

A Visit From St. Nick

Santa and Mrs. Claus will visit Bloomingdale children Dec. 13.

News Report

Santa and Mrs. Claus will make their 15th annual visit to Bloomingdale to meet with the community's children and hear Christmas wish lists.

The jolly couple will be at the Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Goals Road, Dec. 13 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Last year, more than 100 residents met with Santa and Mrs. Claus, bringing with them hundreds of cans of food earmarked for local charities.

In exchange for a donation of canned goods, children were treated to a free photo with Santa, courtesy of the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association.

Santa and Mrs. Claus are currently seeking volunteer elves to help with the effort. Any teenagers interested in obtaining community service hours can contact the BHA at 681-2051.



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Featured Story:

PRIDE cleans up the neighborhood

see page 15

Groundbreaking for new library set for this month. see page 2

Groundbreaking Set For South Brandon Library

By D'ANN WHITE

Just in time for Christmas, Bloomingdale is getting a gift from Hillsborough County — the long-awaited groundbreaking for the new South Brandon Library.

It will be followed by another gift next Christmas — the completion and opening of the new library.

A groundbreaking ceremony for the 15,000-square-foot library on Bloomingdale Avenue east of Bloomingdale High School is set for Dec. 8 at 3:30 p.m.

Residents attending can park in the Bloomingdale High School parking lot.

More than 500 invitations for the groundbreaking ceremony have been mailed to county commissioners, library officials, library supporters and members of the

now-forming South Brandon Library chapter of the Friends of the Library, according to library public relations director Patrice Koerper.

Among those who have tentatively agreed to attend are County Commissioners Ronda Storms and Jim Norman, both of whom lobbied for the additional funds for the library to relieve overcrowding at the Brandon Regional Library.

The nonprofit Friends of the Library promotes and raises funds for the library.

Bloomingdale resident and former librarian Pat Boody has agreed to help organize the south Brandon chapter.

Among those who have stepped up to the plate to help are Bloomingdale resident Julie Owens and Dot Smelt, a member of the Brandon Genealogical Society, which

will use the new library to help residents trace their genealogy.

"I'm really excited to have a library in our community," said Owens, who has children attending Burns Middle School. "That's why I've offered to help with the Friends."

"We're in the process of working with a number of residents on the formation of a Friends of the Library chapter," said Suzy George, chief librarian for the east region for the Hillsborough County Public Library System. Membership fees in the friends are \$10 for individuals and \$25 for a family.

George added that South Brandon Library is just the working title for the new library.

County commissioners are charged with selecting a

name, and residents are welcome to send suggestions to the Hillsborough County Library Board by calling 273-3660.

"The board will evaluate and make recommendations to the county commission, probably closer to the library opening," said George.

The library, designed with a brick and stucco facade, will have 15,000 square feet of space with room to expand another 10,000 square feet, which would make it a regional library.

It will feature covered book drop areas, a 1,500-square-foot children's library enclosed in glass, a computer lab, two group meeting rooms for eight to 10 people and two tutoring rooms for four to six people.

The library will open with 35,000 books.

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County Hopes To Improve Traffic Flow

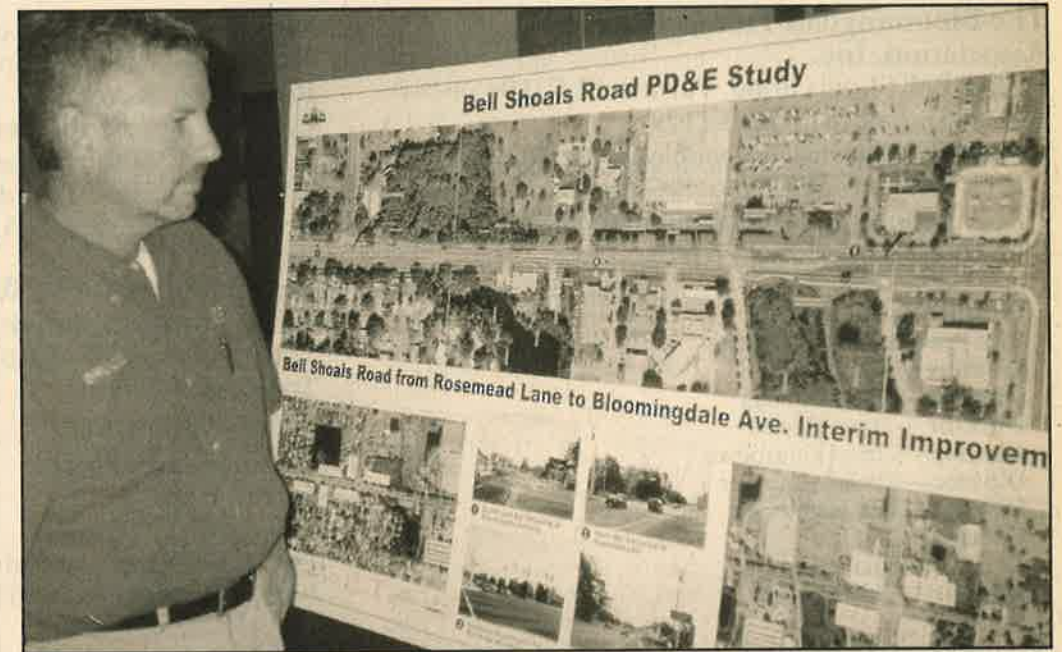
By MACK AUSTIN

Improving the traffic flow at one of the busiest intersections in all of Hillsborough County sounds like an impossible task. But it is an immediate challenge that the Hillsborough County staff and engineers are undertaking with input from the community.

After numerous hours of conducting traffic studies and completing months of planning, Hillsborough County staff members held a public meeting at Bloomingdale High School last month to show residents the current plans for improving traffic flow at the intersection of Bloomingdale Avenue and Bell Shoals Road.

After recently obtaining the undesired record of being the No. 2 intersection in all of

See TRAFFIC, Page 23



Bruce Korte, owner of the Ace Hardware store in Bloomingdale Square, studies the improvements proposed for the intersection. Like many business owners in Bloomingdale Square, he hopes the changes will improve traffic flow and safety for his customers.

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E-mail: Bloomingdale.Homeowners@Verizon.net

Web Site: www.BloomingdaleGazette.com

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

President — Ted Grable
Vice President — Joe Hickle
Treasurer — Pam Liguori
Director — Tony Diolosa
Director — Steve Heckel
Director — Cheryl Kehrmeyer
Director — Michele Caballer
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Director — Jane Lee
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Bloomingdale Special Taxing District

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

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

President — Thom Snelling

Vice President — Russell Jones
Treasurer — Dale Kahn
Recording Secretary — Alice Burleson
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Trustee — Myron Magedanz
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Treasurer — Fred Englehart

THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

The official publication of the BHA since 1980

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Meet Your Neighbors

By D'ANN WHITE

It's hard for Pam and Joe Liguori to imagine that there are Bloomingdale residents who have never been to a Bloomingdale Homeowners Association meeting, and aren't even sure what the BHA is or does.

Being involved in their community, helping neighbors and committing countless volunteer hours to Bloomingdale is a way of life for the couple.

Since moving to their Bloomingdale East home from Texas in 1986, the Liguoris have made it a point to be involved.

Back then, noted Joe, Bloomingdale East was still in its infancy. Augusta Village, where they purchased their home, was newly built and Dumont Drive had just 12 houses on it.

"Everything else was just

fields," recalled Pam. "It felt like wilderness out here."

The Liguoris, who have been married 24 years, have always gotten involved in the communities in which they lived, and Bloomingdale was no exception.

They promptly joined the board of the Bloomingdale Gazette, which at that time met at the Bloomingdale West home of the editor, Susan DeLuca.

"I'd always had an interest in writing so I thought this would be a nice way to get involved," said Joe.

His community involvement continued to increase when he retired from his career in automotive sales.

"I didn't have any hobbies, but I like to keep active, so I got active in my community," he said. From the board of the Gazette, Liguori joined the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association board, then

served on the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District and the Bloomingdale Area Community Council.

Liguori now devotes numerous hours each week as executive director of the Bloomingdale Gazette, helps manage the BHA office and serves as a liaison between the BHA and the taxing district.

Although Pam still works at Verizon, she also is active in the BHA, serving as the secretary.

The couple are charter members of St. Stephen Catholic Church where Joe has served as vice president of the Men's Club and as head usher and Pam is a member of the Community for Women and the Red Hat Society. Both serve on the church's bereavement committee as well.

If that wasn't enough to occupy himself, Joe serves on the Hillsborough County Sign

Appeals Board and volunteers as a poll worker on election days.

"We certainly keep busy," said Pam, adding that they reserve Fridays as a date night so they have time to catch up with one another. "Some weeks we feel like we're just passing each other."

But it's the holiday season when the Liguoris find themselves at their busiest.

For 15 years now, the Liguoris have served as Bloomingdale's official Santa and Mrs. Claus.

Not only do the Liguoris meet with more than 100 children each year at the BHA office, but they visit with children at schools, churches, hospitals and charity events.

They've been offered money to play Santa and Mrs. Claus at stores, but they've turned down all offers.

See NEIGHBOR, Page 22

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MACK AUSTIN/Photo

A new memorial at the Campo Family YMCA remembers local teenagers who have died, including a number in car accidents. The Sheriff's Office reminds drivers to be especially careful during the holiday season.

Bloomingtondale Substation Notes

By DEPUTY PETE MAURER

Time off and travel

These two things can be fun or trouble. We all know what it takes to make our holiday seasons safe and secure. Keeping our families, ourselves, our homes and our belongings safe and secure during holiday season is essential.

Being aware of our surroundings, locking up our valuables and following good safety habits will make our holidays memorable ones, not miserable ones.

We must also remember that December is one of the most traveled months of the year. Many folks are still very concerned about the safety of flying and will instead choose to drive to their destinations. This means thousands more cars on the highways.

There will be every type of driver imaginable on the highways and roads. They'll range from teenagers with only limited experience to truck drivers with years of experience. Before you begin your long trips, each family should sit down and take the time to discuss the dangers of holiday driving, how they can protect themselves and not let a tragedy ruin their holidays.

Of the thousands of drivers traveling on the roads for the holidays, there are four types to watch out for:

Sleepy drivers — According to the National Sleep Foundation, over half of the nation's drivers (51 percent) admit to driving drowsy, pushing themselves too far. Among those, 18 to 29 years old, nearly one-quarter (24 percent), reported that they actually fell asleep at the wheel. Most of these drivers also admitted to being impatient, driving faster and feeling more stressed. Plan your trip and allow time for adequate rest stops. Watch out for sleepy drivers. They usually speed up, then slow down or weave back and forth.

Distracted drivers — Driving while distracted has

become such a serious problem that law enforcement officers now note "driver distracted" on accident reports. This can seriously affect your auto insurance rates. The types of distractions noted could fill a book. They cover everything from cell phones, PDAs, eating, putting on makeup, changing clothes, talking to passengers, reading, shaving and now even watching videos or working on a laptop computer. The mind can concentrate fully on only one thing at a time. Make yours concentrate on your driving.

Drunk drivers — These are some of the most dangerous drivers. Nearly 40 percent of all traffic fatalities are alcohol-related. These drivers are unpredictable, can be very aggressive and usually aren't the ones that get injured seriously. Watch for the signs of this type of driver — weaving, back and forth, driving very slowly or following the emergency lane line. Alert law enforcement if you see them. Don't be one of them.

Aggressive drivers — The holidays put a lot of stress on some people. Some people are very aggressive drivers no matter what the season of the year. If you are driving near an aggressive driver, do not confront them or aggravate them. They can be very unpredictable. You don't know if they are armed or drunk or on drugs. Some drugs will make drivers very aggressive. Just back off, avoid eye contact, do not flash your lights and don't let your fingers do the talking. You won't like the conversation.

Avoid all of these types of drivers. And definitely don't be one of them. Protect yourself and your family by wearing your seatbelts and insuring young children are in properly installed car seats or booster seats.

Congratulations

Our Sheriff's Office Bloomingtondale Community Station

See STATION, Page 6

Yard of the Month

4107 Canoga Park Drive

It was the giant oak tree in the front yard that first attracted Dee Liptok to the house at 4107 Canoga Park Drive in Bloomingtondale West.

It not only gave the yard an inviting feel but Liptok knew its limbs would be the perfect support for her reindeer and sleigh, one of hundreds of items she displays in her front yard at Christmastime.

Liptok and her husband, Gary, purchased the house last December but didn't have time to decorate for Christmas last year. So Liptok more than made up for it this year.

After purchasing the home, Liptok, an avid gardener, began redoing the beds, constructing a decorative timber wall at the sidewalk and generally whipping the neglected yard back into shape.

But by Halloween, her thoughts had turned from gardening to decorating. Lip-



tok prides herself in putting together a Christmas display that stops traffic.

She began putting up lights and decorations before Halloween and was still working on the project this week.

"I just love Christmas and I love lights," she said. "I just keep putting stuff up until I'm happy with the way it looks."

Her display includes hundreds of strands of lights, giant candy canes, her reindeer and sleigh in the tree and another five animated reindeer on the ground. Even with all these wires, she said her electric bill only rises by \$15 to \$20 during the month.

As she puts the finishing touches on the display, neigh-

bors drive by and shout their approval.

"I decorate for me but it's nice when people drive by and say they like it or when you see children with their faces pressed up against the car window," she said. "I'm meeting more neighbors doing this than I've met all year."

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Bloomington Area Community Council Report

By MACK AUSTIN

The Bloomington Area Community Council is made up of residents from homeowners associations in the Bloomington area who work directly with Bloomington Community Resource Deputy Pete Maurer, Community Service Officer Sandy Capitano and other local government representatives to coordinate the resolution of community issues and concerns.

The BACC meets monthly (the third Thursday at 7 p.m. at the Sheriff's Community Substation on Bell Shoals Road) to discuss issues that have been brought to the attention of a council member, Maurer or Capitano.

At the November meeting, the Bloomington Area Community Council welcomed guests Hillsborough County Commissioner Ronda Storms and Audi Canney, the commissioner's aide.



Construction on the Hillsborough County Water Department's new pump station located behind the Parks Maintenance Unit on Natures Way has been completed. The station is located on the site under consideration for a dog park.

MACK AUSTIN/Photo

New deputies wanted

The meeting began with Deputy Pete Maurer sharing

information on good news regarding a special program the Sheriff's Office is actively involved in. He noted that the Sheriff's Office recently received a "Creating a Culture of Integrity Cooperative Agreement Grant" to hire 24 community-oriented policing deputies. "These deputies respond only to calls within their neighborhoods and work with quality of life issues in their community," said Maurer.

The Sheriff's Office still has several deputies on active duty in the military and also lost many to the deferred retirement program. To fill these slots the Sheriff's Office is seeking the assistance of community organizations to identify potential candidates for the program.

These individuals must have a personal desire to serve their communities and, when selected, will receive scholarships for tuition and exam costs paid for by the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office including a \$1,000 supplemental payment per month while attending the law enforcement academy for five months.

Applicants must be 21 years old, have 60 credit hours of college, be drug free for at

least two years, well groomed, have no moving violations within the past two years, have no criminal violation within five years and no drunken driving or drug conviction or any felony convictions. Credit histories will be checked.

Anyone interested in this program can call the Sheriff's Office recruitment and screening section at 247-8000 or check the department's Web site at www.hcso.tampa.fl.us. The deadline for applications is Dec. 12 at 4 p.m.

Traffic

The first major topic of discussion was traffic. Members of the council and guests were updated on the proposal to improve traffic flow on Bell Shoals Road and Bloomington Avenue.

Storms discussed several traffic-related projects in progress including the widening of Boyette Road, the widening of Parsons Avenue between State Road 60 and Oakfield Drive, and plans to consider removing truck traffic from Bloomington Avenue and Lithia-Pinecrest Road.

See COUNCIL Page 21

Property Manager's Report

By AL DEVNEY

Irrigation

Thunder irrigation repaired a broken main line in zone one on Rosemead.

Brandon Irrigation replaced a broken valve in zone one on the Erindale system, reconnected the broken wiring across Erindale and replaced a defective pump relay switch on the Gotham

system.

During the monthly maintenance inspection, 27 spray heads and three rotors were replaced and three zone lines and a rain sensor were repaired. Additionally, there were 76 light bulbs replaced.

Landscaping

Raymow completed the first month of its new lawn maintenance contract.

DPMI inventoried the grass area and landscaping of the Eagle Point entrance and determined the BSTD cost per year to assume the maintenance responsibility.

Other

Russell Electric rewired the lights at the Golf Manor entrance and the BSTD is waiting on TECO to restore the electricity.

DPMI painted the entrance at Tyndale.

In the land of eat, drink and pitch out the window, there were 17 bags of litter picked up along with a watch, five telephones, a towel, a pair of Bermudas, a shirt, a toothbrush, a Genie door opener, a possum and 45 cents. The beverages of choice were Diet Coke for soft drinks, Bud Light for beer and Jack Daniels for distilled spirits.

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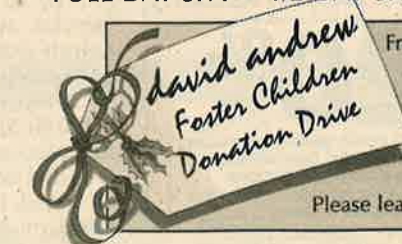
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Association To Lobby For Glenhaven Signal

By D'ANN WHITE

For Bloomington Homeowners Association President Ted Grable, it was more about what the county isn't doing to remedy congestion on Bell Shoals Road than what it is doing.

At a public meeting last month, Grable said he was disappointed to see that certain improvements endorsed by the BHA had not been incorporated into plans for Bell Shoals Road.

With only \$3 million to work with, the county is planning safety improvements to the intersection of Bell Shoals Road and Bloomington Avenue.

County project manager Reg Alford said the county agrees that Bell Shoals Road between Bloomington Avenue and Boyette Road needs improvements. He said long-range plans call for Bell Shoals to be widened



Bloomington Homeowners Association board members, from left, Ted Grable and Stan and Jane Lee look over plans to improve the intersection of Bell Shoals Road and Bloomington Avenue.

to four lanes with landscaped medians.

But that will cost \$13 million, \$10 million more than the county has.

So county consultants

came up with a compromise designed to make the intersection of Bell Shoals and Bloomington safer. They're recommending installing traffic lights on Bell Shoals at the entrance to Wal-Mart and on Bloomington at the entrance to Publix in Bloomington Square. The proposal also calls for the installation of traffic medians to prevent motorists from making left turns onto Bloomington from the Bloomington entrance closest to McDonald's restaurant. A bus bay would be added on Bell Shoals near the Kash n' Karry entrance as well.

Southoak resident Lynn Jahnke thinks the proposal may make the intersection safer.

"I agree with closing off some of those exits," she said. "I don't think people will like it but it's going to save lives. We see accidents around that intersection constantly. Someone's going to get killed."

But, at the same time, Jahnke wonders why the county doesn't go further and widen Bell Shoals Road.

"They talked about widening Bell Shoals to four lanes five years ago," she said. "I just feel like we're getting short-changed. I can't even make a left turn out of my neighbor-

hood anymore. I live in fear of the day my daughter gets her driver's license."

Grable shared her concerns. At the least, he said he'd like the county to install a traffic signal at Bell Shoals and Glenhaven Drive, one of the Bloomington East entrances experiencing the biggest backups.

"I think we need to lobby for additional funding so we can at least put in a light at Glenhaven."

He also wants the county to add a northbound turn lane at Garnet Drive so traffic won't back up when someone attempts to make a left turn onto Garnet, noting that his wife, Mary, was rear-ended at the intersection several years ago.

"I think we could justify those improvements now," he said.

The BHA board voted to write County Commissioner Ronda Storms and ask the county try to find funding for those improvements now.

BHA board member and government affairs liaison Stan Lee is a traffic signal engineer by profession and estimates the cost of a signal at Glenhaven to be \$100,000 to \$200,000.

Lee met with Alford to discuss the plans and said he's also concerned about what will happen to the shopping center behind the Citgo station where the BHA office is. The county plans to put a median along Bell Shoals in front of it, preventing left turns into the shopping center.

"It's going to kill that small center," he said.

The board agreed to ask if a median opening could be put in there or if a service road can be built behind the center adjoining the Kash n' Karry driveway.

County staff will return to the community with revised plans based on their comments in four to six months. Alford said construction is expected to begin in June and wrap up by December 2004.

Traditional Neighborhood Development Coming To Bloomington

By D'ANN WHITE

A Bloomington Avenue property that was once targeted for a Target store will now become an old-fashioned town village with a combination of homes and shops.

GBT Realty Corp. received unanimous approval from commissioners last month for a Traditional Neighborhood Development overlay on a 43-acre parcel on the north side of Bloomington Avenue east of Bloomington High School, next to where the county is constructing the South Brandon Regional Library.

The property was designated in the county's future land use plan for four residential units per acre. GBT Realty, based in Nashville, Tenn.,

previously wanted to build a Target on the property but the area is not designated in the county's land use plan for so-called big box developments.

Instead, the company came back with a kind of town village similar to what is being considered for the Brandon Main Street project off Lumsden Road.

The development will include shops and a mix of residential in a village square type of setting with the library integrated into the site plan, according to land planner Rick Harcrow, representing GBT. The only hitch in the plan is whether bus service will be available.

The Traditional Neighborhood Development overlay, a new county land use designa-

tion, requires a mass transit component.

Commissioner Pat Frank questioned whether the developer would be able to fulfill that requirement, noting that there is currently no bus service to that area.

"HARTline will have a little bit of a problem coming up with additional revenue," she said.

Harcrow said the developer currently is negotiating with HARTline to bring bus service to the development.

"It is our intention to continue to work with HARTline and hopefully create an express route that would come to our site," he said, adding this would be an ideal location for an express route. "What makes this, in our view,

an ideal location for a (Traditional Neighborhood Development) is there's a new library that's coming in next door, there's Bloomington High School, the YMCA is across the street and there's a nucleus of public and civic uses, which we think mass transit would help support."

County Planning and Growth Management manager Paula Harvey added that GBT will not be allowed to develop until mass transit is available.

"They will not be able to proceed with their development until that commitment's in place," she said. "HARTline is one of the reviewing agencies. Until the mass transit requirement has been met, we don't issue permits."

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Bloomingtondale Residents Form Stay-At-Home Dads Group

By D'ANN WHITE

Their days are filled with an endless list of chores: packing kids' lunches, cooking, grocery shopping, washing dishes, sorting and folding laundry and countless other household tasks.

In between, they chauffeur children to and from school, to ballet and judo classes, Brownie meetings and school functions.

Like their female counterparts, they sometimes feel overworked, underpaid and under-appreciated. But these homemakers are all dads.

As more women find challenging, high-paying careers in the workplace, it's the fathers who are choosing to stay at home and raise the children — not out of necessity but by choice.

Just ask Bloomingtondale resident Ray Alzamora.

He was a computer engineer with a defense contractor in Washington, D.C., when his wife was transferred to Tampa.

"I didn't make a conscious decision to become a stay-at-home dad," said Alzamora. "There just wasn't a strong market here for my work and my wife was taking on extra responsibility, so it suited the needs of our family for me to stay home."

That was five years ago. In the interim, Alzamora found he not only enjoyed the day-to-day contact with his children, now ages 8 and 3, but discovered also he was a pretty good homemaker.



Four-year-old Desiree Nguyen shows her dad, Van-Tam, and Tampa Area Dads At Home founder Ray Alzamora the snail she found and named Sarah.

"My children are so used to me being there, they don't think twice about it," said Alzamora. "It wasn't until last year that my oldest daughter even realized that not all dads stay at home."

In fact, said Alzamora, he's been able to use a lot of the same skills he learned in business at home. Now, instead of managing a staff, he manages two children. And, instead of scheduling meetings, he

schedules play dates and teacher conferences.

"I just do what I have to do, whatever it takes to maintain the household," he said. "If it's important, you learn to do it."

He's become a fair cook, manages to pick out clothes for the kids that almost always match and, after some trial and error, he now knows how to separate the whites from the colored laundry.

"I think working inside the home is harder than working outside the home," he said, validating a claim female homemakers have been making for years. "You're immersed in this job 24/7. You can't disconnect like you can when you work outside the home."

There's another disadvantage, said Alzamora. Unlike at his old job, he rarely has a chance to get together with other guys.

While there are plenty of groups geared for stay-at-home moms that Alzamora

was welcome to join, he said he felt a need to get together with other men, especially those facing the same challenges he faces as a stay-at-home dad.

"Most women like to hang out with women, and the same is true for men," said Alzamora. "It's just natural that we'd want to hang out together. So, after awhile, without the interaction of other adults, I was starting to get bored out of my mind."

He began searching the Internet for organizations for stay-at-home dads. He discovered that, while there are some active groups for dads around major metropolitan areas, there was no group in the Tampa Bay area.

So he started his own.

Tampa Area Dads At Home is a group that meets for lunch at least once a month to give the fathers a chance to socialize, whether it's talking sport or discussing the latest theor-

See DADS, Page 23

Residents Hope To Put Brakes On Truck Traffic

By D'ANN WHITE

Citing safety concerns, the Bloomingtondale Homeowners Association unanimously backed a recommendation by county staff to remove Lithia-Pinecrest Road and Bloomingtondale Avenue from the county's truck route plan.

Currently, the heavy phosphate trucks traveling between the Port of Tampa and phosphate mines in east Hillsborough County and Polk County are able to use Bloomingtondale Avenue and Lithia-Pinecrest Road.

In 2001, at the request of FishHawk Ranch residents, the Hillsborough County Commission agreed not to add FishHawk Boulevard to the truck route plan and to remove Boyette and Bell Shoals roads from the list of approved truck routes.

That left Lithia-Pinecrest, Bloomingtondale, State Road 60, U.S. 301, U.S. 92, State Road 74, Causeway Boulevard, Falkenburg Road, Balm-Wimauma Road, State Road 674 and County Road 672 open to through trucks in east and south Hillsborough

County. By statute, all state roads are required to permit truck traffic.

But with the area's increasing residential population and the proximity of schools, ball fields and other youth-friendly activities along Bloomingtondale and Lithia-Pinecrest, residents felt the phosphate trucks carrying potentially toxic chemicals were too dangerous. They asked commissioners to consider removing both roads from the truck route plan.

Bill McCall, senior engineer for the Hillsborough County Transportation Division, studied the request and determined that removing the roads from the truck route plan would not significantly impact the trucking industry. Truckers would still have two east-west routes, one on State Road 60 and the other on State Road 674 through Sun City Center, adding about six miles to the truckers' route.

Trucks hauling goods to local stores or construction sites would still be permitted to use Bloomingtondale and Lithia-Pinecrest. However, phosphate trucks and trucks

using those roads for cross-state travel would be prohibited.

McCall's conclusion was good news for the Bloomingtondale residents. BHA board member and government affairs liaison Stan Lee attended the public meeting last month at which the amendments were discussed. He said the changes would divert 11.4 percent of the truck traffic off Bloomingtondale and Lithia-Pinecrest.

However, Lee expects Sun City Center residents will be out in force to protest the amendments at the Jan. 27 Hillsborough County Commission hearing where commissioners are slated to vote on the changes to the truck route plan. That's because the changes will increase truck traffic along State Road 674 by 10 percent, said Lee.

With that in mind, BHA President Ted Grable urged the board to get the word out

to residents to either attend the hearing or write or e-mail the county commission voicing support for the amendments.

"We feel this would be in the best interests of our community. With Bloomingtondale High School, the new library, the YMCA and the Little League all on Bloomingtondale, the trucks are too dangerous. This is no place for trucks transporting dangerous and caustic chemicals," he said.

But with Sun City Center residents battling the changes, he fears the amendments could be defeated at the county commission level.

"This is one we have to win because it will be five years before the county considers amending the truck route plan again."

For county commissioners' phone numbers and e-mail addresses, visit the county Web site at hillsboroughcounty.org.

Calendar

Baseball tryouts

The Bloomingtondale Classics 10-and-under AAU travel baseball team will hold tryouts to fill approximately four roster positions for the spring season.

Players cannot turn 11 before Aug. 1, 2004. Tryouts will be held at Bloomingtondale Little League Saturday, Dec. 13, and Saturday, Dec. 20 at 10 a.m. and Sunday, Dec. 14 at noon. For information, call 662-0330.

Hanging out

The Campo Family YMCA will present Middle School Madness Dec. 13 from 7 to 10 p.m.

This is a chance for middle school students to head to the

YMCA for a night of dancing, cosmic rock climbing and just hanging out. The cost is \$4 for facility members and \$6 for guests.

Red Kettle bells

St. Andrew's United Methodist Church members will once again ring the bell and collect donations at the Bloomingtondale Publix through Dec. 24 for the Salvation Army and the Red Kettle program.

St. Andrew's is also partnering with Grace Community United Methodist Church (FishHawk) to ring the bell at the new Publix on Lithia-Pinecrest Road south of Bloomingtondale Avenue.

Call: Sean McHale, 643-5157.

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New Year Brings New Safety Measures

By MACK AUSTIN

The New Year will bring increased safety to children and parents who use the Bloomingdale Little League.

With parking spaces limited for the Little League, many players and their parents use the YMCA parking lots and cross over to the ballfields. This results in a high volume of traffic mixed with hundreds of pedestrians crossing Culbreath Road between the Campo Family YMCA and the Bloomingdale Little League.

After construction of the YMCA and remodeling of the Little League, the only semi-controlled crossing areas have been two designated crosswalks. Most parents and children cross Culbreath Road, the shortest route. But county traffic studies have shown that the crosswalk next to the YMCA can be dangerous because the majority of drivers exiting the YMCA do not stop at the stop sign.

After numerous studies and coordination with county parks maintenance supervisor Jeff Mauch, Bloomingdale's Community Resource Deputy Pete Maurer, County Public Works engineers and County Commissioner Ronda Storms and her staff, the county has agreed to construct a high-tech enhanced crosswalk across Culbreath Road. This enhanced crosswalk will



The new enhanced crosswalk on Culbreath Road between the YMCA and Bloomingdale Little League will include special strobe lights and flashers as well as a bridge across the ditch by the park. All pedestrians will be encouraged to use the crosswalk to get across safely.

include new surface strobe lights and warning flashers. The main purpose of this enhanced crosswalk is to provide a safe area for residents to cross Culbreath Road.

Once the construction is completed, residents will be

encouraged to cross only at the crosswalk other point, especially at night.

In addition, officials say drivers in this area will need to use extra caution and slow down. Maurer said this may take some added incentive in

the form of expensive citations.

And anyone using the parking lot at the YMCA or the Little League senior field will need to come to a full stop at the stop sign, look for pedestrians and proceed slowly.

Make A Clean Sweep Of Your Chimney This Winter

By MACK AUSTIN

Many Bloomingdale residents enjoy the warmth and beauty of a nice fire during the cool nights of winter. But with this enjoyment comes some very real dangers.

Fireplaces can be a hazard but taking some basic maintenance steps can help insure the safety of your home and your family.

The U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission reports that more than 5,500 residential fires in the U.S. were related to chimneys and

chimney connectors serving heating systems. As a result of these fires, more than 100 people died, 200 were injured and total property losses totaled \$184 million. Another 100 deaths from carbon monoxide poisoning occurred.

The root cause, concluded the commission, is that most homeowners are unaware that, like all other heating systems, chimneys require regular maintenance and evaluations to work safely.

This situation is complicated by the fact that many

faults, damage or problems are barely visible to the homeowner.

Professional chimney services aid in the prevention of fires related to fireplaces, woodstoves and chimneys. They install, clean and maintain these systems, evaluate their performance and educate homeowners on their safe operation.

Before lighting a fire, Bloomingdale homeowners with fireplaces and chimneys should first insure they are safe to use. Homeowners can do some basic steps to check

their fireplaces themselves. Examine the damper handle. If it is sticky or dirty, it's probably time for a cleaning. Check the masonry surface above it.

If there is more than a quarter inch of soot, call a pro for cleaning. Another plus to the maintenance is that a clean chimney will burn more efficiently and safely.

Check out www.csia.org for specific information on maintaining fireplaces and chimneys and on selecting a certified chimney sweep professional.

Computer Corner

The month of January is always a hard month for dial-up Internet users to connect and stay online through their Internet Service Provider (ISP).

December is the No. 1 month for computer sales and new Internet users. Many people "sign on" for the first time. "Internet Traffic Congestion" (ITC) is the result of everyone connecting to the Internet at the same time.

Symptoms to recognize ITC include several busy signals when attempting to sign on, loss of connection for no apparent reason, slow response from Web sites, poor connection speeds, slow e-mail response and generally poor Internet experience.

But take heart.

February is coming. Like many New Year's exercise programs, people lose interest or switch programs by the end of January.

And ISPs upgrade their

equipment to meet new demand during January.

During January, Cable and DSL users may feel the fallout of new users with slower response time from Web sites due to heavy Internet traffic. This will pass by the mid January.

Keep your head up; you still have better connections than most of the country.

Q: I don't remember my AOL password. Can you change it for me?

A: Change your password by calling AOL. They will give you a new "temporary" password, and will explain their process to you. AOL will want to speak to you (the account holder) and will not speak with anyone else (security measure).

Q: A friend sent me a Word-Perfect document through e-mail. I have Windows 2000

and cannot get the material printed. What can I do to overcome this predicament?

A: Windows 2000 is your operating system. Do you have Microsoft Word (or MS Office)?

If you have Word, open the file in Word and print it from there (it should convert the document for you). A better solution is for your friend to save the document in "Rich Text Format" (.rtf). Anyone with the Windows Operating System can read .rtf files in WordPad (native to all Windows systems).

Q: My laptop makes a strange clicking noise when it starts up and it is very slow. Is it about to die?

A: The laptop hard drive is about to cease functioning. The more you use it, the faster it will cease usefulness. Back up important data/docu-

ments now.

Once it fails, an expensive data recovery lab will be the only recovery method available. Professional technicians have the tools to back up your important data before the drive fails. A professional can also make an exact copy of your drive so you won't know the difference the next time you boot your laptop (other than the absent grinding noise and faster operation).

Bloomington resident Jim Jeup is a certified master technician for Advanced Mobile Tech Computer Service. He can be reached at 508-4378. Computer Corner Archives can be found at <http://www.advancedmobiletech.com/computer-corner.shtml>. E-mail computer questions to: cornerquestions@advancedmobiletech.com, or on the Web at www.advancedmobiletech.com

Residents Invited To Indulge Themselves At Spa

By LESLIE WHITE

With imported Italian chic and inherent style, Bleu Salon & Spa recently opened its doors for business in Lithia Crossing shopping center.

Owner Jan Adams has created a salon that oozes indulgence and specializes in pampering. Having 15 years of background in the beauty school business as well as consulting, Adams wanted to re-create an Italian spa right here in Bloomington.

Upon entering, guests can choose a quaint bistro table and help themselves to complimentary coffee, water and, after 4 p.m., wine. They can browse the latest style books or peruse the shelves of fragrant personal care products imported from Europe.

With 12 stations, 10 stylists, two aestheticians, two nail techs and a licensed massage therapist, there is no need

that can't be met, said Adams. Various skin care treatments are available, which are administered in a special skin care room where a galvanics machine imported from Italy treats damage done by acne, stimulating the skin with a series of electric currents.

"We also offer dermabrasion, which is really popular today," said Adams. "We do it without using chemicals. It removes the dead skin cells from your face and works on scars, acne and even burns. It gives that fresh new glow. After a series of five treatments, you see drastic results."

There is also a spa pedicure area nestled inside the cocoa brown walls. Inside, there are several whirlpool spa chairs that simultaneously massage the body in three different areas while the pedicure is in

See SPA, Page 22



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Restaurant Review

By ELTON DUMONT

Rib City Grill 1215 W. Brandon Blvd. 655-0027

There certainly have been a lot of restaurants opening or changing hands in the Brandon area so I decided to start with the new barbecue restaurant in town.

It had been a while since we were in there, but some of the changes were obvious.

They took out the bar to have more seating (a good idea in Brandon), redid the floor and the ceiling. But the same barbecue rustic atmosphere was still there as was the ever-present antler chandelier. I particularly enjoyed the clever sayings on the walls in the booths like "Beer, so much more than a breakfast drink" and "No matter where you go, there you are."

We stopped in for lunch recently and they were very busy. A good sign. We were seated by an indifferent hostess and our server came quickly.

She offered the daily special, the Sloppy City Sandwich, which is an old-fashioned chopped barbecue specially blended and served with fries and cole slaw for \$5.49. The menu was extensive enough. Starters included Three-Cheese Fries (\$6.50), Housemade Onion Rings (\$3.49), Buffalo Shrimp, Buffalo Chicken and Fried Okra.

The sandwich board included barbecue beef, barbecue pork, smoked turkey, the Big City Burger, the Sloppy City Sandwich, Hot Diggety Dog, beans and franks or a grouper sandwich.

They ranged from \$4.49 to \$6.49. The Rib City specialty is a full rack at \$13.99 or a rack and a half for \$17.49. A signature item is The Sky-scraper, a towering half pound of barbecue beef, pork or smoked turkey served piping hot on garlic bread with fries and cole slaw.

I surveyed the menu and,

when the time came, I asked my server for a chopped beef sandwich. She apologized and said that everything is sliced. I made a hasty decision to order the Big City Burger instead. My wife planned on asking for the pulled pork. But since everything is sliced, she opted for a barbecue pork plate lunch special.

If you are a hamburger bun lover, try the Big City Burger. The hamburger was exceptionally small by any standard and on such a big bun. With fries, lettuce, tomato and onion, it came to \$5.69. The sliced pork was tender but quite fatty and came in at \$5.49 with fries, cole slaw and Texas toast.

Items from the pit were dinners such as BBQ Chicken, Rib City Riblets, St. Louis-Style Ribs and a Rib City Sirloin Steak for \$7.99 to \$11.99. They also specialize in combination platters. Tony's Combo is a full rack and your choice of a quarter chicken, quarter pound of beef or quarter pound of pork for \$14.99.

Fried shrimp (\$12.99) or shrimp and riblets (\$13.99) are also available.

We found the fries to be quite pedestrian but the cole slaw was a very pleasant surprise.

They have a wide range of to-go items; a children's menu that includes a mini corn dog with fries, apple sauce and drink (\$3.49); beer, wine and soft drinks; and dessert items such as Chocolate Mousse Mania (\$3.95), Raspberry Swirl Cheesecake (\$3.50) and Banana Pudding (\$1.99).

Our total bill was \$17.75 including tax and gratuity. Although the owners have other restaurants, the learning curve at this one appeared to be in the infancy stages.

Rating based on five stars
Food ★★ ★
Service ★★ ★ 1/2
Ambience ★★ ★
Overall ★★ ★

Jason's Deli 2702 E. Fowler Ave. Tampa, 903-0017

Yes, I know it's out of Bloomingdale, so it will take a little explaining.

Mrs. Dumont and I were on our way to University Mall and we saw this deli on Fowler Avenue just before the mall. We stopped in for lunch and it was one of the best things we've done in months.

Pay attention. If you're still seeking a great Jewish-style deli or just a plain old-fashioned high-quality deli, I promise you this is it.

It is fun inside, the menu is fun to read and the food and service were terrific. The Reuben sandwich that I had was over 4 inches high, packed with lean, tender and delicious corned beef. Yes, it did have an authentic Kosher-style pickle spear and also came with mounds of potato chips. All for \$5.79.

The Mrs. had a corned beef sandwich on rye with Russian dressing and cole slaw. I also had a salad from the terrific buffet-style salad bar. They even had slivered almonds on the salad bar. Everything was fresh and chilled with 10 types of salad dressings offered. I selected the Leo's Italian-style, which is also available in retail bottles you can buy. The all-you-can-eat salad bar is only \$5.50. Fresh soups and specials are offered daily. Soup and sandwich at Jason's means your choice of soup with a sandwich on famous New Orleans-style Mufaletta bread.

I'll try to review the menu, but I know I can't do it justice. The Mufaletta Madness sandwiches ranged from one-fourth sandwich at \$4.99 to \$6.50 for half. But even the fourth was large. The wraps include Spinach Veggie (\$5.50), Portabella Mushroom (\$5.50) and the Ranchero Marinated Chicken Breast Wrap (\$5.99). Deli Favorite sandwiches include Reuben the Great, Turkey Reuben, the

New York Yankee Corned Beef, Pastrami and Swiss on rye bread, all at \$5.79. The Slim Jim with hot roast beef, fat-free mozzarella, fat-free ranch dressing, shredded lettuce and tomato on a toasted onion bun served with fresh fruit or steamed veggies goes for \$5.50. And the list goes on.

The Build Your Own Jason's Sandwich allows you to choose your meat from corned beef, pastrami, roast beef, turkey, chicken, imported ham, tuna, hard salami and liverwurst. Pick your bread from eight selections including butter croissant, onion bun, bagel, etc. This slightly smaller sandwich is only \$4.99. Adding a cup of soup or red beans or fruit bumps it to \$5.50.

Yes, they have subs and poboys (New Orleans style) for \$5.50 including (are you ready for this?) the Meata Balla Poboys, which is meatballs, Italian red sauce and melted provolone cheese toasted on New Orleans-style French bread.

And baked potatoes or, as they call it Super Spuds, are all about 8 to 9 inches long. Honest! The Plain Jane, Spud au Broc and Texas Style are \$5.29.

The soft-serve ice cream dessert is free. That's right, free, as in no charge.

The menu is focused on healthy choice items as provided by a hospital in Beaumont, Texas.

They have a separate carry-out counter, a huge catering menu and they deliver in a local area (unfortunately, not yet to Brandon).

They have a Jason's Junior Menu from \$1.99 to \$2.99 including spaghetti and meatballs, pizza or mac and cheese. They serve beer and wine along with one dozen other types of drinks such as Nantucket Nectars, Dr. Brown's sodas and IBC Root Beer. They are open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

And finally, while you are there, ask to speak with David Ivey and tell him we need a

See REVIEW, Page 17

Bloomingtondale Girl In Good Cheer

By LESLIE WHITE

Sharks aren't only found off the coast of Florida. A few are found on land right here in Bloomingtondale; some are even airborne.

The Florida Sharks are a competitive all-star cheer-leading team, and Bria Bequette of Bloomingtondale is just one of its shining stars. In the fifth grade at Cimino Elementary, 10-year-old Bequette has been cheering for three years.

"I just like to have fun and I always watched gymnasts do tumbling and I wanted to tumble like that," she said. Now she competes along with her teammates against other all-star teams from across the nation. "We're getting off to a good start this year. We placed second in our first competition of this year."

Competition season for these teams runs from November to April, having an average of two competitions per month.

Bequette practices three times a week at the Florida All-Stars gym on Mount Carmel Road. Practices consist of stretches, motion

sequences, dances and cheers as well as tumbling and stunting, which is where the teams work on lifts. Bequette acts both as a base, the one on the floor, and a flyer, the one in the air.

"Everybody has a spot in a motion sequence and in tumbling. Everybody is seen in the dance and cheer routines. The tightest motions, best tumbling or best sticks get closer to the front and get to fly the most," she explained.

Each performance lasts three to four minutes, and each competition is broken down by age and skill level.

"We have to work together and have teamwork. Our job isn't to be the coach or the assistant coach. We can't blame each other when something goes wrong," said Bequette.

Bequette admits she gets a bit nervous before a competition but that fades once she's on the floor. "Most people get nervous about hurting themselves or getting an injury, but you feel like it's your own gym when the music starts."

Her team of 29 girls is known as the Junior Elite, and

they compete at the intermediate level.

"As you go along and your skills start to get better, you get to be on a higher team and your skills keep getting better."

Each team has its own try-outs and varies in age and grade level, though each team is balanced skill-wise. Bequette's mother, Kristi Bequette, is one of her daughter's biggest fans.

"It's fun and I really like the discipline. It teaches my kids to be dedicated to something. With practices three times a week, you have to show up to participate," she said. "I like the commitment it's teaching them."

Bequette's older brother, Blake, also cheers competitively for the Tampa Ball All-Stars on a senior co-ed team. He also practices three times a week for a few hours each time.



LESLIE WHITE/Photo

Bria Bequette of Bloomingtondale cheers for the Florida Sharks All-Stars and is seen here in the Scorpio pose.

MAGIC

From page 13

have to grocery shop for, prepare or clean up after is like a dream come true. I take pride in the fact that I give valuable time back to those who are trying to do good by their families but are stretched just a little (or lot) too thin.

If this New Year is calling you to take control and make positive changes to better your overall health, consider

cheating just a little and hire a personal chef to get you off to the right start.

Bloomingtondale East resident and personal chef Stephanie Martin owns Mealtime Magic In-home Cooking Service. She can be reached at SMartin@MealTime-Magic.com or 789-8302.

REVIEW

From page 16

Jason's Deli in Bloomingtondale. I did and I need you to help me.

They have more than 100 across the country.

Our total bill including tax and a small gratuity (for semi self-service) was under \$20.

And, yes, I was impressed.

Can you tell?

Rating based on 5 stars
 Food ★★★★★
 Service ★★★★★ 1/2
 Ambience ★★★★★ 1/2
 Overall ★★★★★ 1/2

Until we eat again ...

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A CONTRACTOR
FOR YOUR NEXT
PROJECT**



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365810

He Helps Residents Get The Most Out Of Their Money

By LESLIE WHITE

Dan Sammons says he's found his "Mayberry".

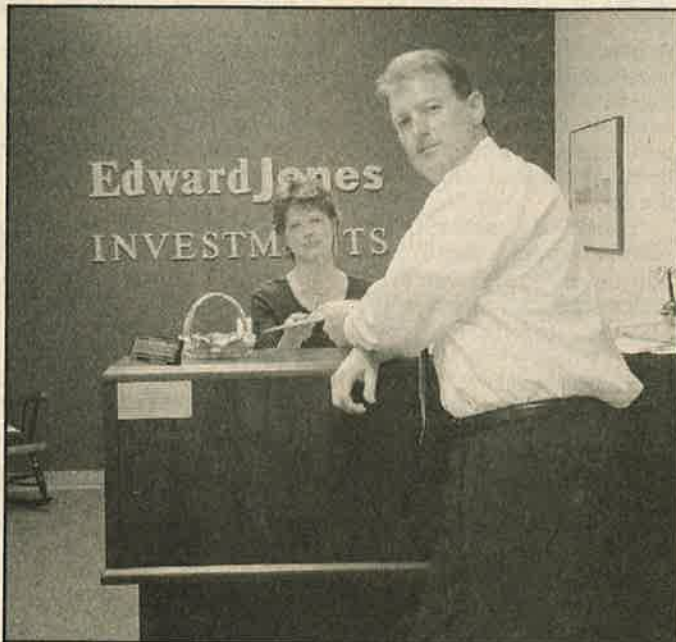
An investment representative for Edward Jones, Sammons has lived and worked in this area for four years.

"I opened this office and went knocking on doors. We're the only company that goes out personally looking for its customers," he said. "He made some really good friends, and see people I know everywhere I go."

With an office conveniently situated next to Car Wash On the Greens in Bloomingdale, Sammons, a single dad of two girls says, "I'm the luckiest guy in the world. I've found something I'm truly passionate about. Most of my clients are within a 3-mile radius of my office. We try to make it easy for people to find us, and we want people to know us personally. When you come into my office, you meet with the same person every time."

Edward Jones prides itself on being what some call the "Wal-Mart of Wall Street". Sammons calls it the last "not-com" company.

"We're just more personal; more conservative. You don't have to have a million bucks



Sandra Garcia and Dan Sammons serve the community at the Bloomingdale location of Edward Jones.

to invest with us. We can work with \$100 or we can work with \$50."

Sammons' approach is to get to know his clients and find out what their long-term dreams are, then help them figure out how to make them a reality. He's quick to point out, "If you don't plan, you're

planning to fail."

With the last three years being the worst in the history of the stock market, Sammons encourages his clients to maintain a very balanced portfolio, keeping their minds on the long-term.

"I'm big on focusing on what we can control and not

letting emotions about the market rule our actions."

He admits that he sometimes manages emotions as much as he does money with the current state of the market. Sammons said with a government that's encouraging people to save via Roth IRA's and other means, more families have a focus on financial planning.

"Edward Jones makes it easier today to get started on your investing because the offices are very localized," he said.

Sammons sees himself as more a financial mechanic, helping clients tune up their portfolios every six months. He suggests never going an entire year without reviewing and adjusting your portfolio. His job is to help clients stay balanced and committed.

"We can start with as little as \$50 a month through systematic investing. Once you create a savings habit, you might want to increase the amount you put back. Jones is the company that will help you do that."

Contact Sammons or the branch office administrator Sandra Garcia at 681-1462 or stop by the office at 3616 Erindale Drive.

Bloomingdale Business Provides Gift Of Time To Busy People

By LESLIE WHITE

As January rolls around, minds naturally adopt a mentality of resolution.

You know the list: lose weight, spend less, exercise more, get that to-do list done.

Now a Bloomingdale-based business, Time Flies Ltd., can help with the last on the list, leaving time to work on the first few.

Shannon Carlton, along with her brother Scott Coururier, started this concierge business in August 2002 when they recognized the need to free up time for working parents.

"I started out doing this for my brother, who works full time and didn't have time to do some of these things for

himself," Carlton said.

It wasn't long before the pair realized the need for this in the community. The two went into business together over a year ago, growing Time Flies Ltd. into a full-fledged concierge service that does grocery shopping, personal shopping, errands such as banking, movie rentals and even film developing.

"I've always been interested in this. I realized how many dual-income families had to run errands after work, meaning they didn't get in until 8 p.m. and still had to do laundry or cook dinner. They didn't get to spend time with their kids."

Carlton wants to afford these families the time to spend with their kids that she

has to spend with hers. A stay-at-home mom with two daughters, Carlton incorporates her customers' errands into her own. Time Flies can also help with once-a-year odd jobs such as addressing holiday cards, party invitations and home reorganization. She'll even be on hand to let the cable guy into your house.

Carlton does event planning as well, including parties, bridal and baby showers, handling everything from the invitations, booking caterers, setup and cleanup. She noted that her service is especially valuable to new moms, the elderly or new residents. She also aids businesses in any of their needs and will house and pet sit as needed.

"If you don't see it on the list, just ask," she says in her brochure.

Time Flies offers gift certificates as well.

"Who wouldn't love the gift of more time?" Carlton asked.

Initially, Carlton presents clients with a questionnaire to discover what services she could provide that would benefit them. Generally, they start with a few errands and, as her customers come to rely on her, Carlton expands her responsibilities with that family.

"One client I had simply needed some help menu planning, so I planned out the menu and prepared the shopping list for it. She did the

See TIME, Page 23

Business Takes Planning Out Of Romance

By LESLIE WHITE

Ever try to plan that oh-so-perfect event only to find yourself stymied by the Internet?

Bloomington resident Yolanda Strudwick has, and she knew she wasn't alone.

As owner of Concierge of Romance Inc., she took her experience and turned it into a business plugged as "Not a dating service for singles," but as a "dating service for couples."

"This all started by my trying to plan something romantic for my husband and myself last Valentine's Day," Strudwick said. "I wanted a resort that offered massages and had a spa. I got on the Internet to look for it and it took me forever. I thought to myself, 'This is why people don't do this for themselves.'"

So, she decided to go into business for herself, helping

others to plan that special romantic date, trip, gift or event. "My first event was for a military gentleman who had missed his first two anniversaries because he was deployed," Strudwick said. "He wanted to do something special, so I arranged dinner reservations for him and his wife, a gift basket and sent a masseuse to their home."

Strudwick also is a travel agent through Global Travel Agency, which allows her to secure discounts, which she passes on to her clientele.

"I keep a database of all my customers, and when or if they'd like to be reminded of upcoming important dates," she added.

When asked why she wanted to share this coordinating skill in the form of a business built around romance, Strudwick smiled. "I wanted something that was going to benefit couples," she said. "I just



LESLE WHITE/Photo
Yolanda Strudwick owns Concierge of Romance Inc.

love romance. I want to make other couples as happy as my husband and I are when we do things like this."

Most of the time, Strudwick said, people call with an idea, or simply with a desire for something romantic. The possibilities are endless, she added.

"I can book dinner reserva-

tions in advance for all the special times of the year," she said. "I can have a personal chef sent to your home to prepare French cuisine. I can have a masseuse sent as well."

Strudwick even will arrange limos and dinner cruises. She even has secured tickets to sold-out Buccaneers games.

"I've got connections," she said with a grin. "I can get you tickets for shows in New York or Vegas, set up a private yacht or jet. I also do small, intimate weddings." She's even willing to fight holiday crowds for that hard-to-find gift.

Strudwick starts with her clients' interests and hobbies and goes from there. She also offers unique, personalized gifts.

Contact Strudwick at 662-6157 or online at www.conciergeofromance.com. Her e-mail address is conciergeromance@aol.com.

CENTER

From page 11

found developmental disabilities and sensory deficits.

To help speed up the renovations and make up for the loss of government funding, an anonymous donor has stepped forward and offered to match donations during the coming year.

Other fundraising efforts include the Stars, Hearts Fashion & Fun Fashion Show Feb. 13 at the Hyatt Regency Tampa and an All That Glitters Wine Tasting and Silent Auction Sept. 20.

"This is such a great program," said Tankersley. "You wouldn't believe the pride and confidence it brings to our workers."

After the presentation, the

BHA voted to donate \$500 to the center.

For more information about the center and its fundraising efforts, call 870-1300.

This is the third Good Neighbor Award that the BHA has presented. The first two went to Shelley Blood of the Hillsborough County Office of Neighborhood Relations and the Hillsborough County Parks Maintenance Unit on Natures Way headed by Jeff Mauch for their help in the Bloomingdale PRIDE program.

All recipients will have their names engraved on a plaque located in the Bloomingdale Community Office on Bell Shoals Road.

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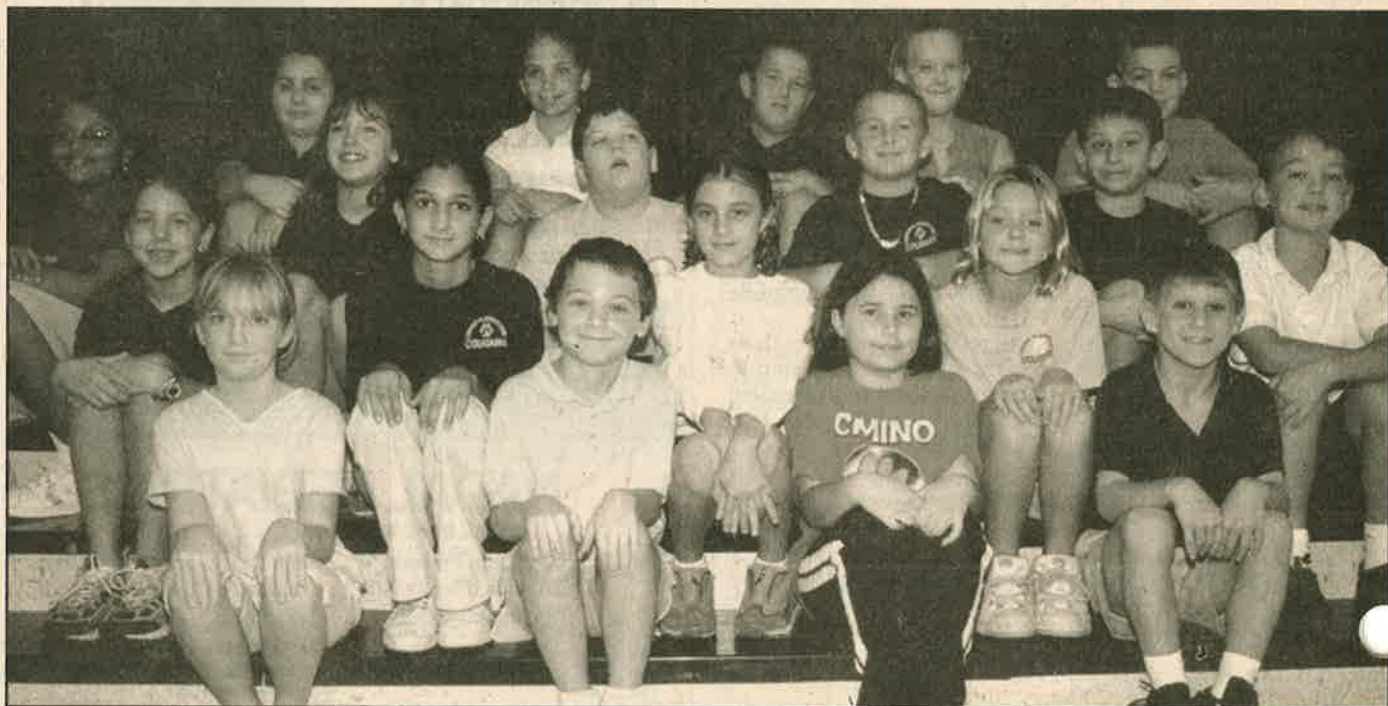


3
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Cimino Cool Cats

Above, Cool Cats for October in grades kindergarten to two at Cimino Elementary School are, front row, from left, Olivia Figh, Curtis Tumicki, Anthony Werner, Danielle Miller, Kristina Lee, second row, Kelly Maxwell, Chris Miranda, Elizabeth Farrell, Chad Elton, Madison Anderson, Jenny Scharp, third row, Victoria Harris, Sara Pittman, Alexandra Meilillo, Ana Villa, Kaleb Evans, top row, Mara Seat, Leah Menetre, Allison Agoglia, Petie Bistolfi, Larissa Randall, Morrigan Carsey, Karli Crognale. Below, Cool Cats for October in grades three to five at Cimino Elementary School are, front row, from left, are KiKenna Hawkins, Kyle Willnow, Sarah Gulley, Chris Bosek, Hayley Cutler, Randa Ibrahim, Stephanie Mikel, Sarah Musselman, John Kelly, third row, Ashley Joseph, Kacie Hollenbaugh, Billy Caulley, Brandon Acquavina, Christopher Cerjan, top row, Jordan McDonough, Casey Field, Billy Mulcahy, Kinley Cole, Eric Agoglia.



PROPOSAL

From page 12

On Bloomingdale, Belluccia is proposed adding a 436-foot eastbound right turn lane so John Moore residents can turn without waiting for a green light. The office and commercial development will have one right-in, right-out driveway on Bloomingdale to prevent people from making left turns out of the center. And the developer is currently negotiating with the county to add a full traffic light at the Bloomingdale Fire Station so patrons can turn left on Bloomingdale.

These improvements, he said, will take Bloomingdale from an "F" grade of service to a "D" grade of service.

The center's driveway on John Moore Road also will be restricted to right turns out. Left turns will be permitted into the shopping center but Belluccia said a median will be built in the center of John Moore that will allow up to four cars to stack while awaiting a chance to turn left into

the center.

Belluccia said the center is expected to generate 28 additional trips at evening peak hours. Barclay principle Jeff Surrency said he thinks what's being proposed is vastly different than the rezoning the residents fought previously.

"We think our plan is far less dense than what was originally proposed," he said, adding that Barclay has agreed to specific architectural style, has limited uses and operating hours, will be saving as many of the oak trees as possible and will install monument signs rather than the less aesthetic pylon signs.

He told residents that Barclay will be limited to commercial neighborhood uses, prohibiting car lots, convenience stores, gas stations, adult uses, fast-food restaurants, liquor stores, bars, pawn shops or check-cashing centers.

The anchor of the development will be a 10,880-square-foot CVS pharmacy. The

development also will have a 6,000-square-foot retail building, a 3,500-square-foot bank with a drive-through and 12,000 square feet of office space. Surrency said the commercial building will contain four tenants at the most and possibly just one.

"It will be somewhat similar in style to the Stein Mart development (Shoppes of Lithia) with the rock façade," he said.

Office hours will be limited to 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. and commercial hours to 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. CVS hours will be 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. although it may later request to operate 24 hours if it discovers there's a demand. The development also includes a significantly larger buffer than was originally proposed, Surrency added. Barclay is proposing a 30-foot landscape buffer along Bloomingdale and a 35-foot buffer along John Moore.

Traffic remained residents' biggest concern. Lydia Harrod, a Bloomingdale West res-

ident and board member for the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, asked Barclay to look into the possibility of adding a right turn only lane to John Moore as well so students headed to Bloomingdale High School can turn right without waiting for the traffic headed north.

Bob Appleyard of Sunrise Homes said he will consider donating additional right of way but believes they have bent over backward to accommodate the residents' requests already.

"Barclay has accommodated every legitimate request," he said. "In fact, they've gone beyond what they needed to do by improving the traffic situation. And now people are saying that's not good enough."

But resident Matthew Carlson believes the developers should go overboard.

"If they want to come into our neighborhood, they should be willing to make improvements," he said.

COUNCIL

From page 10

intersection of Bloomingdale Avenue and Lithia-Pinecrest Road.

Good news came in the form of the groundbreaking for the new south Brandon library to be built on the east side of Bloomingdale High School. The next step is to select a name.

Areas that the BACC will continue monitoring during the coming year include construction taking place along and near Bloomingdale Avenue and Bell Shoals Road.

Security

The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office has implemented numerous programs that have helped improve safety and security in the area as well as address concerns for homeland security. To be effective and continue to improve our safety and security, all of us must be actively involved. The BACC is continuing the educate residents on the need to secure homes and

cars and watch neighbors' property.

Safety

Significant progress was made in the area after the long-awaited construction of additional sidewalks in Bloomingdale West and on Bell Shoals Road were completed.

One special area of concern remaining is near Cimino Elementary School.

FishHawk Ranch residents found out first hand how important it is to learn about their surroundings when an ammonia pipeline was illegally penetrated. This was the first time many Bloomingdale residents realized these same chemical lines run along Bloomingdale Avenue.

Contact Deputy Pete Maurer or CSO Sandy Capitano at the sheriff's Bloomingdale Community Substation for additional information on the BACC, 635-8040.

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Valrico Cardsmart Now Open

By LINDA CHION KENNEY

Retirement was not in the picture for Sandee and Ken White who for 20 years operated two Hallmark stores in New York.

Four years ago, the former Catskill Mountains, N.Y., residents bought a house in River Hills, close to their daughter and grandchildren.

The logical plan was to move to Florida full time and open a store near their River Hills home. With a ton of research into the Cardsmart discount card and value gift franchiser, the Whites decided to open a Cardsmart of their own in the new retail section adjacent to the Albertson's grocery store at Bloom-

ingdale Avenue and Lithia-Pinecrest Road.

Unfortunately for the Whites, they missed the Halloween and Thanksgiving season, and much of the Christmas shopping season, but only because the other retailers in the center had been delayed in their openings. A nail salon, Quizno's sub shop, a barber, pet store, a dry cleaner's, a steakhouse, a learning center and a dance studio are coming, but Cardsmart is the first off the block and interest is picking up daily.

Credit for that word-of-mouth endorsement goes to the selection at Cardsmart,

See VALRICO, Page 23



LINDA CHION KENNEY/Photo

Cardsmart is stocked with a full line of quality, discounted cards and paper goods, as well as popular collectibles and a full range of unique gift items. The Whites opened the store after running Hallmark stores in New York for 20 years.

NEIGHBORS

From page 5

ed to charities that serve people in need such as the Emergency Care Help Organization in Brandon.

"We donate it," Popple said. "Why throw it out? We should donate it. We take pride in that as well."

For more than two years Popple had been the general manager at the Panera in Westfield Shoppingtown Brandon. Now, at the new Panera, he will serve customers who can dine in "cozier, smaller pockets" of space. There's been a great use of arches, with carpeted floors mixed in with tiles.

As at the other Panera establishments, customers who dine in and take out their orders will line up at the same set of cash registers. But in the

new Panera, one staff of workers will prepare the dine-in orders while a separate staff prepares the take-out orders. Customers will pick up their respective orders at two separate serving bars.

"We shoot for two-minute ticket times, rivaling McDonald's and Burger King," Popple said. "But you're getting casual dining, not a fast-food atmosphere."

Dough is delivered daily and all items are prepared with fresh ingredients. Hot bread can be expected out of the ovens every half hour, and the bread stays hot for up to one hour, Popple said. Dining inside is for 75 seats; another 30 seats are available for outside dining.

"I hope we're not big

enough," he said of his café's size. "I hope that we're always packed and always jammed and everyone wants to go to Panera. And you'll still get your food in two minutes."

Menu items include breads, bagels, Danish, croissants, cinnamon rolls and cookies. Soups, salads and sandwiches are always fresh and prepared on site.

New at the Valrico Panera will be a smokehouse turkey panini sandwich that other Paneras will begin serving in about a month's time. Also, the new Panera will be whipping its own whipped cream toppings, a practice the other Panera cafes will begin in about two month's time.

Also first in the Valrico Panera will be a new bread, an

"artisan bread" baked on a traditional deck oven.

Popple, who had expected to be "a band director at one of the local high schools," instead looking forward to meeting hungry Bloomingdale families in the Panera Bread company's newest Florida store.

"People who come into my bakery café, I want them to know me, and know that they can come to me with their baking or other restaurant issues," he said.

"I want them to know I'll take care of them."

Popple noted that charities, churches and schools interested in discounts and donations should call the corporate offices at 877-7533 and ask for the donations department.

SPA

From page 15

progress. Guests are given the choice of a citrus, rose petal or fresh orange pedicure.

Waxing is also available, as are a variety of body treatments including the Illuminating Salt Glow, which uses Dead Sea salts to exfoliate the skin; the Seaweed Body Wrap, which uses refined marine elements to both exfoliate and

smooth to encourage circulation and overall purification; the Sun Contract, which is a shimmering sunless tan that also includes both exfoliation and smoothing; and the Hydrating Paraffin Body Wrap, which is a luxurious treatment wrapping the entire body in warm paraffin wax, which both softens and mois-

turizes skin.

Spa packages are available for both men and women and come in both half days and full days, including either breakfast or lunch.

"This area is amazing," said Adams. "In the first four weeks we went through 750 menus. We want to thank the residents. People have been

very supportive, friendly and welcoming. We're overwhelmed at the response."

Bleu Salon & Spa is located at 3472 Lithia-Pinecrest Road in Valrico. Call: 651-4020. Hours are Tuesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Wednesday and Friday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

STATION

page 6

...ed for every person who drives to drive responsibly. All traffic laws must be obeyed. There are no acceptable excuses for breaking these laws. They were put into effect to save lives and decrease damage to property. I would challenge each of you to make it your personal goal to set the right example when you're driving, for other drivers and especially for our teenage drivers.

We in the sheriff's office will continue to do our part to enforce the laws.

Keeping our children safe and secure is one of our top priorities. Use your seatbelt and be sure your children's seatbelts and car seats are properly installed and secured. Drivers must stop for school buses in required areas. Constant awareness and watching for kids in and around our homes and schools is essential.

We all work hard and want to keep our homes, cars and other valuables safe and

secure. They are very important to all of us. Each homeowner has to do his part to make any security system work. Please, close your garage doors. Those residents who don't are inviting theft. Secure your homes and cars when you leave. Don't be an easy target. Watch out for your neighbors. Report suspicious activity. Call the sheriff's office dispatch at 247-8200 to report problems.

Working together we will continue to make our community a great place to live and work.

It is our pleasure to serve and protect you. Please do your part and together we will succeed. Again, thank you all for your support.

Deputy Pete Maurer is the community resource deputy for the Bloomingdale Sheriff's Office Substation on Bell Shoals Road. Also on duty at the substation is Community Service Officer Sandy Capitano.

VALRICO

From page 23

which includes a full line of cards and paper goods at an every-day discount of 50 percent. That leaves money left over to invest in a full line of collectibles and gifts that represent Sandee White's penchant for shopping and trade shows, where she prides herself on her merchandising abilities.

"If it's all over the place, I don't want it," Sandee White said about her self-imposed selection criteria for unique gifts. "I pride myself on trying to fill the store with more unique things."

Included in the store's stock are Precious Moments, Department 56, Willow Tree, Snowbabies, Ty and Boyd's collectibles, as well as popu-

lar jewelry items such as link bracelets, and soy candles, which burn without soot.

"I designed the store," Sandee White said. "I like an organized store that's neat and easy to shop. I am the merchandiser, the buyer, and my husband handles all the technical stuff and the business end."

It's a match made in heaven.

"I always wanted a gift shop, and so we've been doing it for 20 years," Sandee White said. "Neither of us had any experience before we got into this, but I always had a flair for design and gifts. I truly love all this stuff."

Cardsmart is open 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

TIME

From page 18

shopping and was very pleased with the outcome." Once the needs are established, customers can expect to be contacted by Carlton to see if there's anything she can pick up on her excursions. Carlton spends about 10 hours a week shopping, but most of her work time is spent at home making lists, calls and doing the planning, all while being able to be "mom" to her daughters.

Currently, Time Flies' services are limited to Brandon and Valrico area, but Carlton

is hoping to expand to Sun City Center where she hopes to be of service to elderly people who are unable to do all they need for themselves.

For more information, visit www.timefliesltd.com or e-mail shannon@timefliesltd.com.

She can be reached at 924-4679. As a New Year's special, Carlton is offering 10 percent off the first month's errands.

"I want my clients to get to know me, and think of me as part of their staff or family so they're comfortable."

Look for your neighborhood news The Bloomingdale Gazette

The Absolute Finest in Spa Comfort, Performance and Style

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