

points of view

Parenting takes more than luck

'It's just your bad luck to be born into a family where people don't always know the right thing to do or say.'

Father to son in
"Doing Time on Maple Drive"
Fox TV Network movie



Judith Doner
Berne

the work of a parent in raising a child or children."

Frankly, I was surprised. "Parenting," as such, is a relatively new phenomenon — at least outside the therapeutic community. When I had my three children — in 1962, '66 and '69 — there were prenatal classes and then you were turned over to Dr. Spock.

MY FIRST ENCOUNTER was when, as a reporter, I covered the initial parenting classes offered through West Bloomfield Community Education back in 1978.

"We were the first people in the area to offer the S.T.E.P. (Systematic Training for Effective Parenting) program," said Faye Mapley, West Bloomfield community ed coordinator.

But, it didn't catch on right away.

"For years, dog obedience classes outregistered parenting," the ever-quotable Mapley said. Then, about a year ago, parenting pulled ahead.

This past term, 74 people were enrolled in the S.T.E.P. classes, while dog obedience topped out at 59 registrants. "Parents are out there looking for parent education," Mapley said.

These days they don't have far to look. Parenting instruction comes packaged as one-time workshops, weekly support groups or as a series of classes.

It is offered through schools, Families in Action groups, social service agencies, community centers, churches, synagogues and private counselors.

It ranges from free to reasonable, such as the "Parenting as a Profession" conference from 9 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. this Saturday at Birney Middle School in Southfield, sponsored by the Southfield Public Schools, the Southfield Education Association and Allied Signal Corp. The \$7 registration fee includes lunch. Babysitting is provided for ages 3-12 for a \$4 fee.

SOON, THERE WILL be a new

venue.

A synagogue, Congregation Shaarey Zedek, is building a full-fledged parenting center expected to open this September in West Bloomfield.

Parenting classes and support groups will be available to the community at large.

"These are very unusual times," says Leonard Baruch, executive director of the Southfield-based congregation. "People are having tremendous problems. You see it out in the general community every day. Support mechanisms for families just don't exist anymore. It's very apparent that we have to strengthen the family unit."

Even when times weren't so unusual, we could have been better parents with the kind of guidance now available. Being informed gives parents a road map instead of forcing them to drive aimlessly over uncharted territory.

Now, thank goodness, good parenting doesn't have to rely on luck.

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

from our readers

Let's crack down on porn

To the editor:

I want to thank the citizens of Farmington Hills who complained about the obscenity being sold and rented at video stores, and also police Chief William Dwyer for his quick response to the situation.

Although not Farmington Hills residents, we face the same movies being sold and rented in Livonia. Today many video stores have "back rooms" or as Mr. Qasbat put it "separate rooms" to house their obscenity.

One local video store owner recently told me he was thinking of selling lingerie in his backroom.

It is time to strengthen the obscenity laws here in Michigan. Then we need to enforce them, before the video establishments go too far selling and renting these obscene and pornographic movies.

Cheryl S. Walker,
Livonia

WILL VIDEO tapes and "wired" recordings be admissible evidence? Will public confession at a teacher's meeting be enough penance to re-enter the ranks of the good?

Fortunately, teachers have come a long way to shed themselves of the burden of being treated differently than any other group. Students have never responded favorably to teachers "preaching" or moralizing about an individual's habits or beliefs.

Indeed student smoking in school lavatories continues despite costly control measures, a fact worth further review.

Finally, teachers do know the difference between drinking a beer or having a smoke on their break.

Rather than trying to equate drinking with smoking and otherwise encourage and harass people not to smoke, I suggest that you work toward declaring tobacco a harmful, illegal substance, to be prohibited everywhere. Period.

Laurence Niblett,
Farmington Hills

Tobacco should be prohibited

To the editor:

Your March 12 editorial against smoking on school property, which sprawls like a new test for teacher accountability: Does she/he or does she/he not smoke in the smoking lounge?

The proposal is fascinating. What if a teacher feels that having a smoke, obeying the rules, is no one else's business? What if a teacher never "preaches the ills" of smoking to her/his classes which are consumed by math, science, English, etc. as curricula?

What if teachers are pitted against each other, the good versus the bad, the correct versus the incorrect, in terms of judgement by principals, parents, students, and board members?

Which brings us to the tantalizing question of enforcement. Will principals learn at seminars how to grill suspected offenders to gain the truth?

A reader's speedy reply

To the editor:

I suppose you have to write something for the paper, even if you don't believe it. But the March 12 editorial on the expressway speed limit was a bummer.

The use of the word "we" when expressing an opinion indicates you are either pregnant or you are stating a collective opinion. I doubt if either is true.

The expressway may have been designed with speeds of 60-plus, but the ability of drivers does not keep up with the higher speeds.

Have you driven the expressways lately? It's scary now when everyone is going 70. As far as I know, they only give tickets now for over 80. If they make 60 or 65 legal, everyone will be going 60-plus.

You take your life in your hands to gain a couple of minutes.

I am in favor of taking the radar photos. Fine all the lead-footed cowboys or get them off the road.

Bill Cardwell,
Farmington Hills

Find new school funding source

WHAT'S GOING ON? Internationally, the U.S. is in a trade war with Japan the likes of which we haven't seen since just before World War II. Nationally, our battered economy talpains. School dropout rates in our core cities and many of our rural areas approach 50 percent. As our nation population proliferates, millions of young Americans aren't being prepared to earn a living.

Here at home in Michigan, General Motors closes our Willow Run plant to save one in Texas, throwing thousands more of us out of work and pitting Americans against Americans in competition for jobs.

In a state where historic Willow Run once housed the Arsenal of Democracy (remember the B-52 bombers and Rosie the Riveter?), crack and carjack killings and boarded-up houses abound. (This is true now not only in Detroit and Southeast Michigan, but in many other parts of the country.) Also our inter-city transit system is tangled in economic and political trouble.

political trouble.

IN THE MIDST of this turmoil, Michigan has drastically cut social services. It has also enacted the "Robin Hood" bill for wealthy out-of-formula school districts which potentially produce many of the young leaders whose skills will be needed to save the state and the nation. And "Robin Hood" can't even begin to appreciate help the poorer districts it was clumsily designed for.

Rochester and Waterford have been hit particularly hard. Last year as Rochester's assistant superintendent, I was the reluctant architect of a pay-for-play athletic program and several other cost-saving cuts such as the elimination of all department heads, a reduction in assistant principal time and teacher layoffs that escalated class sizes. I also sacrificed the remainder of my own career to premature retirement to save the jobs of some of my top staff.



John
Telford

But my personal sacrifice was like a straw in the wind. Robin Hood — and a property tax freeze plus contemplated legislation seeking districts with social security and retirement costs — will now cause even more unconscionable cuts in Rochester. If an April 6 millage request fails.

In 1991 I chaired tense, 10-hour meetings where good people battled bitterly over who and what should stay or go. The same bitter battles have been fought there with even greater grimness again this year. Rochester could lose an incredible total of \$17.7 million since the 1990-91 fiscal year.

ROCHESTER, Waterford and other district like them aren't at fault for their plight. The fault lies with myopic "Robin Hood" legislators who merrily continue to steal kids' futures. You parents out there from both in-formula and out-of-formula districts had better band together to stop "the merry men" right now with letters and picketing in Lansing.

Otherwise, they're going to keep on chopping down all the tall trees in this contemporary version of "Sherwood Forest" without measurably nurturing the short ones. On a national scope, we've got to get rid of property tax funding for schools and tap income taxes instead.

What's going on? The educational short-changing of every child in Michigan and millions of other children in America is what's going on. And children who are themselves short-changed won't ever be able to change this battered world for the better.

"MOTIVATE WHEN YOU DONATE"

Help us help those in need
by donating your used car, boat, real estate
for charitable purposes.

CALL 373-9000
VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA



Get Exactly The
Sofa You Want
At The
Best Sale Price
Of The Year
From \$699

We know it's impossible to satisfy everyone's tastes with a limited selection. That's why we offer hundreds of styles and fabrics for endless, one-of-a-kind possibilities. And right now, Norwalk is offering us factory discounts that we are passing on to you. You'll save up to 25% every Norwalk sofa, chair, sectional, sleeper, and recliner during our Factory-Authorized Sale. And, with each purchase, you'll receive a one-year subscription to your choice of magazines — PEOPLE Magazine or House Beautiful for more decorating ideas for your home.

Save 25 to 40%
on Special Orders

Come in soon this
Sale won't last long!

Custom Made Just For You

Choose From Over 700 Styles

Choose From Over 700 Fabrics

Delivered In Just 35 Days

Brent FURNITURE

1914 Telegraph Road, Bloomfield Hills • 338-7716
Just north of Carl's Golf and 1/2 mile north of Square Lake

ULTIMATE SPRING



SALE FOR WOMEN

Ultimately, you want a sale where you decide what's on sale, like our Ultimate Spring Sale. You save 20% when you purchase any combination of 2 suits, dresses, coats or blazer & bottom outfits in our entire women's department. You'll also save 20% on each blouse, shirt or accessory purchased to complete your new outfits. If you purchase 3 or more suits, dresses, coats or blazer & bottom combinations, you save 25% on the apparel and the finishing pieces. Sale ends April 11.

GRAHAM & GUNN

Somerset Mall
2841 W. 11th Hwy, Bloomfield Hills, Mich.
48304-7003

Total Test Preparation
SAT • ACT
LSAT • GMAT • GRE • MCAT

Small classes • Free diagnostic testing
Permanent facility • Qualified directors and instructors
Great Score Improvements

THE
RONKIN
EDUCATIONAL GROUP

Bloomfield Hills
3630 W. Maple • In the Village Knoll Center
(313) 642-0710

LOST OUR LEASE
SALE

"CLEAN UP WHILE WE CLEAR OUT"
STORE-WIDE SALE 25-75% OFF

Silvers FURNITURE
GIFTS • OFFICE PRODUCTS • FURNITURE

TEL-TWELVE MALL, SOUTHFIELD ONLY