

Safe at home



*DORCAS WHITE/Photo

Bloomingdale 11/12 Major Softball All-Star Briana Bell slides in safe at home in Oviedo during the 2004 Little League state softball tournament July 23-25. After winning the District 13 and Section 4 titles, the Bloomingdale girls advanced to the state championship game, where they lost to Dunnellon, 5-4. Bloomingdale beat South Brevard, 3-1, and Naples, 5-4, en route to the title game. The all-stars are, alphabetically by last name, Briana Bell, McKenzie Carter, Kaelyn Castellanos, Hannah Hensley, Macy Holsonback, Ally Ledenham, Tiffany Martinez, Katrice Sabb, Bailey Schinella, Emily Shepherd, Devyn White and Arika Zimmerman. They were coached by Jerry Schinella, Rob Ledenham and Dane White. For more information on Bloomingdale Little League registration, see page 10.



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Residents can meet the candidates

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Bloomingdale library construction is on schedule *see page 6*

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Residents Get Chance To Meet Taxing District Candidates

By D'ANN WHITE
Editor

Bloomington residents will have a chance to meet the candidates for trustee of the Bloomington Special Taxing District Tuesday when the Bloomington Homeowners Association hosts a "Meet the Candidates" reception.

The event will take place Aug. 10 from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Stephanie Ann Culbertson Recreation Center in Bloomington Park West on Canoga Park Drive. The seven people vying for the five positions on the taxing district will be present. The election takes place Aug. 31.

The seven-member taxing district oversees how Bloomington residents' \$100-a-year assessment will be spent on the community's common areas. The trustees make decisions on items ranging from maintenance of the entryways and walls to landscaping and lighting. The current budget is \$475,200.

In the past, noted current trustee and candidate David West, the board has had a hard time filling the voluntary positions. West himself was appointed two years ago when a vacancy arose.

This is the first time in the district's 20-year history that there has been an election because more than one candidate was vying for a position on the board.

According to Tim Bridge, who oversees the county's taxing district elections for the Supervisor of Elections Office, Bloomington is the only district that has five spots up at the same time. Most districts have either three or four openings in any year.

This year, the positions now held by trustees Rusty Jones, Dale Kahn, Myron Magedanz, David West and Ken Pyse, who was appointed last month following the resignation of Alice Burlson, are up for election. Kahn does not plan to run again. Jones, Magedanz, Pyse and West, all of whom were appointed, have filed to run. Other candidates are Paul Sims, David

Steck and Joe Harless.

Col. Paul Sims and his wife, Diana, moved to Bloomington Village four years ago after retiring from 30 years in the military, most recently serving as deputy chief of staff for Special Operations Command at MacDill Air Force Base.

A graduate of Virginia Tech, Sims said he decided to run for a position on the Bloomington Special Taxing District as a way of giving back to his community.

"I enjoy volunteering now that I'm retired," said Sims, who has done missionary work in the Dominican Republic through his church.

Sims said current trustee Rusty Jones, who served with him in the Special Forces, encouraged him to run for trustee.

"I want to do what I can to make sure Bloomington remains a great place to live," he said. "We have an attractive, well-maintained community and the taxing district and homeowners association are very proactive.

David Steck, his wife, Nancy, and their three sons, age 4, 5 and 7, moved to Monte Lake Drive in Bloomington East from St. Louis 2 1/2 years ago.

Steck, who works as a home healthcare marketer from home, said they chose Bloomington because of its top-rated schools, amenities and easy access to Tampa.

"I decided to run to get involved in my community and I wanted to have an influence on how our tax dollars are spent," said Steck.

Magedanz was appointed to a vacancy on the taxing district three years ago. He and his wife, Judith, were among Bloomington's earliest residents. They moved to Orangefield Place in the second section of the community to be constructed in 1981 and raised their daughter, who graduated from medical school and is doing her internship at the James A. Haley Veterans Administration Hospital, in Bloomington.

"We moved here because the price of homes was reasonable, the community was nice and the schools were good," said Magedanz, who retired after 30 years in the steel bridge manufacturing industry. His wife is a retired schoolteacher.

He said he got involved in the taxing district as a way of giving back to the community.

Joe Harless of Callista Avenue in Bloomington East got to know the members of the taxing district and Bloomington property manager Al Devney when his construction company was hired to do work on the Bloomington entryway renovations. He and his wife, Mary, moved to Bloomington 17 years ago and raised their two sons, now both in college, in Bloomington. Harless remains active with the Boy Scout troop where both sons obtained their Eagle Scout awards.

"I've attending some (taxing district) meetings and thought I would have something to offer the district," said Harless, adding that he's done budgeting for his company and is familiar with the process the district uses to determine where the tax dollars will be spent. He said he's also ridden with Devney to become familiar with the duties of the property manager, funding by the district, and the needs of the common areas.

"Al is enthusiastic and knowledgeable, and I think I'd enjoy working with him," he said.

Harless' neighbor on Belle Grande Drive, David West, was appointed to fill a vacancy on the taxing district three years ago. Originally from Illinois, he moved to Valrico as a youngster, attending McLane Middle School, Brandon High

See TAXING, Page 23



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The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, Inc.

3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33594. (813) 681-2051. Fax: (813) 684-2358

E-mail: Bloomingdale.Homeowners@Verizon.net

Web Site: www.BloomingdaleGazette.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
Director — Jane Lee
Director — Stanley Lee
Director — Lydia Harrod

Bloomingdale Special Taxing District

3509 Bell Shoals Rd., Valrico, FL 33594
(813) 684-6667

BSTD meetings are held at the community office on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7 p.m.

President — Thom Snelling
Vice President — Russell Jones
Treasurer — Dale Kahn

Correspondence Secretary — David West
Trustee — Myron Magedanz
Trustee — Michael Buday
Trustee — Ken Pyse
Property Manager — Al Devney

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P.O. Box 3132, Brandon, FL 33509-3132. (813) 685-2817

BOSTD meetings are held at 3419 Cade Lane on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m.

President — Bill Grace
Treasurer — Fred Englehart

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Yard of the Month

The eye-catching yard of Carlene and Tom Carlin at 106 Bayfield Drive in Bloomingdale Estates almost audibly invites passersby to stop and admire. Over the past 23 years, the couple created a "euro-tropical" landscape in the front yard, and a lyrical, park-like setting in the back.

Sago palms, colorful begonias and caladium frame the front walkway. Immaculately trimmed topiary boxwood lends an English garden element to the yard.

In the back, meandering paths, lovely plantings and garden ornaments surround a sunk-in spa, nicely tucked away in a screened gazebo.

Carlene enjoys sprucing up the yard in the spring, but turns the grueling summer work over to Tom Kohler Lawn Maintenance.

"It's just too hot for us to get out there now, but I don't like to let anything go. Tom is a big help and does a great job for us," she said.

The Carlins received a \$25 Bealls gift certificate, courtesy of the BHA. Mail nominations to BHA, 3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, 33594 or Bloomingdale.Homeowners@verizon.net.



LAURA FRAZIER/Photo

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Library Construction On Schedule, Under Budget

By LAURA FRAZIER
Correspondent

The new Hillsborough County library branch under construction on Bloomingdale Avenue is on schedule and under budget.

Library operations manager David Wullschleger said the skyrocketing costs of steel, concrete and other building materials in recent months have pushed construction costs closer than expected to top estimates. But he said "fluid contract negotiations" and "value engineering" have allowed the project to stay under budget thus far.

However, one group of residents are concerned about changes in the original plans for the library. At the July monthly meeting of the Bloomingdale Area Community Council, residents expressed concern about a security gate at the rear of the property being scrapped from the plans.

"The original plan showed a security gate at the rear of the building to prevent access to six acres of very desolate area that would undoubtedly become breeding grounds for criminal mischief," said community council member Steve Heckel, who also serves on the new branch's Friends of the Library board.

The gate on the original plan was designed to block access to the rear parking lot and the vacant land behind the library. The group wants to know why the gate, as well



LAURA FRAZIER/Photo

Friends of the Library chapter President Pat Boody, right, and board member Pat Bowker brainstorms public relations, programming and fundraising activities for the new library branch at the group's July monthly meeting. The Friends group is talking to local businesses about donating a flagpole for the facility.

as a flagpole for the new library, was removed from the plans.

"If (the contractor) is cutting these things because of cost overruns, that should be the contractor's problem and not the county's," Heckel said.

Wullschleger acknowledged that, in the course of contract negotiations, the gate and the flagpole have been eliminated to keep the project under budget.

"All the construction bids came in higher than expected," Wullschleger said. "Basically, you target the budget and work with the contractor to find a way to meet it. We

want to get the library up and running without any sacrifices to quality. One way to do that is to eliminate, or at least hold off on, some of the amenities that are considered nonessential."

Wullschleger said he'd personally like to see the flagpole and security gate in place before the library opens later this year, a possibility that's not out of the question.

"There is always a construction allowance, a reserve that's built in to the contract, so that later on you can go back in and buy back some of those nonessential things that were excluded," he said.

But the council, including member Deputy Pete Maurer, the community resource deputy for the area, disagreed that the security gate is "nonessential."

"The city of Tampa has a program called Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, a program Hillsborough County is beginning to embrace," Maurer said. The policy requires government officials and contractors to make safety and crime prevention features a design priority. Such features would include fencing or bar-

Move To New Branch Bittersweet For Librarian

By LAURA FRAZIER
Correspondent

South Brandon resident Julie Beamguard is about to begin a new chapter in her career as a Hillsborough County librarian.

When plans were announced last year to build a new library on Bloomingdale Avenue, Beamguard knew right away she'd want to be a part of it. Her only reservation, she said, was leaving the Riverview Branch Library she's supervised since 2001.

Though excited by her upcoming assignment to supervise the new library, Beamguard said, "I just know how much I'm going to miss Riverview."

"We've developed such great relationships between our staff and our patrons. I'll miss our Friends of the Library chapter and our book discussion groups. People come in and they know each other, and the staff knows a lot of people by name. Riverview (library) has sort of a small-town atmosphere. That's what keeps me going and has made my day, every day."

Beamguard envisions creating the same welcoming atmosphere and close-knit relationships at the new library, if on a slightly larger scale.

Recent growth in the Riverview area, along U.S. 301, both north and south of the branch, has given Beamguard a small

See MOVE, Page 22



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See LIBRARY, Page 22

Bloomington Area Community Council Report

By MACK AUSTIN
Correspondent

The Bloomington Area Community Council is made up of 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 local government representatives to coordinate plans and actions on community issues and concerns to improve the quality of life in Bloomington.

The BACC meets monthly, the third Thursday at 7 p.m. at the Bloomington Sheriff's Community Station, to discuss current issues that have been brought to its attention directly, through a council member or through Maurer or Capitano.

At the July meeting, members discussed the following items:

Maurer began the meeting by introducing a guest, Veronica Stitzel, a legislative assistant to District 62 state Rep. Johnnie Byrd, R-Plant City, who is also currently Speaker of the House in Tallahassee. Stitzel noted that while Byrd continues his campaign for state Senate, she and the other representatives working in the Plant City office will continue to assist residents with their concerns.

Maurer briefed members on several topics including:

- ♦ The BACC reviewed current burglary stats for the area.

Maurer noted that many burglaries are caused by residents leaving their homes and vehicles open.

Reserve II Deputy Mike Sessa noted that during his patrols he has observed numerous garage doors left open at night.

One major vehicle theft involved a white truck with a black trailer that could be used in other burglaries.

Anyone seeing this vehicle should call the Sheriff's Community Station at 635-8040 or the sheriff's dispatch at 247-



MACK AUSTIN/Photo

The intersection of Bell Shoals Road and Bloomingdale Avenue has been ranked the second worst intersection for traffic accidents in Hillsborough County.

8200.

- ♦ Maurer continued his appeal to parents not to buy motorized skateboards for children. "These boards are very dangerous, totally illegal and parents will be held responsible for any accidents or incidents," he said.

- ♦ Maurer expressed congratulations to BACC council member, Mike Sessa, on being the first member to successfully complete the Sheriff's Reserve II Deputy Program.

"I am proud to be serving my community and look forward to working with the residents of Bloomington," said Sessa.

- ♦ Maurer noted that Bloomington recently received some unwanted recognition. The intersection of Bell Shoals Road and Bloomingdale Avenue placed second in all of Hillsborough County for having the worst record of traffic accidents.

- ♦ Members discussed concerns over the Boyette Road widening project and how it will affect traffic on Bell Shoals Road.

This project is projected to start soon.

- ♦ Residents and business owners are concerned about the proposed changes to Bell

Shoals Road under a county plan to improve the Bell Shoals/Bloomingdale Avenue intersection. While the

improvements are intended to increase safety and traffic flow, the businesses are concerned about the proposed median limiting access to their businesses.

- ♦ Members noted that the Eckerds on Bloomingdale Avenue is changing to a CVS pharmacy.

- ♦ Members noted the increase in the number of more "For Sale" signs along Bloomingdale Avenue, representing more development and, therefore, more traffic.

- ♦ The flashing lights have been installed by county traffic engineers at the crosswalk at the Bloomington Little League and YMCA. The BACC would like to see sidewalks and over Culbreath Road constructed next to permit residents to cross safely.

Contact Maurer or Capitano at the Sheriff's Bloomington Community Station for additional information, 635-8040.

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County To Look At Bell Shoals Alternative

By D'ANN WHITE
Editor

He's not making any promises, but county transportation engineer Reg Alford has agreed to take a look at a proposal by Bell Shoals Road businesses to improve Bell Shoals south of Bloomingdale Avenue but leave access to their businesses open.

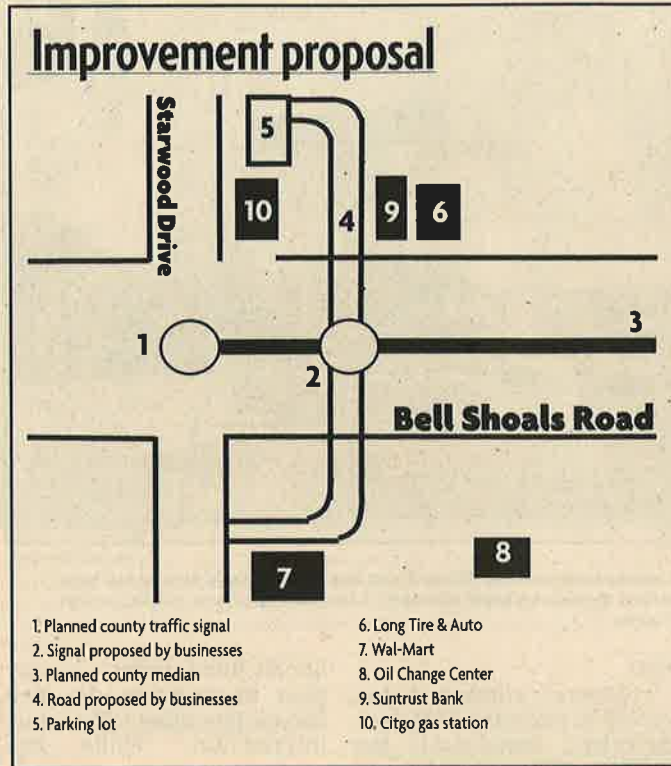
Alford met with owners of businesses on the east side of Bell Shoals between Bloomingdale and Rosemead Avenue last week to discuss their concerns.

The county is currently drawing up a plan to improve the intersection of Bell Shoals and Bloomingdale, which has one of the highest incidences of traffic accidents in the county.

The county plans to construct a median along Bloomingdale in front of Bloomingdale Square, lengthen the turn lanes and create only a single access point to the shopping center with a traffic light at the western-most entrance across from Dunkin' Donuts.

The county has a similar proposal for Bell Shoals. A median would limit access and a traffic light would be constructed at Starwood Drive and the entrance to Wal-Mart. Starwood Drive is a service road next to the Citgo service station that provides access to Kash n' Karry and a storage facility.

But the Bell Shoals business representatives including



- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Planned county traffic signal | 6. Long Tire & Auto |
| 2. Signal proposed by businesses | 7. Wal-Mart |
| 3. Planned county median | 8. Oil Change Center |
| 4. Road proposed by businesses | 9. Suntrust Bank |
| 5. Parking lot | 10. Citgo gas station |

Map by Amanda Tomaini

Citgo, Long Tire and Auto Service, Papa John's Pizza and SunTrust Bank say the plan would limit access and hurt their businesses.

Citgo owner Larry Neville has an additional concern. He said the county's plan will force customers in the rest of the shopping center to drive through his parking lot, in between the service station and the gas pumps. Not only would this be dangerous for his customers, he said, but it

would cause traffic waiting for the Starwood light to change to back up in his parking lot.

"No one will go down to Rosemead to make a U-turn. They're going to turn onto Starwood and go through my parking lot. You're making our driveway a throughway," Neville told Alford. "It will create a dangerous situation and will have a negative affect on our businesses."

Long Tire and Papa John's are also concerned about semi-tractor trailer trucks making deliveries to their businesses. Under the county plan, the trucks would have to continue south to Rosemead and make a U-turn, a maneuver that's difficult for big rigs.

The businesses have launched a petition drive in the hopes of convincing the county to amend its plan. Currently, hundreds of customers have signed petitions, said Steve Heckel, a director for the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, which has an office in the shopping center.

Concerned about the affect

of the county's plan on the businesses and residents, Heckel conducted a daylong traffic study, counting 2,000 vehicles entering the shopping center.

Showing Alford a hand-drawn rendering, the business owners, who have hired an attorney to represent them, showed Alford an alternative that would give them access while providing the improvements needed on Bell Shoals.

They suggested the county build a new entrance to Wal-Mart across from the road that runs between SunTrust Bank and Long Tire and place the traffic signal there. The median would then run in front of Starwood Drive and the existing Wal-Mart entrance.

It's not an original idea, the business representatives said. They noted that the county created a similar service road entrance for the Lowe's Home Improvement Warehouse on Providence Road to provide access to Brandon Centre South shopping center across the street. A similar entrance was created on Falkenburg Road to provide access to the Brandon Crossroads shopping center.

The businesspeople pointed out, as well, that their plan would give the county more room to extend the left turn lanes from Bell Shoals Road onto Bloomingdale since the entrance they're proposing is further south.

Alford agreed to do some engineering plans using the businesses' suggestion and meet again with the businesses in a couple of weeks.

An alternative, he said, is to eliminate the Bell Shoals improvements altogether and just make the improvements to Bloomingdale. But Alford said the Bell Shoals improvements are needed to eliminate the center turn lane on Bell Shoals Road, which was the source of 17 accidents in June.

"We realize someone's

See ROAD, Page 23

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Bloomingtondale Substation Notes

By DEPUTY PETE MAURER

Yes, the 2004 school year is already here. With it comes many concerns of which our first concern must be for the safety and protection of the thousands of kids headed back to school in our community.

As usual, many will be walking or riding bikes to school for the first time. Some will be walking or riding in areas where sidewalks still have not been installed. Thousands will be waiting at bus stops for their school buses. Lots of teens will be driving to school for the first time. Combine all of these different ways for kids to get to school with thousands of drivers in a hurry and you have some very dangerous situations.

Parents, now is the time to talk to your kids about the importance of being safe going to and from their schools. Emphasize safe biking - wearing helmets, crossing only at crosswalks, obeying all bike-riding rules and watching for cars. Have them walk or ride their bikes in groups with friends or classmates. Discuss the importance of being very careful if strangers approach them. Review the route they should take to school and walk or ride it with them. Note the seriousness of them staying at their bus stop, watching out for cars and behaving while they wait.

Some kids will be alone for a while when they first get home. For many, this will be their first time waiting for their parents to get home. Stress the importance of staying inside, knowing important emergency numbers and numbers for parents or friends, following the rules you set for using kitchen appliances and not talking to strangers.

Parents, just as your kids are preparing, so too must you prepare yourself and them for a new school year. Include extra travel time in your commute. Make a note if new schools have opened up along the way you take to



MACK AUSTIN/Photo

With school season back, traffic on Bloomingdale Avenue has increased. Drivers should keep a safe distance from school buses, stop in both directions if there is no median and slow down.

work. It will mean more traffic, more delays, more kids and more buses for you to prepare for.

Make sure everyone in your car buckles up. Watch out for school buses. Your kids are watching you. Don't talk on the phone and drive. Pay close attention. The safety of your kids and the safety of other kids is much more important than any phone call. Accidents only take seconds to happen. Have a safe school year!

Drivers, you must stop both ways for school buses

Thousands of children in our communities will be riding school buses and waiting at bus stops. Most of the school buses do not have seat belts.

Drivers must give full attention when driving near schools and when driving near school buses. Florida traffic laws require that all cars must stop both ways for school buses on roads without medians. This law applies to all traffic on Bloomingdale Avenue west of Bell Shoals. Drivers, keep a safe distance between other vehicles and especially school buses in front of you.

speeding, especially in areas like school zones. When you do and get pulled over by a deputy, there will no more warnings. You speed, you pay and you pay big. The average ticket in some areas last year was over \$300 and the fines have gone up. The same applies for running red lights. There will be special patrols watching for you. Speeding fines are doubled in school zones. Slow down - it's that simple.

Don't cut through

None of us want drivers speeding and cutting through our neighborhood just to get around traffic. It is totally disrespectful and unsafe. Several residents have identified their neighborhoods as "cut throughs" and residents will be watching for offenders. Also, sheriff's deputies will be patrolling them. Respect the lives and neighborhoods of others.

Attention speeders — no warnings

Most drivers don't plan on



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Neighborhood PRIDE Report: Name Your Community

By STEVE HECKEL
BHA director

The Neighborhood PRIDE Program is moving along slowly due to a lack of resident involvement.

Participation within each neighborhood is essential. The next PRIDE meeting is scheduled for Monday, Aug. 16 at 7 p.m. at the Bloomingdale Community Office. This meeting will focus on the nine unnamed neighborhoods (see related article).

Neighborhood PRIDE tips:

Addresses are required, which simply requires the numbers (at least 3 inches high) to be clearly visible from the street, either on the house or on both sides of the mailbox. Hillsborough County Emergency Services requires these address standards. Violations can result in a \$50-per-day fine until corrected. Contact the Department of Public Safety, 9-1-1 Administration, at 744-5911 for more information.

Trashcans, trash bags and yard waste are required to be stored out of sight from the street between 6 p.m. Monday and 8 p.m. Tuesday or between 6 p.m. Thursday and 8 p.m. Friday. This is a Hillsborough County standard and violations can result in citations and fines. Contact Waste Management at 276-2927 for further information. This is also a deed restriction

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Name Selected: _____

violation.

The parking of any vehicle, trailer, boat, etc., on any unpaved surface is a deed restriction violation if visible from the street. For further information, check your deed restrictions. A transcribed copy is available on our Web site at www.BloomingtondaleGazette.com.

Fences are common in our community, however, they must be maintained sound and sturdy, according to Hillsborough County Building Code standards and deed restrictions. Leaning fences and missing, broken or rotted slats are relatively easy repair jobs.

Name your neighborhood

For the past few months, the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association has been actively pursuing names for the nine unnamed neighborhoods within our community. The naming of a neighborhood has many advantages. It

helps establish ownership, it promotes a sense of pride, it makes giving directions easier, it promotes neighborhood functions, evokes neighborly relations, and it can even benefit property values.

The following is a list of unnamed neighborhoods with suggested names from which residents can vote. The neighborhood definitions may be viewed on the BHA Web site. You may cast your vote by e-mail or by mail. Only one vote per household will be counted, which is why an address is required. The neighborhoods with the most votes will have signs designed, purchased and installed at neighborhood entryways.

Unnamed neighborhoods:

Neighborhood "A" consisting of 201 residences in sections A1-A4:

Suggested names: Spring Hollow Estates; Green Vale Estates; Springvale Greens Reserve

Neighborhood "B" consist-

ing of 117 residences in sections B1-B2:

Suggested names: Briarlake Estates; Park Villa Estates; Natures Way Village

Neighborhood "C" consisting of 226 residences in sections C1-C4:

Suggested names: Casa Canoga; Park View Estates; Park West Estates

Neighborhood "E" consisting of 94 residences in section E:

Suggested names: Bloomingtonfield Run; Bloomingtonfield Manor; Shady Hills Court.

Neighborhood "F" consisting of 85 residences in section FF:

Suggested names: Natures Glen; Glen Haven Way; Cameo Crest Glen; Spring Way

Neighborhood "H" consisting of 228 residences in sections H1, H3, H4:

Suggested names: Encina Heights; Sweatleaf Village; Bloomingdale West Village

Neighborhood "I" consisting of 215 residences in sections I2, I1, I2:

Suggested names: Sandy Creek Estates; Canoga Creek Run; Sandy Creek Manors

Neighborhood "J/K" consisting of 128 residences in sections J, K:

Suggested names: Natures Way Estates; Murray Dale Crossing; Kinsford Town

Neighborhood "M" consisting of 154 residences in sections M1-M2:

Suggested names: Bell Grande Heights; Hacienda Grande; Callista Heights; Parkside.

Winter Ball Registration Set

Staff Report

Bloomingtondale Little League will hold registration for the winter ball season Saturday, Aug. 14 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Wednesday, Aug. 18 from 6 to 9 p.m. and Saturday, Aug. 21 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Bloomingdale Civic Center next to the Little League. The cost is \$ 60 for the first child and \$30 for siblings.

Bring an original birth certificate and proof of residency. A general members meeting will be held Saturday, Aug. 21 at 3 p.m. Board of directors elections will be held on all registration dates.

Volunteers are needed to serve as umpires, coaches, managers and board members. Sign up during registration or call the information line at 684-8422.



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Bloomington Homeowners Association Updates Web Site

By D'ANN WHITE
Editor



D'ANN WHITE/Photo

Web site designer Rodney Biddle shows members of the Bloomington Homeowners Association board the new version of the Bloomington Homeowners Association Web site, www.bloomingtongazette.com.

The Bloomington Homeowners Association's redesigned Web site is up and running.

Web site designer Rodney Biddle, working with BHA board members Joe Hickle and Steve Heckel, has revised the Web site, making it easier to navigate and providing more information for users.

The new Web site includes deed restrictions for Bloomington's various neighborhoods, up-to-date articles from the Bloomington Gazette, listings of activities taking place in the area and forms that allow residents to report deed restriction and code enforcement violations.

The new site also will include youth sports information for Bloomington Park West, a lost-and-found and polls on issues of concern.

"It's looks great and is very user friendly," said BHA President Ted Grable.

The BHA was one of the first homeowners associations in the county to launch its own Web site to communicate with residents. The association is also in the process of compiling an e-mail list for residents so it can communicate directly with them about upcoming meetings and issues of concern.

In other BHA news, the county has contacted the homeowners association about using its neighborhood enforcement program as a prototype for other homeowners associations throughout the county. Last spring, the BHA hired Neighborhood Standards, a private enforcement company, to survey Bloomington neighborhoods that do not have mandatory homeowners associations for deed restriction and code enforcement violations.

Heckel, the liaison for Neighborhood Improvement, said the company has sent out 1,728 letters to residents so far for deed restriction or county code violations. He said the violations are almost evenly

distributed between deed restriction and code violations. And most of these, he said, are for improper display of addresses and leaving trash-cans exposed. Of that number, only 84 were sent to the county's code enforcement department for follow-up.

"People seem to be pleased that we're out there trying to improve the community," said Heckel. "And most of the people are happy to comply once the violation has been pointed out."

To help residents comply with the county address requirements, the BHA has free mailbox address numbers available at the Bloomington Community Office on Bell Shoals Road.

In addition to residential violations, Neighborhood Standards reported nine damaged or missing signs and more than 100 sidewalk trip hazards to the county and 17 burned-out or broken street lights to Tampa Electric Co.

One of the major code violations in Bloomington is the placement of yard waste on the curb. By law, yard waste should not be put out before Thursday evening for Friday pickup. Grable said this presents a problem for residents since most do their yard work over the weekend and have no place to store the yard waste

until Friday.


"We don't want to discourage people to trim their trees and shrubs," he said. The BHA agreed to talk to the county about rotating the yard waste

pickup schedule so that Bloomington's yard waste can be picked up earlier in the week.

With a traffic light at Erindale Drive and Lithia-Pincrest Road in the process, the BHA is asking the county to look at another dangerous intersection in the community, the intersection of Glenhaven Drive and Bell Shoals Road. Board member Stan Lee will draft a letter to County Commissioner Ronda Storms asking that the county investigate putting a traffic light at the intersection and adding a left turn lane at Garnet Drive for drivers turning left onto Garnet. Currently, drivers traveling north on Bell Shoals either have to wait for the driver to turn left on Garnet or go around the car on the shoulder.

Residents of unnamed neighborhoods in Bloomington will have a chance to

See WEB SITE, Page 21





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406122

Taxing District Approves Irrigation Contractor

By D'ANN WHITE
Editor

Hoping to make Springvale Drive a bit more lush, the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District has hired Planscape Inc. to install an irrigation system at a cost of \$16,825.

The board made the decision after receiving two bids for the project. The other was higher and the bid package was incomplete.

"Planscape has done other work for the taxing district and has been satisfactory," said BSTD Chairman Thom Snelling as the board voted to approve giving the job to Planscape.

In the meantime, Bloomingdale property manager Al Devney announced another major taxing district project is complete and under budget.

As part of its ongoing program to refurbish all the major entrances into Bloomingdale, the taxing district hired JBD Construction to rebuild the entranceway walls and re-landscape the entrance of Greenhollow

Drive. This is the second entranceway to be renovated. The Garnet Drive entrance was completed last year.

The taxing district budgeted \$57,940 for the project. But because the wall beneath the planter was intact when the planter was removed, JBD did not have to rebuild the wall, reducing the cost of the project by \$14,052.

Next will be construction of an entrance at Culbreath Road in 2005. The entrance at John Moore Road will be redone in 2006. And the BSTD wants to create an entrance at Springvale Drive in 2007.

After the BSTD grappled with the cost of holiday decorations during the June budget approval, office manager Joni Hickle presented an alternative to the board at last month's meeting.

She suggested the board look into the use of seasonal banners on utility poles, similar to those used in Temple Terrace.

She said the district could solicit business sponsors for the various banners to help

fund them.

Prices of the banners range from \$45 for a 48-inch banner to \$150 for a 94-inch banner. The brackets that attach the banners to the utility poles range from \$45 to \$98. The brackets are designed to permit easy removal of the banners.

Snelling suggested that the board consider four or five banners at each of the major entryways. The banners can be changed to reflect the season, one at Christmas, another for spring, a patriotic banner for summer and a fall banner.

He said the only problem would be soliciting sponsors. Hickle agreed to look into the idea further and report back to the board.

Concerned about the appearance of a conflict of interest, Snelling said he did not feel comfortable with a request from trustee Dale Kahn to help landscape the Culbreath Road/Natures Way entrance to Bloomingdale Ridge.

Kahn, also a board member

for the Bloomingdale Ridge Homeowners Association, said the association wants to beautify the entrance with a waterfall feature at a cost of \$15,000. The association will finance the project's construction and upkeep, but would like the BSTD to help with landscaping.

Devney said that entrance is due to receive new landscaping as part of the BSTD's regular landscaping cycle. It hasn't been landscaped since 1998, he said.

Snelling said the project would make be an attractive addition to the community. However, he was concerned that helping the association with its project would set a precedent and he feared that, since Kahn serves on both boards, it could be perceived as a conflict of interest.

"I think it's a great idea, but I want due diligence to make sure this is something we can do," he said.

The next BSTD meeting will be Monday, Aug. 9, at 7 p.m. at the Bloomingdale Community Office on Bell Shoals Road.

Class Notes

Teen Trendsetter

Gov. Jeb Bush announced the names of nearly 200 high school students from across the state selected to serve a Teen TrendsettersTM during the third annual Teen TrendsettersTM Reading Mentor

summit.

Teen TrendsettersTM is a program aimed at getting more high school students involved in mentoring while at the same time helping under performing elementary school readers.

The program pairs quali-

fied high school students with low-performing third-grade students to serve as reading mentors.

During their trip to Orlando, the nearly 200 Teen Trendsetters received training on specialized reading curriculum created to teach the high school students the most effective third-grade reading skills. After the training, these students will go back to their high schools, recruit and train other students to become mentors and establish a reading mentor program at an elementary school in their area.

Local Hillsborough County Teen Trendsetters included Joseph Rector from Bloomingdale High School.

ingdale Ave. Dancers should arrive 30 minutes before the audition for registration. The audition fee is \$15 and dancers should wear black leotards, pink tights, ballet or pointe shoes and wear hair in a bun for females; white T-shirts, black tights and white socks, ballet shoes and hair off face for males.

Dancers must be 9 or older with a minimum of three years of classical ballet training. Auditions, by age, run from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Brandon Ballet is also seeking extras for its annual performance of "The Nutcracker" Dec. 18-19. Auditions will be Aug. 28 from 9:30 a.m. to noon for dancers age 7 and up. Adult extras for the party scene may also sign up at that time.

Call: Alice Holden Bock, 684-4282.

Ballet auditions

The Brandon Ballet will hold auditions Aug. 21 at The Dance Centre, 161 E. Bloom-

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Property Manager's Report

By AL DEVNEY

Irrigation

The 26 timers for the irrigation system were set to operate only on Fridays as required by Hillsborough County regulations. The watering restriction has been extended to Aug. 9.

Thunder Irrigation replaced a defective valve for zone 1 in the John Moore system.

During the monthly maintenance inspection, 18 spray heads and three rotors were replaced. Additionally, there were 55 lights replaced.

Landscaping

JBD Construction Co. completed the Greenhollow renovations.

The original price was \$57,940 and negotiated down by \$14,052 to \$43,888.

The three oak trees on Greenhollow that had gone into shock have been saved by lots of water and fertilizer.

Other

The Hillsborough County Roads and Streets Department was called three times

about removing the large, dead oak tree on Bell Shoals Road and Rosemead. There is no status as of this date.

There were two accidents this month, a car versus wall at Culbreath and Natures Way and a car versus tree at Culbreath and Bloomingdale. The cars lost both times.

Russell Electric corrected electrical problems at the Hickory Ridge and Greenhollow entrances and relocated the spot light for the flag at Greenhollow.

I hosted a pre-bid meeting for the expansion of the Springvale irrigation system. Two contractors attended the meeting and were eligible to bid on the project.

There were 24 broken slats in the wooden fence on Natures Way. There is no increase in damage in the last 30 days.

Lee's Lawn Service trimmed several trees on Garnet and Springvale and removed a broken palm tree at Natures Way and Holleman.

I picked up 173 marking flags within 100 yards at Lithia-Pinecrest and Erindale that Hillsborough County had

placed there for their traffic light study.

In the land of eat, drink and pitch out the window, there were 13 bags of litter, a towel, several pairs of male underwear, a residential white telephone, a hubcap, a leaf rake, a Bob's barricade, a full-size ping pong table, a 2-gallon gas can, four lug nuts, a wash cloth and 31 cents. The beverages of choice were Diet Coke for soft drinks, Bud Light for beer and Old Grand Dad for distilled spirits.

been completed by the end of the third quarter: the renovation of the Greenhollow entrance, the wall painting on John Moore, Canoga Park and Rosemead, the new bench and landscaping on Culbreath, the tree replacement on Natures Way, Glenhaven and Greenhollow, and the landscape improvements on Springvale.

The projects remaining for the fourth quarter are the flowers for the entrances and the irrigation on Springvale.

Al Devney is the owner of Devney Property Management.

Projects

The following projects have

SAY YOU SAW IT IN THE
THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

Calendar

Autistic children's support

Concerned Parents of Autistic Children will meet at Nature Health Foods, 3443 Lithia-Pinecrest Road in Valrico, Aug. 29 from 3 to 5 p.m.

The group is for parents seeking guidance in helping their autistic children get therapy, treatment and financial aid.

Call: Dr. H. Moursi at Lake Hours Urgent Care Center, 643-9393, or Ed Dickelman, 681-1491. Birthday bash

Nifty 50 party

Brandon Baby Boomers turning 50 this year are invited to celebrate this milestone while raising funds for the Brandon Outreach Clinic Building Fund and the Emergency Care Help Organiza-

tion.

Anyone over the age of 21 is invited to attend. This event will recognize all residents born in 1954.

The first Fifty is Nifty fundraising party will be held at The Barn Theatre at Winthrop, 11349 Bloomingdale Ave., Sept. 11 with dinner, a dance and a cash bar. The evening will start with cocktails at 6:30 p.m. and the dinner from 7 to 8 p.m. Dancing will follow the dinner until midnight. Rhythm Makers DJs will provide music from the '60s, '70s and '80s.

The Brandon Blues Brothers will make a special appearance.

Advance tickets are \$30 and are available by calling George May, 662-1102, or Marilyn Collins, 892-7151.



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BHA Membership Drive Kicks Off In August

Staff report

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association's annual membership drive kicks off in August. Membership forms will be mailed this month to each homeowner in the Bloomingdale district. The \$20 per home annual membership dues are the association's sole means of financial support.

With the continued financial and volunteer support of its residents, the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association Inc. will continue its efforts to ensure that Bloomingdale remains a vital, cohesive, active, safe and attractive community.

The BHA represents Bloomingdale's 40 neighborhood sections of more than 4,500 homes. The organization's board of directors, all

volunteers who live in Bloomingdale, speak and act on behalf of residents to address neighborhood, county, school, land development and law enforcement issues. BHA members also work closely with the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District to promote common area and entryway repairs, maintenance and improvements.

The association holds monthly open public meetings at the Bloomingdale Community Office on Bell Shoals Road and owns and produces The Bloomingdale Gazette, now in its 25th year of publication. The group established and maintains the community Web site, www.BloomingtonGazette.com. The BHA provides part-time staff at the community office to assist residents with neighborhood concerns, and

also funds and coordinates the Neighborhood Watch program.

In 2004, the homeowners association hired an independent contractor, Neighborhood Standards, to help resolve deed restriction and county code violations such as neglected yards or homes in disrepair, parking of inoperable vehicles, illegal home business usage, nuisance issues and more.

In recent years, the BHA assisted residents with a community petition to keep all Bloomingdale students together at Bloomingdale High; orchestrated a successful campaign to locate the new library branch under construction on Bloomingdale Avenue; launched and continues the Neighborhood PRIDE program, which organizes cleanup days for

every section of the community on a rotating basis; appointed a volunteer board member to act as a liaison between residents and the Hillsborough County School District; and assisted residents in several neighborhood sections who wished to speak out about county land use rezoning and development plans.

In addition to this month's direct mailing, the membership dues notice will be printed in the September issue of The Bloomingdale Gazette. Forms are also available online at www.BloomingtonGazette.com and at the community office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road, behind Sun TrustBank and Citgo. The office is open Monday through Thursday from 7 to 11 a.m. For more information, call 681-2051.

Business Briefs

Clinic extends hours

The Late Hours Urgent Care Clinic, 3444 Lithia-Pinecrest Road in Valrico, is extending hours on weekends from 10 a.m. to midnight.

On weekdays, the hours will remain from noon until midnight. The clinic does lab tests, EKGs and X-rays on site, with results back in minutes.

The physicians are Dr. H. Moursi, board certified in emergency medicine; Dr. M. Ansari, certified in emergency

medicine and internal medicine; and Dr. L. Aguila, board certified in emergency medicine. Call: 643-9393.

AmSouth Cares Day

On July 10, more than 125 AmSouth bankers volunteered at seven YMCAs across the Bay area with their commitment translating to fresh paint on YMCA walls, landscaping, and smiles from children being tutored in math.

AmSouth bankers worked

at the Campo Y at 3414 Culbreath Road in Valrico landscaping and providing snacks to basketball players.

Business After Hours

The Salon & Spa at 3212 Lithia-Pinecrest Road in Valrico will host the next Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours Aug. 10 at 5:30 p.m.

New laser system

Bloomingdale Medical Associates recently introduced the Sciton Profile™ laser system to its practice. This innovative laser system spans the widest wavelength and application range and can effectively treat all types of patients including tanned ones.

Profile is a minimally invasive aesthetic procedure that can be performed with a very short turnaround time. Its modular configuration allows for fast and accurate delivery of several applications including high-speed hair removal, MicroLaserPeel, facial and leg veins, nonablative therapy,

photo facial, wrinkles, vascular lesions, full resurfacing, pigmented lesions, telangiectasia, rosacea, scar revision and more. Call: 654-1775.

Golf tournament

The Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce's annual golf tournament will be Oct. 14 at Bloomingdale Golfers Club, 4113 Great Golfers Place in Valrico.

The four-person scramble cost \$100 per player. Registration and lunch starts at noon, with a shotgun start at 1 p.m.

Gold, silver, beverage/cigar cart, contest, exclusive hole, and hole sponsorships are available. Call: 689-1221, or register online at www.brandonchamber.com.

Networking

A new business group is forming for Bloomingdale residents and businesses. The group meets weekly to network and refer leads to businesses in the Bloomingdale area. Call: Larry Niday, 244-6475.

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Commentary

Editor Gives Farewell, But Not Goodbye, To Gazette

By D'ANN WHITE
Editor

I glanced up from my computer at The Brandon News and my heart skipped a beat.

It was after 5:30 p.m. I had less than a half hour to pick up my 8-year-old from his after-school program and get him to his Wolf Pack meeting by 6 p.m.

My heart skipped another beat when it suddenly occurred to me that it was my turn to bring snacks to the meeting.

Remembering the homemade brownies fellow Scout mom Theresa Hickie brought to the last meeting, I hurried into the break room to see what I could scrounge. Slim pickings. All I could find were chocolate bars left over from a school fundraiser and a day-old pot of coffee. Somehow, I didn't think my fellow Scout parents would appreciate me feeding their boys the equivalent of a No-Doze pill just before bedtime.

So while my son remained in the car, scurrying into his Scout uniform and guzzling his dinner, a Slim Fast shake I'd pilfered from the office refrigerator (I promise I'll replace it), I ran into Eckerd's for cookies and juice boxes.

This little slice of life has nothing to do with Bloomingdale.

It's just my convoluted way of announcing that I'm relinquishing my duties as editor of the Bloomingdale Gazette to spend more time with my family.

I had my share of reservations when I agreed to help out the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association a year ago when Bloomingdale Gazette editor Laura Frazier and her family relocated to North Carolina. My full-time duties as editor of The Brandon News left little time for extracurricular activities. However, I felt it would be a good opportunity to get to know my chosen home a bit better. And it was. I got to

And Laura, bless her heart, has agreed to resume her duties as editor of the Gazette so my heart can do a little less skipping and my son can get a decent dinner.

know a lot of wonderful people I'd never have met otherwise and I got a much better insight into the dedication of the people who make up the BHA and the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District, not to mention Joe Liguori, the volunteer executive director of the Gazette whose dedication to his community is unmatched.

But the Fraziers discovered their hearts belonged in Bloomingdale. They're back, having found a home in Bloomingdale Estates, just a stone's throw from their previous house in Dogwood Hills.

And Laura, bless her heart, has agreed to resume her duties as editor of the Gazette so my heart can do a little less skipping and my son can get a decent dinner.

Although my name will no longer be on the Gazette masthead above the title "editor," the Gazette won't be entirely rid of me.

I plan to remain active in the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association and contribute to the Gazette on a voluntary basis.

I'm ashamed to say that, although I'd lived in Bloomingdale for eight years, I had never attended a homeowners association or taxing district meeting until I took over as editor of the Gazette. Like most of the 5,000 homeowners in Bloomingdale, I figured the BHA and BSTD would handle all of my concerns. I didn't really need to get involved.

But over the past year, my perspective has drastically changed. I'm frankly amazed

at the amount of work accomplished by so few people.

The BHA directors and BSTD trustees spend countless volunteer hours ensuring that Bloomingdale remains a great place to live.

And the help they receive from most of us 5,000 homeowners is miniscule at best.

Nevertheless, it's a tribute to the hard work of those few that the BHA's PRIDE program was recognized last year as the best neighborhood

improvement program in Hillsborough County. And the county's Neighborhood Relations Department holds Bloomingdale's Neighborhood Improvement Program up as an example of what can be accomplished if a community takes responsibility for itself.

This is the place my husband and I chose to invest our savings and raise our son. I plan to stay involved in the BHA and the BSTD to make sure my investment remains a sound one and that Bloomingdale remains the attractive, family-oriented community where children can safely play, where exercise enthusiasts can jog and ride their bikes without fear, where neighbors look out for one another.

I urge my fellow residents to do the same.



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Teacher Says Music Education Is Important For Growth

RECOMMENDS PARENTS PURSUE ALTERNATIVES

By LESLIE WHITE
Correspondent

In today's competitive world, parents strive to provide every opportunity to ensure their child's success; the keys to which may not be solely academic, but ivory.

Studies in neuroscience by accredited doctors show that significantly more of the brain is being used during music making than originally thought, actually expanding the brain. One recent University of California/Irvine study focused its attention on elementary school students, proving that students who took piano lessons boosted their math performance.

Bloomington resident and piano teacher Karin Matlock believes music also helps children learn better hand/eye coordination as well as strengthens their spatial relationship perception. Having taken piano lessons for 14 years herself, Matlock began teaching private piano lessons in 1998, seeing the many benefits of music manifested in her students.

"I see them develop strong self-esteem, more self-confidence," she said. "I see these skills translate into other areas of their life. After performing at a recital in front of a small crowd, they're even

better at public speaking."

Matlock currently teaches 31 students ranging in age from 6 to adult, and has a waiting list of hopeful students. "Music in general allows children to focus on

something," she said. "They hear the music; touch the keys. In seeing the music, they're reading. They experience the cause and effect of touching the keys."

In touching the keys and hearing the sound, children learn the touch is translated into music. Matlock has observed great leaps in the early years of her students, watching them develop perseverance. "Reading music is much like reading books; left to right, top to bottom. If they're able to sit for a period of time and are able to do the lessons and practices, then they're ready for lessons."

Rhythm and patterns are inherent in a child's learning, but Matlock suggests that kids need to be ready to take in that information and process it to get the most out of music

lessons, which is why she recommends not starting a child in music lessons until they're at least 6 years old. With music education often the first thing to go during budget cuts, Matlock said she can "do more privately for those who have the time, the resources and feel like that's important." She also said the benefits of music education are widespread, varying from strengthening math skills to giving them a sense of belonging, psychologically creating positive feelings, building organizational skills, teaching the kids self-discipline, time management and patience.

A 2000 Gallop Poll indicates the American public feels a Matlock does, with nine out of 10 believing music education



LESLIE WHITE/Photo

Karin Matlock teaches piano in her Bloomington home.

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See MUSIC, Page 19

Resident Offers Speech Therapy For Youngsters

**ONE-ON-ONE
SESSIONS
AVAILABLE**

By **LESLIE WHITE**
Correspondent

For All About Kids' Julie Kogut, a community approach is the key to successful speech therapy.

"People don't realize the importance of early intervention, of one-on-one treatment and a teamwork approach," she said.

With 11 years of experience and a master's degree in language pathology, Kogut opened All About Kids Pediatric Speech Service out of her home after the birth of her last son.

"Kids really enjoy coming," she said. "I do games and awards. My little ones think it's a play date," laughs Kogut. She admits, "I have more difficulty getting them out the door than in the door."

Kogut said children are comfortable in this relaxed setting with the parent observing, the one-on-one approach being less intimidating to the child than a group setting. Kogut meets with her students one to three times a week, depending on their age and their special needs.

Parents are the primary observers of their child's language skills, and often the first to suspect a problem. "The earlier you notice the difficulty the better," advises Kogut. The critical time for developing language skills is between age 3 and 6.

So what do parents look for?

By age 1, a child should have about 20 core vocabulary words and "play" with language, imitating sounds. Simple games like patty cake and peek-a-boo facilitate these early skills, as does giving concise directions and watching whether or not the child responds. The biggest leap in language skills is between the age of 1 and 2

when a child's vocabulary should increase to 200 to 300 words, their speech development allowing them to string together two and three word phrases. At this early age, you should be able to understand them 70 percent of the time, and the child should be capable of six to seven minutes of "sit down" time with parents, using language functionally.

By age 3, the toddler should comprehend up to 1,200 words, speaking in four- to five-word sentences. The toddler should also ask and answer questions. They should be understood 80 percent of the time, and be able to communicate something that happened in their recent past.

A child who is unable to communicate might resort to throwing tantrums, not having a grasp on the words it takes to communicate feelings. Another red flag goes up when parents find themselves translating for their kids. By age 3, a parent may still need to clarify, but not translate. Consonant blends, L's, R's and S's are later developing sounds, but if a child is still struggling with K's, G's, L's and S's by age 4, that could be a problem.

Kogut hopes parents will seek help for their children before they enter school because they can hinder school performance. "If you can't say the sound, you can't spell it or read it," says Kogut. All of these language checklists enable parents to gauge their child's development, and hopefully recognize problems early on. "We hope to catch it before they start kindergarten so that they don't need special service once they're in school," Kogut said.

Parents whose children receive speech training in school note two disadvantages over the off-site one-on-one approach. Speech administered during the school day disrupts the student's class time, often leav-



Julie Kogut of All About Kids offers one-on-one speech therapy to Caden McClenathen, 3.

LESLIE WHITE/Photo



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400150

Cimino Elementary Celebrates Academic Success

By LESLIE WHITE
Correspondent

Cimino Elementary School is celebrating its success, receiving its first "A" grade since its inception.

"We're very proud," said Principal Sandra Frost. "I think the teachers did an excellent job preparing the kids, not just for the tests, but academically."

Frost, too, is proud of the students. "They did an outstanding job. This was a combination of the work of the parents, students and teachers."

Admittedly, her expectations for the coming school year are very high, with Cimino looking forward to another grade A year as the 2004-05 school year begins.

Although Hillsborough County offers school choice beginning with this year, Cimino is virtually unaffected. "I believe we only added a few kindergartners due to choice. Our neighboring schools are really good schools, so people really don't want to switch," says Frost.

Enrollment is actually down from last year's 1,006 "We had such a large fifth grade enrollment last year. We currently have between 940 and 950 students," explains Frost.

Despite decreasing enrollment, Cimino gained units this year, necessitating the addition of four portables to accommodate the extra classes needed to keep class sizes smaller. This year there will be



LESLIE WHITE/Photo

Belinda Cohen, left, who joins Cimino this year as the vice assistant principal, along with Sandra Frost, principal, and Deborah Talley, assistant principal, stand in front of the Cimino Quilt, each block contributed by every class throughout the school.

eight kindergarten units, eight first grade, seven second grade, seven third, six fourth and seven fifth grade units. The teacher/pupil ratio for primary units is 20/1, and Frost said that most of her current units have 21, with second and third grades being the most crowded with around 26 children per class.

"This could be alleviated after our fifth day count," Frost said.

With the addition of these units comes another addition to the Cimino staff, Belinda Cohen, vice assistant principal. Cohen will be responsible for the coordination of school activities, keeping the calendar current as well as aiding Assistant Principal Deborah Talley during testing, and

switching up administrative duties.

Cimino has also adopted a "team teaching" approach, which is encouraged by the school district. Seven units have either co-teachers or a team of three teaching the students throughout the day. "In this situation, we have compatible teachers working together, balancing each other's strengths and weaknesses," explains Frost. "The only grade not team teaching is fourth," adds Frost.

With the safety of students of primary concern, Frost implemented another change she hopes will ensure campus safety. "We now have Coach Horn on the sidewalk between the school and the crossing guard, monitoring the stu-

dents," said Frost, who hopes parents will help her teach and reinforce the safety precautions designed to protect the students. "We expect the kids to adhere to all safety precautions which are sent home to the parents twice, once in the teacher assignment letter and another in the first day packet sent home with each student. We also expect children to be in uniform."

Into its third year, Cimino is fast becoming established as a successful neighborhood school, instilling in its "Cougar" population a dedication to both educational goals as well as character building, making for what parents see as strong, responsible, productive students, she said.

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THERAPY

From page 17

ing them to complete unfinished work at home.

The most notable distinction is the lack of parental presence.

"When a child comes to me, the parent is with them—observing. Parents hear what I'm doing and I train them on what to do with the kids at home," says Kogut, adding that the reinforcement at

home is vital for success. "Sometimes, all the child needs is a push in the right direction."

If you believe your child may have a speech difficulty, contact Kogut at All About Kids at 368-2485. She is located in Bloomingdale East, works by appointment, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Kindergarten Teacher Offers Advice For Parents

HER SON ENTERS SCHOOL THIS YEAR, TOO

By LESLIE WHITE
Correspondent

For 9 years, Cimino Elementary School kindergarten teacher Mary Ann Gonsalves has welcomed children and parents into her classroom. This year, she will switch roles as she escorts her oldest son, Marshall, into school on his first day of kindergarten.

"There's a lot of mixed emotions," Gonsalves said. "It's a little sad, but I'm so proud of him."

As every parent knows, it's a heart-wrenching day of conflicting feelings for both parent and child — anticipation and trepidation, coupled with exuberance and anxiety. Letting go of that little hand as your child walks into a classroom and begins their trek into academia isn't easy. A part of your heart remains, and worries don't subside until that little smiling face is back with you at 2:15.

Excitement laces their voice as they tell you about their new teacher, new friends and all the fun things they did that day. It's a time of wonder, and a time of budding independence. Parents can help maxi-

mize a successful transition into kindergarten.

Gonsalves has had the chance to observe what works and what doesn't. "Hopefully, the children have been left with a sitter or family before so it's not such a shock," she said. "Tiny intervals away from parents help the child to get a little more independent."

Also helpful is attending Meet the Teacher night, or Open House with your child, familiarizing the child with the classroom and the teacher they'll spend the bulk of their day with.

Verbal affirmations the first day enable the child to feel secure in their new environment. Gonsalves suggests parents use such phrases as "be back later" or "see you soon," then leave, keeping the good-bye short and less emotional. "When parents linger at the door or in the room, it confuses the child," said Gonsalves, who also advises parents not to cry in front of the child or use phrases that make the child feel sad, such as "I'll miss you."

Keeping a positive tone and a happy face helps children go in easier and feel more secure. When it comes to skills, kindergartners should know and be able to identify their ABC's as well as the numbers 1-12. Children should know



LESLIE WHITE/Photo

Mary Ann Gonsalves prepares for a new year. She is a kindergarten teacher at Cimino Elementary School.

how to print their names and hold a pencil correctly. At this stage, children should be learning what sounds the letters make, which will help them to begin reading. It's also helpful for kids to know how to hold scissors correctly and be able to cut.

Gonsalves suggests having kids practice on strips of

paper, just cutting squares off the end of the strip. The ability to assemble simple puzzles is a skill builder that strengthens hand/eye coordination. "The most important thing," emphasizes Gonsalves, "is to read to your child every night and talk about what you read." Parental involvement is the key to success. Paying attention to the take-home folder on a daily basis will keep the parents abreast of what the child is doing during the day.

Gonsalves also stresses having a daily conversation with your child about their day.

This builds their communication, as well as informs the parents of classroom activities. The first day, Gonsalves and her students play several name games, enabling them to get more familiar with each

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MUSIC

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helps students succeed in other academic areas. Active music making is proven to be a key to intellectual development, physical wellness and improved grades.

Music is an endeavor involving most of the senses from tactical to auditory, and enhances thinking and creativity in participants. Such well-known pop culture icons as VH-1 see the value in music education and have created

Save the Music Foundation, which helps improve the quality of American education by restoring music programs by donating new and

used instruments.

With the benefits of music education proven, parents might want to consider enrolling their children in some facet of music education, and although Matlock is not currently accepting new students, she recommends checking with your school's music teacher for the names of local teachers. Another resource is your local music store, which sometimes has a list of private teachers. Most people find their teachers via word of mouth and Matlock says, "Happy students are the best references."

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Red, white and blue in Bloomingdale



Photos courtesy Joe and Joni Hickle

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association showed off its community PRIDE program during the annual Brandon Fourth of July parade. The BHA would like to express its appreciation to the Bloomingdale Golfers Club, which donated the use of golf carts for the occasion. Above, BHA office manager Joni Hickle and BHA director Joe Hickle decorated one of the carts with red, white and blue bunting, bows and a giant Uncle Sam while BHA director Lydia Harrod, at right, gave her golf cart her own patriotic touch.



ADVICE

From page 19

other They take a tour of the school and discuss ways to treat friends, supplies and property. Gonsalves takes time to review behavior expectations, which are posted on a daily behavior management chart.

Kindergartners learn responsibility as they keep up with their weekly homework assignments and monthly

family projects listed in their daily agendas. After a few weeks, Gonsalves welcomes parents into the classroom to volunteer.

"I've always loved to have parents volunteer in my classroom. They're very helpful and I think it helps them see what we're doing."

With the reduction in kindergarten aides last year,

these teachers now share three aides among the eight classes, so parental involvement is instrumental in helping the classroom thrive. Also reduced this year is the number of students per classroom, the ratio being closer to 18 pupils to 1 teacher to accommodate the reduction in class sizes approved by Gov. Bush. Gonsalves had 24 students in

2004, and 30 in 2003.

For kindergartners entering school this year, they can expect to make new friends, develop new skills and learn to tie their shoes. And, if parents have children enter Mary Ann Gonsalves' class, they can expect a teacher who understands exactly how it feels to parent a kindergartner.

Backpacks Causing Back Pain, Chiropractor Says

By JOYCE MCKENZIE

Each day as he drives to and from his office during the school year, Dr. Scott Stoltz witnesses what he calls a mounting epidemic among students in his Bloomingdale neighborhood.

"I see it all through the year because I live near two elementary schools," said the chiropractor and owner of the Spine Center in Seffner.

The health plague he's referring to is an increasing incidence of "backpack attacks," the strain of heavy backpacks on the backs of students.

Oftentimes, he said, he watches the children walking to school hunched over from the weight of their overloaded backpacks or bent sideways because they chose to carry them over one rather than both shoulders.

"The old adage 'as the twig

bends, so grows the tree' always comes to mind," Stoltz said. "If they walk more than seven or eight minutes, their backpacks can affect the curvature of their spines and damage their nervous systems and other organs. The nervous system runs everything in our bodies."

Even though "hitting the books," he believes, can lead to academic success, the manner in which students carry backpacks can cause lower back pain and ultimately spinal problems.

"Like dentistry, if we neglect spinal hygiene, it can have dramatic effects later on," Stoltz said. "Do this heavy math — 12 pounds in an average child's backpack times 10 lifts per day equals 120 pounds lifted per day. This 120 pounds per day times 180 days per school year equals 21,600 pounds lifted in one school year. This is nearly 11

tons or the equivalent of six full-size automobiles."

He points to statistics from the Consumer Product Safety Commission that show 6,512 emergency room visits each year are the result of book bag injuries.

"This is the beginning of an epidemic, one that will cause serious damage to a child's health for a lifetime," Stoltz said. "Kids need to learn how to choose, pack, lift and wear their backpacks correctly."

To educate parents and children on these issues, Stoltz will host a Back-to-School Bonanza Aug. 7 from 9 a.m. to noon at The Spine Center, 2101 N. Parsons Ave.

Using a video and handouts supplied by Backpack Safety America/International, an educational program designed to help prevent backpack-related back problems, Stoltz will address what he believes should be a major

concern among parents of school-age children at 10 a.m.

"For instance, backpacks should only weigh about 15 percent of the child's body weight, should be fitted properly and not carried over one shoulder," Stoltz said.

The event, open to anyone in the community, also will feature guest speaker April Oakes, president of the Autism Autoimmunity Project, at 11 a.m. Oakes will discuss the connection between autism and childhood vaccinations.

In addition, there will be activities to entertain the children including a clown, games and free goodie bags. Free children's scoliosis screenings, chair massages and drinks, compliments of Smoothie King on Bloomingdale Avenue in Brandon, also will be available.

For more information, call 681-9239.

WEB SITE

From page 11

choose a name and the BHA will install signs with the chosen name. The BHA plans to spend \$20,000 on 2- by 3-foot wooden signs for the unnamed neighborhoods.

As part of the Bloomingdale PRIDE program, the homeowners association is asking residents to vote on a neighborhood name. (See related article for proposed names and voting ballot). The neighborhoods generating the most votes will get signs first.

The project is intended to promote neighborhood pride and identity, said Grable. When Bloomingdale was first developed in the 1980s, the developer opted not to name 10 neighborhoods in Bloomingdale West and portions of Bloomingdale East.

The BHA is also working on plans to revive the community's mobile watch program. Bloomingdale had one of the first mobile watch units in the county 20 years ago. Residents took turns patrolling the neighborhoods, reporting suspi-

cious activities and crimes.

Mobile watch coordinator Tony Diolosa has proposed purchasing a mobile watch vehicle using a law enforcement grant and donations, and equipping it with decals and lights for the watch volunteers to use. Long Tire and Automotive on Bell Shoals Road has agreed to repair the car at cost plus 10 percent and Citgo on Bell Shoals will give the watch a discount on gas.

Grable said his only concern is insurance. "We need to get a legal opinion so we're sure we're covered from a liability standpoint," he said.

According to Gazette executive director Joe Liguori, at one point the mobile watch had 180 volunteers. There were three cars with two volunteers per car to patrol the roads, parks and teen gathering spots.

Although Bloomingdale's crime rate is below the county average, the BHA would like to have the mobile watch reactivated as a deterrent to crime.

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MOVE

From page 6

taste of the large and still-growing patronage she and her 15-member staff are expected to experience at the new library.

Riverview's 25-year-old, 8,000-square-foot library has become very busy over the past few years, Beamguard said. Formerly a sleepy little library, the branch now welcomes new families moving into the area on a weekly basis, while continuing to provide service to hundreds of longtime residents.

The new 15,000-square-foot branch under construction on Bloomingdale Avenue just east of Bloomingdale High School is expected to draw a large number of patrons from Brandon, Valrico, Riverview and Lithia. Beamguard is ready to greet them all with the help of a 15-member staff. Her plan is to focus on providing the same good service and small-town, welcoming atmosphere the Riverview branch prides itself on.

More than just a place to check out books, Beamguard envisions the new library as a community hub, a place people come to meet, to interact and to learn. It should be a place, she said, where both children and adults feel comfortable coming to socialize, to get information and to explore new interests.

"If a newcomer moves into the area and asks a neighbor where they can get local information or where they can take their kids, I want us to think of the library first. We want this library to be a welcoming



LAURA FRAZIER/Photo

Riverview Branch Library supervisor Julie Beamguard was selected for reassignment to the library under construction on Bloomingdale Avenue. The new branch is scheduled to open in December.

place with good service and lots of community involvement."

The library is scheduled to open in December. Plans for special programs and activities are still in the brainstorming stage. But Beamguard said there will be no shortage of goings on at the facility.

"We will have several community rooms, and I just know we're going to be really busy. I'd like to see things like computer and technology programs and training. People ask for those all the time. We will have book discussion groups, children's programs ... there are so many things that can be done. We want to hear what the community wants."

Beamguard said she's happy to have a Friends of the Library chapter in place months before the facility is set to open.

Used Books, Media Sought

Sale To Benefit New Library

Donations of gently used books and media (CDs, DVDs, VHS tapes, video games, computer software, etc.) are needed for an upcoming book sale to benefit the new library branch under construction on Bloomingdale Avenue. Residents can drop off donations Monday through Friday, 7 to 11 a.m., at the Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road. The South Brandon/Bloomingdale chapter of the Friends of the Library will hold the sale Sept. 18 at the Stephanie Ann Culbertson Recreation Center in Bloomingdale West Park on Canoga Park Drive from 9 a.m. to noon. Call: Pat Boody, 785-3373 or pwboody@tecoenergy.com.

"I'm really happy to have a terrific group that's so involved. They're already planning a big book sale."

The group meets monthly at the Bloomingdale Community Office on Bell Shoals Road, where used books and media (CDs, DVDs, video

games, etc.) are now being collected for the Sept. 18 fundraiser.

The Friends group, in addition to raising money for perks like special speakers, staff amenities and volunteer awards, acts as a liaison between the library and local and state government, and serves as a link between residents and library officials.

Marilyn Shynett, East Hillsborough's regional chief librarian, said Beamguard was chosen to head the new library from an undisclosed number of applicants for the job. "Julie was chosen for reassignment because of her proven track record as an efficient librarian," said Shynett.

"She is an excellent communicator, has a high level of expertise in reference, and works well in cooperation with others for the benefit of the library."

Beamguard received her master's degree in library science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill shortly before moving to Florida in 1977. She ran the reference department of the Ocala Library in Marion County for five years. In Hillsborough County, Beamguard worked at the main library in Tampa, the Temple Terrace branch and the Port Tampa branch before her assignment to Riverview in 2001.

Ann Fleury, head librarian of the Seffner/Mango Branch Library, will be reassigned as supervisor of the Riverview branch. Children's librarian Karen Resciniti will remain at the Riverview branch.

LIBRARY

From page 6

riers for after-hours security, appropriate outdoor lighting and landscaping that won't provide convenient hiding places for trespassers, he said.

"Those features keep people safe, prevent vandalism and theft, and maintain the security of public buildings. That's all we're looking for (at the new library)," Maurer said.

But the security gate could prove costly, Wullschleger said. One less expensive option is to install traffic bollards at the rear of the facility. The series of posts, usually constructed of metal or concrete, have been used successfully at other Hillsborough County libraries with similar security issues, he said.

Wullschleger encouraged residents with questions or concerns about the new library to contact the branch's Friends of the Library group.

"It would be great if people would bring these concerns to the Friends group and get involved in the organization, because it will be a terrific asset to the library," he said.

Pat Boody, president of the

new Friends chapter, said the group is talking to local flag companies about the possibility of donating the flagpole, estimated to cost \$2,000.

The Friends group meets monthly at the Bloomingdale Community Office on Bell Shoals Road. For meeting times or information, contact Boody at pwboody@tecoenergy.com or 275-3642.

TAXING

From page 3

School and the University of South Florida where his son now goes.

His daughter attends Bloomingdale High School. He and his wife, Susan, have been married 23 years and moved to Bloomingdale 12 years ago, attracted to the reputation of Bloomingdale's schools.

He works as a senior sales representative for Sherwin Paints and is active in the Brandon Rotary Club.

West said he'd like to continue the work he's been involved in as a trustee. Since his appointment, he has worked on the tax roll counts and budget committees and prides himself on rarely missing a monthly meeting.

"If you're going to do something, I believe you should give it your all," he said. "I'm not afraid to make things happen, to take action."

He said he would like to continue overseeing the renovation of Bloomingdale's

major entrances, a project he lobbied for when first appointed.

"Bloomingdale is a wonderful community, and the taxing district is doing its best to maintain it," he said.

A River Crossing resident since 1996, Rusty Jones retired from the Air Force at MacDill after 22 years and now works as a senior security specialist for Honeywell International.

Jones and his wife, Joyce, along with their three children, age 17, 18 and 22, were attracted to Bloomingdale because of its schools and the general appearance of the community.

"The people are friendly and Bloomingdale is convenient; it's close to everything," said Jones.

Responding to an article seeking trustees in the Bloomingdale Gazette, Jones was appointed to the district in August 2002.

"I knew Thom (Snelling, the district's chairman) when he coached my daughter's softball team and he encouraged me to get involved," said Jones.

Jones said he's not only interested in volunteering for his community but wants to make sure the community's tax dollars are spent wisely.

"I want to help make sure that Bloomingdale remains an attractive place to live and that our tax dollars are spent prudently.

Ken Pyse is the newest member of the district, appointed earlier this summer. A resident of Cambridge Cove since 1997, Pyse and his wife of 43 years, Barbara, moved from New Jersey after he retired as a distribution manager for UPS. They have two daughters, one in New Jersey and the other in Tarpon Springs.

Pyse said they chose Cambridge Cove because of its

proximity to the golf course, Pyse is an avid golfer, and because the area was attractive.

He said he became interested in beautifying and maintaining Bloomingdale's common areas while working on Cambridge Cove's entranceway on Natures Way.

"As a trustee, I would like to preserve and protect the interests of our community, and make sure the rules are followed and the money well spent," he said.

He also believes that his experience in budgeting with UPS will also come in handy as a trustee.

Bloomingdale is one of 44 special taxing districts in Hillsborough County.

The Bloomingdale Special Taxing District trustees meet the second Monday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road.

Call: 684-6667.

ROAD

From page 8

going to be impacted when you make improvements," said Alford. "Wal-Mart has a higher volume of traffic, so we opted for a plan that would keep their entrance open. But I'm amenable to looking at anything you suggest."

Alford said he also will hold a public meeting when the road improvement plans are 30 percent designed. Construction was expected to get under way in November, but Alford said that schedule has been moved up to the first of the year.

Ultimately, the county wants to widen Bell Shoals to four lanes between Bloomingdale and Boyette Road,

however, there is currently no funding available for that project.

In the meantime, the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association has asked the county to look into the possibility of installing a traffic light on Bell Shoals at Glenhaven Drive to prevent accidents caused by motorists trying to make left turns onto Bell Shoals. The association also would like a left turn lane added to Bell Shoals at Garnet Drive.

However, Alford said these requests are beyond the scope of the \$3 million Bell Shoals/Bloomingdale intersection improvement project.

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