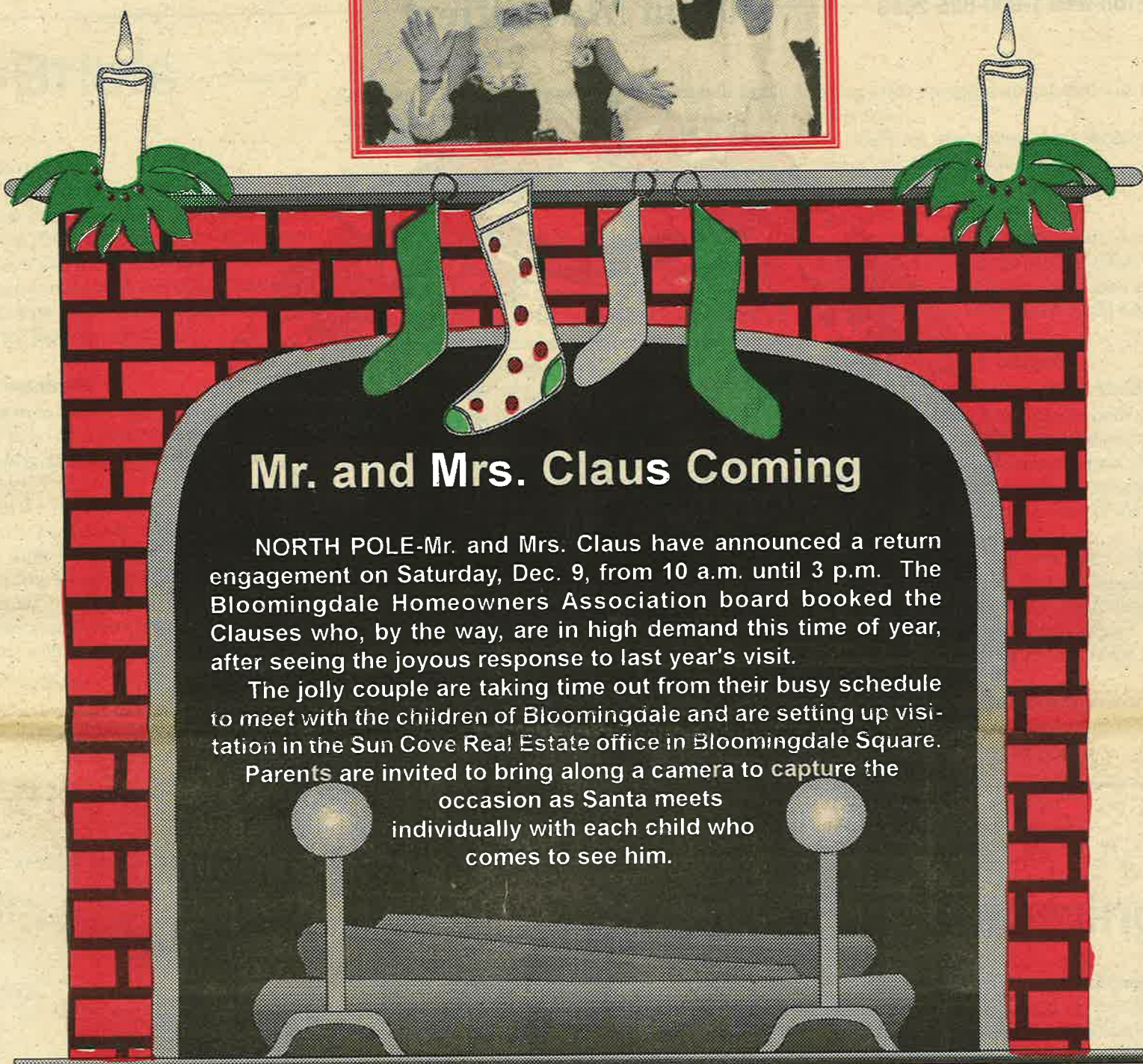


The Bloomingdale Gazette

Season's Greetings



Mr. and Mrs. Claus Coming

NORTH POLE-Mr. and Mrs. Claus have announced a return engagement on Saturday, Dec. 9, from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association board booked the Clauses who, by the way, are in high demand this time of year, after seeing the joyous response to last year's visit.

The jolly couple are taking time out from their busy schedule to meet with the children of Bloomingdale and are setting up visitation in the Sun Cove Real Estate office in Bloomingdale Square. Parents are invited to bring along a camera to capture the occasion as Santa meets individually with each child who comes to see him.

School Officials Come Under Fire At Alafia

by Rozel Sciulli

It wasn't what the 200 parents present wanted to hear but the message was loud and clear - the school system has run out of money for new construction and if parents are dissatisfied, they need to complain to the state legislature.

The only problem, according to school officials, is that the legislature is not listening. That message was further driven home when it was pointed out that the area's elected state officials chose to ignore an invitation from the Alafia PTA to attend last week's open forum with school officials which was moderated by WFLA television's Wes Sarginson.

"I'd like to thank everyone for coming tonight," Sarginson said. "And now I'd like to point out who isn't here."

Sarginson named legislators such as Victor Crist, Buddy Johnson and Sen. Malcolm Beard who turned down invitations and school board member Joe Newcome who gave no response.

"Frank Brogan (state secretary of education), should be here to see and hear your anger and concern," he added.

Although advised that the forum was

of questions and accusations to the panel. But school officials put the blame back on the parents who they said failed to pass the half-cent sales tax.

"There is no money. There is nothing we can do," said Larry Martin, area 4 director.

Martin said if the school board accepts the proposal, Bloomingdale (projected enrollment 2800), Gaither, and possibly Chamberlain and Plant City High would all be on double sessions next year. The schools will enter the cluster plan which adds ninth grade to the high schools and would introduce 500-700 new students to each school.

"I see no relief for Bloomingdale coming off double sessions. It might be for years," Martin said.

Time and again parents were told to make their voices heard in the legislature.

"It's not that Florida is a poor state. It just treats its children poorly," said Michael Bookman, assistant superintendent for business and resource development.

Connie Milito, the district's government relations liaison, who along with Bookman lobbies the legislature for education funding, invited parents to join a growing team of parents in the county who will

that our children are our priority," she said. "They're listening, but they're not acting. It's not just Hillsborough County and it's not just Florida that has this problem. It's a problem throughout the country."

Under the double sessions proposal, Burns would house 7th and 8th graders with the 6th graders attending Valrico Elementary, still under construction on Miller Road. Ninth and some 10th graders attending Bloomingdale would likely attend the second session from around 12:30 until 6 p.m. Eleventh and 12th graders would have to begin school as early as 6 a.m.

Martin attempted to downplay the negative side of double sessions saying "it's not as bad as it sounds," which elicited boo's from the audience.

"There are many options for making double sessions work," Martin said. "But we have run out of seats in Hillsborough County. Now the only thing we can do is use a seat twice during a day."

Parents posed concerns about a decline in the quality of education and an increase in juvenile crime with students off half the day.

One parent asked school board member Carolyn Brickley if she could name



This parent wanted school officials to hear her anger at the proposed double sessions for Bloomingdale



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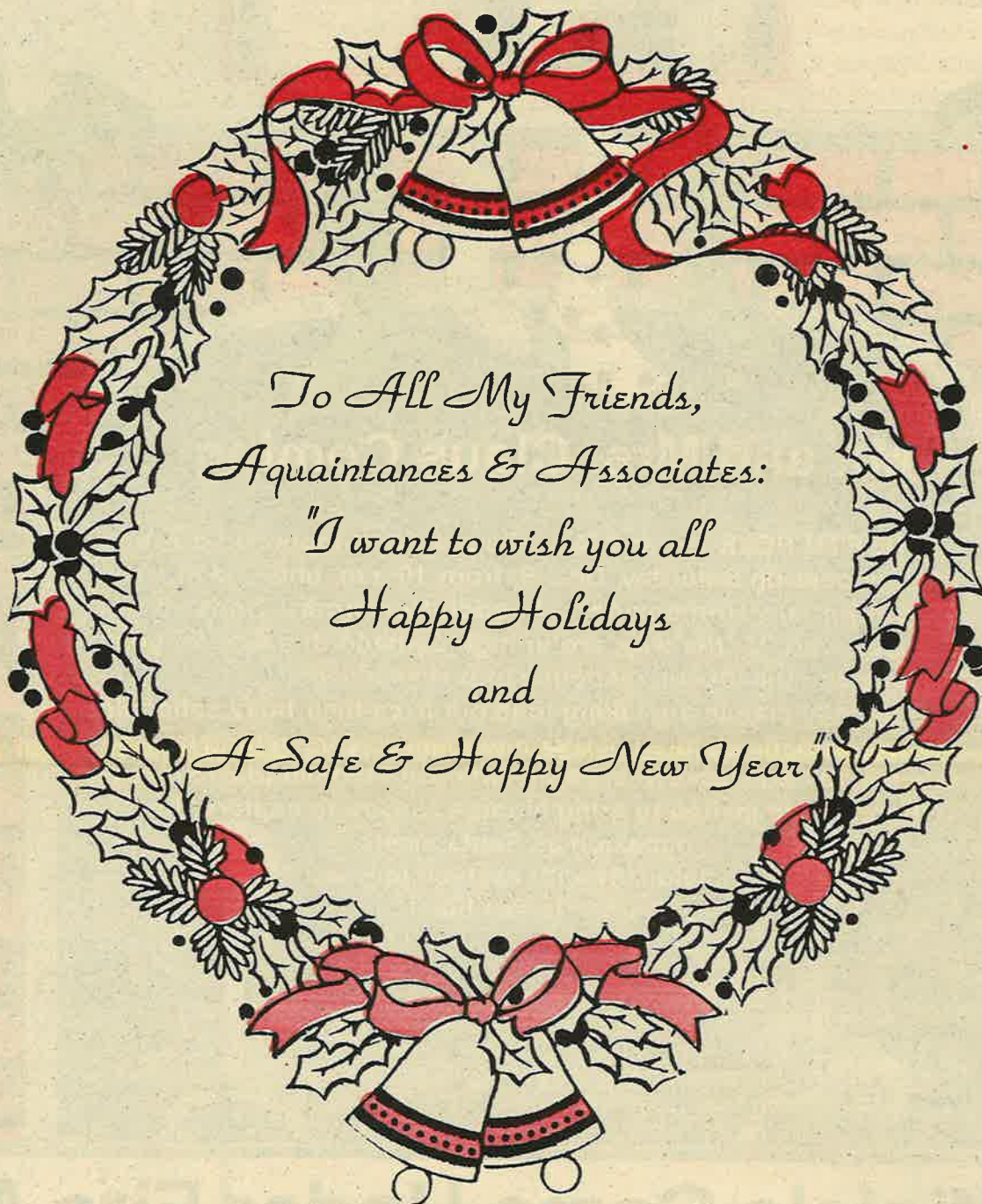


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The Gazette...We're The Original!

The *Bloomington Gazette* has served the community for nearly 16 years. It is the original newspaper and source of information for Bloomington residents.

It is the mission of *The Gazette* to report fairly and accurately the events that matter most to our community whether related to county government, education or

neighborhood activities.

While others have tried to move into our community, no other publication meets the needs of the residents of Bloomington, specifically. The others may circulate into Bloomington, but are not of Bloomington or for Bloomington.

Expect *The Gazette* to be hung on your front door the first Saturday (second Saturday following a holiday) of each month. It will not appear in your mailbox, on your driveway, or in the street's rain gutter.

This is our commitment to you. *The Gazette* and Bloomington - growing together.

The Bloomington Gazette

Volume XV, Number 12

Published by the Bloomington Homeowners Association, Inc.

December 1995

BHA Briefs

Monthly Meeting

Members of the Bloomington Homeowners' Association are invited to attend this month's meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 12, at 7:30 in the Community Office's new location in the Royal Oaks of Bloomington. The Community Office has moved to 3244 Lithia Pincrest, Suite 103, next door to Kim Hall's Dance Studio. Residents have the floor at the top of the meeting.

BHA Board Nominees

Nominations were taken at last month's BHA meeting and a slate of 10 board of directors will be voted on at this month's meeting, Dec. 12. Nominations still will be taken from the floor.

Nominees for the 1996 term are current board members Michael Davis, Ted Grable, Rick Oros, Pat Radel, Luana Russell, Anne Underwood, Randy Wolfe and LaWayne Wyatt. Mark Leytze and Stan Highsmith also have been nominated.

Board members serve a one-year term and meet once a month to discuss matters of concern to the residents of Bloomington.

Membership Drive Underway

The 1996 BHA membership drive is now underway.

Residents of the Bloomington communities will begin receiving packets this month. Dues are \$20 and are for the calendar year. Packets will include a notice of dues, Mobile Watch volunteer sign-up form and an informative brochure about the BHA and other area organizations.

What BHA Membership Gives You

Residents who take advantage of all the services offered by the BHA get their money's worth. In the last year the BHA has provided community symposiums on deed restriction and zoning violations, road and street lighting/traffic control advocacy, public safety information, a community picnic.

In addition, the BHA sponsored a parks and recreation advisory committee that continued the efforts of the 1987 board and accomplished the goal of bringing a rec center to the Bloomington community.

The BHA continues to support the Mobile Watch program and *The Bloomington Gazette*.

They also continue to stay on top of local government issues that affect the community and are advocates for the neighborhoods of Bloomington.

Now isn't all that worth \$20 a year. What a bargain!

Special Thanks

Woody Russell was a paper-folding, envelope-stuffing fanatic the last month when he and his crew got together all the mail-outs for the 1996 BHA membership drive.

Some 4,000 envelopes were stuffed with four inserts in record time.

The BHA would like to thank Woody for his volunteer efforts. What a great help!

By-Laws Revised

The by-laws of the Homeowners' Association have been revised to reflect the needs of today's community. A revised copy is available for residents to review in the community office from 9:30 to 12:30 weekdays.

Speaker Calms Concerns

Bloomington resident Tom McClusky was the invited guest of the BHA at last month's meeting. Mr. McClusky owns a home in Bloomington West that is a special care residential facility for six youngsters. Mr. McClusky answered questions presented by board members regarding the activities of the residents and their supervision.

After listening to Mr. McClusky and reviewing the state documents he provided, the board found that the residential home meets all local and state guidelines and is not in violation of deed restrictions.

"We try to be good neighbors the best we know how," he said.

Mr. McClusky was invited to meet with the BHA board after a resident raised concerns about the nature of the residence.

Holiday Events At Area Schools

Alafia

Dec. 8 - 7 p.m. Holiday Concert at Bloomington

Lithia Springs

Dec. 13-14

Dec. 14 - 7 p.m.

Music Dept. holiday program
Chorus and String Holiday
program at Durant High

B. T. Washington

Dec. 13 - 7:30

Holiday Band Concert at
Bloomington

Burns

Dec. 8 - 7-10 p.m.

Dec. 11 - 7 p.m.

Dec. 12 - 7 p.m.

Dec. 14 - 7 p.m.

Winter Dance
Chorus and Orchestra at
Bloomington High
Band Concert at
Bloomington High
Orchestra and Band at Burns

Dec. 14 - 7 p.m.

Dec. 14 - 7:30

Dec. 18 - 7:30

Chorus and Orchestra

Band Winter Program

Resource Deputy On Duty

Sheriff Deputy Pete Maurer has been assigned to serve the Bloomington area as its Community Resource Deputy. He is available and ready to discuss community or individual concerns, and can be reached by calling the Brandon Sheriff's sub-station at 247-8555 and leaving a message for Deputy Maurer.

Maurer urges residents to continue to use 911 in the event of an emergency, and says his capacity is more in the way of problem solving.

He is Bloomington's "cop on the beat", and is eager to help find solutions to community concerns such as vandalism, speeding, and loitering.

Residents who report crime in their neighborhood to

Surprise!

More Construction On Bloomington

by Gazette Staff

Expect more delays in traffic along Bloomington over the next two years. The next phase of widening Bloomington Avenue will take place east of Kings Avenue to U.S. 301. The \$10.1 million project is scheduled to begin in January and be completed by July, 1997.

The project includes widening Bloomington from two lanes to a five-lane urban roadway and improving the intersections at U.S. 301 and at Providence Road. Sidewalks also will be added and a new bridge will be built over Buckhorn Creek. The first section of work will begin at Kings.

The current widening along Bloomington between John Moore and Bell Shoals is operating on schedule, according to a spokesman for the county's road engineering department.

Rainy weather caused some delays, said Steve Valdez, "but it worked out for the best."

The heaviest road construction in front of Bloomington Square was scheduled to take place during the holiday shopping season. Now, because of the rain delays, that construction is not expected to begin until January.

The Bell Shoals to John Moore stretch of improvements should be completed by August.



BLOOMINGDALE COMMUNITY PAGE

The Bloomingdale Gazette and The Bloomingdale Homeowners

Association wish
you and yours a
safe and happy
holiday!

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**BLOOMINGDALE
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ASSOCIATION, INC.**
3244 Lithia Pinecrest Road
Suite 103
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681-2051

Randy Wolfe President 229-3321
Rick Oros Vice President 685-0866
Ted Grable Member 685-7193

Directors

Michael Davis 684-8881
Russ Lembke 689-2829
Patricia Radel 651-0210
Luana Russell 684-3144
LaWayne Wyatt 685-2072
Anne Underwood 653-4677

Bloomingdale Special Taxing District 684-6667

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Chris Hering Vice President 654-0235
Joe Ligouri Treasurer 681-9655
Tom Snelling Corresponding Secretary 681-9186
T. Szabo Recording Secretary 684-2547
Peter Aluotto Trustee 685-0727
Keith Wilson Trustee
Alan Devney Administrator 684-6617

Bloomingdale Mobile Watch

Core Committee
LaWayne Wyatt Coordinator/Scheduler 685-2072
John Britton Treasurer 681-1553
Steve Schneider Equipment Manager 685-8378

Members

David Guy 681-5943
Paul Kelmer 681-9701
Rick Borling 684-2022

**Bloomingdale Oaks
Special Taxing District**
P.O. Box 3132
Brandon, Florida 33509-3132

William Grace President 685-2817

The Bloomingdale Gazette

3244 Lithia Pinecrest Road • Suite 103
Valrico, Florida 33594
681-2051

Monday - Friday 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Bloomingdale Homeowners

Association, Inc.	Publisher
Rick Oros	President
Rozel Sciulli	Editor
June Oros	Administrative Assistant/Layout & Graphics Editor
	Writer
Gwen Szafranski	Ad Representative
Ellen Slovacek	Ad Representative
JoAnne Scoff	Distribution Manager
Ruth Green	Rent A Kid
Shirley Farrer	delivery system
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MEETINGS

All meetings take place at the Bloomingdale Community Office. These are monthly public meetings and all Bloomingdale residents are invited.

Bloomingdale Special Taxing District

Second Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m.

BHA Board of Directors

Second Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m.

Bloomingdale Oaks Special Taxing District

First Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m.

Mobile Watch & Neighborhood Watch

Watch this listing for dates & times. The meetings are held on a per need basis.

Our Times

Hello-o, McFly

by Rozel Sciulli

From the 'I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't heard it with my own ears' file comes this item..

Received in the community office two weeks ago a phone call from a gentleman who shall remain nameless wanting to know what was being built in Park West. Said he lived in Bloomingdale West.

In between regaining consciousness from shock and controlling my laughter I had to question the validity of his residence.

"This is some joke," I blabbed back at him thinking it was one of my prankster friends. "Ok, who is this and don't you have anything better to do today than bother me?"

"Excuse me," said the perplexed voice on the other end. "This is (so-and-so) and I live at (blah-de-blah), do you know what's being built in the park?"

With bewildered resignation I gave in to his query and informed him that a county recreation center was being built, then I asked if had he been out of the country for the last two years.

"No," was his annoyed reply, then he machine gunned me with a barrage of questions. "When was this decided? Why didn't the residents have input? How late are the lights going to be on at night? Who's going to supervise the place?"

Hello-o. Did Mr. Out-To-Lunch just awaken out of a coma? We've only been following and writing about the rec center for the past two years. It's been in the works since 1987. The residents had a dozen opportunities over the years to offer input. There will be no lights - it's a day only park. It will be staffed by county employees.

It surprises me how many people lack current event knowledge - not about what's going on in Bosnia or with the

might up and move if they don't get a new stadium - but what's going on in their own neighborhood. Are there still people out there who are so wrapped up in their own doings that they have no idea what's going around them?

Maybe because I'm so "in-the-know" I find it incredulous that other people aren't, and that, unlike me, other people don't hunger for information.

Here was a gentleman who has lived in West for "x" number of years and didn't know about the rec center because he hadn't read it in *The Gazette* - he didn't even know he receives a community newspaper once a month.

Then again, I guess only those of you who are reading this realize that we are your community newspaper.

There have been several attempts over the 16 years of our publication to discredit *The Gazette*, threaten its existence, and invade its boundaries - all unsuccessful, I might add.

As long as there is a Bloomingdale Homeowners Association there will be a *Bloomingdale Gazette*. Others may try to compete with us or confuse you by imitating us, but there is only one *Gazette*.

As I told Mr. Head-In-The-Sand, we are here to keep Bloomingdale residents informed about events in this community and those decisions made outside our neighborhood that affect this community.

NO OTHER PUBLICATION CAN MAKE THAT CLAIM.

It's a head start that Mr. Man-With-Blinders-On made a telephone call to the community office. At least he knew that one existed.

As for his knowledge of current events, I told Mr. Ignorance-is-Bliss that *The Bloomingdale Gazette* is the only paper that will keep him on top of what's going on in Bloomingdale.

Before hanging up he thanked me for being helpful then apologized for having one more question?

"Okav, lay it on me." I dared.

Vandals Targeting Entry-way Signs

Special from the STD

In the last month vandals have caused considerable damage to three entrance way signs. Erin Arbor, Oakcrest, and Fairway Manor letters have been ripped off from the walls. The cost to repair the destruction is \$600.

"These letters didn't just fall off; someone has gone to considerable effort and taken time to rip them off," said STD property manager Al Devney. "The letters aren't being kept for souvenirs, but have been tossed in the street and bushes."

He said the STD is making every effort to make Bloomingdale's common areas as appealing



Vandalism is becoming too frequent an occurrence to entry signs such as this one at Erin Arbor. Homeowner tax dollars are used to repair the signs, sometimes more than once a year.

as possible. "The senseless waste of our hard earned tax dollars to cover vandalism limits the STDs ability," he said.

The STD is asking residents to assist in reporting crimes of vandalism. Anyone with information is asked to call 684-6667.

NIP Report

Volunteers Keep Bloomingdale Beautiful

The NIP volunteers have been continuing their efforts working with concerned homeowners to keep the appearance of the Bloomingdale homes and areas up to a level which we can all be proud of.

The BHA office continues to get calls from homeowners on a regular basis, reporting possible violations in their neighborhoods. The majority of the calls concern unsightly junk and debris in yards, cars parked on lawns, garbage cans left out and unkept lawns or shrubs. The BHA office coordinates these calls with the NIP volunteers. The volunteers check on these reports and follow up to try to ensure that the problems are corrected.

action to do the necessary clean-up or fix-up. This is a promising indication that most of the residents want to keep Bloomingdale clean and beautiful.

The NIP volunteers are providing a worthwhile benefit to the community and are helping to make a difference. They plan to have an organizational meeting in January to do some additional training and improve coordination of efforts.

The program still needs volunteers. It only takes a few hours each month. If you have seen problems in your part of the community and wished something could be done about it, then possible you should get more involved. If you are interested,

Alafia Teacher Man Of Many Talents

by Ellen Slovacek

There's a guy in Bloomingdale who really gets around. You can see him at the Brandon Town Center Mall juggling balls for the Nature Company, or at Barnes and Noble Bookstore skipping a rope and telling stories, or at Alafia Elementary teaching gifted science classes. Who is this guy and where does he get his energy?

Meet Windell Campbell, son of retired Dean Willie Campbell and educator Lillie Campbell. Windell is a native Floridian with a knack for making people happy; little people in particular, but he always gets a smile out of even the most cynical adult as well.

About 17 years ago, Windell graduated from the University of South Florida and began a teaching career that would take him to various areas around the state, but mostly here in Brandon. It was while teaching fourth grade at Apollo Beach that he was recognized as Teacher of the Year.

Windell also discovered a hidden talent. He loves to tell stories and he's good at it. So good, in fact, that he has made it his second career. As a professional storyteller, Windell can be seen in the Bay area performing at various museums, libraries, theaters, high schools, and basically wherever a story needs to be told.

What makes his storytelling so unique is that he performs a skill to match the story. Whatever the story is about, Windell will perform it. So far, he has perfected



Windell Campbell

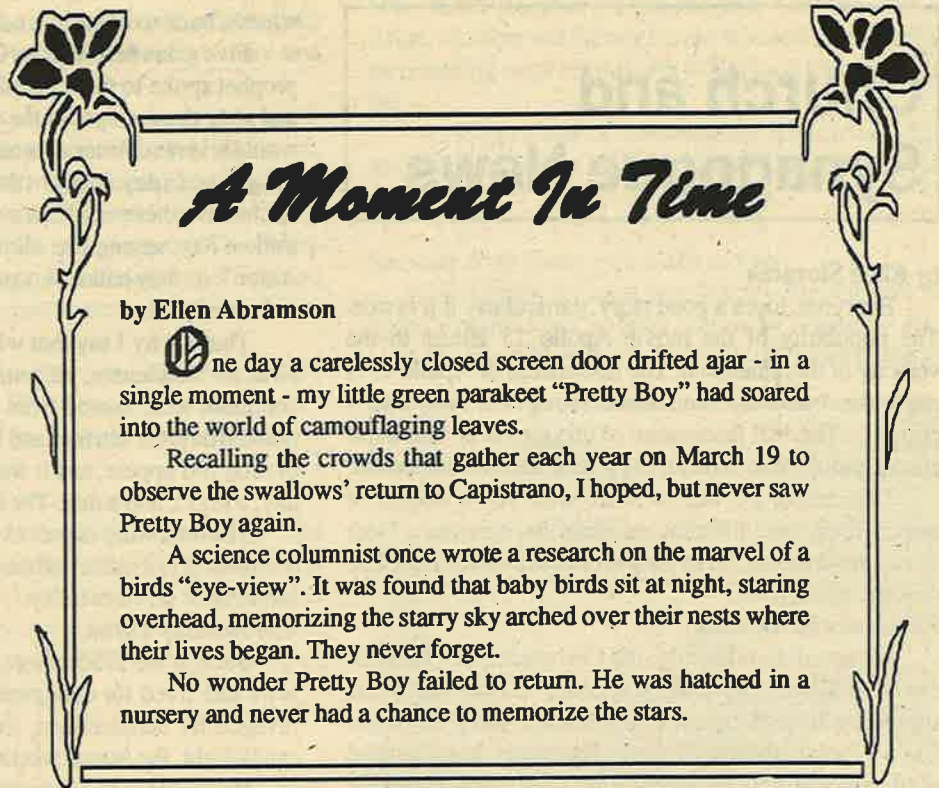
the art of juggling, rapping and is working on skipping.

"I'm going to skip so well, I'm going to make the boxers look bad," Windell said.

The happy-go-lucky entertainer turns serious when talking about his career in education.

"My teaching has been more rewarding than anyone can imagine. I didn't realize the influence I had on my students until years (later) when they would come back to me and relate the littlest incident that happened in my classroom and what an impact it had on them.

"That means more to me than anything."



A Moment In Time

by Ellen Abramson

One day a carelessly closed screen door drifted ajar - in a single moment - my little green parakeet "Pretty Boy" had soared into the world of camouflaging leaves.

Recalling the crowds that gather each year on March 19 to observe the swallows' return to Capistrano, I hoped, but never saw Pretty Boy again.

A science columnist once wrote a research on the marvel of a birds "eye-view". It was found that baby birds sit at night, staring overhead, memorizing the starry sky arched over their nests where their lives began. They never forget.

No wonder Pretty Boy failed to return. He was hatched in a nursery and never had a chance to memorize the stars.

Life In These Times

Some Gifts Test Our Gratitude

by Daniel Farrer

Have you ever wondered what Christmas would be like without presents? After all the concept of giving is really what Christmas is all about.

This year will you find yourself doing the old exercise I call the "Chris Cringle Shuffle"? For those of you not familiar with the term, it involves a certain Christmas ritual of putting off buying gifts until the last minute, thus causing yourself to scramble around town, foaming at the mouth, praying for inspiration on selecting gifts that will match your credit card limit.

Needless to say all of us have done it, and the results of our efforts do show up under the Christmas tree. Over the years I have gotten pretty good at spotting gifts from fellow family members that might fall into this category.

One year, my wife and I got a really beautiful gift from my sister (Ha! Ha!) - a set of satin sheets and pillow cases. Well, I had been a cotton man all my life so I thought it was a really special present. Well, at least, I learned they were different.

The first night with those silky nightmares on the bed I almost froze to death. We were living in Utah. Satin has no heat retaining properties at all. The second night I found my pillow wouldn't stay on the bed and kept slipping off onto the floor. (Pretty slick stuff) The third night I was standing in the bedroom and told my wife, "I bet that stuff is so slick you could slide off the bed if you moved wrong."

With that comment, I took a running start, hit the bed and kept going at full speed, slid right across the sheets, off the bed and into a huge walk in closet on the other side of the bedroom. After 20 years, I think those

sheets are still in the garage at the bottom of a big box marked "odds and ends."

Other years have brought an assortment of well meaning gifts. How can I ever forget the aviator scarf (don't have a pilot's license), or the lime green tie with little hoot owls all over it? Oh, I'll also never forget the little fishing cork that looked like Goofy.

Of course, I haven't been the perfect gift giver myself. I have been known to remember these special gifts and send appropriate gifts to the sender the next year. For instance, I sent my brother-in-law, who used to play in a rock band, a CD of the 20 all-time favorite Scottish bagpipe hits. I think he like their rendition of "Amazing Grace" the best. My sister also got a very special sweatshirt that said "I'm not having hot flashes, I'm having power surges".

If in Christmas past you've found yourself in this same situation, perhaps we secretly try to justify our conduct by hiding behind the old adage, "It's not the gift you give but the thought that's behind it," as an excuse.

Well, if you think about that wise old saying and what it really means, do our gifts and the amount of time, care and attention we spend on selecting them reflect the spirit of Christmas? Perhaps it would mean so much more this year if we can slow down a little, plan a little better and take time to think of those we give to.

Here's hoping we can take a little more time this special season to enjoy the gift of getting and giving. Remember, the smallest gift can warm the heart if the receiver knows that's where it started. Merry Christmas.

Great Beginnings...

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Christmas Holiday Schedule
Family Christmas Night
December 10, 6:30 p.m.
Communal Penance Service
December 18, 7:30 p.m.
Weekend Mass Schedule
December 23, 5:30 p.m., Vigil Mass
December 24, Sunday Morning Masses
9:30 a.m. & 11:30 a.m. only
Christmas Eve Evening Masses
5:30 p.m. - Childrens' Mass
7:30 p.m. - Youth Mass
12:00 a.m. - Midnight Mass

**December 25
Christmas Day**
9:30 a.m. & 11:30 a.m.
only

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ST. MARK UNITED CHURCH
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Valrico, Florida 33594

685-0998

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WORSHIP.....9:00 a.m.
WORSHIP & CHURCH SCHOOL11:00 a.m.
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Join Us As We Celebrate Christ's Birth
Dec. 11 & 17 at 9am & 11am
Dec. 24, Sun., 10:30am Christmas Cantata
Dec. 24, 7pm, Family & Children's Service
Dec. 24, 11pm, Candlelight Carol Service

**HOLIDAY
HOURS**

Church and Synagogue News

by Ellen Slovacek

Everyone loves a good story, particularly if it is true. The popularity of the movie Apollo 13 attests to the veracity of this statement. The fascination of Apollo 13 is not in the drama of events alone, though the story line is gripping. The real fascination of this movie is that these events, unfolded to us on the big screen, actually happened.

This month I'd like to share with you a couple of stories form two different religious backgrounds. Both stories are dramatic histories and both stories are true. The first one is entitled...

Christmas In America

We are all familiar with the Christmas story found in the New Testament. Luke's account is beautiful in its simplicity. It speaks to us of events surrounding the Christ Child's birth in the Middle East. There were but a handful of citizens who noticed anything different that night - a few shepherds, the wisemen, Joseph and Mary, of course. But on the other side of the world, an entire nation of people had great concern for what was happening that night, for their very lives depended on it. To explain, let me take you back about 600 years before Christ was born.

When Babylon was preparing to overtake the city of Jerusalem and bring its citizens into captivity (about 600 BC), many prophets spoke warnings to the people. Very few would listen. In fact, the prophets were cast out and many feared for their lives because of the people's anger.

One such prophet from Jerusalem, after trying to warn his people, was commanded by the Lord to leave with his family and travel in the wilderness. Over the course of eight years, this prophet, guided by the Lord, arrived on the American continent.

I take you back that far in time so you can see that this prophet and his family are the start of a mighty nation on the American continent. Down through the years, the posterity of this man multiplied and filled the Americas. Their righteous living seemed to ebb and flow, as in a never ending cycle of great righteousness to even greater wick-

edness, back to humility and righteousness again.

Five years before Jesus Christ was to be born, another prophet spoke to these people on the American continent and gave them a sign for the coming of Christ: a great star would arise and America would have no darkness for a day, a night, and a day. Many of the people were wicked and did not believe there would be a Christ. Accordingly, they set aside a day, saying that all believers of this "vain superstition", as they called it, would be put to death if the sign did not appear.

That's why I say that while few noticed the Savior's birth in Bethlehem, an entire nation on the American continent were spared from imminent death. On the appointed day, the sun rose and went down again as usual, but the star did appear, and it was as if it were daylight, for a day, a night, and a day. The believers were spared.***

The next story comes to us from Congregation Beth Shalom. It is a history of the "Holiday" Torah which they use in their services today.

The Holiday Torah

Back in the 1750s, there was an area in Poland where Jews had lived for centuries. In this forgotten city, later ravaged by antisemitism, there sat a scribe, writing by candlelight, the sacred words of God.

He could not have known that this Torah would still be used 200 years later, in a synagogue halfway around the world, in Brandon. Nor would he have any idea that this Holiday Torah would come through one of the darkest times in Jewish history.

By some miracle, a group of Jews from a synagogue outside of Warsaw, Poland, in the 1930s were able to take their families out of Poland and come to the United States. Leaving Poland with just the clothes on their back, they brought with them their most prized possession, the Holiday Torah.

In their new home of New York, the Torah was a link to their historical past as they looked forward to a new life of freedom in America. The Holiday Torah served them well through countless bar mitzvahs, weddings and every holy event in the lives of these people.

Now the Torah is available to Beth Shalom, where it will carry on its purpose of educating and watching over the Jewish congregation.

During this holiday season, we would do well to reflect on our own histories, family traditions, and become a little more grounded in the faith of our ancestors. We are

here because of their decisions made long ago. Let us build on their faith and move forward.

God bless you this holiday season.

Calendar of Events

The parishioners of St. Stephen Catholic Church are having a fun Family Christmas Night, Dec. 10, from 6:30 until 8 p.m. A musical program and narration will be featured. Also at St. Stephen is an outdoor living nativity on the grounds of the church Dec. 19-21, from 7 to 9 p.m.

The children's ministry of Bloomingdale Oaks Baptist Church will present a holiday drama and music celebration entitled "I Wish You Jesus" on Dec. 10 at 10 a.m. An adult Christmas program called "A Christmas Caroling" will be presented Dec. 17.

St. Andrew's United Methodist Church Chancel choir will present "Christmas Fantasia", featuring the children's choir, Joyful Noise, and Trifony, a women's trio, Dec. 10 at 8:30 and 11 a.m.

Congregation Beth Shalom will host an adult education evening Saturday, Dec. 9, at 7:30. Rabbi Robert Goodman will lead a discussion on past and current issues surrounding the Middle East. This will take place at the Apostles Lutheran Church, 200 N. Kingsway in Brandon. For more information, call 681-6547.

The Presbyterian Church of Bloomingdale would like to thank the community for its response to the carwash and yard sale held last month. Because of those efforts, Elder Peggy Argudo and others were able to spend a week in Honduras delivering 100 packages of rehydration formula as well as clothing to the impoverished people there.

Holidays Prime Time For Crime

Special to The Gazette

Don't let crime ruin your holiday. Precautions can be taken to deter the criminal and you can avoid becoming a victim, according to Buddy Phillips, executive director of the Florida Sheriff's Association.

He tells of a couple who woke up one morning to discover their car had been stolen from their driveway. When the car was recovered a note of apology from the thief was found inside. In the envelope he included two tickets to a Broadway play showing in their hometown.

The couple was touched by the holiday spirit and decided to attend the play. When they arrived home that evening, all their Christmas presents had been stolen as well as electronic equipment and all their jewelry.

Con games like this one are just one risk during the holidays. The majority of other incidents are crimes of opportunity, said Phillips.

He offers these tips:

* Pay attention to your surroundings and try to make eye contact with everyone you meet. These two steps send a message of confidence and awareness, both deterrents to criminals.

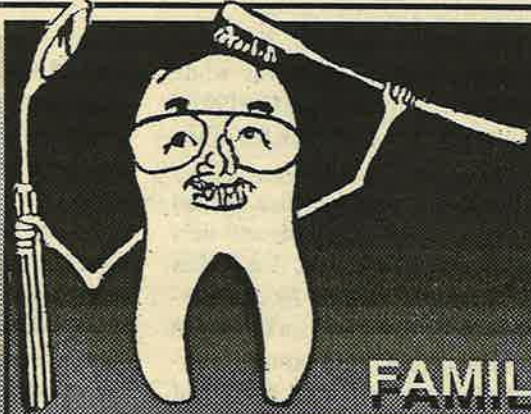
* If possible, leave children at home. Adults are easily distracted and preoccupied during holiday shopping, putting children at risk.

* Avoid being overburdened with packages. Keep your hands free.

* Keep packages locked in the trunk of the car.

* Fanny packs worn around the waist with the purse part in the front are the best deterrent to pick-pockets. If just a wallet is carried, it should be in a buttoned pocket. A purse should be strapped across the chest and carried in front. Minimize loss by reducing what is carried. Put car keys in a pocket, and if medication is needed, only carry enough for that day, not the entire prescription.

* Keep your eyes on your credit card. Many times retail stores will hire extra holiday help and they could be planning to take advantage of shoppers.



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Saturday, December 9 — 7:00 p.m.



A Promise for All People

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Luke 2:10-11

Living Savior Lutheran Church
3401 Lithia Pinecresd Road, Valrico
Christmas Eve Children's Service 7:30 pm

Bits and Pieces



by Gwen Szafranski

Christmas is a time of caring and sharing and coming home. Bloomington residents are busy this month sharing their time and talents with family members and the community and welcoming their loved ones home for the holidays.

Lempert and Underwood Exchange Vows

Sandra Louise Lempert and Jeffrey Paul Underwood were united in marriage at noon on August 12, 1995, at The Rusty Pelican in Tampa. The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Steven Schnur of Town and Country, Tampa. The groom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Underwood of Valrico.



Mr. & Mrs. Jeffrey Underwood

The ceremony began with the lighting of the unity candle by the mothers of the bride and groom followed by the couple, thus uniting the two families. Vows were exchanged under a bridal canopy with Michelle Alfonso officiating. Hebrew passages were read by the bride's grandfather, Earnest Schnur of Clearwater, who also officiated in the wine blessing and traditional breaking of the wine glasses after which guests joined in a chorus of "Matzeltov."

Given in marriage by her father, the bride wore a white satin gown with a cathedral train. The off-shoulder bodice

featured full length sheer sleeves accented with lace appliques, sequins and seed pearls. The bride carried a bouquet of white and peach roses with a cascade of greenery and peach and teal ribbons.

Serving as Matron of Honor was the bride's sister Debbi Moore of Tampa. Bridesmaids were Tracy Lempert, Shalene Wakefield, Robin Levenson, and Michele Gonzales. Robin Lee, the bride's niece, served as junior bridesmaid and wore a peach satin gown. The bridal attendants wore floor length gowns of teal satin and carried peach and white long stemmed roses tied with peach and teal ribbons.

Ralph Calistri served as Best Man, and the groom's men were Alex Algarin, Chris Boyle, and the bride's brothers, Greg Lempert and Joe Schnur. Ryan Lee, nephew of the bride, was ring bearer.

A reception followed the ceremony. The bride is a 1990 graduate of Leto High School. The groom graduated from Brandon High School in 1988 and serves in the United States Coast Guard. He is stationed in Seattle, Washington. After a wedding trip to Nashville, Mt. Rushmore, and Yellowstone National Park, the couple now reside in Lynne, Washington.

Trent Honored at Homecoming Party
Jared Trent, who returned recently from a two year mission to Uruguay for his church, was the guest of honor at a welcome home party November 19 hosted by his parents, Larry and Mayetta Trent.

Trent, who spent most of his time in central Uruguay, had numerous tales to relate to guests about his trip, including his opportunity to speak with the country's leader, President La Calle, as well as having his picture taken with him. La Calle was visiting the town of Melo to dedicate a new school at the same time that Trent was stationed there.

Trent Honored at Homecoming Party

The ingenious Trent was also invited onto Uruguayan radio after he and his companion wandered into the studio and ended up chatting with the DeeJays. Obviously impressed with their candor as much as their message, the host of the morning show invited the young men back to speak on his program the next day.

One of the many guests gathered to welcome Trent home was Shane Henry, son of James and Linda Henry, who returned last August from his two year mission to Brazil. Among the area residents also attending were Trent's sister Lori, recently of New Orleans, Bishop and Mrs. Duane Gardner, Cal and Nolana Bowman, Dr. and

Mrs. Mark Bernhisel, Mrs. Maurice Cecchini and son Brian, and Dan and Shirley Farrer, whose son Mathew will be returning from his mission to England later in December.

A 1993 graduate of Bloomington High School, Trent will begin classes at Brigham Young University in January.

Russells Help Santa with Calls to Tots
Local realtors Luana and Woody Russell will play Santa's helpers this holiday season by arranging phone calls to area children from the merry elf, himself, through

December 21.

Russells Help Santa with Calls to Tots

"This is something my husband has wanted to do for four years," commented Luana Russell. "While he was awaiting his heart transplant, Woody spent a lot of time in the hospital during the holidays. He realized how hard it must be for sick children who are not able to go to a mall and have a visit with Santa. Woody thought a phone call from Santa would be a wonderful way to reach these children."



The news crew from Channel 44 interviewed local realtor Luana Russell last month. She and her husband, Woody, are sponsoring Santa calls to children.

December 21.

Russell added that many parents today find it difficult to work a visit from Santa into their busy work schedules. She thinks the Santa calls might remedy this, and she welcomes all parents interested in requesting a call for their child as well as children interested in receiving a call to contact Santa by letter in care of Luana Russell, 3834 Cold

See BITS, pg. 15

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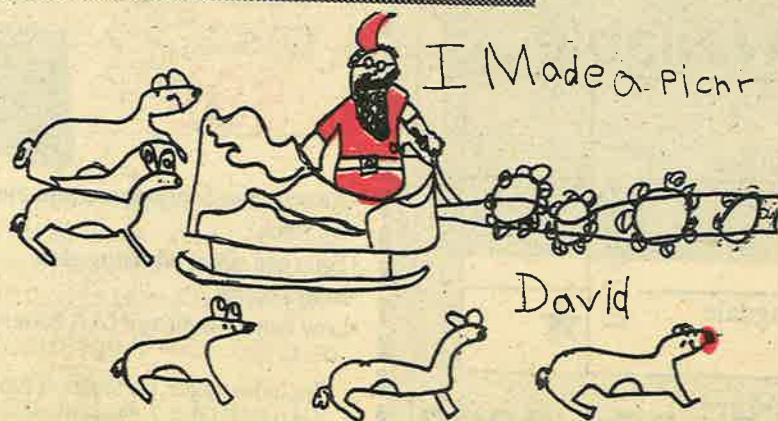
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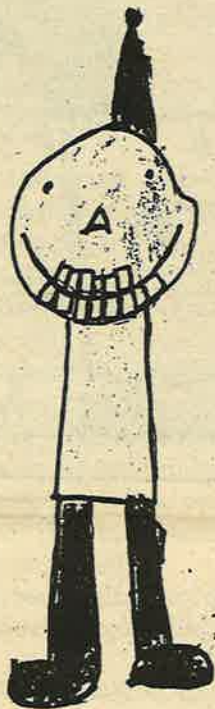
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Radio disc jockey Scott Robbins (107.3) tells students at Lithia Springs what it's like to work in broadcasting. He was one of 130 Lithia guests during the Great American Teach-In at county schools last month. The volunteers gave over 300 hours of their time to Lithia Springs.

Bloomington resident Marl Ellen Houghton and her son Evan, show the artwork he submitted in Lithia Springs PTA-sponsored "Reflections" contest. Over 40 students' efforts will be judged for county awards in short stories, poetry, art and photography.



** LIGHTEN FRAME*
"Andrew" *LOSE THIS LINE*

*From the desk of:
 Sister Mary Gertrude*

*Dear Mrs. Golden-
 It is obvious from this work that
 Tim is spending too much time
 with his camera instead of his
 schoolwork.
 You may want to have a chat with
 him.*

*Sincerely,
 Sister Mary Gertrude*

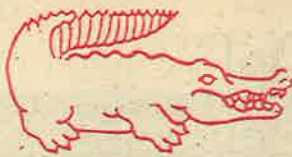
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Gator Tales



by Ruthe Brunson

Christmas is fast approaching and we are all busy, busy, busy. So much to do, so little time left.

Here at Alafia, activities are bountiful. Alafia children will present a musical program Dec. 7 at 7 p.m. in the Bloomingdale High auditorium. Market Day pick-up is Dec. 12 (don't forget to get your goodies for the holidays). And a volunteer Holiday Coffee will be held by the PTA on Dec. 13 from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. in the media center. Santa will be visiting all the classrooms Dec. 19. He will spread holiday cheer and pass out candy canes on this last day of school before vacation.

Congratulations to the Alafia PTA for being one of six schools to receive the Local Unit Achievement Award for Hillsborough County. The award is given

to PTAs that strive to meet the PTA goals. Alafia also won the award last year.

Thanks to all the 227 students who participated in the Reflections Program. This is a great response, especially since we do not have an art teacher at Alafia. A big "thank you" to the PTA for all their help. A panel of independent judges chose 35 projects to be sent to County Council for further judging.

Student Council officers were recently elected and they are for the 5th grade - Michael Wiesenhart, president; Brian Langford, vice-president; Rhiana Edmondson, secretary; and Jayson Pearce, treasurer. For 3rd/4th grade - Beth Coen, president; Brandy Eden, vice-president; Kelly Heckinger, secretary; and Tricia Phillips, treasurer. The student council's first project will be visiting a nursing home on Dec. 12.

BHS 3rd In County SAT Scores

Special to *The Gazette*

Bloomington High's students placed third in the county in the verbal and math portions of the Scholastic Assessment Test, but Hillsborough County's combined scores topped the state and national averages.

The school district's combined score rose five points in 1995, two points in verbal and three in math, for a combined score of 911. The state average is 899, while the

national average is 910.

Bloomington students scored a combined 951. Hillsborough, which is one of two schools with International Baccalaureate students, was No. 1 in the county with a combined 1010, while Plant was second with 992. Bloomington's scores reflect an increase of three points in verbal (447) and 11 points in math (504).

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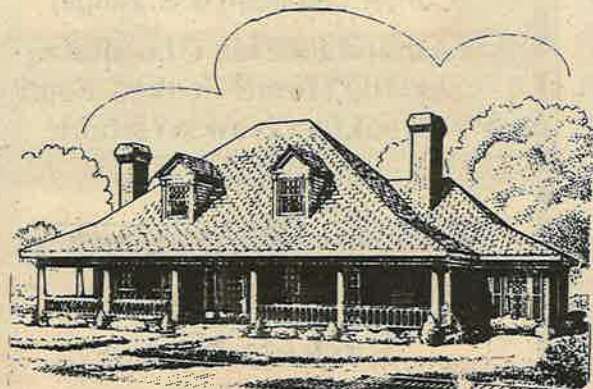
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Bulls' Eye



TV Students Dog'gone Clever

by Rozel Sciulli

Bloomington High's television production instructor Phil Carr always knew his students had clever ideas, following through on them was the problem.

That changed when his advanced class realized they had the chance to earn \$10,000 for their program simply by producing a commercial. That's when thoughts turned to action.

All they needed was dogged determination.

The idea and the follow-through were a success and won first place and a \$10,000 educational technology grant from GTE. The project asked high school students to create

a television commercial promoting the phone company's new 941 area code which split away from the local 813 code.

"The kids were surprised they could do something of this caliber," Carr said. "The whole class gets the credit because everyone was involved to a degree."

It took the students two months to produce the commercial, the stars of which were a couple of dogs - literally.

When the students were brainstorming ideas, senior Colleen Gill mentioned that her Yorkshire Terrier, Sparkie, could answer a telephone. That turned out to be the kicker. The students opened the commercial with cuddly puppies, to represent the area's population growth, playing with a telephone.

"Everyone loves puppies," junior Stephen Polakiewicz said. "We could've used people, but that's boring."

Sparkie and her love-struck co-star Bubba, a black Labrador owned by senior Howard Eriksson, are apart. He wants to send her flowers...er, a bone, and must dial the new area code to talk to her and to place the order. The only human star of the production is senior Frank Manses, who got to play the deliveryman.

Weeks of planning and training included "baiting" the telephones with tempting food items, like Cheez Whiz smeared on the receiver. Never mind that Bubba's paw is big enough to press all the phone buttons at one time.

Carr said the grant money will be used to purchase two computers that will give the production classes technology they currently are lacking.

Polakiewicz said the winning entry showed what the students could do with the technology they have. "Not bad, huh?"

Students from 24 area schools participated in the preliminary phase which required a story board, sequential



Members of the winning TV production team are Colleen Gill, Stephen Polakiewicz, Frank Manses, Howard Eriksson, Tony Lockett and Gerald Muforo, pictured in their studio with instructor Phil Carr.

drawings of each frame of the commercial. Once the story board and presentation were accepted by a panel of judges, the finalists were given the go-ahead to produce a videotaped 30-second commercial.

Bloomington's winning spot will be broadcast as part of GTE's area-wide public information campaign over the next few months.

Carr said he liked the curriculum guidelines provided by GTE because it was realistically based. "Every aspect of video production from brainstorming to on-location shooting was covered."

The students said the part that challenged them most was actually making the presentation. "We've never made a formal presentation before," senior Gerald Muforo said.

The Bloomington students' presentation was first, a position they felt was an advantage.

"We were the example that they'd measure the others by," Polakiewicz said.

Gill said she didn't realize how time consuming a 30-second commercial could be. "It took away from other things we had to do and other competitions we wanted to try out for, but it was worth it."

Carr thought so, too. In fact, now that he knows the talent level of these students, his classroom expectations are going to be higher.

Polakiewicz agreed. "We've been used to turning our work in on notebook paper, now we're going to have to be more professional about turning in our work to Mr. Carr."

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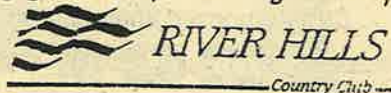
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Bruin Beat



by Joe Bader

Burns Junior High's 1995-96 student council officers were elected recently and are as follows: **Luke Morris**, 9th grade president; **Suzanne Miller**, vice-president; and **Alecia Hill**, secretary and treasurer. **Phelan Merrell** is president for the eighth grade. The

sponsor for this year's student council is **Lisa Greenaker**.

The annual Christmas dance will be Dec. 8 from 7 to 10 p.m. in the school cafeteria. **Mr. Cooper** will play Santa Claus and **Mrs. Oggero** will be Mrs. Claus.

The band will perform a Christmas Concert Dec. 13 at Bloomington and on the 14th at Burns. The chorus and orchestra will perform on the 12th at Bloomington.

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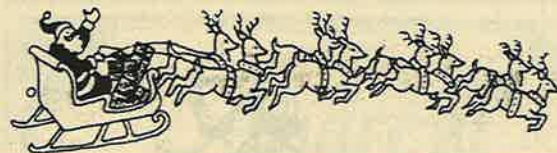
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Letters To Santa



First graders from Lithia Springs Elementary School let Santa know what they want for Christmas in these unedited letters.

Dear Santa, I want for this crismis a motrsicol and the new Zord. Wut Irelee want is a reale tent. I am grat. How are you. - Love, Jeffrey

Dear Santa, I am trying to be vere vere gode. I wate (want) sagu and a kiote and a hors and a rotrilre and a parangr (power ranger). - Love, Frankie

Dear Santa, I hope I get all the thegs I wuntid thos thegs ar a green woch and skatebord - From, Michael

Dear Santa, I want a rel cowboy sut and a fak pistol and a rel hos and a rel satol - Jerry

Dear Santa, I wood like a dog and makeshor she is cute. P.S. and a cat. I wood aso like a Mysize Bierbe - Love, Zoe

Dear Santa, I wot the chikin limbo

and a kitin and a huos. I hav bin a gud gul. - Love Meagan

Dear Santa, I want a marry kate and ashlyly Olsen tape and a TV and some craons. I want a wach and a birbe jeep. I want a new colre for my cat. - Love, Caitlin

Dear Santa, I'm sorry htat I've bin a little bad. Well these are the two toys I want. Goffy Golf mashen and Super van city. - From, Joey

Dear Santa, I've been a good girl. I hope I am on your good list. If I am I whant a rele horse for Chrismis. - Love, Molly

Dear Sant I want a babe car and a reall horse. - Love, Katie

Dear Santa, I waht a bsikle and a tede bar. and Iv bin a gud girl. - Love, Mindy

Dear Santu, Thank you for letehge (letting) Jesus diee on the kros for us. Luve, Tony.

Dear Sata, Can you brrrg me Knx. I wel gef kkes (cookies) and milk tu you. - Love, Brock.

Dear Santa, There is a littel girl and she needs fuv toys and maybe a bike too and I just wanted to tell you thank you. - From, Lindsay

Dear Santa, I have a 4 page crissmiss list but you don't have too get everthing. - From, Lindsay

Dear Santa, Can you get my favert book becaus yuor the best santa I no. - Love, Jessica

Dear Santa, I want to have a jeep and a bike and batman and other thags. Have a grate nite. - Cory

Dear Santa, I want a barbe car that i can fit in and a tent and i want anathr fish my my othr one. - Love, Angela

Dear Santa, You are speshll to me. Thak you for the neat toys that you

gave me. - Love, Jason

Dear Sana, Please can you gyte me a bike. - Love, David

Helluo, I can't weat intel crsmis becus I like it. I bet thos elves are wrng (working) hard and I bet you are too. I like presins wil I ges it is time to. Bui. - Love, Adam

Dear Sat Thank you for all the preses that you gav me. - Love, Nick.

Bloomington Pediatric Associates P.A.

by
Sonia M. Ruiz, M.D.

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Members of Junior Girl Scout Troop 898 will make several children's wishes come true this holiday season. The girls, all sixth graders, decided to spend their troop funds on gifts for needy children. They are Meaghan Fournier, Emily Walker, Katie Russell, Meghan Bice and Erin Cantwell pictured here with Mr. Waller, manager of the local Wal-Mart. The girls said they decided to draw

Tax Topics

Inside The IRS

by Robert J. Morris, CPA

There is a lot of action being proposed by Congress that may ultimately affect the IRS and how it is structured. The IRS has announced that it needs 5000 new revenue agents and a budget increase of 11 percent. However, Congress is proposing to cut the budget by 2 percent and reduce the number of employees by as much as 30,000. For those who would like to know the size of this government agency, as published by the National Society of Tax Professionals, it is as follows:

Employees - 115,000; 1996 Budget - \$8.2 Billion; Returns processed - 204 million annually; Documents processed - 1.1 billion annually; Amount collected - approx. \$1 1/4 trillion; Non filers - approx. 10 million (5%); Taxes unpaid - \$127 billion.

The IRS also has recently announced that it is going to discontinue their policy of random audits and concentrate more on select audits. This should reduce the number of audits on taxpayers who have consistently filed on time and in a manner consistent with current tax laws. In the past, many audits were performed randomly which did not serve a particular need nor did it result in collection of tax dollars but did cause apparent hardship on ordinary tax abiding citizens to withstand the pressure of an audit.

This, to me, appears to be a move in the right direction and sounds like it also may weaken the IRS's plan to perform the all inclusive TCMP audits that were scheduled to take place between Oct. 1995 through the year 1997. The TCMP audits are used by the IRS to generate industry statistics to determine future selections of audit criteria and Congress has been pressuring legislation to eliminate this process.

Even many IRS agents do not like to do TCMP audits and some have expressed to me the basic statistics have not changed over the past years that these were performed. This implies they are over burdensome, overly expensive and overrated as an effective tool in determining audit criteria.

Let's hope our "wise Congressmen" continue this pressure.



Expansion has begun at the Winn Dixie at the Royal Oaks of Bloomingdale. When completed it will be a second Winn Dixie Marketplace in the community. Winn Dixie has taken over three adjacent office spaces which previously housed The Salon (moved in same complex closer to Pinch A Penny), Classic Karate (moved in same complex closer to dry cleaners), and the Bloomingdale Community offices, which moved between Fields Custom Framing and Racoons.

Real Estate Moves

Expect High Standards From Realtor 'Friend'

by Michael Davis

Do you have a friend "in real estate"? The chances are good that you may have several such friends. That could create a dilemma when you decide to sell your present home. How would you decide which friend to represent you in the sale of your home?

If you are like most sellers, you will no doubt want to sell your home at the best possible price. At the same time, it would be important to accomplish the sale in the least time and with a minimum of inconvenience to you and your family. To accomplish each of those three objectives, your home should be marketed effectively from the beginning.

If you choose one of your real estate friends, it makes good sense to choose one who knows the real estate business from the inside-out; someone who devotes full time to the business and has made a long term commitment to be the best. Your friend should possess extensive knowledge about your neighborhood and, specifically, the type property you will be selling. The friend you choose should be in touch with the local market, having daily contact with mortgage lenders, bankers, attorneys and other real estate related individuals.

Your friend should be a realtor, a member in good standing of the local Board of realtors who subscribes to a Code of Ethics. This association provides many opportuni-

ties for its members, including continuing education and regular contact with other professionals, another measure of your friend's commitment to excellence. His or her activity level, the degree of involvement in day-to-day changes which occur in real estate locally, will very likely reflect an established record of successful real estate sales.

Does it seem as though you should look for a professional real estate businessperson, rather than a friend? You really should, and if that professional also happens to be a friend - Bingo! - everyone's a winner.

Analysis of Bloomingdale's Single Family Residential Re-Sale Homes (figures through Sept. 30)

Total Sold	195
High Sale Price	\$342,500
Low Sale Price	\$67,900
Median Sale Price	\$105,500
Median Age	1986
Median Size	1932 sq.ft.

Number of Units Sold by Price Range

Under \$70,000	1
\$70 - \$100,000	90
\$100-\$150,000	75
\$150-\$200,000	23
\$200-\$250,000	4
\$250-\$300,000	1
Over \$300,000	1

Note: All data was gathered from the Multiple Listing Service and believed to be accurate but is not guaranteed.

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Sports Spots

Bloomingsdale High's Athletic Calendar

Basketball

Dec. 7 Boys at Leto
 Dec. 8 Girls host Brandon
 Dec. 9 Boys at Tpa Catholic
 Dec. 11 Boys at King
 Dec. 12 Girls host East Bay
 Dec. 14 Boys host Plant City
 Dec. 15 Girls host Robinson
 Jan. 4 Girls host Plant City
 Jan. 5 Boys at Chamberlain

Soccer

Dec. 7 King at home
 Dec. 9-14 King Tournament at Hillsborough
 Dec. 15 Gaither at home
 Dec. 18 Brandon at home
 Jan. 4

Wrestling

Dec. 12 at Plant City
 Dec. 15 at East Bay
 Dec. 19 Tampa Tech at home
 Jan. 5 Leto at home

All-star Cheerleader Try-outs Set

Try-outs for the Bloomingsdale Junior All-stars cheerleading program will be held Saturday, Dec. 9, from 10 a.m. until noon at Saladino Park.

Girls and boys who are in the 8th grade down to age 9 (by June 1) are eligible. Participants will be taught a cheer and a dance for try-outs in groups of three and four.

The Bloomingsdale Junior All-Stars is in its second year and is a year-round cheerleading program. It was founded on the idea of taking youth cheerleading to a higher level, much like select soccer did for rec soccer.

The cheerleaders are instructed by NCA certified coaches and will participate in local and state competitions, summer camps, and parades.

"Our goal," said organizer Kay Steinestel, "is to receive a bid to go to NCA National Competition in Dallas. Two girls from last year's squad, Chrissy Edwards and Brooke Burdett, tried out for and made All-American.

Steinestel said her group does not stress winning as much as it tries to follow NCA guidelines of building self-esteem, character, and teamwork.

In addition to the cheerleader all-stars, basic cheerleading classes will be offered to children age four and older one day a week at the cheer gym. Youngsters will be taught basic jumps, motion and cheer dances.

For further information call 653-2652 or 689-9535 for further information.

Vacation Baseball Camp

The Charles Perdomo Baseball Camp will hold a mini-session Dec. 20, 21 and 22, from 9:30 to 2 p.m. at South Brandon Little League.

Tony Saladino, sponsor of the 26th annual spring high school baseball tournament, will be a guest speaker.

The camp is open to boys and girls ages 6-16. Applications may be obtained at area Beef O'Brady's, Reds Sporting Goods or by calling 681-5428.

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Sports Salute

BHS Swimmers Make Splash This Season

What a season it has been for the girls and boys swim teams from Bloomingsdale. Both won their division's Western Conference Championship for the second straight year, there were several district winners and the girls finished 5th at state, the highest of any school from Hillsborough County.

At Western Conference, the boys, scored a two-point victory over Gaither. They were lead by Barry Hoey and Kevin Fischer, both of whom won two events. Hoey captured the 200 and 500 yard freestyles, while Fischer was first in the 200 yard individual medley and 100 butterfly. Hoey and Fischer also combined with Erik Lundberg and Clay Vaughn to win the 200 freestyle relay and the 400 freestyle relay. Vaughn also won the 100 freestyle by nearly five seconds.

The boys' highest points of the meet came when Hoey, Lundberg, and Robert Hooker took the top three places in the 500 freestyle. Adding to the boys' totals was a repeat championship performance by junior diver Michael Ames, who placed eighth in the state last year.

The girls broke four conference records. Sophomore Summer Washburn set a new best time in the 100 yard backstroke, and Stephanie Reich did the same in the 100 yard breaststroke. The 400 freestyle relay team of Washburn, Jennifer Conley, Jennifer Handley, and Carrienne Vaughn also broke their own record from last year with Washburn replacing the graduated Tracey Pavlishin.

Washburn, Handley and Vaughn were joined by Reich to win the meet's opening event, the 200 medley relay. They broke a

record that had stood since 1989 during the preliminaries for that event. Vaughn and Handley also had individual wins in the 50 freestyle and 100 butterfly, respectively.

At Districts the girls came in second behind Clearwater Countryside and the boys finished 5th. District champs were Ames in diving and Hoey in the 500 freestyle; and for the girls it was the 200 medley relay team of Washburn, Reich, Handley and Carrienne Vaughn.

These swimmers qualified for state along with Conley, Lundberg, Fischer and Clay Vaughn.

At State the girls relay team once again led the Bloomingsdale contingent, this time finishing third with their fastest time of the year. They also finished sixth in the state in the 400 freestyle relay. Ames was seventh in diving. Other state places were as follows: Conley, 8th, and Carrienne Vaughn, 9th, in the 200 freestyle; Handley, 9th, in the 100 butterfly; Conley, 5th, in the 500 freestyle; Washburn, 7th, in the 100 backstroke; Reich, 11th, in the 100 breaststroke; Lundberg, 15th, in the 200 freestyle; Lundberg, 4th, and Hoey, 9th, in the 500 freestyle; Fischer, Hoey, Pergament, Lundberg, 16th, in the 200 freestyle relay and 16th in the 400 freestyle relay.

Cross Country

Hats off to Bloomingsdale twin sisters and runners extraordinaire Jen and Katie Mitchell. Katie won the Class 6A state cross country title and Jen finished second. The seniors are looking ahead to college and would like to attend one of the military academies. During the season, Katie participated in 10 meets and won eight.

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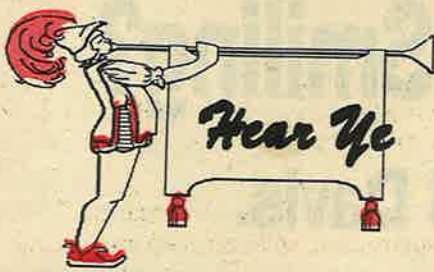
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BHA Meeting

The monthly meeting of the Bloomingdale Homeowners' Association will be Tuesday, Dec. 12, at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Office, Royal Oaks of Bloomingdale Plaza. This month's meeting will consist of election of board members. Homeowner concerns and issues are always welcomed. The meeting is open to all dues-paying members and all newcomers are invited to attend.

STD Meeting

The monthly meeting of the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District trustees will be Monday, Dec. 11, at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Office, 3244 Lithia Pinecrest, Royal Oaks of Bloomingdale Plaza. The meeting is open to all Bloomingdale homeowners.

Kiwanis Meeting

Members of the Kiwanis Club of Brandon Nights meet every Wednesday at 6 p.m. at the Game Day Grill, Oak Park Plaza on Lumsden and Kings. President of the organization is Bloomingdale resident Mark Leytze. The group sponsors the Terrific Kids program in the local elementary schools.

Mr. and Mrs. Claus

Children will have a chance to meet individually with Mr. and Mrs. Claus from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. this Saturday, Dec. 9, at Sun Cove Real Estate in Bloomingdale Square. Parents may take photographs.

Lunch With Santa

Tickets are now on sale for Center Place's annual Lunch with Santa to be held Saturday, Dec. 9, at 11 a.m. Tickets are

\$2 a person and children of all ages are invited to attend. Parents are encouraged to take photographs because children will be able to visit personally with Santa after lunch.

Children's Auditions

Performers in grades 4-12 are invited to join in the fun and excitement as Brandon Youth Theatre presents a 12-week class ending in a production of *Peter Pan*.

Parent orientation followed by auditions will be held at Center Place on Sunday, Dec. 17 beginning at 3 p.m. or on Tuesday, Dec. 19, at 6 p.m. To attend auditions, students must register at Center Place and prepay the class fee. Casting notification and scripts will be available Dec. 22.

Classes will begin Jan. 2 under the leadership of Wayne Otto, president and artistic director of Stage Door Community Theater. Three productions will be given at Center Place on March 22, 23 and 24.

Students will be taught theater skills in addition to participating in the production. No prior experience is required.

Class registration fees are \$95 for members of Center Place and \$100 for non-members.

Nutcracker Tickets

The Brandon Centre Ballet Guild will stage its annual performance of "The Nutcracker" with a cast of 50 local dancers on Dec. 9th and 10th at the Armwood High auditorium. Tickets are now available for both matinee and evening performances. For information, call 684-4282.

MOSI Camp

When school is out, MOSI is in! Full day and half-day programs are available during the two-week winter break. Parents may enroll their children by the class, the day or the week for "Ocean, Air, and Space" Holiday Camp.

All classes revolve around the weekly theme and are appropriate to grade levels. Classes are not repeated. Morning classes are from 9 a.m. until noon (\$15 members, \$20 nonmembers). Afternoon classes are from 1 to 4 p.m. Half-day classes are \$15 for members and \$20 for nonmembers; full day \$30 and \$35; or \$40 and \$50 for the entire week. Supervised lunch is available at no charge from noon until 1 p.m. for participants only.

Apply Now For Magnet Schools

Parents interested in enrolling their child for one of the county's nine magnet school programs for the 1996-97 school year may now begin that process. Specialized programs are offered at various inner city schools to which bus transportation is provided.

At the elementary level, there are schools of technology at Lee and Lincoln elementaries and a school of the arts at Philip Shore. Middle school students may apply for technology studies at Middleton; environmental studies at Dowdell; or the school of international studies at B. T. Washington.

Senior high programs include the International Baccalaureate at King and Hillsborough and the Academy of Health Professions or the Academy of Engineering, both at Tampa Bay Tech.

All students must apply in order to be accepted. Selection of elementary and middle school students is by a random computer list based on ethnicity, grade level and gender. High school students are chosen by GPA, test scores, teacher recommendations and a writing sample.

Call 272-4818 or 272-4575 for further information.

BITS, from page 7

Creek Drive, Valrico, FL 33594.

Requests should include the recipient's name, phone number, and a choice of three different dates and times when the child would like to receive the call. (Parents wishing to know what is "tops" on their child's gift list should include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.)

Helping Santa with his Christmas calls will be just a part of the season's joy for the busy Russells, who have lived and worked in Bloomingdale for fourteen years. Their daughter and son-in-law, Susan and Jim Bradford, are expecting the Russell's first grandchild around December 19. Since the Bradfords are also Bloomingdale residents, the Russells can truly share the holiday with the parents-to-be and their Christmas baby.

The Russells are also looking forward to the arrival of their son, Bobby, on December 20 from Costa Rica, where he works as a missionary. Bobby shares his mother's love of music and has toured as a professional Gospel musician. Members of Bell Shoals Baptist Church will remember Gospel solos performed by Luana, who toured professionally in secular and Gospel bands throughout California and Arizona before moving to Florida. With all this planned for the holidays, there is sure to be "a joyful noise" in the Russell household during this Christmas season!

Chorus Chooses Local Children

Eight children from the Bloomingdale/Valrico area will be adding their voices to the 135 member Tampa Bay Children's Chorus which performs at 7:30 p.m. on December 10 in The Playhouse at the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center.

Erica Baker, Jessica Birdwell, Ashley Cohen, Enaled Heidt, Erin Moyses, Rob Roy St. John, Kara Sujansky and Jessica Vaughn were chosen to join the seven year old group under the musical direction of founder Dr. Averill Summer. Auditions are held May through August and are open to children throughout Hillsborough County who are between the ages of eight and sixteen.

Executive Director Marian Winters commented that the December program will include Christmas music from around the world, adding that a unique intergenerational concert with seniors and the Children's Chorus will be presented March 23 at the Tampa Theater. A spring concert will follow April 27 at the Performing Arts Center.

A brief audition period will be held in January, said Winters, and those interested may call 988-8956.

"Scrooge" Performed by Stage Door

Members of Stage Door, Community Theater of Brandon will present the Leslie Bricusse musical "Scrooge" at 8:00 p.m. December eighth and ninth at the Ybor Campus Theater of Hillsborough Community College.

Bloomingdale resident James Hickie joins the cast members in a rollicking rendition of the timeless Dickens tale, which stars Frank Ferrante in the title role, Pat Raimondo as Bob Cratchit, Tania Enriquez as Tiny Tim, and Mike Ihnat as the ghost of Jacob Marley. Reservations can be made by calling 684-4759.

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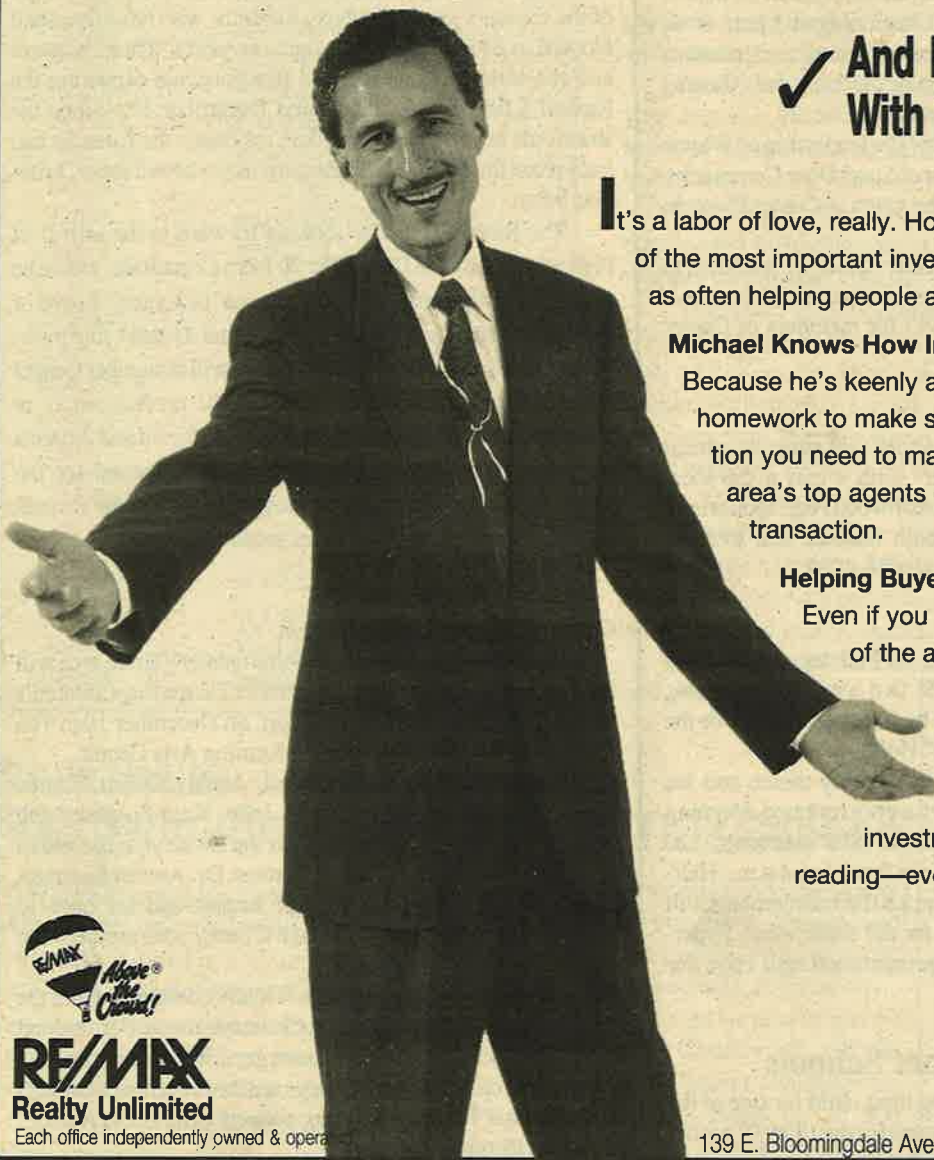
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