



JONI HICKLE/Photo

Relay for Life

Above, hundreds of participants walked the Bloomingdale High School track for 18 hours, raising more than \$108,000 for the American Cancer Society. At right, South Brandon Relay for Life chairman Anthony Pursino opens the March 12 event at Bloomingdale High School. See story, page 3.



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Cheryl Kehrymeyer steps down

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John Moore residents, developer reach agreement see page 5

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Bloomingtondale Turns Out For Relay For Life

By D'ANN WHITE

In his second year as chairman for the South Brandon Relay for Life, Bloomingtondale East resident Anthony Pursino wasn't quite sure what to expect.

The year before, the relay was held at Riverview High School and a violent storm forced its cancellation a couple of hours into the 18-hour event.

This year, with the relay to be held at Bloomingtondale High School's football field and track, Pursino was keeping his fingers crossed that the weather would cooperate.

He breathed a sigh of relief when March 12 arrived with clear skies and crisp spring temperatures.

"It's perfect," said Pursino.

As was this year's relay, which attracted hundreds of residents who formed teams



D'ANN WHITE/Photo

The Bloomingtondale Homeowners Association formed a Relay for Life team for the first time. Among the walkers were Bloomingtondale Gazette executive director, Joe Liguori, and Pam Liguori, secretary for the BHA.

See RELAY, Page 22

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E-mail: Bloomingtondale.Homeowners@Verizon.net

Web Site: www.BloomingtondaleGazette.com

BHA meetings are at the community office on the 1st Monday of each month at 7 p.m.

- President — Ted Grable
- Vice President — Joe Hickle
- Treasurer — Pam Liguori
- Director — Tony Diolosa
- Director — Steve Heckel
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- Director — Michele Caballer
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- Vice President — Russell Jones
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Fax: (813) 651-1129

E-Mail: News@BloomingtondaleGazette.com or dwhite2@mediageneral.com

Executive Director — Joe Liguori

Editor — D'Ann White

Correspondent — Mack Austin

Correspondent — Leslie White

Restaurant Critic — Elton Dumont

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Residents, Developer Agree On John Moore Development

By D'ANN WHITE

It began as a controversial proposal, evoking some heated debate between residents and developers.

But that wasn't apparent at the March 15 zoning hearing master hearing, where the proposal to rezone 38 acres at the southwest corner of Bloomingdale Avenue and John Moore Road barely made a ripple in Zoning Hearing Master John Crislip's heavy agenda.

The reason for the accord between developers and residents, said Ryan Christopher Rodems, a resident and attorney representing the residents, was the developers' willingness to negotiate and the residents' insistence that they be a part of the process.

"There have been a lot of meetings, a lot of work," he said. "All of the people I represent have spent countless hours at no compensation meeting with the applicant, meeting county staff and discussing, arguing, fighting, pushing and pulled."

The result, said Rodems, is a proposal that includes nearly every condition the residents requested.

The Barclay Group plans to rezone the wooded pasture on the corner to allow 32,000 square feet of commercial and office space on a 5.7-acre parcel along Bloomingdale, including a CVS Pharmacy. As part of the same rezoning, Sunrise Homes is asking to build 49 single-family homes on the 29.57 acres abutting the Bloomingdale parcel.

Last year, residents organized under the name UNDO (United Neighbors Dedicated Opposition) and successfully fought two proposals for these properties, one to rezone 42.5 acres for 125 homes and another to rezone 5.9 acres for 22,000 square feet of commercial and office space.

The Hillsborough County Commission turned down both requests, citing compatibility and traffic concerns.

This time, said UNDO member Jeannette Figari, the residents were able to reach

an agreement with developers on just about every concern, including how traffic will be handled. "We went through a great deal of detail and scrutiny by the UNDO group," said Vin Marchetti, the land-use attorney representing the Barclay Group and Sunrise Homes. "We knew we had to work with the UNDO group and satisfy their requirements and, I'll tell you at the end, it worked out fine."

As a result, he said his clients have agreed to a number of conditions. There will be only one access on John Moore from the single-family development. The developer will turn the emergency traffic signal in front of the fire station on Bloomingdale Avenue into a full signal and build a 436-foot right-turn lane on Bloomingdale to provide additional capacity. In addition, the developers will modify the traffic light at John Moore and Bloomingdale and build dual left-turn lanes on John Moore. As requested by residents, the developers also will build a concrete median at the commercial driveway on John Moore to prevent left turns. Cars will be able to make right-in and right-out turns only.

In all, said Marchetti, the developers will spend more than \$300,000 to make road improvements on John Moore and Bloomingdale.

In addition, they've agreed to prohibit fast-food restaurants and convenience stores and restrict hours of operation with the exception of the CVS pharmacy, which will operate 24 hours.

The developers also have agreed to incorporate architectural details, similar to the Lithia Crossing shopping center on Lithia-Pinecrest Road, and use only monument-style signs.

The development will include a 35-foot landscape buffer along the commercial development at John Moore Road and a 15-foot buffer with a 6-foot wall along the residential portion. Sunrise's homes will be built on 11,500-square-foot lots at a density of

1.49 units per acre.

Rodems said those conditions were important to the residents. "We don't want liquor stores on this. We don't want porn shops. We don't want people fixing cars there," he said. "This is a very elegant corner as it is now, and with what the applicant has proposed, we're getting the best possible commercial development that I think we could get, or I wouldn't stand up here and endorse it."

But not everyone was completely satisfied. Butler Road resident John Fenn urged the county to take the road improvements a step further by adding right-turn lanes on John Moore Road so drivers don't have to wait for the light to change. "What I'm suggesting is that the county donate or give or make available to the developer this land that is needed for a right-turn lane and that the developer construct it at his expense as he's

constructing the rest of the road improvements all at once," said Fenn. "I think it would be a crime to spend \$300,000 on road improvements and leave out a few thousand more to do this at the same time."

But Marchetti called the suggestion "asinine." He said the developer is already going way beyond what is required in county codes and that county transportation staff said the exclusive right-turn lane on John Moore would only "slightly improve" turning traffic.

"This improvement should be placed on the public works department intersection improvement list for analysis, ranking and implementation," Marchetti said. "I do not think this should be required of the applicant."

The rezoning is scheduled to go before the Hillsborough County Commission April 27 for a final hearing.

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Meet Your Neighbors

Candidate To Host Bloomingdale Coffees

**Arlene Waldron
and Valerie Wilkerson**

By D'ANN WHITE

Here's a chance to meet your neighbors, literally.

Bloomingdale resident Arlene Waldron and Parkland Estates East resident Valerie Wilkerson will share coffee and conversation with Bloomingdale residents on the first and third Monday of the month at 8 a.m. at the Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road, behind the Citgo service station.

Waldron, branch market manager at BankAtlantic in Brandon, is running for the District 62 Florida House seat being vacated by Johnnie Byrd, R-Plant City.

District 62 includes all of Bloomingdale.

Wilkerson, a financial sales representative at SunTrust Bank on Bell Shoals Road, is a campaign volunteer.

The two met last year at a meeting of the newly formed Brandon Republican Women Federated.

"Arlene was one of the first people who introduced herself to me," said Wilkerson. "I didn't really know anyone, and she really made me feel comfortable."

A Tallahassee native, Wilkerson grew up in a home that strictly voted the Democratic



D'ANN WHITE/Photo

Valerie Wilkerson, left, and District 62 state House candidate Arlene Waldron of Bloomingdale will meet with residents at the Bloomingdale Community Office.

ticket.

"So naturally I voted the same way," said Wilkerson.

But after marrying her husband, James, a Navy lieutenant commander, living in Maine for five years and having two children, James, 11, and Lauren, 9, Wilkerson said she began to realize she was more conservative than she thought.

"I discovered I was really more in line with Republican values," she said. "I know it's not common for a black woman to be a Republican, but I'm not ashamed. Hopefully my involvement will bring other Republicans out of the closet."

Waldron said Wilkerson was just the person she wanted to have working on her campaign.

"She's friendly, a great communicator," said Waldron. "I'm proud to have her on my campaign."

And Wilkerson added that Waldron is just the person she'd like to have in Tallahassee representing her. She said that's why she volunteered to work on her campaign, although she's never been particularly politically active before.

"It's more than her credentials. I was very impressed with what she had to say and how she's herself no matter

who she's talking to," said Wilkerson.

Wilkerson added that she believes it's time that Brandon is represented in the House, noting that the last two representatives, Johnnie Byrd and Buddy Johnson, hailed from Plant City. But with redistricting, the majority of residents in District 62 live in the Brandon-Valrico area, she said.

"We plan to settle here so I thought it was important to get more involved and help get people voted into office who can make things happen," she said. "With 5,000-plus homes, Bloomingdale is very important in this election."

As for getting involved in a political campaign, Wilkerson, who holds a master's degree in organizational management, said, "I'm learning as I go along."

It was her idea to host the bimonthly coffees.

"Being a resident here myself, I feel it's important for people to really get to know Arlene one on one, to see how much she really does care," she said. "I'd especially like to see teens come in and get more involved in the political process."

Waldron said she feels lucky to have Wilkerson and the other volunteers who have embraced her campaign.

"Many of them I've just met recently through Brandon Republican Women Federated," she said. "It's so exciting to see this groundswell of people getting involved and helping to shape the community's destiny."

She added that the coffees are something she plans to continue even after being elected to the House.

"Once I'm elected, I'll be the residents' voice and I need to know what they're thinking about issues such as transportation, education and health care for children."

Residents can meet with Waldron April 5 and 19.

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MACK AUSTIN/Photo

Under construction

Among the new developments being constructed along Bloomingdale Avenue between Bell Shoals Road and Lithia-Pinecrest is the Bloomingdale Professional Center just west of Bloomingdale High School. The center is offering 29,500 square feet of medical and general business space with offices ranging from 700 square feet to 9,800 square feet. The development also has approval for up to 6,000 square feet for a restaurant or retail store. For leasing information, call (863) 698-5022.

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Births

Dec. 30

Annalee Elizabeth Cooper, daughter of Jacqueline and Robert A. Cooper III of Centennial Falcon Drive.

Feb. 3

Abby Kathleen Panter, daughter of Beth and Brandon Panter of Buckner Road.

March 1

Cara Elizabeth Alexander, daughter of Susan and Mark Alexander of Allwood Avenue.

March 2

Hailey Elizabeth Vance, daughter of Kimberly and

Richard Vance of Bryan Valley Court.

March 10

Kameron Anthony Wozunk, son of Kimberly and Kenneth Wozunk of Pine Trace Circle.

March 13

Jaden Francis Boyd, son of Kristie Schoen-Boyd and Gerald Boyd of Arley Place.

March 17

Riley Kingsbury Rush, son of Taria and Steven L. Rush Jr. of Sawdust Court.

Calendar

Spring ballet

The Brandon Ballet will perform "Coppelia" as its spring performance April 17-18.

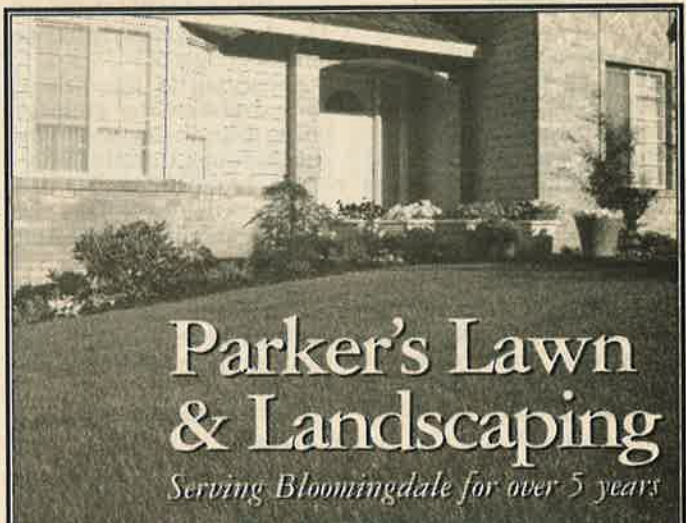
Bloomington resident Alice Holden Bock, the founding artistic director of The Brandon Ballet, describes the ballet as a "wonderful and endearing, but also humor-

ous and entertaining, ballet for the entire family."

Now in its 11th year, the spring ballet will take place April 17 at Riverview High School and April 18 at the Polk Theatre in Lakeland.

"It's a bout a girl who falls in love with a boy and there's a mad toy maker who makes

See CALENDAR, Page 23



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BHA Says Farewell To Director

By D'ANN WHITE
Editor

The resident who spear-headed Bloomingdale's PRIDE program has submitted her resignation from the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association board of directors.

Windsor Woods resident Cheryl Kehrmeyer said she handed in her resignation with a heavy heart.

"I loved being on the homeowners association board and working on the PRIDE program," she said.

But Kehrmeyer said she had a bigger priority, namely her children.

Kehrmeyer and her husband, Randall, have two sons, including the newest member of the family, Jacob Alec Kehrmeyer, born Aug. 5, less than 24 hours after his mother attended the monthly BHA meeting. Eleven days later, Kehrmeyer was loading trash for the Aug. 16 cleanup.

She said she gave her resignation reluctantly so she could spend more time with her children.

BHA President Ted Grable said he understood Kehrmeyer's reasons though he was sad to lose her as a board member and coordinator of the PRIDE program.

A member of the board for

more than a year, Kehrmeyer was the author and key cheerleader of the PRIDE program, which kicked off last April. PRIDE is an acronym for people revitalizing, improving, developing and enjoying our great community.

The idea was to give residents an opportunity to get rid of trash that may be cluttering their homes, garages and yards as well as encourage residents to spruce up their properties. In the process, the BHA hopes to give the aging community an increased sense of pride.

Since PRIDE began, hundreds of residents have gotten rid of tons of garbage including

old barbecues, unsightly fencing and swing sets in disrepair.

The program proved so successful that last fall the Hillsborough County Commission presented the BHA with a Neighborhood Recognition Award for best beautification program.

BHA Director Steve Heckel has agreed to coordinate the PRIDE program in Kehrmeyer's absence. The next cleanup is being planned for May, said Grable.

Anyone interested in filling the opening on the BHA board can contact the BHA office at 681-2051 or e-mail BloomingdaleHomeowners@Verizon.net.

Special Taxing District Trustees Wanted

By D'ANN WHITE
Editor

Residents who'd like a role in making decisions about Bloomingdale's common areas are invited to file to be a candidate for trustee of the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District in the 2004 election.

The seven-member board oversees the decision-making process regarding the lighting, landscaping, the maintenance of entryways and walls and general maintenance of Bloomingdale's common areas using budgeted funds

collected through a special tax from Bloomingdale residents. The district currently has an annual budget of \$475,200.

According to Tim Bridge, who oversees the county's taxing district elections for the Hillsborough County Supervisor of Elections Office, Bloomingdale will have five trustee openings in the Aug. 31 election.

"Bloomingdale's unusual because most of the taxing districts have three or four trustees up for election at any one time.

Bloomingdale has five one

year and two another year," said Bridge.

Trustees serve four-year terms.

Candidates must be registered voters and must be residents of Bloomingdale. Bridge said no experience is required.

Residents also must qualify by obtaining seven signatures on a petition. Residents can obtain filing forms by contacting Bridge at 272-5850. Forms also will be available through the BSTD.

The trustees meet the second Monday of each month at

7 p.m. at the Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Be Shoals Road.

In the meantime, BSTD President Thom Snelling accepted the resignation of trustee and recording secretary Alice Burlson who said she is giving up her spot on the board to pursue personal interests.

Bridge said the vacancy may be filled through a board appointment.

Anyone interested in filling the nine-month vacancy can contact the BSTD at 684-6667.

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Bloomingtondale Area Community Council Report

By MACK AUSTIN
Correspondent

The Bloomingtondale Area Community Council is made up of concerned residents from homeowners associations and neighborhoods in the community. They work directly with Community Resource Deputy Pete Maurer, Community Service Officer Sandy Capitano and other government representatives to coordinate plans and actions on community issues and concerns that will improve the quality of life in the community.

At the March meeting members welcomed guests Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office District IV shift officer Lt. Bob Spooner; property detectives Mark Wilder and Mike Sardone; white collar crime detective Tim Allen and District IV crime analyst Todd O'Hehir, also a Bloomingtondale West resident.

Community Resource Deputy Pete Maurer began the meeting by having the guests update the BACC on activities in the Bloomingtondale area and how they affect residents.

Wilder briefed council members on the importance of residents taking the necessary steps to prevent crimes. He noted that "too many residents are making it too easy for criminals by leaving their vehicles and homes open."

Sardone noted that many burglaries are not even reported and most of those that are involve property that has not been properly marked for identification.

Allen emphasized that residents must take steps necessary to protect their credit from criminals, some of whom have been arrested in Bloomingtondale.

Spooner said residents can do their part in preventing crimes by being alert and aware of activities in their neighborhoods and contact the sheriff's office's Crime Watch when they notice unusual activities.

Maurer added that cooperation between law enforce-



MACK AUSTIN/Photo

Guests at the March BACC meeting included, from left, District IV shift Lt. Bob Spooner, crime analyst Todd O'Hehir, Detective Mark Wilder, Detective Mike Sardone and Detective Tim Allen.

ment and residents provides a great deterrent to crime.

Additional topics discussed included:

- ♦ Current crime statistics in Bloomingtondale: Some types of crime are up but burglary detectives have solved several cases in Bloomingtondale.

- ♦ Safety project: Results of a recent warranty study by county traffic engineers at Natures Way and Culbreath Road showed this area did not warrant a three-way stop, although the BACC believes the intersection is unsafe. Members agreed to coordinate with the Bloomingtondale Homeowners Association, other homeowners associations in the area and residents to continue to pursue a solution.

- ♦ The crosswalk at the Bloomingtondale Little League and Campo Family YMCA; The markings and signs for this project have been completed. A work order for a traffic signal has been issued. Coordination with TECO for power is being completed.

- ♦ Maurer asked members to note June 7 on their calendars. Plans are under way for a joint BACC/BHA community meeting with Chief Deputy David Gee to identify the con-

cerns of residents.

Contact Maurer or Community Service Officer Sandy

Capitano at the Bloomingtondale Sheriff's Substation Sheriff's at 635-8040.

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Commentary

Intersection Near School Needs 3-Way Stop

By MACK AUSTIN

After several parents of students at Cimino Elementary School expressed their concern about the danger at the Culbreath Road/Natures Way intersection by Cimino Elementary, members of the Bloomingdale Area Community Council decided it was time to contact our county commissioner, Ronda Storms, for assistance.

With traffic in this area continuing to grow, the BACC agreed something needs to be done as soon as possible to improve safety for children and parents in this area.

The following letter was forwarded to Storms requesting her assistance:

"Members of the Bloomingdale Area Community Council held their monthly meeting March 18. One of the main topics of concern and discussion was the serious safety concern brought to the attention of our community resource deputy by many parents with children at Cimino Elementary School.

The intersection near Cimino Elementary where Culbreath Road and Natures Way meet is a major school crossing for Cimino Elementary students. Culbreath Road is a major access road to Bloomingdale Avenue for Bloomingdale residents living south of this intersection. It is also the most direct route used by



MACK AUSTIN/Photo

With increased traffic and more students enrolled at Cimino Elementary, the danger at the intersection of Natures Way and Culbreath Road near the school has increased significantly. The Bloomingdale Area Community Council is recommending that the county install a three-way stop to help control traffic and improve safety for the children.

Bloomingdale High students living in this area. The traffic on both Culbreath Road and Natures Way has significantly increased due to the growth in this area. Cimino Elementary has also had an increase in enrollment. Obtaining safe access to the school is a daily

challenge for the parents of Cimino students and for students walking to school.

The main safety issue involves controlling the increased traffic flow at this intersection. Controlling the flow of this traffic on a school day is nothing less than dangerous for the crossing guard. Children have to cross Culbreath Road, hoping traffic will stop, with only a one-way stop sign on Natures Way.

Many residents believe making this intersection a three-way stop would cause the traffic flow on Culbreath Road to slow down and stop, and thus provide the crossing guard with the restriction needed to better control the traffic. Protecting the children crossing Culbreath Road would significantly increase.

Previous traffic studies indicated that a three-way

stop was not warranted, based on statistics. When the children, heavy traffic and rushed drivers are mixed on a school morning, the reality of the danger is clear.

In 2000, you and your staff provided outstanding assistance in obtaining approval for the installation of a three-way stop at the intersection by Alafia Elementary, an intersection just like this intersection. We would appreciate your assistance in providing the children and the parents who utilize this area with the maximum safety measures. Your assistance and concern is greatly appreciated."

Concerned residents or parents are encouraged to write Storms and let her know their concerns and support for this recommendation. Her address is P.O. Box 1110, Tampa, 33601.

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Bloomingtondale Substation Notes

By Deputy Pete Maurer

License required for motor scooters

One of the most misunderstood vehicle regulations is the one that covers motorized scooters and skateboards. Go-peds and similar gadgets are considered motor vehicles under Florida law. Therefore, anyone operating one of them must be at least 16 years old and have at least a regular driving license.

However, the vehicles themselves do not have to be licensed or registered. This is where the confusion sets in. The law is designed to protect younger children who don't know traffic laws and rules and drive all over the place, in and out of traffic. This has proven to be dangerous and deadly.

Parents, before you purchase one of these vehicles, learn the rules and protect your children.

Move over - it's the law

A very important reminder for all drivers: when an emergency vehicle approaches, all other traffic must move to the nearest edge of the road, clear any intersection and stop until the emergency vehicle has passed.

Most new vehicles have good sound proofing so some drivers may not hear the emergency vehicles.

This is another reason for all drivers to pay close attention. Get into the habit of checking your mirrors and looking ahead and to the sides of your vehicle every few seconds.

Tunnel vision is common and can be deadly. The emergency workers may be responding to help you or someone you know.

Florida law also requires special actions when approaching a patrol car, fire truck or ambulance stopped in or near the roadway with its lights flashing.

On a multi-lane road, move your vehicles to the lane far-



MACK AUSTIN/Photo

When you see emergency vehicles approaching, Florida law requires that motorists pull over.

thest from the stopped emergency vehicle. On a two-lane road, if there is no extra lane, all traffic passing the emergency vehicle must slow to a speed of 20 mph less than the posted speed, or a top mph if the posted speed is 20 or less.

Special announcement

The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office is providing a temporary summer employee program for ages 14 years and older. Those selected will be paid a minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour while employed from June 7 to July 30.

Applications will be accepted in the sheriff's personnel processing section until April 9. Selected applicants will be notified by mail.

Temporary employment applications are included in Sheriff's order 9809.32 or can be obtained in the Personnel Processing Section.

Applications must include the following: a copy of a birth certificate, Social Security card, a copy of a high school diploma if applicable, a copy of a drivers license if applicable and the name of a person referring applicant if applicable.

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Restaurant Review

By Elton Dumont

Jordan's Porterhouse
 3345 Lithia Pincrest Road
 Valrico, FL 33594
 651-3552

Think of the three or four best steak restaurants in the Brandon-Valrico area. Well, this new entry has the potential of being one of your favorite three with a little more experience under its belt.

We went on a Friday night, which happened to be the restaurant's third night after opening. Because of the newness, there were some peaks and valleys, but I'm sure they will be corrected quite quickly.

The dining area was large and there is a full bar and plenty of outside patio dining. At this early date, beer, wine and mixed drinks were not yet available, so it was suggested we brown bag for now. I'm sure Albertson's and the surrounding retailers were happy for the bonus.

It was quite busy and we coincidentally ran into Monte and Luvy Queensbury and Longe and Lorne Wood, who were a few tables away from us.

We started with steamed black mussels in shallot butter and wine sauce (\$8). Other starters included the onion soup with gruyere cheese (\$6), crispy buttermilk calamari with roasted garlic aioli (\$9.50) and the crab cakes with grilled asparagus and a three-grain mustard (\$12).

Our mussels were good, but it was a tad lacking because so many of the shells were broken. The other table ordered the onion soup, which was excellent and flavorful but could have stood a tad more cheese, and the crab cakes, which they highly recommended.

The salad offerings included a spinach salad with white beans and warm bacon mustard dressing (\$8), seared Sonoma Valley duck breast salad with blueberry vinaigrette, yellow pea shoots and crispy duck skin (\$11).

I jumped right into the fresh catch. Atlantic salmon, Ahi tuna or grouper was available grilled, blackened, broiled or pan seared. I ordered the pan-seared salmon (\$17.50). It was perfect in taste and in presentation. The spaghetti squash was no ordinary vegetable - very good! I chose the papaya salsa topping over the chunky

olive tapenade and it was a satisfying change from anything I've ever had over salmon.

My wife had the 8-ounce fillet served over creamed spinach with roasted fingerling potatoes and baby carrots (\$21). To be safe, she asked for a steak knife, but our server assured her that the butter knife would be quite adequate. Boy, he was right! It was that tender and melted in your mouth.

The Queensburys and the Woods ordered the signature 20-ounce grilled porterhouse (\$29) and the Buffalo burger (\$10) and gave them both high marks.

Other entrees included a 10-ounce flat-iron steak with margarita marinade (\$17), a veal porterhouse with pomegranate glaze (\$28) and pork chop or lamb shank. Sauteed entrees included the crawfish pasta (\$14), chicken and goat cheese penne pasta (\$13.50), scallops and shrimp over a corn pudding with port wine reduction (\$22) or the Neapolitan ragu with meatballs, pancetta and linguine pasta.

We did differ on the salad. I had the Caesar, which offered a correct hint of anchovy paste with at least three differ-

ent types of lettuce, tomato and cucumbers. Luvy seemed to feel that the required hint of anchovy was missing, while my wife was positively wild about the raspberry vinaigrette.

The bread was a doughy pretzel-type with butter as well as rolls. My wife and I enjoyed this different type of roll, but once again, Luvy was less convinced.

All six of us agreed that the service was slow because of the newness and because they were quite up front in admitting that they didn't expect to be so busy so soon. It was also surprisingly noisy, so the idea of a romantic dinner might be a bit of a stretch. But I believe they can square these things away.

If their niche is to be between Outback and chasing Ruth Chris, they have a good start. Our total bill including tax and gratuity was \$64.

They are not open for lunch, and the server can offer you a child's menu. At this point, reservations will not be accepted.

Ratings based on five stars:

Food: ★ ★ ★ ★

Service: ★ ★ ★

Ambience: ★ ★ ★

Overall: ★ ★ ★ 1/2

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County Seeks Names For New Library

By D'ANN WHITE

Here's the chance to get in your 2 cents' worth.

Residents who would like to submit a name for consideration for the South Brandon Library are encouraged to contact the Hillsborough County Library Advisory Board.

Jacquelyn Zebos, manager for Hillsborough County Library Services, said the naming of the new library under construction on Bloomingdale Avenue will be on the agenda at the board's next policy and bylaws committee meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for April 22 at 2:30 p.m. at the John F. German Public Library, 900 N. Ashley Drive, Tampa.

Since it was first approved, South Brandon Library has been the working title for the new facility due to open in December. A permanent name has yet to be chosen. The advisory board is taking sug-

gestions from the community and then will make a recommendation to the Hillsborough County Commission, which will make the final decision.

In the past, library names reflected their locales, including the Brandon Regional Library, the Riverview Library and the 78th Street Library. However, in recent years the commission has begun to choose names that honor individuals, including the county's newest libraries, the Jan Platt Regional Library in South Tampa and the Jimmie B. Keel Regional Library in northwest Hillsborough County.

Among the names nominated is the McLean Library.

In the late 1800s, John Noel McLean homesteaded the property on Bloomingdale Avenue where the library is being built. His family sold the property for the library to the county and donated an additional acre for future expan-

sion.

McLean's granddaughter, Candi Martin, said she'd love to see her grandfather's name on the library because it would continue the family's legacy in the community, now in its sixth generation.

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association has asked that the name "Bloomingdale" be included so residents can immediately identify its location.

In the meantime, Bloomingdale resident Pat Boody said the South Brandon Friends of the Library is up and running. "We've got a real good group of 12 to 15 people who have been meeting monthly now," she said. "I've been very pleased with the response and interest."

The group has come up with a set of bylaws based on the national organization's model and expects to elect officers this month.

Boody, a 20-year librarian who now works at Tampa Electric Co., has been nominated for president, Charles Polstra for vice president and Emma Nystrom for corresponding secretary.

Boody said the friends group also will make plans to commemorate the library's opening in December and will plan fundraisers to pay for extras not furnished by the county including a flagpole, flag and outside benches.

The Friends of the Library is open to any resident. The membership fee for an individual is \$10 a year, a family \$25 a year, supporting member \$50 a year and patron member \$100 a year. Applications for membership are available on the library's Web site, www.thpl.org/thpl/board/. For more information, contact Patricia Boody at pwboody@tecoenergy.com.

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Children's Boutique Offers Unique Items

By JOYCE MCKENZIE
Correspondent

Last year, Bloomington resident Bernadette Maccarone and her 27-year-old daughter Mary Sparshott spent many hours together while they took their daily three-mile walks along Natures Way.

It took their minds of their concerns for Maccarone's husband and Sparshott's stepfather Michael Maccarone, a tech sergeant in the Air Force who during that time was on a six-month assignment in Afghanistan.

The duo, who had visions of someday opening their own business together, often used the time to brainstorm about the type of retail store they thought the public might like to have in their community.

Coincidentally, they remembered when their family moved to the community two years ago they had difficulty finding unusual and quality items for Maccarone's youngest just a toddler at that time.

Today, however, they believe they've solved that dilemma, not only for themselves but also for others with similar experiences.

They've opened Petite Elite, a baby boutique in Lithia Crossings at 3464 Lithia-Pinecrest Road in Valrico.

Specializing in distinctive clothing, furniture, bedding, car seats and educational toys for infants to youngsters in



JOYCE MCKENZIE/Photo
Owners Mary Sparshott, left, and her mother, Bernadette Maccarone, admire one of their favorite infant dresses at Petite Elite, their new store in Valrico.

their middle childhood years, much of the store's merchandise is not found in typical department stores.

"We researched the Internet to make sure we chose the best quality and the safest, but not necessarily the most expensive items," Sparshott said. "We want to help people with the products that are really meant to suit their life styles."

Among the clothing pieces are a wide selection of gowns and suits for Christenings as well as for Jewish Bris and Baby Naming ceremonies.

for safety, Britax booster seats for older children and Peg Perego strollers. Each comes in a choice of fabrics and colors.

"A lot of our products you usually see only on-line but we wanted our customers to be able to feel and see the details you can't get by shopping on-line," Sparshott said.

Other unique items include a 'time-out' chair with a working clock, gliding chairs for both adults and children and custom-designed Shoo Shoes for infants. A selection of soft toys, stuffed animals, hand-crafted wooden puzzles and greeting cards are also in stock.

"We sell only educational toys and all our inventory is the result of a lot of research," Maccarone said. "We're trying to not just be for one customer, but do a little for everyone."

Petite Elite also has play area for children and offers lay-away service, gift certificates and a gift registry where clients can make selection during regular store hours or after hours by appointment.

In addition, a full nursery design service is available to its customers. "We have contractors who will help you put it all together."

The store is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday from noon to 5 p.m.

"This place has the most beautiful things I've ever seen and I want to buy everything I see," said Valrico resident Debbie Hamborski. "You know, we want nothing but the best for our babies."

What stands out in the mind of frequent customer Rene Vojnovic is the uniqueness of the store's products.

"It's nice, too, not to have to travel down to the mall and they are the most wonderful people and are so open to making their customers happy...if they don't have an item in stock they will get it in stock within a couple of days."

Call 643-1411 for more information.

There are complimenting big sister/little brother and big brother/little sister outfits, dresses with matching sweaters, uniquely designed coveralls and special-occasion dresses through size 8.

In addition, they carry Stylease one-piece clothing items that take on the look of three pieces.

"They look great when you don't want them to wear layers. You can throw them in the diaper bag and you and the baby are on your way."

The majority of garments are for newborns to 5-year-old children, but within the next few months the owners plan to add more sizes.

Also among the store's inventory are solid birch wood cribs and dressers, including a sleigh crib and one that comes complete with a changing table. There are also out-of-the-ordinary crib sets for both girls and boys. Two-sided crib mattresses, one with a soft side for infants and the other a bit firmer for older babies, are also available.

In addition, they stock Britax car seats, a brand Sparshott said is crash-tested

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Designing Duo Give Homeowners Advice

By LESLIE WHITE
Correspondent

Inside the newly relocated Fine Designs looms a treasure trove of decorating accessories and two designers with the much sought-after ability to "pull it all together."

Kay Wensloff is the owner, designer and color consultant for Fine Designs in the newly opened Benjamin Moore Paints in the Shoppes of Lithia. Joanne Lanier is an interior designer who has been with Fine Designs since September.

This is more than just a paint store, said Wensloff. It's a design service offering color consultation, as well as a full line of home accessories to match any tastes and color schemes.

Husband and wife owners Jerry and Kay Wensloff have operated Fine Designs for three years in Bloomingdale, and say they enjoy the look of surprise when a new customer walks through the door and sees their wares.

An eclectic selection of pillows and lamps dot the arrangement of chairs and armoires. A decorator's delight of sample books line several bookcases.

Now, with two designers, Fine Designs is able to accommodate the needs of all its customers, said Wensloff.

"Traffic has really increased since we moved to this location," she said.

Customers come in and browse, often bringing along something they're attempting to match.

"It can take up to 2 1/2 hours to pick out paint colors," said Wensloff.

"It really helps when people bring in an object to match instead of saying they're looking for a 'blue,'" said Lanier.

Wensloff and Lanier will consult on anything from paint colors to window treatments to flooring. Fine Designs offers custom draperies and blinds, making them a full-service contact for all home-decorating needs.



Joanne Lanier and Kay Wensloff combine their design talents at Fine Designs in Valrico. LESLIE WHITE/Photo

For 20 years, Wensloff worked for other designers in Atlanta before moving to Brandon. She said people would walk into her home and be so impressed that they'd ask her to "do theirs."

Working independently out of her garage grew cumbersome, as did traveling to Tampa to purchase quality paints.

"Benjamin Moore paints have richer colors and deeper pigments. Most decorators use it because of its quality. It just looks better on your walls," said Wensloff.

But there were no Benjamin Moore dealers in a 25-mile radius, so Wensloff decided to approach the retailer about opening one in the Brandon area. Three years later, the business is going strong.

"She has an innate talent and ability," said Jerry Wensloff of his wife.

Wensloff subcontracts out such projects as flooring, cabinetry and the painters so that customers deal exclusively with her. She said she only hires quality subcontractors whose reputations rank with her own.

For \$95 Wensloff or Lanier will visit a home and help choose the color scheme that best suits what the homeowners

already have.

"People always have something to work off of. But if you live with it every day, you just get used to it," she said,

adding that they can provide a fresh perspective and help "alleviate the anxiety and layer the colors."

These days, she finds that it's not just the lady of the house with opinions about decorating.

"Now, the man is involved and it's more of a joint effort."

So she often finds herself in the role of mediator. Eventually, the colors are chosen and the anxiety is alleviated.

Color is what most do-it-yourselfers are worried about, according to Wensloff.

"Fear of using bold colors can prevent some homeowners from diving into a decorating job. But bold colors are what Benjamin Moore does best," she said. "They have a fabulous array of reds. Everybody wants red, they just don't know which one to go with. More intense pigmentation

See DESIGNING, Page 16



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Store Offers Brazilian, 47 Types Of Granite

By LESLIE WHITE
Correspondent

Offering a wide array of Brazilian granite and marble, Fine Stone USA opened for business two months ago in Lithia Crossing shopping center.

One of three managing partners, Bloomingdale resident David Kocina, along with his wife, Ana Maria, chose to open their first store here due to the accessibility of the Port of Tampa and the booming local market.

Showcasing 47 types of granite, the Kocinas have a personal connection to its source.

Ana Maria's cousin owns the mine in Esprit Osantos, Brazil, where the Kocinas spent 20 years in the granite business. Because of this connection, Fine Stone USA is able to pass along quarry-direct-to-consumer prices.

The store carries a private stock of Blue Bahia granite, the most expensive granite in the world, and has a conference table fashioned from the stone. Fine Stone USA features ready to install countertops, sinks, backsplashes, columns, benches, flooring and hand-crafted desks. Custom orders are welcomed, and will be installed in 60 to 90 days, allowing travel time from Brazil.

"We are the only ones in the area that carry Brazilian granite. The quality of Brazilian



LESLIE WHITE/Photo

Owner David Kocina sits behind a custom-made granite desk, one of the products available at Fine Stone USA.

stone is different. There are more colors and types. It's very good quality. You can see the difference," Ana Maria said. "Granite is stronger and more durable. In 10 years, they still look like new. This is a very popular look right now."

Homeowners can bring in measurements or at least rough estimates, but Fine Stone also offers on site consultations with an interior designer. The designer will coordinate a complete look,

tying in colors throughout the home.

"We've had a very strong customer interest even before we opened. They've become buying customers already," said Kocina.

Fine Stone USA is a full-service store that offers prices 40 to 50 percent less than leading retailers and provides instruction on cleaning and protecting the granite.

"It's not a complete service if you don't learn how to take

care of it," Kocina said. "Each closing customer receives an informational DVD on stone care."

A full product line of cleaners and protectors is available in-store.

Fine Stone USA is open Tuesday through Saturday from noon to 7 p.m. and Sunday noon to 4 p.m. It is located at 3429 Lithia-Pinecrest Road.

Visit them online at fine-stoneusa.com or call 651-2091.



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DESIGNING

From page 15

tion in the Benjamin Moore paints is what gives the walls that 'wow' look."

"Paint color can totally transform a room," added Lanier.

Fine Designs also subcontracts faux painters and muralists for custom jobs. Fine Designs also will offer faux paint classes starting this month. Signup sheets are in the store, and there is a small fee to cover the cost of sup-

plies.

"We hear from our customers that the quality of service is so meaningful to them. We give them a personalized treatment that chain department stores can't," said Wensloff.

Wensloff and Lanier can be reached at 657-9822 or by stopping by Fine Designs 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday or 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday.

Students Celebrate Dr. Seuss' Birthday

LESLIE WHITE
Correspondent

One book, two books — we've just begun. Dr. Seuss makes reading fun!

Though he died in 1991 at the age of 87, Dr. Seuss is still one of the most celebrated children's authors of all time. This year would've marked his 100th birthday, and Cimino Elementary students celebrated "Seuss-style" as the day started with morning show announcements presented in rhyme by media specialist Cindy Dowdy.

Fourth- and fifth-graders did research on Ted Geisel, aka Dr. Seuss, and presented their facts and findings on the morning show.

"We are trying to get the students to understand that there is a person behind the books the kids love," explained Dowdy. "As a former reading coach I'd say about 50 percent of the children choose a Dr. Seuss book as their favorite. He's made such an impact on children."

Experiencing 43 rejections before his first book was published, Dr. Seuss' life is also a lesson in perseverance. Mr. Melvin, the school's custodian, dressed up as Dr. Seuss to blow out candles on a birthday cake made by Mrs. Clark in the cafeteria.

Classes celebrated individually with some classes spending the day reading and

others playing Seuss bingo. Mrs. Elton's fourth-grade class had a DEAR day (drop everything and read).

Karen Elton believes, "This is well deserved after FCAT testing."

Because it's the beginning of learning for so many, Dr. Seuss' books are praised for their great sentence fluency, a pattern which has hooked so many readers.

The fourth-graders had the day to lounge comfortably on the floor or in the reading area, most of them choosing to delve into the Battle Books they'll be tested on after spring break. Mrs. Elton has seen a love of reading develop in her students this year, a love that is encouraged throughout the school.

In Mrs. Czaja's first-grade class, students were asked to bring in their favorite Dr. Seuss books and pillows and blankets to spend the day reading and sharing books. They also watched "Horton Hears a Who" and played games where they matched Seuss characters to the books they appeared in.

Most classes had guest readers come in to read Seuss stories, and at the end of the day Cimino students had honored one of America's most beloved authors in a way that would've surely had the scribe grinning like a cat — a cat in the hat, that is.



Students at Cimino Elementary School sign a giant birthday card to celebrate Dr. Seuss' 100th birthday.

Students Raise The Bar For Fundraiser

By LESLIE WHITE
Correspondent

Cimino Elementary students did extra chores, gave up a little more allowance and got parents and their employers involved to raise Coins for a Cure.

As the faculty adviser for this fundraiser benefiting the American Cancer Society, Liz Waters raised the bar this year, increasing the goal from last year's \$2,000 to a chal-

lenging \$3,000. No one expected the goal to be exceeded by more than \$6,000 — all in one week's time.

At a pep rally celebrating the students' efforts, Waters lauded them.

"Boys and girls, I have never been so proud of one group of people as I am of you," she said.

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Bloomingtondale Freshman Swings Into County Golf Scene

GOAL TO TAKE BULLS TO STATE

By ROBERT CONE
Correspondent

Though he may have come from a small school in north Florida, there's nothing tiny about Louis Amira's golf game.

A freshman, Amira qualified for the state golf championships as an individual at The Villages High School in the fall, and he recently moved with his family to the Bloomingtondale area. A straight-A student who scored more than 1200 on his SATs as an eighth-grader, Amira now attends Bloomingtondale High School and hopes to help the Bulls golf team reach the state championships next season.

"I'm friends with Brad Schneider, Kyle Simpson and Robbie Carl, guys on the Bloomingtondale team, and we've got two seniors coming back," said Louis. "Next year our team will definitely be good. I'm hoping to go to state. We'll definitely have some high goals."

Louis' father, Mike Amira, has been the only coach he's known, and Louis would like to keep it that way.

"I don't really want anybody else. He knows my swing the best," said Louis about his father. "I trust him to never do anything bad for my game. He never forces me to do anything, (he's) real supportive."

Mike Amira ran Bloomingtondale Golfers Club for a short time before moving to Ace Golf in Riverview last month. He's a full-time teaching professional and has equipment on-site to do custom club regripping, club repairs and custom fitting.



HEATHER MARTELLO/Photo

Louis Amira, a 14-year-old freshman at Bloomingtondale High School, hopes to help the Bulls to the state golf finals next season. Amira stands with his father and coach, Mike Amira - the new teaching professional at Ace Golf range in Riverview - at the range while practicing his game.

"That's the No. 1 problem in golf: people not using equipment that fits them," said Mike. "My job is to get people to come and find out what I can do for them, from fittings to adjusting their golf swings. I use video - it doesn't help me teach, but if it makes the student learn better than I'll use it."

Mike and his wife, Toni, are pleased with the Bloomingtondale area so far.

"I want to stay here (east Hillsborough County) for a while. Because my son's in accelerated classes, they have a wider range of studies for him here," said Mike. "Where we live is always based on the schools and the system. That's why we chose to come to Bloomingtondale. I liked this area, too."

Louis used to come along with his dad on the golf course when he was little, so golf was a natural fit.

"By the time he was 4 or 5 he'd been exposed to it. I'd take him out in the evenings and he'd putt my shots. Then when he was 6 he was hitting the shots pretty well so he would chip. I think when he was 9 or 10 he won his first event and he's been competing ever since," said Mike. "I'm not one of those parents who really wants his son to go on the PGA tour. My only goal is for him to be able to choose the school - academically and athletically - that he wants to go to. He's thinking Arizona or Stanford and we'll probably consider a Florida school."

Though Mike admits his son might not be the best prep

golfer, there's no one he would pick to beat his son in a match.

"There are kids better than him out there, but I would bet on him because he's so competitive. As a coach, I'd say he's probably the most solid ball striker on long irons and woods - he hits the ball anywhere from 275 to 300 yards and a lot of fairways," said Mike. "He's learning the short game every day and he really works hard on it, hitting the ball high and low, left and right. He can hit all kinds of shots."

After going to such a small high school with less than 500 students, coming to Bloomingtondale has opened Louis' eyes.

"I like it (Bloomingtondale High). Coming from a retirement community, it's nice being in a place where there's lots of kids around. It's definitely a change," said Louis. "Overall, I think it's great. One thing I don't like is the traffic."

Louis shares his father's goal to go to college.

"My first goal is to get a Div. I scholarship. Ever since the fourth grade, I've wanted to go to the University of Arizona," said Louis. "I'd like to be a PGA tour pro and, after that, if it doesn't work out, I want to be a pilot."

Louis, who won his district golf tournament in the fall and placed fourth at regionals, and his father agree on his golf strong points and weak areas.

"My driving (is best) - I hit a lot of fairways and hit the ball long for my size. My irons usually are good and hit a lot of greens, but I'm working on getting my shots closer to the holes," said Louis. "My short game used to be horrible, but it's starting to get better. Same with my putting."

Louis looks forward to going back to the state tournament this year and performing even better.

"There were so many good kids there. I think the kid who won it is No. 5 in the country, said Louis. "There are a lot of good golfers here in Florida."

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Alafia Elementary Celebrates Gasparilla With Dance

By LESLIE WHITE
Correspondent

Students at Alafia Elementary School kicked up their heels last month for the school's first Gasparilla dance held in the multi-purpose room.

Dressed as pirates and escorted by their parents, children were draped with beads as they entered the PTA-sponsored event.

More than 250 tickets were sold to students, parents and staff members.

"We wanted to give the kids a chance to come to school, have fun and unwind before FCAT," said PTA President Rhonda McCall.

Students sipped soda and nibbled on popcorn and candy during dance breaks. Third-grader Emilie McCall said what she liked best about the dance was "being with my friends."

PTA special events chairwoman Cindy Bergevin manned a booth selling blinking magnetic lights, which were a big hit.

"I'm really happy to see so many people turn out," said Bergevin.

The highlight of the night was a costume contest, awarding a prize to the best-decorated pirate. Matthew Colbert took that honor, winning a \$10 gift certificate to Barnes & Noble.

He will attend Alafia in the fall as a kindergartner.



LESLIE WHITE/Photo

From left, Alafia students Tasha Steiner, Emilie McCall and Duncan McCall with among the students participating in the Gasparilla dance.

Property Manager's Report

By Al Devney

sions of the contract.

Irrigation

Thunder Irrigation upgraded the irrigation at the Kiowa entrance and the area for the new bench on Culbreath.

During the monthly maintenance inspection, 50 spray heads and five rotors were replaced and four risers and one zone line were repaired. Additionally, 55 lights were replaced.

Landscaping

Cardinal Landscaping removed 15 diseased or dead oak trees and planted 13 oak trees on Greenhollow, Natures Way and Glenhaven and installed new landscaping at the Kiowa entrance.

Raymow installed the landscaping around the new bench location on Culbreath and pruned the crepe myrtle trees according to the provisions of the contract.

Other

Lee's Lawn Service painted the walls at the Kiowa entrance and the trash containers around the area.

A pre-bid meeting was held for the annual wall painting contract. The BSTD will be painting the walls on Canoga Park, Rosemead and John Moore.

The wooden fence on Natures Way has 22 broken slats.

In the land of eat, drink and pitch out the window, I picked up 17 bags of litter, a broom, four towels, an air filter, 29 dinner knives, a 4-foot by 8-foot peg board, a telephone, a sweatshirt, three pairs of socks, three gloves and 35 cents. The beverages of choice were Diet Coke for soft drinks, Busch Light for beer and Iceberg Vodka for distilled spirits.

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MACK AUSTIN/Photo

One of the easiest ways for criminals to get into a home is through an open garage. Many take valuables such as bicycles or golf clubs from the garage. Others will gain access into homes through the open garage.

Take The Time To Prevent Crime

By MACK AUSTIN
Correspondent

Most Bloomingdale residents look to law enforcement officers to protect them from criminals and crime. The fact is that crime prevention literally starts at home. This is, after all, where most crimes occur.

Sheriff's office personnel attending last month's Bloomingdale Area Community Council meeting noted that residential burglaries are most common in the daytime and vehicle burglaries and theft are most common at nighttime.

They said the following items are at highest risk for theft: firearms, computers, especially laptops, sports equipment, photographic equipment, stereos, especially car stereos, tools, jewelry, cash and collectibles.

They suggested the following tips for protecting valuables:

1. Know your possessions — Many people do not know what kind of TV they have or what their vehicle tag number is.

2. Properly mark your possessions — Engrave your driver's license number on valuables such as electronics, sports equipment and weapons.

3. Photograph your possessions — This not only helps detectives identify owners but is also useful when working with insurance companies. Store the photos in a secure place such as a safety deposit box.

4. Be cautious and suspicious — Know whom you allow into your home. This includes repairmen, visitors, friends of your children and other

strangers. Several burglaries have been committed by residents living right here in the area.

5. Protect your identity — Use your computer with caution. Know where the e-mails you open originate. Many viruses have been hidden in messages forwarded from friends.

6. Protect your credit — Be careful when using your cards and ATMs. Many users put "SEE ID" on the back of their credit cards to force business owners to check their identity.

7. Secure your home, close your garage — This is one of the most accessible areas into your home. Lock all doors and windows.

8. Secure your vehicle — Many vehicles that are stolen have keys left in them, valuables on the seats or windows

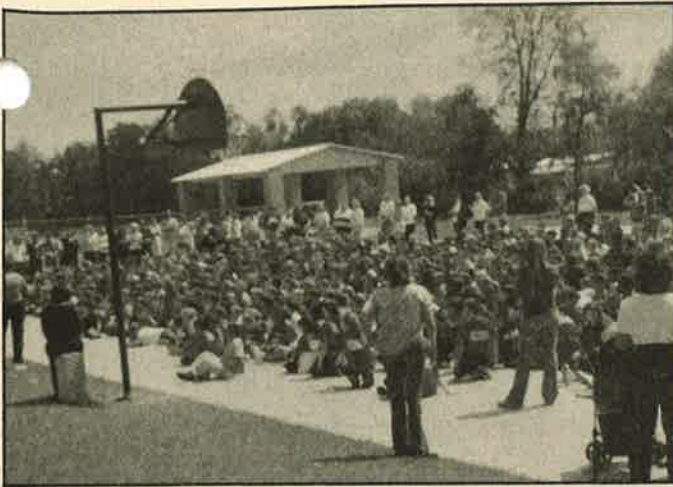
open.

9. Be cautious at gas stations — The gas credit card scam has hit Florida. Keep an eye on your card and lock your vehicle if you leave it and use stations you trust.

10. Be careful when using contractors — Insure contractors are licensed and bonded. Check the Florida Department of Business Regulations for information on contractors.

11. Mail your bills at the post office — Several residents have had mail removed from their mailboxes. Remove your mail as soon as possible or have someone pick it up for you.

12. Contact the sheriff's office — Time is very important when a burglary or other crime takes place. It can also prevent other crimes from occurring.



LESLIE WHITE/Photos

Above, Cimino Elementary students, staff and parents gather for a pep rally on the basketball courts. Right, even the giant thermometer outside the school couldn't keep up with Cimino students who raised \$9,350 for the American Cancer Society.

FUNDS

From page 17

Amidst the cheers and squeals of excited students, Waters announced the final total of the Coins for a Cure fundraiser, \$9, 212. Waters also introduced two faculty teams that participated in the South Brandon Relay for Life March 12 at Bloomingdale High School.

As part of either the "Happy Days" or "Laverne & Shirley" team, the teachers participated in the 18-hour walk to raise even more money for the American Cancer Society.

After singing the theme

song to "Laverne & Shirley," the students had a relay of their own, walking a lap around the basketball courts followed by a popsicle reward for their efforts.

In addition to the faculty teams, a number of Cimino families participated in the South Brandon Relay for Life, which raised more than \$108,000.

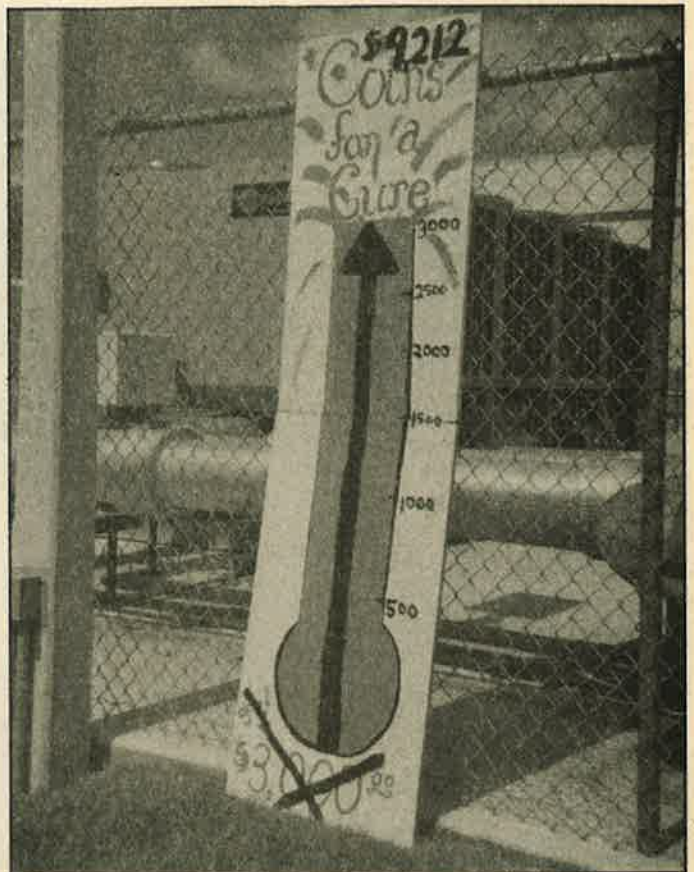
"It was a lot of fun," said Waters.

The final total for Cimino's Coins for a Cure was \$9,350.



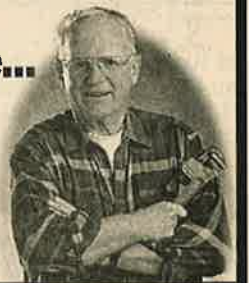
A cool exhibit

Cimino Elementary was selected to feature an exhibit at the Florida State Fair on the school's "Be a Cool Cat for Character" program. Students and staff designed a quilt to demonstrate honesty, caring, respect, responsibility and patriotism emphasized through the Character Education Program. Also included was the Compliment Tree, photographs and student work demonstrating character education through classroom lessons, service projects and awards programs. The display took the team several days to assemble. From left are Sheryl Yordan, who led the project, Debbie Minichbauer (Cimino guidance counselor), Patty Odom and Lee Gunter (school fair committee).



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A team of seniors from Bloomingdale High School including Randi Fetterman, Carle Gomes, Becky Brown, Jen Danley, Tracy Vogt, Laura Castling, Courtney Kiper, Susan Dutch, Alle Hocking and Katie Hamm chose the "Andy Griffith Show" for its theme.

RELAY

From page 3

of 10 to 15 people and raised money for the Southeast Hillsborough County Unit of the American Cancer Society.

With a goal of \$100,000, this year's relay raised more than \$108,000 for the unit to help pay for prosthetics, summer camp for children affected by cancer, support groups and services for cancer survivors and help fund Hope Lodge, a lodge near the Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute that's free of charge for people undergoing treatment.

The event included a survivors' walk during which cancer survivors introduced themselves to the crowd and then walked the first lap around the track, officially opening the relay. Among them was the relay's honorary chairman, Sheriff Cal Henderson, a five-year prostate cancer survivor.

He credits his survival to early detection and encouraged men to get tested. "It's

not the most pleasant procedure, but it could save your life," he said.

Throughout the football field, more than 100 teams of high school students, service clubs and church groups set up tents decorated in keeping with the relay theme "Cancer is No Laughing Matter." The teams were asked to set up campsites using TV sitcoms as themes.

Beneath the tents, the teams continued raising money, selling hot dogs, drinks, baked goods and other refreshments. A team from Kingswood Elementary School, who chose "Gilligan's Island" as its sitcom, invited participants to try their luck at limbo.

Among the first-year participants was a team sponsored by the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association. BHA Vice President Joe Hickle said he was inspired to form a team after hearing a presentation

from Pursino.

"There's hardly a person who hasn't been impacted by cancer in some way," said Hickle, who has lost close family members to the disease.

He walked the track with neighbor and cancer survivor Doreen Donovan. Also walking on behalf of the BHA were board members Ted Grable, Steve Heckel, Cheryl Kehrmeyer, Lydia Harrod, Jane and Stan Lee, and Pam and Joe Liguori. The team raised \$885 for the relay.

"I was happy to see all the BHA folks," said Pursino. "I think they finally saw just what relay is and I hope that they want to come out again next year."

Randall Middle School student Megan Foley said one of the most memorable moments for her was the luminaria ceremony occurring just after dark. She and fellow student Hannah Poth-

ier sat quietly on the track as candles were lit inside white bags bearing the names of those who have lost their battle with cancer as well as those who have survived. The bags lined the entire track and participants looked on in silence as a bagpiper played "Amazing Grace."

"There are so many," said Foley. "It makes you realize how many people have cancer."

Joy Stafford, luminaria chairwoman for the past three years and mother of two cancer survivors, said the ceremony often has that affect on relay participants.

"By 9 p.m. when the ceremony began, there were 958 luminarias around the track and 58 more luminarias in the stands spelling out the word 'cure,'" she said.

"It was an awesome evening, fulfilling a year's worth of plans and hope, the theme of all relays."

CALENDAR

From page 7

...s," Bock said. "If you don't think it's funny, you weren't watching, it's that funny."

Curtain time for the Riverview performance is 7:30 p.m. The Lakeland performance starts at 5 p.m. Ticket prices for both shows are \$15 for adults, \$12 for seniors 55 and older, and \$10 for children 17 and younger. Group discounts are available for organizations of 20 or more.

Call 684-4282 for tickets and information.

Spring Jubilee

St. Stephen Catholic Church will hold its third annual Spring Jubilee April 15-18 at 10428 St. Stephen Catholic School on St. Stephen Circle in Riverview.

Admission and entertainment are free. Entry forms are available online for the second annual Little Miss Spring Jubilee; first Mother and Baby Spring Jubilee; talent contest; Elvis impersonator contest; and '50s costume contest.

Additional events are the Brandon Balloon Classic, Corvette Car Show, the Ultimate Beach Party, the Big Chili Cook-off, fireworks on Saturday night, more than 35 rides, a 5K race, and midway games.

Call: 689-7174 or visit www.springjubilee.com.

Chili chefs wanted

The Krewe of Alafia Norsemen is challenging all chili chefs to enter their best chili

recipes in the third annual Chili Cookoff at the Spring Jubilee at St. Stephen Catholic School on Boyette Road April 17. Setup is from 9 to 11 a.m., cooking begins at 11 a.m. and chili sampling by the public takes place from 2 to 4 p.m., followed by an awards ceremony at 4:30 p.m. Sample cups will be available to the public for \$5 each. WFLA-TV Channel 8 meteorologist Steve Jerve will serve as a special guest judge. The first-place winner will receive \$300, second place \$150 and third place, the Norsemen Choice Award, will receive \$75. Winner of the best-decorated table will receive \$50.

All proceeds benefit All Children's Hospital. According to krewe member Rick Salabarria, last year's cookoff raised \$1,500 for H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute.

The entry fee is \$50 for a three-person nonprofessional team and \$75 for a three-person professional team. Chili chefs can register online at www.springjubilee.com.

Moms club

Moms Offering Moms' Support of Bloomingdale holds its meetings on the third Monday of every month at 10:30 a.m. at St. Stephen Catholic Church on Bell Shoals Road. The chapter has park days, holiday parties, field trips, playgroups, arts and crafts and other activities.

Call: 657-8503.

Business group

A new business group forming is for Bloomingdale residents and business. The group will meet weekly to network and refer leads to businesses grow in the Bloomingdale area.

Call: Larry Niday, 244-6475

Tax assistance

AARP Tax-Aide volunteers will provide free income tax assistance to low- and moderate-income and elderly taxpayers now through April 15 at the Stephanie Ann Culbertson Recreation Center at Bloomingdale West, 3940 Canoga Park Drive, Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Taxpayers should bring their 2003 income records and a copy of their 2002 income tax return when seeking assistance.

The location of other Tax-Aide sites may be obtained by calling (800) 227-7669 or Web site at www.aarp.org/taxaide.

Career transition

The Career Transition Ministry was created to help residents of the greater Brandon community who have been negatively impacted by current economic times.

It is a free service for anyone who is currently unemployed or underemployed.

It provides the opportunity to network with others in similar situations; to share frustrations, what works and what doesn't; provide a forum to end the isolation and the resulting feelings of diminished self-confidence and self-esteem; and to give leads into industries, companies and organizations that might be good contacts.

The ministry meets every Friday from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Campo Family YMCA in Bloomingdale

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