

# Open house not the answer

By R.J. KINO  
STAFF WRITER

Most every home-seller has gone through the motions of cleaning and scrubbing kitchen floors in preparation for an open house, but is all that elbow grease worth it?

According to a recent survey by the National Association of Realtors, just 3 percent of people who bought existing homes said they first found them through an open house.

"That number is a little low for us because we have a lot of first-time home-buyers who attend open houses," said John Cole, broker/owner of Century 21 John Cole Realty Inc. in Redford. "But open houses are just one piece of the overall marketing strategy."

"Open houses offer potential buyers the opportunity to examine a home with a Realtor to see how it fits their needs. But we also market homes through advertising, signs, networking throughout the real estate office and the multiple listing service."

## Not a total waste

Some real estate agents report that while open houses may be not pan out for their customers,

they do bring in new business. A drawback is that a particular house, but a real estate agent can find one that suits their needs.

According to the NAR report "The Homebuying and Selling Process," real estate agents continue to be the most important information source for homebuyers, though such contact is declining.

"It should be noted that strong reliance on personally contacting real estate professionals is slipping, according to information previously reported in NAR's home buying and selling studies," said the recent report.

In the 1989 study, 78 percent (of buyers) reported relying on real estate professionals for information, while in the recent study (1991), that number dropped to 63 percent. At the same time, the percentage of home-buyers who rely on newspapers has significantly increased, from 41 to 58 percent.

Still, in a steady market, or one that is predicated on weather, open houses may be more effective, but with a fairly quick sale the seller may not notice. In leaner times, especially in the winter, open houses may be a

drawback.

"That survey may not be an exact science, because you may have seen an open house while driving around but waited until later to call the listing agency," said Mary Ann Grawi, manager of the Real Estate One office in Farmington Hills.

"I would say between 7 and 8 percent of our home sales start out due to open houses. People like to see what they're buying and we've been much more accommodating in recent years in holding open houses on Saturdays and during the week."

## Exposure is key

Grawi added that marketing a home is no different from a business that pushes a product through advertising, charity sponsorships or telemarketing. The trick is to expose a product or house to as many potential buyers as possible in the shortest period of time.

Still, repetition is not always the answer. A house held open Sunday after Sunday may begin to look like a loser and draw under-priced bids. Neighbors, who often answer questions from potential buyers, may begin to wonder as well. What's more, for people who live in outlying

areas, an open house may not draw many prospects.

To boost interest, such sellers may consider invitation-only showings or networking with other open houses in the area. The latter option can be even more effective if sellers exchange information, leaving a write-up of their home with surrounding neighbors in return for a stack of similar leads to hand out if potential buyers do breeze through.

In searching for a real estate agent, the NAR recommends people ask relatives, friends and neighbors for referrals or visit open houses and judge for themselves. An agent who butters people up instead of showing off the home may only be interested in closing a sale. But an agent who shows off the home, researches the neighborhood, the school system, public services and financing options, is the best candidate for the job, writes Carolyn Janik, author of "How To Sell Your Home in the '90s" (Penguin Books, \$9.95).

"You always have to be innovative and accommodating," said Grawi. "Anything we can do to help sell a home is crucial. We will go the extra step and that's what we train our agents to do."

# Association controls what goes in yard

I have purchased a home in my subdivision and installed a satellite dish in my side yard, which is clearly visible from the front of the house. Nine of the 800 homes in our subdivision already have dishes, eight are in the back yard and one is on the side. The subdivision has not taken any action against the people who have put dishes in their back yards. What are their chances of prevailing in an action against me?



ROBERT M. MEISNER

In a recent Florida decision on facts similar to yours, the court held that the association could pursue its "absolute and exclusive" right to refuse to approve plans that it deems unsuitable or

undesirable for any reason, including purely aesthetic reasons.

That the association did not pursue the back-yard dishes was not substantial evidence of selective or arbitrary enforcement. Depending on your restrictions, it would appear that it is at least a close question whether or not the association will be able to prevail in this matter.

You should have sought the approval of the association before you installed the dish.

Robert M. Meisner is a Birmingham attorney concentrating his practice in the areas of condominiums, real estate and corporate law. You are invited to submit topics you would like to see discussed in this column by writing Robert M. Meisner at 30200 Telegraph Road, Suite 487, Birmingham Farms 48025. This column provides general information and should not be construed as legal opinion. To leave a voice mail message for Robert Meisner, dial 953-2047, mail box 1871.



BUY U.S. SAVINGS BONDS

# CLASSIFIED REAL ESTATE

THE Observer & Eccentric NEWSPAPERS

## CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

REACH MICHIGAN'S FINEST MARKET



Where You Will Find...

Autos For Sale	SECTIONS	G
Help Wanted	SECTIONS	F, G
Home & Service Guide	SECTIONS	F
Merchandise For Sale	SECTIONS	G
Real Estate	SECTIONS	D, E
Rentals	SECTIONS	E



DIAL CLASSIFIED DIRECT

Wayne County	591-0900
Oakland County	644-1070
Rochester/Rochester Hills	852-3222
Fax Your Ad	953-2232

## Deadlines

For Placing, cancelling or correcting of line ads.

Publication Day	Deadline
MONDAY ISSUE:	5 P.M. FRIDAY
THURSDAY ISSUE:	5 P.M. TUESDAY

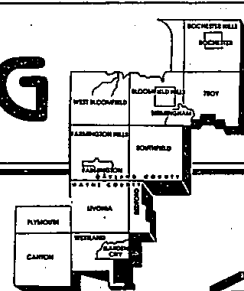
FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION ON OPEN HOUSES - CALL:

**HOMELINE**  
953-2020

OFFICE HOURS:

8:00 A.M.-5:30 P.M.  
MONDAY-FRIDAY

AFTER HOURS:  
Use Our 24-Hour  
Voice Mail System



EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

Ask About  
**AD SITTER**  
Your very own talking classified ad and make matters service.

All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status or national origin or intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination." This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwelling advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis.

## INDEX OF CLASSIFICATIONS

### HOME & SERVICE GUIDE

# 1-999  
An alphabetical directory of all your service needs. See Above For Section.

### REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

# 300-364

- 301 Open Houses
- 302 Birmingham-Bloomfield
- 303 W. Bloomfield/Kearney-Orchard Lake
- 304 Farmington-Farmington Hills
- 305 Brighton, Hartland, Howell
- 306 Southfield-Lathrup
- 307 South Lyon, Miford, Highland
- 308 Rochester-Troy
- 309 Royal Oak-Cadillac Park
- 310 Huntington Woods
- 311 Westland-Commerce Lakes Area
- 312 Oakland County Homes
- 313 Livonia
- 314 Canton
- 315 Plymouth
- 316 Northville-How
- 317 Farmington-Farmington City
- 318 Dearborn-Dearborn Heights
- 319 Grosse Pointe
- 320 Homes-Wayne County
- 321 Homes-Livington County
- 322 Homes-Macomb County
- 323 Homes -
- 324 Westland County
- 325 Other Suburban Homes
- 326 Real Estate Services
- 327 New Home Builders
- 328 Duplexes & Townhouses
- 329 Apartments for Sale
- 330 Mobile Homes
- 331 Northern Property
- 334 Out Of Town Property

### COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL

SALE OR LEASE  
# 365-378

- 365 Business Opportunities
- 366 Office Business Space Sale/Lease
- 367 Business & Professional Buildings Sale/Lease
- 368 Commercial/Retail
- 369 Industrial/Warehouse Sale or Lease
- 370 Income Property
- 371 Industrial/Commercial Vacant Property
- 372 Investment Property

### REAL ESTATE RENTALS

# 400-436

- 400 Apartments
- 401 Furniture Rental
- 402 Furnished Apartments
- 403 Rental Agency
- 404 Houses
- 405 Rent Option to Buy
- 406 Property Mgmt.
- 407 Mobile Homes
- 408 Duplexes
- 409 Pools
- 410 Townhouses/Condominiums
- 411 Time Share
- 412 Southern Rentals
- 413 Condos
- 414 Homes
- 415 Duplexes & Townhouses
- 416 Rentals to Exchange
- 417 Mobile Home Stock
- 418 Rooming
- 419 Living Quarters to Share

### EMPLOYMENT/INSTRUCTION SERVICES

# 500-524

- 500 Help Wanted
- 501 Help Wanted - Dental/Medical
- 502 Help Wanted - Office/Clerical
- 503 Food - Beverages
- 504 Help Wanted Sales
- 505 Help Wanted Part Time
- 506 Help Wanted Domestic
- 507 Help Wanted Couples
- 508 Entertainment
- 509 Job Wanted Male/Female
- 510 Elderly Care & Assistance
- 511 Summer Camps
- 512 Education/Institutions
- 513 Nursing Care
- 514 Secretarial Business Services
- 515 Professional Services
- 516 Attorney/Legal Counseling
- 517 Tax Service

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

# 600-614

- 600 Personal
- 601 Wedding Chapels
- 602 Lost & Found (By the word)
- 603 Health, Nutrition, Weight Loss
- 604 Health/Insurance/Meetings/Seminars
- 605 Local Notices
- 607 Insurance
- 608 Transportation/Travel

- 609 Brides
- 610 Cards of Thanks
- 611 In Memoriam
- 612 Death Notices
- 613 Personal Services (Just West of Main Drive)

### MERCHANDISE

# 700-736

- 700 Auction Sales
- 701 Collectibles
- 702 Antiques
- 703 Crafts
- 704 Furniture Sale/Free Markets
- 705 Wearing Apparel
- 706 Garage Sale - Oakland County
- 707 Garage Sale - Wayne County
- 708 Household Goods - Oakland County
- 709 Household Goods - Wayne County
- 710 Misc. for Sale - Oakland County
- 711 Misc. for Sale - Wayne County
- 712 Appliances
- 713 Bicycles
- 714 Business & Office Equipment
- 715 Computers
- 716 Commercial/Industrial Equipment
- 717 Lawn, Garden, Farm & Snow Equipment
- 718 Building Materials
- 719 Hot Tubs, Spas & Pools
- 720 Farm Products - Flowers, Plants
- 721 Hospital Equipment
- 722 Hobbies - Coins, Stamps
- 723 Jewelry
- 724 Cameras and Supplies
- 725 Musical Instruments
- 726 Video Games, Tapes
- 727 VCR, TV, Stereo, Tape Decks
- 728 CB Radios, Cellular Phones
- 729 Sporting Goods/Exercise Equipment
- 730 Trade or Sell
- 731 Wanted to Buy
- 732 Absolutely Free-Monday only

### PETS/LIVESTOCK

# 738-749

- 738 Household Pets
- 740 Pet Services
- 744 Horses, Livestock Equipment

### AUTOMOTIVE RECREATIONAL VEHICLES

# 800-884

- 800 Recreational Vehicles
- 802 Snowmobiles
- 804 Airplanes
- 805 Boat Docks, Marinas
- 806 Boats/Motors
- 807 Boat Parts & Service
- 808 Vehicle/Boat Storage
- 810 Insurance, Motor
- 812 Motorcycles, Go-Karts, Minibikes
- 813 Motorcycles, Parts & Service
- 814 Campers/Motorhomes/Trailers
- 815 Auto/Truck, Parts & Leasing
- 816 Auto Rentals, Leasing
- 818 Auto Financing
- 820 Autos Wanted
- 821 Junk Cars Wanted
- 822 Trucks for Sale
- 823 Vans
- 824 Jeeps/4 Wheel Drive
- 825 Sports & Imported
- 826 Classic Cars
- 845 American Motors
- 855 Eagle
- 856 Buick
- 858 Cadillac
- 860 Chevrolet
- 862 Chrysler
- 864 Dodge
- 866 Ford
- 868 Geo
- 869 Honda
- 870 Lincoln
- 872 Mercury
- 875 Nissan
- 876 Oldsmobile
- 878 Plymouth
- 880 Pontiac
- 881 Saturn
- 882 Toyota
- 884 Volkswagen

## WE ACCEPT



## PLEASE CHECK YOUR AD

The Observer & Eccentric will issue credit for typographical or other errors only on the first insertion of an advertisement. If an error occurs, the advertiser must notify the Customer Service Department in time to correct the error before the second insertion.

## POLICY

All advertising published in The Observer & Eccentric is subject to the conditions stated in the applicable rate card, copies of which are available from the Advertising Department, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia, MI 48150, (313) 591-2300. The Observer & Eccentric reserves the right not to accept an advertiser's order. Observer & Eccentric Ad-Takers have no authority to bind this newspaper and only publication of an advertisement shall constitute final acceptance of the advertiser's order.