

the Bloomingdale gazette

Complimentary

Official Publication of the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association Volume XX, Number 12

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**Scooters—
fun and danger,**

See story on
page 16

Santa Claus is coming to Bloomingdale!

Santa and Mrs. Claus are coming to town for their 12th annual visit to Bloomingdale. Mr. and Mrs. Kringle and their elves will greet children and pose for pictures at the Bloomingdale Community Office on Saturday, December 16 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Community Office is located at 3509 Bell Shoals Road, in the Sun Trust Bank Plaza just south of Bloomingdale Avenue.

The visit and photos are sponsored by the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association and are provided at no charge, with the donation of any non-perishable food item for local charities.

If you require directions or further information, please call the BHA at 681-2051. A representative of the North Pole will return your call promptly.



Best Bloomingdale Holiday Decorations Contest

Untangle the lights and round up the extension cords! The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association is sponsoring our second annual "Best Bloomingdale Holiday Decorations Contest." Winners will be chosen in three categories; Most Elegant, Most Charming and the esteemed Most Delightfully Excessive.

A team of judges will patrol our neighborhoods this month in search of the most impressive lighting and decorative displays. Residents are invited to nominate their own home or one that has caught their eye, by phone (681-2051), fax (651-1129) or e-mail (frazier1@tampabay.rr.com).



The Starke's display in Bloomingdale East's Erin Arbor was voted the "Most Charming" in 1999.

Your Inside Connections

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, Inc.

3509 Bell Shoals Rd. • Valrico, FL 33594
(813) 681-2051 • E-mail: BHA@CyberRails.com

Web site: www.bha-online.org

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- President Bill Grace, 685-2817
- Treasurer Fred Englehart
- Meetings .. Second Monday each month at 7:30 pm,
3419 Cade Lane, Bloomingdale Oaks



Share your news with the community!

Write to Editor, 3509 Bell Shoals Rd., Valrico, FL 33594
Phone: (813) 681-2051 • Fax: (813) 651-1129
E-mail: frazier1@tampabay.rr.com

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Meetings

All meetings take place at the Community Office at 3509 Bell Shoals Rd. These are monthly public meetings and all Bloomingdale residents are invited.

BHA Board of Directors Meetings
Second Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m.

Special Taxing District Meetings
Second Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m.



the Bloomingdale gazette The official publication of the BHA

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We're looking for a few good yards!

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association invites all Bloomingdale homeowners to nominate their friends and neighbors (or themselves!) for the Bloomingdale Yard of the Month award. If you have a beautiful or unique yard, or know someone who does, please complete the entry form and mail to: Yard of the Month, BHA, 3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33594, e-mail to frazier1@tampabay.rr.com or fax to 813-651-1129. Winners will be presented with a \$25 Ace Hardware of Bloomingdale gift certificate.

Bloomingdale Yard of the Month nomination

Homeowner's Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Landscape features that stand out _____

Bloomingdale Yard of the Month



Appreciative neighbors nominated the home of James and Sylvia Townsend, at 4004 Orangefield Drive in Bloomingdale East, for our Yard of the Month award. The yard features a variety of healthy and manicured plantings, an elegant fountain and a gracefully curved brick walkway.

A unique block enclosure with lattice brick accents and a wrought iron gate surrounds the back yard, offering passers-by a glimpse of several birdbaths, feeders and decorative statues.

Sylvia takes pleasure in caring for the yard on a regular basis. "There's always something that needs to be done," she said, "and I just love to be outside. It gives you a chance to chat with your neighbors, and ours are as sweet as can be!"

Let's light up Bloomingdale!

Luminaria kits available on December 9

By Barbara Reed

For the 21st consecutive year, Bloomingdale area neighborhoods will be aglow on Christmas Eve as the tradition of lighting luminarias (paper bag lanterns) continues. The Brandon Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) will again help to "light up Brandon" by distributing kits containing 15 eight-hour votive candles, 15 paper bags (brown or white), matches, instructions and a bag of sand. Each kit sells for \$5.

The kits will be offered for sale on Saturday, December 9th at the



AAUW volunteers assemble luminaria kits available for sale on December 9 at Albertson's grocery store.

Albertson's Grocery Store on Lithia Pinecrest Road in Brandon, from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Proceeds benefit the AAUW "Girls Can!" project, which recognizes Brandon area 8th and 12th grade girls for excellence in math and science. Since 1994, the AAUW has honored 122 students and presented them with \$18,000 in United States savings bonds.

For more information, please contact Barbara Reed at 671-3078.



Welcome to Bloomingdale!

Sarah Marie Smith

Born October 17, 2000 to Sandra and Ron Smith

Erica Jane Singletary

Born October 19, 2000 to Mary and Marty Singletary

Megan Ashley Strynar

Born October 22, 2000 to Christine and Robert Strynar

Jacob Aaron Barker

Born October 25, 2000 to Ceri and Jeffery Barker

Mariyah Argene Bell

Born October 29, 2000 to S. Maria and Marvin A. Bell

Sarah May Young

Born November 2, 2000 to Deidre and Scott Young

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Bloomingdale Avenue widening on schedule

By Laura Frazier

The final phase of the \$32 million Bloomingdale Avenue widening project is progressing on schedule, with completion projected over the next 6 - 8 months. The segment from Lithia Pinecrest Road west to Bell Shoals Road has been under construction since February of this year.

The final phase will accomplish the construction of 5 lanes divided by a median from Bell Shoals Road east to the vicinity of Bloomingdale Senior High School. Major improvements to the intersection of Bloomingdale Avenue and Bell Shoals Road will be made; including improved turning lanes, crosswalk buttons, sidewalks and curb cuts for the disabled.

The four-part project began in 1993 in an effort to improve traffic flow along busy Bloomingdale Avenue from Lithia Pinecrest Road west to US-301 and I-75. Phase 1 extended from Bryan Road west to Kings Avenue. Phase 2 covered Kings Avenue west to US 301 a year later. Beginning in 1995, Phase 3 extended the project from Bell Shoals west to Bryan.



Progress continues on Bloomingdale Avenue

County Community Affairs Director Steve Valdez said, "The medians for the final phase are a pilot project for Hillsborough County, the first to be equipped with an irrigation system." Valdez says county planners took advantage of reclaimed water systems already in place in the area in an effort to promote healthier, more drought-tolerant plantings.

Costs for the final leg of the project are estimated at \$8.76 million. The Bloomingdale Avenue project is the last in the Brandon area to be subsidized by bonds secured by Hillsborough County gas tax revenues.

Issues addressed have included traffic concerns ranging from speeding on Natures Way, getting traffic signals installed at Bloomingdale Avenue and Culbreath Road and Fish Hawk and Bell Shoals Road, purchasing our own radar speed monitor, and improving traffic congestion around our schools. Other concerns have involved coordination with the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office on matters ranging from dealing with sexual predators to improving safety and security for our homes and local businesses.

Monthly meetings to discuss issues that have been presented to a council member or brought to the attention of Deputy Maurer are held at the Community Station. Special guests from County offices and local businesses have attended meetings to hear the issues firsthand. State Representative Johnnie Byrd and his staff have been very active in offering their support and assistance.

With the continued commercial and residential growth in our area will come more challenges. The increase in businesses along Bloomingdale Avenue will bring more traffic problems, security issues and safety concerns. The explosive growth south of Bloomingdale in the FishHawk area will present its own set of concerns. Other issues like the current attempt to rezone conservation property on Springvale Drive and the current request to rezone property at Bloomingdale Avenue and Lithia Springs Road to allow the construction of a Publix grocery store have been or are being addressed.

A recent attempt to re-zone the property next to Bloomingdale High School to allow retail shopping center construction prompted the attention of the Council. Residents are encouraged to contact the BACC about what type of development they'd like to see on the multi acre site, or to express their concerns about other issues they feel need to be addressed in order to best serve the needs of our community.

Every issue needs a concentrated community effort with a central focal point. This is what the BACC was developed to be. The BACC has proven to be very effective. It needs the input and support of our community residents to continue to improve and protect our quality of life.

Deputy Maurer can be reached at the Community Station at 635-8040.

Bloomingdale Area Community Council needs your support

By Mack Austin

There is a volunteer organization within our community that has proven to be very effective in monitoring and resolving public issues that directly affect the Bloomingdale area. The Bloomingdale Area Community Council (BACC) works with a variety of County agencies and local businesses to find solutions to Bloomingdale community issues.

The BACC was formed shortly after the Bloomingdale Area Community Station opened. Council members are volunteers from various homeowners associations or simply residents interested in working to improve our community. Community Resource Deputy Pete Maurer and Community Service Officer Sandy Capitano organize and monitor the activities of the BACC.



The new MacDill Federal Credit Union construction project on Bloomingdale Avenue will soon be completed. Although a much needed and welcomed addition to our community, it will mean more traffic concentrated in this area. More patience and courteous driving habits will be required.

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Bloomingdale High School News

By Mack Austin

Save those magazines!

First of all, a special thanks to the many supporters of the Bloomingdale High Reading Program. Those of you who donated your time to work directly with the students, those who helped collect and deliver the magazines, and those of you who donated magazines all helped to make the program a great success. The students really enjoy reading the magazines, and progress is being made with the Reading Test Scores.

As the holidays approach and you're straightening up, be sure to put your no longer needed magazines aside so you can drop them off at the high school or at the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Community Station on Bell Shoals (near Beef O'Brady's). Deputy Maurer and Officer Capitano will arrange to have them taken to the school for distribution. One special note, please remove any mailing labels.

Volunteers are always needed to listen and assist students with their reading each week on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday during second period (8:30-9:30 a.m.) and during fifth period (12:50-1:50 p.m.). Every Tuesday volunteers are in the school cafeteria to exchange candy for magazines. Call 744-8018, ext. 563 to volunteer to be a Reading Program volunteer. Whatever time you can spare, the rewards are great! You will make a difference.

Linda Weronik, Bloomingdale High School's Reading Program Director, is looking for incentives to motivate students into reading more and learning the true importance of developing a life-long inter-

est in reading. Since all students like good food and a good party, any local businesses who would like to sponsor a Pizza Party or Ice Cream Party for those classes Ms. Weronik identifies as being the most active participants in the reading program, can contact her at 744-8018, ext. 563. Finding ways to motivate students to read can be challenging. There's nothing wrong with making it fun!

Construction and traffic

The widening of Bloomingdale Avenue, especially the areas in front of the high school, has caused much confusion, tried everyone's patience and produced many delays (see related story in this issue). It is a necessary part of our growing community. As you drive in this area, give yourself additional time to get through. Remember, traffic fines in construction areas are automatically doubled. Some patience and courtesy will go a long way towards making this confusing situation much more bearable. We're all in it together, so let's work together until it's completed.

Bloomingdale High's School Resource Officer

By Mack Austin

It used to be that parents just needed to know the teachers and coaches that taught their students. In this day and time there is another very important school official they must get to know who is charged with protecting our students. That official is the School Resource Officer (SRO).

(Continued on page 9)

Bloomingdale High is very fortunate to have as its SRO Deputy Harrison Bashner. Deputy Bashner or "Dep" as some students call, him joined the Hillsborough County Sheriff's team in 1995. One of his first assignments was to patrol the University Square Mall and University of South Florida area. He gained a lot of experience fast covering this area. He was assigned as SRO at Bloomingdale in April 1999.

Deputy Bashner approaches his duties and responsibilities with the utmost professionalism. He is responsible for the safety and security of the students, faculty and administration at Bloomingdale High, as well as their personal property and all of the County resources and facilities. It is an enormous task.

Deputy Harrison recognizes the need for effective communication and cooperation between students, faculty, administration and parents in order to provide the safe and secure environment everyone wants. He has an active Crime Watch Program that utilizes the participation of students to assist in providing a safe school environment.

"School is basically a community within a community for four years of the students lives," said Deputy Bashner. "As in any community, everyone has to do their part. I'm very proud of the work our Crime Watch teens are doing."

Deputy Bashner noted some of the specific areas that need special attention. One of the first has proven to be a significant challenge, monitoring and controlling traffic in and around the school. The widening of Bloomingdale Avenue presents some difficult situations.

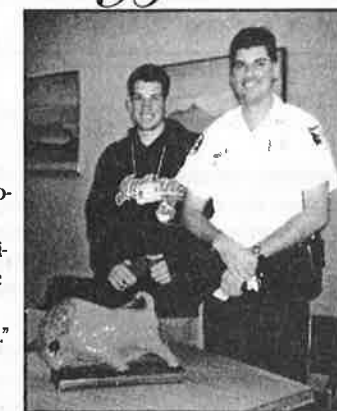
"All drivers, teens and parents, must have patience and use extra caution until this project is completed. Obeying all traffic laws and rules are important. These include the One-Way areas and No U Turn areas on campus, especially during drop-off and pick-up times." Parents setting the right example when driving is one of the best ways there is for our students to learn good driving habits.

Some of the other areas receiving emphasis will be theft prevention - students must lock their lockers, noise reduction, truancy, drugs and alcohol

on campus, and speeding on campus. He does use radar and tickets are being written. "Safety is critical and those who violate the rules will be subject to discipline and can lose their driving and parking privileges."

Providing a secure environment is also a challenge, since he must follow certain rules and guidelines established by the Hillsborough County School Board. As a professional officer, Deputy Bashner will do all that he can to provide our students with a safe and secure school environment. He does need the assistance of all parents and students. Parents should become familiar with the rules and regulations that govern our school security programs in order to find out how they can help.

We welcome Deputy Bashner to our community and look forward to working with him in providing everyone at Bloomingdale High with the safest environment possible!



Bloomingdale High SRO Harrison Bashner and Joshua Sackett, a Crime Watch teen member, are part of the team effort to improve safety and security at BSHS.

Public school calendar reminder

Winter holiday: December 20 - January 3, 2001
Students return to school: January 4, 2001



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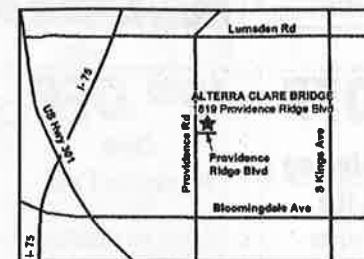


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Substation Notes

By Deputy Pete Maurer

Just about everyone makes out shopping and "to do" lists this time of year to make sure the holidays go smoothly. Here are some special lists we recommend to make sure your holiday season is a safe and secure one. Please take the time to use them. Don't become a crime or accident statistic during this holiday season.

Home security

- Lock all doors and windows when not at home.
- Close and lock garage doors.
- Complete "Request for Security Check" form at Community Station before leaving town (see related story in this issue).
- Arrange to have lawn mowed, if necessary.
- Arrange to have mail and newspapers collected while gone.
- Use timers on inside lights.
- Arrange for a neighbor to keep an eye on property while on vacation.
- Leave emergency phone numbers with friend or neighbor.

Personal security:

- Secure valuables while shopping.
- Secure packages in trunk while shopping.
- Monitor and secure credit cards used in shopping.

Be alert at all shopping centers, especially parking lots.
Lock your vehicle.
Let someone know where you will be.

Travel safety:

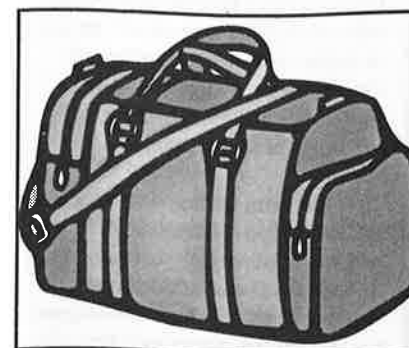
- Inspect your vehicle before traveling.
- Insure everyone in your vehicle uses his or her seat belts.
- Insure all child seats are properly installed.
- Put emergency supplies in your vehicle if traveling in harsh winter areas.
- Do not drink and drive.
- Do not ride with someone who has been drinking.
- Obey all traffic rules and regulations.
- Watch out for children, especially after Christmas day-bikes and scooters.
- Check the weather before leaving.

Child safety:

- Carefully inspect new toys for potential dangers.
- Insure all children wear bike helmets and pads.
- Keep children away from electrical hazards.
- Secure all swimming pools, especially from children visiting for the holidays.
- Secure all weapons and use trigger locks.
- Keep children close when shopping.

From Deputy Pete Maurer and Officer Sandy Capitano...
"Have a safe and secure holiday season!"

Suitcases and sports bags needed



For some children, the holidays won't be as cheerful and happy as they would like.

The Bloomingdale Community Station is working with the Tampa Police Department (TPD) to collect suitcases and sports bags for kids from troubled homes being removed from difficult situations without anything

to put their few belongings in. Suitcases and sports bags can be dropped off at the Community Station for delivery to TPD. Call CSO Sandy Capitano (635-8040) for additional information on this program. All donations will be very much appreciated.



Reverse 911

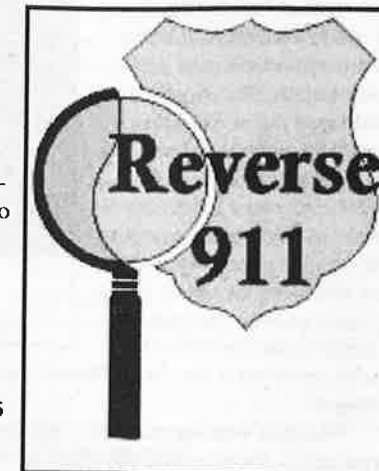
By Deborah Biddle


Reverse 911 is a system used by the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office to call a list of published phone numbers in the event of an emergency or the need to provide public information such as Crime Prevention tips. The system is not meant to replace the news provided by the media in the event of a large-scale emergency such as a hurricane.

Calls to a specific geographic area can be initiated within 5 minutes of an emergency. A type of emergency that could benefit from Reverse 911 may involve an escaped prisoner, a hazardous chemical leak, a hostage situation or a missing child.

The database that is provided to the Sheriff's Office includes published telephone numbers only. To add your non-published telephone number to the calling list, you must call 813-247-8200 and ask to be added to the Reverse 911 database.

For more information, call the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office at 813-247-8115 or visit www.hcso.tampa.fl.us.





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Bloomingdale resident joins mission to Africa

By Laura Frazier

When Bloomingdale East resident Michael Davis was asked by a friend to join a missionary group traveling to Ghana, Africa his first reaction was, "Are you sure you've got the right Michael Davis?" The self-described unlikely candidate for the job was baffled, and halfheartedly told his friend he'd think and pray about it, and get back to him. Weeks passed and Davis never felt compelled to commit to the trip.

Six weeks later, Davis says he received a dramatically clear calling to Ghana. His pastor's secretary phoned to ask if a friend of Living Water Church passing through Tampa could stay with the Davis family for a few days. Michael and his wife Judy happily obliged.

The first evening the visitor arrived, Michael says, "We were stunned to discover that our guest had been born and raised in



Michael Davis dons traditional African attire during a mission this summer to Ghana, Africa.

Ghana, Africa!" To Davis, the incredible coincidence was clearly an act of divine intervention, delivered directly to his living room. On September 4, 2000, Davis joined the team on their mission to Ghana.

The team intended to encourage the people of Ghana to live and work in integrity and honesty, to honor personal and business commitments, and to "do what you say and say what you do." The group visited remote villages and went out into the streets and market places to minister to the people through drama and music. Davis was astounded by the positive reactions their ministry generated.

"Incredibly, there were over 200 confirmed salvations committed to record during our mission. From the chief who greeted us with appreciation for choosing his

tribe to visit, to the husbands who embraced our message to cherish and hug their wives on a daily basis, we saw God make major changes in Ghana."

Restaurant Review

Luna Rossa

1947 Lumsden Road, Brandon
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(813) 643-9181

A new gourmet Italian restaurant has landed in Brandon, at the corner of Lumsden and Providence Roads, next to the new Winn-Dixie supermarket in Brandon Center South. It is gourmet, so don't expect your typical Italian fare. We enjoyed a fabulous dinner there recently, and I highly recommend it.

The owner is Cinzia Cripe, and I guarantee that she will do anything to see that you enjoy your visit. Cinzia does it all, but the cooking falls on two sets of very successful shoulders. Her cousin Fabio Chioni is the head chef, and her mom, Rita Petagna, prepares a great deal of the inspired meals.

The restaurant is appointed with window boxes, linen tablecloths and napkins and an indoor fountain. There is entertainment on Friday nights, with authentic Italian melodies. There were fresh flowers and a candle on our table, which added to the experience.

We received a complimentary dish of Italian toast and sautéed mushrooms in olive oil to enjoy as we studied the menu. It was absolutely delicious. Appetizers include Carpaccio; slices of lean beef topped with shaved parmesan cheese, arugula and olive oil, or the Italiano; slices of prosciutto ham, salami and cheese accompanied by olives and mushrooms.

Soup and vegetable courses include Grilled Eggplant or Pepperoni Di Rita. The latter is made by the owner's mom and is one of her favorite recipes; ripe red, green and yellow-bell peppers, sautéed in olive oil, garlic, black olives and capers. Our salads were

unfortunately served at room temperature, but did include chicory, arugula, escarole and the best house dressing I've had in quite awhile.

I chose the Zuppa Frutti Mare for my entrée; clams, mussels, calamari and shrimp in a white wine sauce with garlic, olive oil, parsley, red pepper and a touch of tomato, served with a side of angel hair pasta. I ordered it sans the calamari and got miniature lobster tails instead. It was really wonderful.

My wife ordered and thoroughly enjoyed the Chicken Portofino, breaded and baked chicken breast stuffed with sage, prosciutto, garlic and swiss cheese, served with a creamy Mediterranean sauce. It was accompanied with angel hair pasta and a medley of sautéed red, yellow and green bell peppers.

Other entrees offered include Cernia Al Forno, Sicilian style baked grouper filet, Linguine Luna Rossa, a lobster tail sautéed in olive oil and served over linguine, and Veal Boscaiola, veal scaloppini sautéed in martini sauce and served with portabella mushrooms.

I had American coffee and a Cannoli for dessert, an excellent choice. The Cannolis are filled on premises and sprinkled with miniature chocolate chips. Other desserts offered include Torta Caprese; sponge cake with custard and fresh fruit, and Tiramisu; ladyfingers with espresso coffee, marscapone cheese and whipped cream.

Our total bill including tax, not including gratuity, was about \$42.00. Our server, Chris, did an excellent job, so we tipped accordingly. Luna Rossa is open daily for lunch and dinner; dinner reservations are accepted. You might want to call ahead to confirm the hours, which may vary as this wonderful new restaurant settles in for what we hope will be a long stay in Brandon.

Until we eat again.

Elton Dumont



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Limited Openings for 2000-01 School Year

"Keeping in touch"...
with Benjamin Bunn

By Mack Austin

PFC Benjamin Bunn, BSHS Class of 2000 graduate, proudly poses with his sister Courtney and mom Karen Aponte after completing U.S. Army Basic training at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina.



"Special greetings and a warm Florida hello are sent to PFC Benjamin Bunn from friends and family in Valrico, Florida. We're all looking forward to you coming home for the holidays. Good look with the remainder of your AIT training. We're very proud of you!"

Ben is a member of the Bloomingdale Senior High School Class of 2000. He completed Army basic training at Ft Jackson, SC and is currently completing Advanced Infantry Training at Ft Gordon, GA. Upon graduation, he will serve with the HHSB 3rd Battalion, 116th Field Artillery, Florida Army National Guard in Plant City, Florida.

Ben will use his military education benefits to attend Hillsborough Community College and then the University of South Florida, where he plans to pursue a degree in Communications and later, a career in journalism.

Friends or former classmates who would like to drop a line to Ben can reach him at the following address: PFC Benjamin Bunn, 369 Foxtrot, 1ST Platoon, 15th Signal Brigade, and Ft. Gordon, GA 30905.

Keeping in Touch

The BHA and the Gazette would like to recognize local graduates who have entered into the military services, and help to keep them in touch with friends and former classmates. Please send the completed form, with a photo if available, to: Keeping in Touch, The Bloomingdale Gazette, 3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33594, or e-mail to frazier1@tampabay.rr.com.

Graduate's name: _____

High School and year graduated: _____

Military Address: _____

Branch of Service, Rank, Specialty: _____

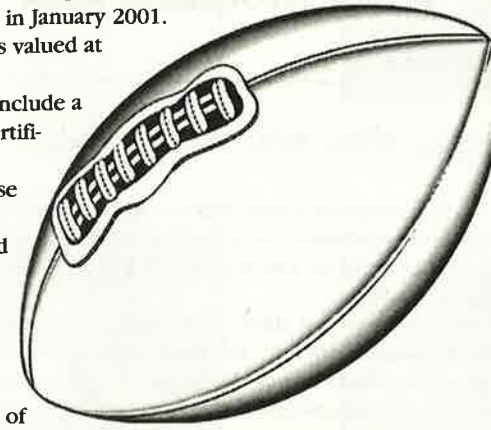
Future goals or plans: _____

Name, relationship and phone # of person submitting form: _____

**Brandon Cowboys raffle off
YMCA family membership**

The Brandon Cowboys youth football league has some great prizes lined up for a December 17 raffle. The grand prize is a one-year family membership valid at any Hillsborough County YMCA, including Bloomingdale's new Campo Family YMCA, scheduled to open in January 2001. The membership is valued at \$800.

Other prizes include a \$100 Chili's gift certificate and two \$25 Outback Steakhouse gift certificates. Tickets will be sold for \$2 each or 3 for \$5, and may be purchased at the Bloomingdale Little League ball field, at the corner of



Bloomingdale Avenue and Culbreath Road, on December 16, 2000 from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

League members will be selling tickets door to door in December.

Tickets may also be requested online at www.brandoncowboys.com or by calling Pam Upshaw or John Cicero at 661-8310.

**Bloomingdale Homeowners
Association, Inc. 2000 Dues**

\$20.00

Mail to: BHA; 3509 Bell Shoals Road; Valrico, FL 33594

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

E-mail*: _____

*If you have access to e-mail, please include your address to register for free BHA e-mail updates concerning timely crime and safety advisories, planning and zoning hearings, school boundary change proposals, etc. If you have any questions, please call the BHA at 681-2051.

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Riverview Goolsby Point 11697 Boyette Rd 672-1832.	Brandon Lake Brandon Village 11393 Causeway Blvd. 643-6944	Seffner North Grove Plaza 1515 S. Parsons 684-5897	Valrico Valrico Square 1985 E. Brandon Blvd. 654-2324
Brandon 913 W. Brandon Blvd. Builders Square Plaza 684-4499	North Brandon Kingsway Plaza 1213 Kingsway Ave. 653-4535		

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A good reflection on Alafia

A Gazette report

Over 40 Alafia Elementary students in grades K through 5 participated in the national PTA Reflections programs this year. Students were asked to expand on and portray the theme "Wouldn't it be strange if..." in their choice of several mediums, including photography, fine art, music composition and literature.

Participants pictured are Stephanie Maxwell, Tessa Baller, Collin McGuire, Tom Muck, Travis Edwards, Daniel Dye, Amanda Brooks, Kelsey Garagnon, Philip Mathew, Nicholas Giuliani, Rachel Maxwell, Amanda Hill, Emily Frazier, Kelly Pregent, Kasey Ellison, Maddie Dempsey, Victoria Jones,



Kyle Swetnam, Corrine Szczesny, Nicole Marcellin, Kaitlin Dunning, Nicholas Pletcher, Alexis Brooks, Bobby Szczesny, Kayla Gandy, Pan Pan Li, Courtney Ivey Carson, Megan Bergevin, Savannah Cox and Casey Field.

Live from Bloomingdale... WBHA?

By Rodney Biddle, BHA-Online Webmaster

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association (BHA) is currently exploring the opportunity to sponsor a community radio station. License applications for low power 100-watt FM stations in Florida come up in January.

Low power stations allow communities to broadcast their own neighborhood radio stations. The BHA is approaching this concept as an interesting project that could be used by the community, schools, and non-profit organizations in the Bloomingdale area.

The BHA Board is taking a preliminary look at the costs and benefits of such an undertaking. If the Board decides to pursue the project, community participation is necessary for it to become a reality.

Any residents who would be interested in leading or assisting with the WBHA project are invited to call the BHA at 681-2051, contact Rodney Biddle at rbiddle@cyberrails.com, or visit the BHA web site at <http://BHA-Online.org> for more information.

Protecting these young riders involves some basic safety steps: wear protective gear, including shoes (not flip flops or bare feet); never ride a scooter at night, especially since they don't have reflectors; children under eight years old must be supervised by an adult when riding a motorized scooter, and older kids should be given specific rules to obey.

We all want kids to have fun riding these scooters. We just don't want to see them taken to the ER.



This Bloomingdale scooter rider is following some of the basic safety rules, wearing a helmet and riding on the sidewalk.

Motorized scooters – fun and danger

By Mack Austin

We've all seen them flying through our neighborhoods, in and out of driveways, on and off the sidewalks, and sometimes right down the middle of the street. There is genuine concern among safety officials for the riders of these popular vehicles – lightweight, motorized scooters.

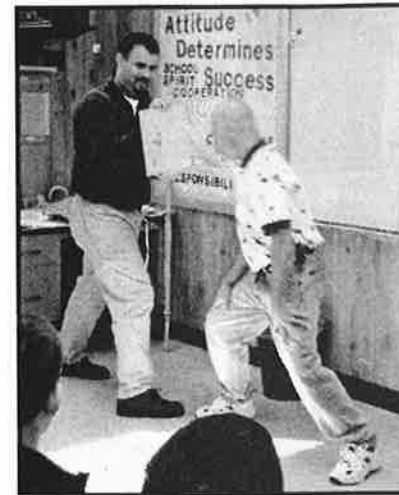
My personal experience involves coming within a few feet of hitting one riding down the middle of our street. One of the greatest dangers comes when riders scoot in and out of traffic and driveways. Many riders just fly in and out with no concern for what lies ahead.

Some scooters can reach speeds of around 17 MPH. This speed, combined with hard pavement or a sidewalk, can lead to some very serious skin-peeling injuries, as some have seen. A young rider on a six-pound vehicle will be no match for a four thousand pound vehicle moving at 25 plus mph.

Consumer Product Safety Commission records show that scooter injuries have nearly doubled since May. Just in August, there were 4000 injuries that required emergency room visits. Most of these injuries, 63%, could have been prevented with protective gear. So, consider making these items a part of the gift package – a helmet, sturdy shoes, wrist guards, knee and elbow pads.

Over one third of injuries so far have been to the head and face. Helmets are a must. Without them, injured riders may sustain fatal injuries or suffer brain damage that can lead to permanent problems like speech difficulties and cognitive impairment.

Great American Teach-In 2000 at Alafia Elementary



Teacher A.J. Hendrix helps Karate instructor Henry Osuba present a "beads-on" demonstration to his daughter Amber's 5th grade class.



All eyes were on Mr. Osoba, who spoke softly and carried a big stick!



Students hammed it up for our Gazette photographer and enjoyed "interviewing" their teacher as a lesson in photojournalism.



Colonel Bob Brown took time off from his MacDill Atr Force Base duties to demonstrate parachute safety and dynamics to his wife Shelia Brown's 4th grade class.

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Brandon

Brandon Rotary Club paves the way for All Persons Playground

By Laura Frazier

Members of the Brandon Rotary Club are busy bringing their vision of a handicapped accessible playground to life. Rotary's All Persons Playground, to be built on Parsons Road in Brandon, just north of Lumsden Road, will incorporate equipment suited for special needs children in a traditional park setting.

Project Chairperson Bob DeVold says, "There's not a facility like it in Hillsborough County. This park will enable special needs children to play and socialize without the common inconveniences and impossibilities traditional playgrounds place in their way."

Specially designed swings and slides, picnic tables that allow easy access for wheelchair bound children, and easily maneuverable surfaces are among the elements being planned for the playground. A water play area is one of several "extras" on the Rotary Club's wish list for the park. The budget for the playground is \$450,000. At press time, private and corporate contributions, including a \$25,000 grant from Brandon Regional Hospital, totaled \$365,000.

Project Chairperson Randy Kizer said the project has had the critical support of Senator Tom Lee, State Representative Johnnie Byrd, and Hillsborough County Parks and Maintenance Department #2, under the direction of Jeff Mauch. Kizer said, "This is a classic example of residents and local government working hand in hand to benefit our community."

For a \$50 donation, the Rotary Club will engrave and install commemorative brick pavers at the park entrance and walkways throughout the playground. Each brick will be engraved with up to three lines of text indicating your name and/or business or the name of a loved one. To help pave the way for Brandon's special needs children, or for more information, contact Bob DeVold at 681-4601 or Randy Kizer at 684-9919.



Brandon Rotary Club members Bob DeVold and Randy Kizer display sample brick pavers available for a \$50 contribution to Rotary's All Persons Playground.

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Owner: Juliette & Tim Johnson

Ages: Pre-School, Kindergarten, Grades 1-4

Enrollment: 180

History: School founded by the Johnsons in 1992.

Accreditations: American Montessori Society, London Montessori Society

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Kathy: We've got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy down in our hearts!!
Judy: That's because we're all looking forward to our annual tree trimming and holiday festivities here at the Park Club.

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Watering restrictions still in effect

Watering restrictions in unincorporated Hillsborough County, including Bloomingdale, permit lawn watering only one day a week, depending on your address. Watering may be done only once a day, either before 8 a.m. or after 6 p.m. No watering is permitted on Saturdays or Sundays.

Addresses ending in 0 or 1 may water on Mondays; those ending in 2 or 3, on Tuesdays; 4 or 5 on Wednesdays; 6 or 7 on Thursdays; 8 or 9 on Fridays. Properties with no address, such as common areas or medians, may also water on Fridays.

Low-volume watering devices, such as drip or soaker hoses, are currently not restricted for use on plant materials other than grass. Reclaimed water customers are voluntarily requested to restrict their lawn watering to the one-day-a-week schedule as other water customers.

Pressure washing is not currently restricted. Hand watering of trees, shrubs, flowers and vegetable gardens with a watering can or hose with an automatic shut-off nozzle is permitted on any day at any time. Hand watering of lawns is allowed only during prescribed days and watering times.

New lawns and landscaping are exempt from day-of-week restrictions for the first 60 days after planting. However, the new planting must cover at least 50 percent of a sprinkler system's irrigation zone in order to water the entire zone. Otherwise, it should be hand watered or a manual sprinkler used.

Vehicles, including cars, boats, and RVs, may be washed on any day at any time, using an automatic shut-off nozzle. Hosing down of

porches, sidewalks, and driveways, except for health and safety reasons or as a part of construction activities, is prohibited.

Violation of these restrictions is a civil infraction punishable with fines up to \$500. Residents may call 272-5900 to inquire about watering restrictions, or 224-8993 to report suspected violations.

Home Safe Home

Hillsborough County household chemical collections
 South County collection site
 626 Golf & Sea Boulevard (beside the Fire Station)
 Open 9am to 3pm
 Saturday, December 2, 2000

Materials accepted

Paints and solvents, automotive products, household cleaners, pool chemicals, lawn and garden supplies.

Materials not accepted

Explosives, flares or bio-medical material.
Absolutely no commercial waste will be accepted.

For additional information
 call the Hillsborough County Solid Waste
 Management Department at 272-5680.

Letters to the BHA

If you have a problem, complaint or suggestion and would like to enlist the help of the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, please e-mail bha@cyberrails.com, phone (813) 681-2051, or write to 3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33594.

Question:

"I'm sending you this e-mail to express concern about the treacherous sidewalk on the south side of Erindale. This sidewalk is so slippery from algae and muck that people are slipping and falling because of it. It is only a matter of time before someone falls and really hurts themselves. I feel that this is a liability that the homeowners association can prevent if they hire someone to come out and clean the sidewalk."

BHA Response:

"Erindale is a county street, and the roadway and sidewalks are generally maintained by the County's Roadway Maintenance Division. In addition, the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District (BSTD) has some responsibilities for the maintenance of the common areas (walls, neighborhood entrances, etc.).

We forwarded your concern to the appropriate County offices and the BSTD for review and comment. Please let us know if you require further assistance."

Follow-up reply:

"The County came out and pressure washed the sidewalks. They were very prompt. Thank you for your help in resolving this matter."

Question:

"Are there any kind of restrictions that can keep the garbage trucks from entering the neighborhood so early in the morning? For the last 4 months, the trucks have been coming in at about 5:40 a.m., via Bloomingfield at John Moore. There are usually 2 or 3 trucks working at the same time, which creates a lot of noise and wakes up our kids long before they need to get up. I know they have a lot of ground to cover each day, but anytime after 6 a.m. would seem much more reasonable. Thanks for any help."

BHA response:

"We contacted the Solid Waste Management Department and spoke with Richard Mims, who indicates that regular collection hours for all residential solid waste collection services are from 6 a.m. until 6 p.m. Mr. Mims assured us that the franchise collector for your area will be contacted immediately and directed to operate within the required time frame. If you encounter future problems, please contact Richard Mims at 276-2932."

Clerical help wanted

The Bloomingdale Special Taxing District (BSTD) is in need of permanent part-time clerical help. Approximately 10 hours per week, flexible hours, one person office. Light typing and general clerical duties at our Bell Shoals Road office. Please call BSTD President Thom Snelling at 681-9186, or send resume to BSTD, 3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33594.



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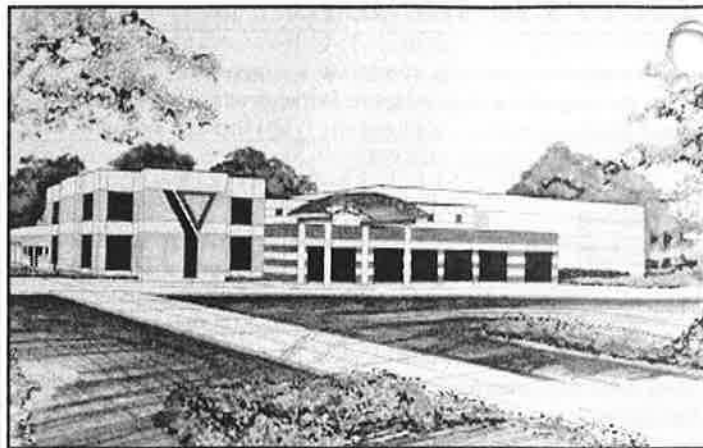
685-4490

Bloomingdale Cove
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 Fax: (813) 685-7066

New YMCA memberships available

The Campo Family YMCA, under construction at the corner of Bloomingdale Avenue and Culbertson Road in Bloomingdale, is scheduled to open in January 2001. The facility will feature a state of the art health and fitness center complete with a supervised nursery and youth area, a 75 foot outdoor heated pool, multi-purpose basketball gym, rock climbing wall, and a teen center designed by and for youths 13 - 17. Programs planned include youth and adult sports, teen programs, swim lessons, karate, dance, basketball, t-ball, soccer and Bible study.

The YMCA is now offering Cornerstone Memberships for a joining fee of \$175. Monthly membership dues vary depending on the number of family members; \$62 per month for a family of four. Cornerstone members will enjoy exclusive benefits, including a special grand opening preview dinner. For more information, please call 684-1371.



The Campo Family YMCA, artist's rendering provided by the YMCA

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