of paper with EUREKA-type thoughts and zinging phrases. Most of it hits the true reject pile when read in the light of day.

alarm of an impending infrastructure disaster have defined it in terms of man-made things. Bridges, highways, tunnels, transportation modes. They seem unaware of the stress and wear that is threatening the real infrastructure of our existence. Us.

My input is a barrage of news from around the world: wars, famines and epidemics. Nazis in Germany, Skinheads in Michigan, armed borders in Israel-Palestine, armed borders in Detroit. Write it, tell the people about the horrors that come with intolerance. But like the scraps of paper that hit the trash upon closer inspection, I remember Chicken Little and how ridiculous her attempts looked and how all the other animals were too busy living their lives, rather than trying to save their lives.

LIKE CHICKEN Little, barnyard neighbors whose time was spent on survival, our daily efforts to work and eat, to save and make it, to stay safe and not get involved has caused us to neglect the true infrastructure of our lives. Each other.

KNOWING THAT, imagine my chagrin when I picked up my pen and the first word which came out was infrastructure. That's as in the infrastructure of our country is falling apart; as in the bridges we cross, the roads we drive, the structures in which we park our cars; the buildings where we earn our pay. The sky is falling.

Bridges are essential to take us from one piece of land to another and we need them in good repair, but the type of bridge that is vital to future happiness is the kind that is formed to unite people. Paved roads are necessary to move goods and services from place to place, but more necessary is paving a road of understanding between all races.

Sewers in Guadalajara explode. Sea walls in the city of Chicago erode. Our nation's landfills and dump sites and incinerators no longer serve us, they are stalking us. The sky is falling.

Sewers and landfills are critical to good health and efficient waste removal; more critical is the need to develop an elimination system to rid us of the waste of intolerance and racial hatred.

Years of neglect, decades of abuse, a century of decline have left our land despoiled, our water supply at risk our air polluted. Our infrastructure is at risk of collapse, but, like Chicken Little, we dare not scream it. Most can't be bothered with infrastructure. They're too busy trying to evade the modern day job loss, crime, fear and uncertainty.

Subways, buses, trains and planes are important transportation vehicles to take us from point A to point B, more important is the need to develop a communication mode to get us all on the same wavelength.

Those who have sounded the

The sky is falling. Like many of us, the daily headlines, sound bytes and horror stories are wearing this chicken little down. Down, but not out, and even though my barnyard neighbors choose not to listen, I keep coming back to infrastructure.

We can strengthen every man-made structure ever built, in order to improve our lives, but if we don't deal first with ourselves — the number one structure of this country — then the infrastructure we fortify will be standing on a crumbling base.

Jeffrey Miller, a Southfield resident, is producer/host of "Transition" which airs at 8:30 a.m. Saturdays on WXON-TV.



Hunger. Homelessness. A month in the bitter Michigan winter with a steel trap clamped on a leg. Excruciating pain. Infection. Loss of a limb. . . Most of us never would have made it. Little Lady wouldn't have either. If it hadn't been for the Michigan Anti-Cruelty Society. When the MACS rescue team found her near Belle Isle, she was starved and traumatized, her back leg a darkened stump with a single joint protruding. Unfortunately, during surgery, the remaining portion of her gangrenous rear leg had to be removed. But after a period of convalescence, Little Lady was adopted by a loving woman who, ironically, shares her same physical challenge. The fact is, Little Lady's happy ending is a rare occurrence. Her case got television coverage, but for too many animals who are unloved, deserted or even tortured, their stories end quietly and unhappily. This is why The Michigan Anti-Cruelty Society (MACS) needs your assistance. For over 57 years, they have been providing animal rescues, adoption services, cruelty investigations, as well as shelter for neglected animals. Your help is needed, happily not for Little Lady any longer, but for the thousands of animals that will come after her, whose stories you won't see on the evening news, but are every bit as painful and sad. If you'd like to help, just send us the coupon in this ad with your donation. God forbid you should have to go through what Little Lady did. So please help us to keep it from happening to any more animals.

WHAT THIS DOG WENT THROUGH WOULD KILL MOST PEOPLE

Yes, I would like to help. Here is My Donation Of \$15 \$25 \$50 \$100 \$200 Other. Please Make Check Payable To: Michigan Anti-Cruelty Society, 13369 Joseph Campan, Detroit, MI 48212. (313) 891-7108. Or Charge My: VISA, MasterCard, Exp.iration Date. Card Number. Signature. Name. Address. City, State, Zip. Date. The Michigan Anti-Cruelty Society is a non-profit organization funded by private contributions. All contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law. MSC 2316



Be Kind To Animals Week. May 3-9