

POINTS OF VIEW

New mix of businesses brings more people to town

I'm shrinking, I'm shrinking. This is no fairy tale, as when Al-ico goes from life-size to pintsize.

This is what's happening to Birmingham's retail district — the classic downtown of south Oakland County. You have to go north to Rochester to find another.

And you know what, it's not all bad.

Offices and restaurants are going into spaces that were previously retail — bringing more people to town to utilize the solid base of shopping that remains.

Practically as you read this, Century 21 Town & Country real estate is celebrating the grand opening of its new Birmingham office — in the former

Chudlik's store on Brown Street which closed its doors almost two years ago.

Meanwhile, Weir Manuel Snyder & Ranke really is expanding its South Woodward office into what was formerly Today's Bride. That quaint building has been empty since a lawsuit was filed by hundreds of brides, whose orders remained unfilled as their wedding day approached.

Weir Manuel will keep its major sales office around the corner on South Woodward, but will gain room as it moves its support services to the Today's Bride building. They've been in the same spot since 1950. "We have been crumming for years," said Mark Thomas, Weir Manuel president.



JUDITH DONER BERNE

Offices and restaurants are going into spaces that were previously retail — bringing more people to town to utilize the solid base of shopping that remains.

The symbol of a shaky Birmingham shopping district has been the vacant corner of Maple and Park (Ring Road), where Alma's Stereo once stood. Empty for four years, it will now house Pazzi Designs, an architectural firm moving from smaller quarters on Brownell.

They've carved a row of windows out of the stark brick wall to look out over Ring Road and allow the kind of light that architects need. It also opens up that area — an added bonus for the rest of us.

There are two new restaurants that also took over previous retail space. Elie's Middle East restaurant is lodged in the out-of-business Birmingham Bookstore's former slot on Pierce; Sy Thai on Hamilton has brought Thai

food to the heart of Birmingham.

New and expanded law offices and brokerage firms continue their march to take up available space in plazas and malls, once designed for retail.

A group known as the Principal Shopping District now has the funds and program to market this new version of Birmingham.

If they can hunker down and retain the heart of this town — its one-of-a-kind shops, tens of art galleries and sleek eateries, together with a few quality chain stores, it will bode well for the whole metro area.

Judith Doner Berne is managing editor of the Eccentric Newspapers. She can be reached at 901-2563.

This education model stresses mastery of subjects

QUESTION: Outcome Based Education seems to be a hot issue in many states across the country, according to newspaper accounts. Is this something new? How does it differ from what has been going on in schools?

ANSWER: In theory, the Outcome Based Education (OBE) movement is very sound. An OBE curriculum basically states specific measurable learned outcomes in all subject areas, outcomes that a child is expected to master. Those who promote the theory believe education can no longer rely on the concept of a child's education being based solely on "time spent in class or school" (i.e., two years of math completed, three years of social studies.)

And really, credits toward graduation can be quite nebulous. Indeed, some high school teachers are getting hunchback carrying students through to graduation.

The model OBE program does not rely on typical symbols, such as S (Satisfactory), AA (above average) or NI (Needs Improvement) in the elementary or grades (ABDE) in high school.

An authentic Outcome Based program will have a testing (assessment) program that is aligned to the district's stated outcomes in each subject area. It measures whether or not a child has mastered a specific skill or objective such as subtracting mixed fractions. The child is usually expected to answer correctly three of four questions assessing for mastery.

Reporting systems

Many school districts talk about Outcome Based Education, but few if any used the classical OBE reporting system below.

Typical Report Card — Area: Math Concepts, Grade: S. OBE Report Card — Skill: Not Mastered, subtract mixed fractions.

Outcome Based Educators would say the S (Satisfactory) on our historical report card (above) doesn't identify the specific skills the child missed under Math Concepts. While an NM (Not Mastered) on the OBE report card (above) after a specific math skill immediately tells the teacher, the principal and the parent that this child can't subtract mixed fractions.

Therefore an S (Satisfactory) stu-



DOC DOYLE

dent, in today's reporting system, could literally go through the elementary system not mastering 90 percent or more of the specific math skills needed for success at the middle school level.

The same holds true with the middle school where the typical C can mean a child has not mastered 30 percent of the skills in a particular math class.

The OBE people would ask of the C grade which math comprehension, computation or problem solving skills were missed (not mastered) and what is being done to see that the child masters those skills before moving him/her up the ladder toward graduation? That is, how is a parent to know which math

skills were missed in the math concept area if an S (Satisfactory) is all that the report card shows? Were the missed skills manipulation of three digit numbers, area of a triangle . . . don't know.

Subject mastery

A classic OBE report card would list every skill in the content (subject) area and consider mastery of a skill only when a child answers at least three of four questions measuring a particular skill.

Gov. Engler, of course, was moving into the mastery learning concept (OBE) when he announced that high school students will pass an essential (used to be called basic) skills state proficiency test in 1997 or not graduate. Frankly, I see nothing wrong with a state proficiency test. And if teachers think I'm laying it on them, they are wrong. When those moms and dads who have dumped their kids on the system find out that their kid isn't going to graduate, let's hope they show up for a teacher/parent conference and pay attention for a change.

Different educational leaders have different opinions on OBE. A national-

ly known friend of mine, Dr. Bill Spady, director of the International Center for Outcome Based Education says, "A unit of credit has nothing to do with what a child has absorbed or can demonstrate. With different outcomes expected in different classes and different standards in different buildings and in different districts, too many children graduate without the skills they need". And this is true!

Conversely, Dr. Michael Apple, professor of education at the University of Wisconsin says, "While Outcome Based Education has some good points, I am deeply worried about its hidden dangers."

"We're at a time when the conservative agenda is very powerful in education. More and more schools are being treated like factories where "inputs and output" are measured against in light of the "total needs of the child."

So here we go again. Educators never seem to be able to agree! Dr. Spady wants measured outcomes while the warm, kindly professor, Dr. Apple, wants the Gestalt theory in place, that is; looking at person in totality and not only as a learner but a social, psychological human being with other needs.

ANTIQUÉ DOLLS
Up to 20% OFF
on Key's exquisite collection of antique & collectible dolls thru 11/13/93.
China • Bisque • Compo
Unusual Hard Plastics
Disc • Mod. Alexanders
Shirley Temple • Terri Lee
Sonia Hette & more!
A Very Special Gift!
The Doll Hospital & Toy Soldier Shop
3947 W. 12 Mile • Dearborn • 483-3115
Mon. & Sat. 10-5:30; Thu. & Fri. 10-8; Sun. 12-4

BLINDS DIRTY?
YOU SHOULD CALL US
COMMERCIAL • RESIDENTIAL
Verticals • Mini-Blinds
Venetians • Cloth & P.V.C. etc.
Ultra Sonically Cleans & Presses, Sanitizes & Disinfects
Static Proofing, Lubricates
Working Mechanisms
Introductory Offer
FREE BLIND CLEANING
Get the 5th blind up to 60" AT NO CHARGE
WITH THE 2nd
Alexander's Blind Cleaning
Fully Insured - On Site Mobile Service
1-800-254-6344

CURIO Cabinet
SPECIAL \$279.88
REG. \$474
• Available in cherry or oak
• Mirrored back and bottom shelf
• Beveled glass front
• Lighted interior
• 22" w. x 15" d. x 71" h.
FREE DELIVERY
Layaway Available
Laurel FURNITURE, INC.
3141 Van Alden Road • Plymouth, MI 48170
(313) 453-7700
Open Mon. - Sat. 10am - 6pm • Sun. 12am - 5pm

CHRISTMAS MAGIC STORES NOW OPEN

TRIMS
LIGHTS
WREATHS
GARLANDS
NATIVITIES
SNOW BABIES & SNOW VILLAGE
-BY DEPT. 56-
FONTANINI
ELEGANT TREES

Westside North Main

Laurel Park Place
3700 W. Six Mile Rd.
(next to Winkelman's)
Livonia
953-2660

Troy Commons
821 E. Big Beaver
(near Jacobsons Clearance Center)
Troy
524-0087

Display Creations
1515 Astor Rd.
(By Maple & Coolidge)
Commercial
Troy
435-2309

PLAY IT SAFE WITH METRO COMMUNICATIONS & AMERITECH CELLULAR

Be prepared for any road emergency that may come your way — with Metro Communications. We'll help you find the exact Ameritech Cellular service plan to fit your needs.

Finding the right Ameritech Cellular service plan is as easy as finding your way to METRO COMMUNICATIONS. Because nobody knows the advantages of the many Ameritech Cellular service plans better than METRO COMMUNICATIONS.

And nobody is more qualified to help you find the exact service plan to best suit your needs. So stop by METRO COMMUNICATIONS and ask about Ameritech Cellular service. You'll find you've come to the right place.

Motorola flip phone model AC-PCH (F09HLD)
Includes: Heavy Duty Battery & Charger
OWN IT FOR ONLY... \$149.00

Motorola transportable cellular telephone Model AC-2250L (S3230A)
OWN IT FOR ONLY... \$4.95

• NO PROGRAMMING FEES • NO HIDDEN COSTS • Program expires 12/31/93

OR RECEIVE 300 SERVICE CREDIT WHEN YOU CONVERT TO AMERITECH FROM YOUR CURRENT CARRIER

Call for details (313) 534-9350
METRO COMMUNICATIONS CO.
24350 Capitol St. • Redford, MI 48239

Ameritech Cellular Dealer
New line activation required. Other restrictions may apply.