

Community Office Moves

The Bloomingdale Community organizations once again have a new office that will better serve the residents of Bloomingdale. Thanks to the new president of the STD, a 3 year lease was signed that will give the organizations a permanent location for the next 35 months. Tom Snelling, the President of the STD, commented that the new office will have ample seating and space for residents attending any of the meetings. It will also have

the professional look that a government agency of this type should maintain.

Over the past 4 years, the offices were in one unit at Royal Oaks Plaza (near KFC) and then moved to another unit. The space had to be vacated in late 1998 and as a result the last 4 months the meetings were held in the Rec Center at Park West.

The new office is located at 3509 Bell Shoals Road, in the unit that was formerly occupied by Mocha Bay Coffee Shop. This is just to the left and behind the Sun Trust Bank.

As you can tell by the pictures, the STD is doing some major renovations to allow all the community organizations to have a monthly meeting place. This new facility will be the



headquarters for, (1) the BLOOMINGDALE TAXING DISTRICT, (2) the BLOOMINGDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION, (3) the BLOOMINGDALE MOBILE WATCH, and (4) the Bloomingdale Gazette. Please stop in to say hello, or call the STD at 684-6667; the BHA and Gazette at 681-2051, or the Mobile Watch at 685-2072.

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Don Cassels of Flock Cards, Inc. adorned the front yard of this Bloomingdale home with 40 pink flamingos.

Your inside connections

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, Inc.
 3509 Bell Shoals Rd.
 Valrico, FL 33594
 Voice Mail: 681-2051
 E-mail: BHA-INC@ALTAVISTA.NET
 (no website)

Randy Wolfe, President 681-2051
 Ted Grable, Comptroller 685-7193
 Luana Russell, Secretary 662-1610
 Patricia Radel, Director 681-2051
 LaWayne Wyatt, Director 685-2072
 Ann Underwood, Director 681-2051
 Pam Liguori, Director 681-9655

Property Manager:
 DPMI 684-6617

Mary 219-6885

Bloomingdale Special Taxing District
 684-6667

Tom Snelling, President 681-9186
 Tom Mackiewicz, Vice President 653-4145
 Don Cassels, Treasurer 681-8855
 R. Dickey, Corresponding Secretary 689-2177
 Alice Burselon, Recording Secretary 685-1076
 T. Szabo, Trustee 684-2547
 Tim Golden, Trustee 653-1337

**Bloomingdale Mobile Watch
 Core Committee**

LaWayne Wyatt, Coordinator/Scheduler 685-2072
 Paul Kelmer, Treasurer 681-9701
 Tony Diolosa, Equipment Manager 681-1146
 Steven Heckel, Membership Chairman 654-4266
 David Guy 681-5943
 Paul Warr 685-7883

Bloomingdale Oaks Special Taxing District
 PO Box 3132
 Brandon, FL 33509-3132

Bill Grace, President 685-2817
 Fred Englehart, Treasurer 685-3638

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
 Second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m.

Bloomingdale Oaks Special Taxing District
 Second Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m.
 at 3419 Cade Lane, Bloomingdale Oaks

Mobile Watch & Neighborhood Watch meetings are held when special concerns arise

the Bloomingdale gazette
 The Official Publication of the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association

Published by Manatee Media, Inc

P.O. Box 271880
 Tampa, FL 33688-1880

Diane Mathes Advertising Director
 Mark Mathes Publisher
 Kathy Tidler Advertising Sales
 Anissa Camp Editor
 I.B.S. Production

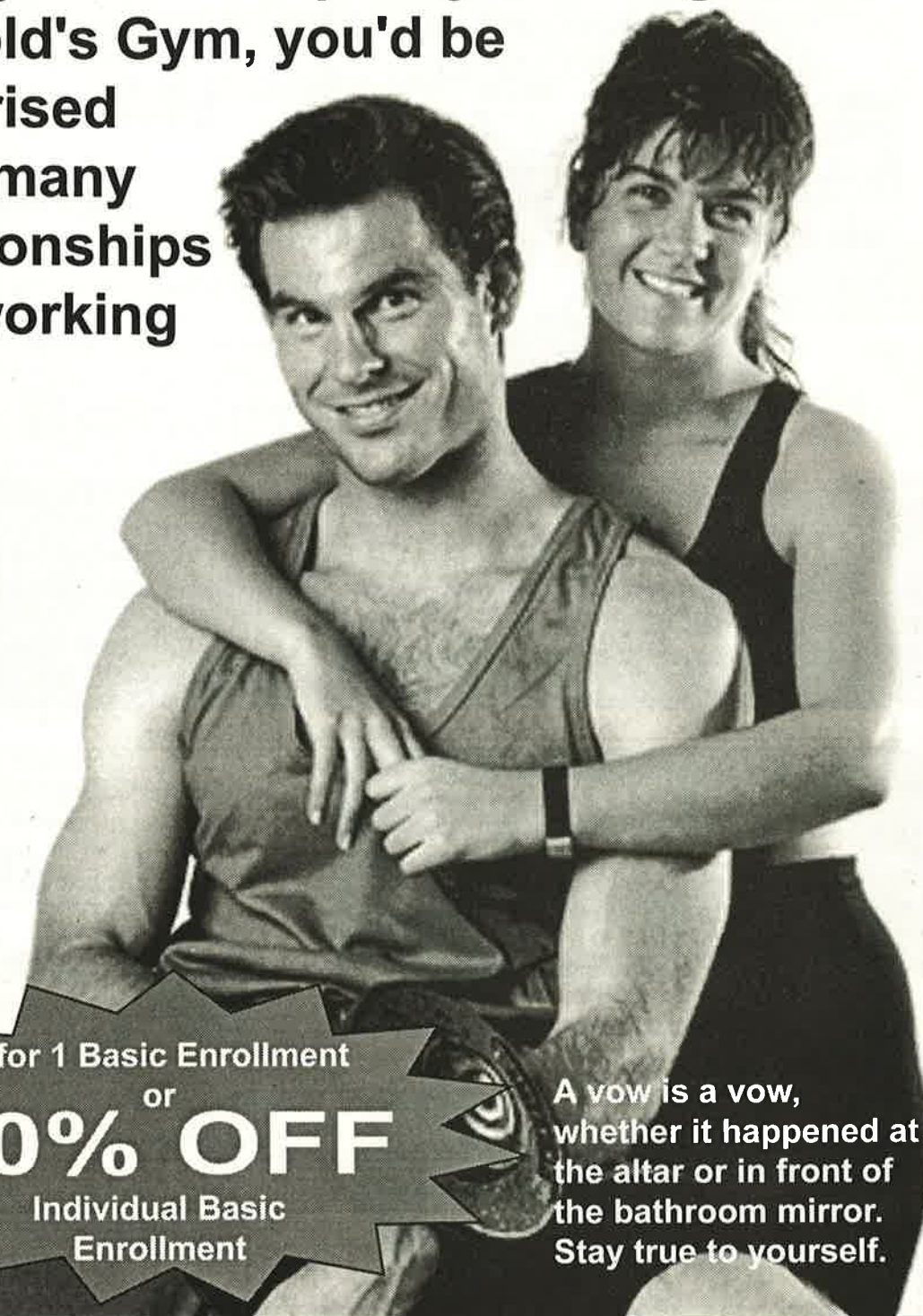
Phone: (813) 964-1919
 Fax: (813) 963-5876

Share your news with the community! Write to Editor, at 3509 Bell Shoals Rd., Valrico, FL 33594 or fax to (813) 681-2051



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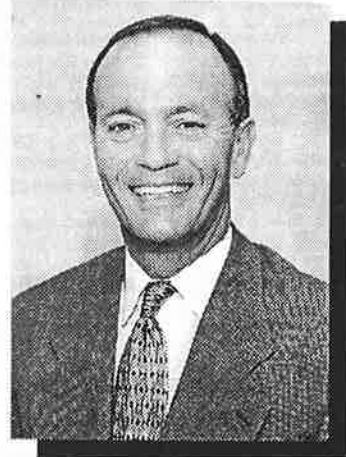


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Attention — Attention How to get the Gazette

We are in the process of updating our distribution mailing list. If you are a Bloomingdale resident and did NOT receive your copy of The Bloomingdale Gazette through the U.S. Mail, we would like to include your address on our mailing list.

The Gazette's goal is to deliver to each house a copy of your Gazette to you once a month. You can get on the mailing list by contacting us in one of four ways;

- 1- You can call the Gazette at 681-2051 and leave your name and address. Do NOT call the Gazette's alternate number
- 2- You can drop us a note at The Gazette, 3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico 33594
- 3- You can fax your name and address to (813) 651-1129, or
- 4- You can contact us via e-mail: BHA-INC@altavista.com.

And lastly, we welcome your comments and letters. Please write, fax or e-mail us at any of the addresses or numbers listed above:

Welcome To Bloomingdale

We are pleased to acknowledge 2 brand new residents to our Community.

First, welcome to Nicholas Andrew Whitney, born on December 19th, 1998. Congratulations to Nicholas' proud parents, Carrie and Richard.

Second, welcome to Victoria Kathleen McClanahan, born on December 17th, 1998. Congratulations to Victoria's proud parents Sherry and Randy.

If you are aware of any new births in Bloomingdale, please call the Gazette at 621-2051 so we can welcome them to our community in upcoming issues.



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Bloomingtondale Special Taxing District Property Manager's Report

December 1998

1. Irrigation:

- a. Brandon Irrigation repaired the broken pressure gauge on the Gotham system.
- b. I exchanged 112 10 Half nozzles for 12 Half nozzles in zones 3-5-7 in the Greenhollow system. This procedure stopped the well cycling in those zones.
- c. I attended a four-hour electrical class on irrigation systems presented by the Florida Irrigation Association.
- d. During the monthly maintenance inspection, the following items were corrected, 12 spray heads, 13 rotors, 5 lights and 1 light receptacle were replaced; and 1 zone line and 2 risers were repaired.

2. Landscaping:

- a. Neighborhood Pest Control sprayed the plugged areas with Bassagram and Telstar to kill the broad leaf weeds and sedges and fertilized the other grass with Lesco 5-5-15 per contract.
- b. Mr. Snelling and I hosted the Lawn Maintenance pre-bid meeting. Six contractors attended the meeting.
- c. I took out 180 2-foot wooden pegs from the Crepe Myrtle's trees on Canoga Park.
- d. Florida Landscape Authority mulched all the beds per contract.

Others:


- a. I installed the Christmas lights and bows at the six major entrances.
- b. Signs by Mineo repaired and replaced the vandalized sign at the Polumbo entrance.
- c. I met with 2 building contractors and 1

- painting contractor to obtain proposals for our new office.
- d. I painted the damaged wall on Natures Way by Kendal.
- e. I sprayed 4 gallons of Rid 0' Rust remover on the walls on Greenhollow and Natures Way. The rust stain disappeared.
- f. There were 21 Poinsettias and 4 strings of lights stolen from the entrance ways during the Christmas season.
- g. In the land of eat, drink and pitch out the window, I picked up 27 bags of trash, 2 hubcaps, 1 camera, 1 baby bottle full, 1 sheet, 1 possum dead, 1 welcome mat, 1 bra, several 2x4s, 4x4s and 2x10s and \$.45 cents. The alcoholic spirit of choice for December was Jack Daniels.

Suggested projects for the second quarter, January, February and March:

- The entrance way project for Greenhollow and Garnet.
- b. Painting the walls on John Moore and Natures Way from Glenhaven to Schmidt property.
- c. Cleaning the walls on Rosemead, Canoga Park and Garnet.
- d. Plugging areas on Canoga Park, Garnet and Natures Way from Glenhaven to Schmidt property.
- e. Plant Crepe Myrtle trees on Canoga Park to finish the project. Install an irrigation system in front of Park East that will connect two existing systems.
- g. Upgrade the landscaping on Rosemead on the south side to match the north side.

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Flamingoes Invade Bloomingdale

By Laura Frazier

Don Cassels recounts one of his many post-midnight covert operations, holding back laughter as he tells the tale. "I pulled up quietly to the guy's house, hiding in the shadows near the driveway. I had been informed that he should be in bed by midnight, but here it was 1:00 am and the lights were still on in his office," Cassels says. Eventually the lights went out and the gentleman, a South Brandon surgeon, retired to bed. Cassels sprang to action. With the stealth of a secret agent, he carried out his mission; to plant 50 three foot tall pink plastic flamingoes in the good doctor's yard, along with a banner proclaiming "Guess Who's Not 50 Anymore?! Happy Birthday!". Was the doctor amused? "He called me first thing in the morning and, somewhat confused, asked, "When are you coming to take these birds away?" Surprise, confusion and astonishment are the reactions the doctor's co-workers were hoping for when they called Cassels into action.

For a fee, Cassels will sneak a flock of flamingoes or other equally silly items and banners onto the property of your unsuspecting friends, family, or co-workers. He accomplishes his task by the light of the moon, a couple hours after the intended's usual bedtime. The next evening after sunset Cassels returns to collect the ornaments, leaving as quietly as he came.

Cassels has operated his business, Flock Cards, Inc., from his Bloomingdale home since January of 1998. After attending a home show in Ohio where he saw a display touting the surprise

plastic flamingo business, he was inspired to bring the novel idea home to Bloomingdale. With the help of his partner, Dave Jennings, Cassels has delighted and bewildered unsuspecting "victims" with lawns burgeoning with flocks of flamingoes, dozens of 19" tall hearts, and has even adorned a restaurant's grand opening with specially ordered "pigs". "The restaurant loved the pigs so much they bought them," says Cassels. "We currently have giant baby bottles on order for congratulating new parents, and the hearts are a unique alternative to roses for anniversaries, weddings and Valentines Day. We have used the hearts to surprise a bride-to-be on her wedding day. She woke up that morning to find 25 two-foot tall hearts on her front lawn and a banner proclaiming "I Love You". Our motto is "Why say it with a card when you can say it in your yard!"

Cassels and his wife Karen have lived in the area for 11 years, and are proud to call Bloomingdale home. "We just love the neighborhood and the great schools," Cassels says. "We have the best neighbors. On the weekends as soon as the garage doors start opening up the kids start playing and the adults kind of socialize in between running errands and working around the house. The best part this time of year however," says Cassels, smiling, "has to be Monday Night Football. We have one neighbor whose backyard like Beef O'Brady's during the games."

Fun and good humor play a big part in Cassels' life, and they overflow right into his truly unique business. For more information or to stage your own flamingo invasion, contact Don Cassels at 681-8855.

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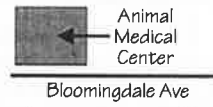


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Brandon Lake Brandon Village 11393 Causeway Blvd. 643-6944	Seffner North Grove Plaza 1515 S. Parsons 684-5897	Valrico Valrico Square 1985 E. Brandon Blvd. 654-2324	North Brandon Kingsway Plaza 1213 Kingsway Ave. 653-4535	

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Winner of January Trivia Contest

The winner of the January Trivia Contest was Sarah McKinley. She correctly answered all but 2 of the questions. The correct answers for January: (1) Lisbon (2) Chocolates, (3) 48, (4) George Orwell, (5) Ron Howard, (6) 88, (7) Scout, (9) Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus, (10) Montague and Capulet, (11) Beets, (12) President's Day, (13) Nixon, (14) University of Tampa, (15) Foghorn Leghorn, (16) Juneau, (17) Atlanta, (18) Transylvania, (19) Mutiny, (20) Orville, (21) Groucho, Harpo, Chico, Zeppo and Gummo, (22) Swee' Pea, (23) Vivian Leigh, (24) Schroeder, and (25) Supersaurus. Congratulations Sarah!

Our Elected Officials

By Laura Frazier

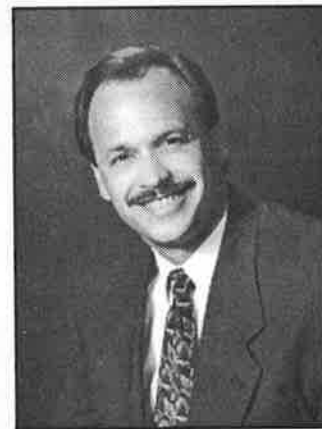
Many Bloomingdale residents exercise their right and responsibility to vote at the polls each year. But our involvement in the democratic process need not be limited to election time. By sharing our opinions and ideas with our elected officials, we can take an active role in helping them make decisions about the issues and pending legislation that affect us all.

The following biographies provide background information on the State Senator, U.S. Congressman, Florida House Representative and County Commissioner we elected to represent our district this past November. A complete outline of our statewide and national elected officials is provided for your reference. If there is a particular bill that will affect our community or us directly if it becomes a law, it is our responsibility to express our concerns to these legislators. They value our suggestions, encourage our input, and offer several means of contact to communicate with their offices.

If you have any questions or specific concerns that you would like to address but aren't sure where or how to begin, the Hillsborough County Neighborhood Help Line at 272-6333 provides access to government services, as well as a place to report problems and ask general questions about county government.

State Senator Tom Lee, Republican - Florida Senate, District 23

Tom Lee was first elected in November of 1996, becoming the first Brandon resident to represent Florida in the Senate. Senator Lee attended Hillsborough County public schools, Hillsborough Community College and the University of Tampa. He and his wife, Brandon native Amy Carey, have one daughter, Regan. He is Vice President of Finance of Sabal Homes of Florida, Inc.



Past president of the Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce (1993), Lee has reached out to the community on the local level by serving as a member of the Hillsborough County City/County planning Commission (1992-1995), Hillsborough County Zoning Board of Adjustment (1991-1993), and the Economic Development Steering Committee for Team Florida. He is currently a member of the Board of Directors of both First Housing Development Corporation of Florida and the Center Place Fine Arts and

Cultural Center.

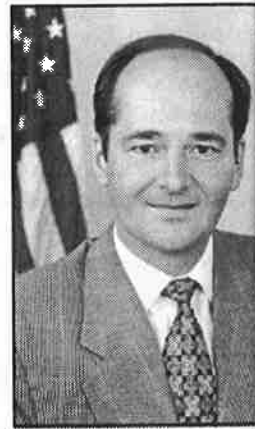
Senator Lee is Chairman of the Florida Senate Committee on Regulated Industries, Vice Chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee, and has been appointed a member of several committees including Education, Executive Business, Ethics and Elections, and Ways and Means.

To Contact Senator Lee:

Tallahassee: Room 311 Senate office Building, 404 S. Monroe Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100
Phone: (850) 487-5072
District: P.O. Box 2743, Brandon, FL 33509
1421 Oakfield Drive, Brandon, FL 33511
Phone: (813) 744-8683
E-Mail: lee.tom.web@leg.state.fl.us

U.S. Congressman Charles Canady-Republican, District 12

Charles Canady was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives represent our district in November 1998. Born and raised in Lakeland, Canady graduated from Lakeland High School in 1972. He received his bachelor's degree from Haverford College in Pennsylvania and his law degree from Yale Law School in Connecticut. In 1979, he became a practicing attorney in Polk County, where he worked for 13 years before running for Congress. Representative Canady married Jennifer Houghton, an elementary school teacher from Lakeland in 1996.

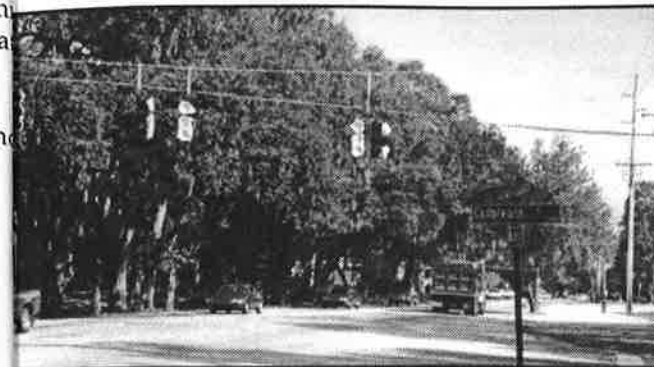


Canady served in the Florida House of Representatives from 1984 to 1990, where he was honored as the Most Effective First Term Legislator. He served as Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee for Criminal Justice from 1988 to 1989 and as a member of the Crime Prevention and Law Enforcement Study Commission from 1987 to 1988. He was the House majority Whip from 1990 to 1998.

As our U.S. Congressman, Canady currently serves on the House Agriculture Committee, where he is a strong advocate for Florida agriculture, and the House Judiciary Committee, where he has fought to strengthen the criminal justice system.

Continued on page

Culbreath Light Arrives



After years of asking for a traffic light at Culbreath and Bloomingdale, the residents of Bloomingdale and the surrounding areas now have a traffic light at this intersection.

Mack Austin, a Bloomingdale resident and project coordinator for the Bloomingdale Community Council, spearheaded this project and has maintained a close contact with Deputy Peter Maurer at the Bloomingdale Community Substation. Mack and the others who helped him and we supported the project now can think of "Chicken Alley" as a bad memory.

The residents who wanted to cross Bloomingdale to get to the shipping center as well as those who were at the center waiting to cross Bloomingdale to get back on Culbreath can now do so with the traffic light as their guide. The problem was exacerbated during school days by Bloomingdale High School students who were traveling in both directions on Bloomingdale and trying to get off or back on to Culbreath.

Mack also related the information he garnered from Corporal George Mosher, assigned to the Traffic Division of Hillsborough County Sheriff's Department. Corporal Mosher said that of the traffic incidents that have taken place regarding entering and exiting Bloomingdale; this intersection is the only one that has recorded a fatality. The business establishments at Royal Oaks as well as those that are in close proximity to Royal Oaks expect a little more business and those that are trying to drive to those establishments can breathe a little easier.

This light once again shows how community residents CAN make a difference. If you have any questions or comments please contact Deputy Peter Maurer at the Bloomingdale Substation. The phone number is 635-8040.

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SAVE THOSE MAGAZINES! B.S.H.S. NEEDS THEM!

Photo and story by Mack Austin

Of all the skills learned during the process of getting an education, none is more important than reading. Have you ever tried to write a paper for homework or take a test knowing that your reading skills were not the best they could be? This is a real situation for many students. In order to improve the reading skills of their students, the Administration and teachers at Bloomingdale Senior High School initiated a special "Sustained Silent Reading" Program this past year.

Linda Weronik, Reading Resource Specialist for BSHS, directs the program. It requires each student to read from a variety of approved magazines and newspapers for thirty minutes each day. Yes, magazines! "The students really like it. They get to read about something they are interested in,

everything from fashion and sports to current events or computer technology," explained Weronik. Proof of the program's effectiveness was demonstrated when Bloomingdale Senior High students scored second on the Reading portion of the most recent High School Competency Test.

Two items are needed from the



Deputy Pete Maurer carries a stack of magazines into Bloomingdale Substation. Photo by Mack Austin.

Continued on page

Save Those Magazines!

Continued from page 12

Bloomingdale community to keep this program going. First are magazines. The best ones are those geared to the interest of teens such as "Sports Illustrated", "Teen", "Seventeen", "YM", "Readers Digest", or those on subjects such as entertainment, computers, music or cars. In order to help make donating the magazines more convenient, a special drop-off point was found. Deputy Pete Maurer, Community Resource Officer for Bloomingdale, and CSO Sandy Capitano, collect magazines at the Bloomingdale Community Station 4342B Bell Shoals Road (by Beef O'Brady's). Magazines can be dropped off during office hours (8am - 5pm), Monday to Friday.

Also needed are volunteers to help tutor students with basic reading. All that's needed is time and a desire to help. Contact Linda Weronik B.S.H.S. at 744-8018.

Construction at Bloomingdale High School Ahead of Schedule



The above photo shows the construction progress in December on the building addition project at Bloomingdale Senior High School. To date construction is ahead of schedule and is still scheduled for completion in August 1999. The additional twenty classrooms will help improve the crowded conditions for students and teachers. Photo by Mack Austin.



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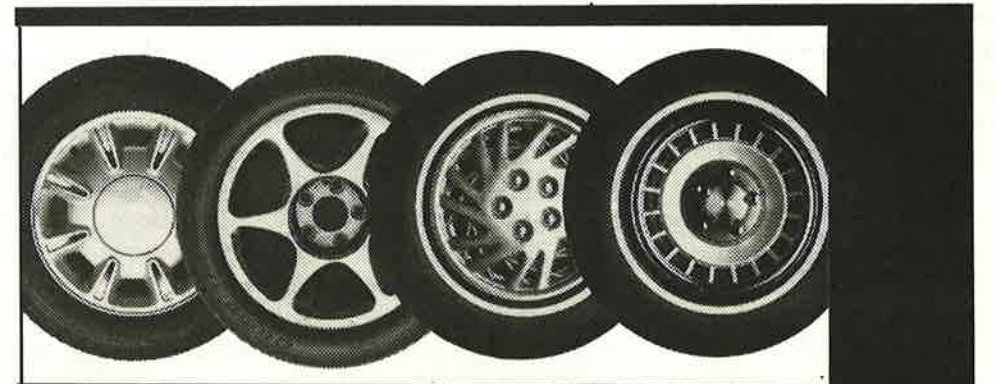
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Business is Blooming!

By Laura Frazier

Karen and Marilyn Schotanes moved to Valrico two years ago from their home state of New Jersey. On October 2, 1998 they became the owners and operators of Bloomingdale Florist in Bloomingdale Square. And things have been looking pretty rosy ever since.

Karen Schotanes has worked in the floral industry for 12 years. She noted the great location of the Bloomingdale floral shop, its existing customer base, and the potential for growth along with the growth of the community. Business has been wonderful. "In our first two weeks of operation," says Schotanes, "we did eight weddings. BIG weddings!"

Bloomingdale Florist offers an extensive variety of plants and flowers including tropicals, Holland flowers, and Ecuadorian roses in every imaginable color. Karen provides in-home floral decoration, a service many clients take advantage of during the holidays and for parties throughout the year. "We meet with the customer for a consultation in their home, and plan and design a variety of decorative elements such as centerpieces, wreaths, topiaries, arbors and the list goes on. We can decorate any area the client may have in mind," Schotanes says.

Another specialty of Bloomingdale Florist is custom made gourmet gift baskets, filled with any number of items limited only by the customer's imagination. "We can do traditional gift baskets filled with candy, balloons and flowers, or specialty baskets for a unique, personalized gift. For example, we just did a basket for a new baby in which the customer requested no flowers and no candy. We included picture frames, baby toiletries, bottles and pacifiers. Our customers seem to be very pleased with the truly useful items we include in our baskets," says Schotanes. Karen and Marilyn launched their business with a solid existing customer base. "We are very pleased to have retained the existing clients and to have the opportunity to welcome so many new



Karen Schotanes, new owner of Bloomingdale Florist in Bloomingdale Square.

customers," says Karen. "We would like to invite Bloomingdale residents to stop by the shop as Valentine's Day approaches to take advantage of the in-store specials we have planned for February".

Bloomingdale Florist is located at 827 East Bloomingdale Avenue in the Publix shopping center. Business hours are 9:00 - 6:00 Monday through Friday, and 9:00 - 3:00 on Saturdays. The delivery area for local service includes all of Bloomingdale and most neighboring towns including Valrico, Brandon, Riverview, Plant City, and parts of Tampa. They offer three different wire services for out of the area deliveries; FTD, Teleflora and AFS, and gladly accept telephone order purchases with Visa, MasterCard and most major credit cards, and can be reached at 654-730

Yard of the Month

Because of the recent frost damage to some area yards, there will be no Yard of the Month this month, but watch for its return in March.

Bloomingdale Gazette February 1999 Trivia Contest

Due to the response of the January Trivia questions we thought you might like to see another one this month. If you are over 50 years old, you probably knew most of these answers, but have forgotten them. If you're between 40 and 50, you know some of them and still remember the answers. If you're under 39, you probably will have to ask a member of "the older generation" for help.

- Name 5 of Donald Duck's relatives.
- Who are Woody Woodpecker's nephew and niece?
- Name the town Superman lives in, the paper Clark Kent works for, and the editor.
- What is the name of Mighty Mouse's girlfriend? (hint: it's NOT Minnie)
- Who is Mighty Mouse's arch enemy?
- What type of birds are Heckle and Jeckyl?
- Who is the "Caped Crusader"?
- What is the name of Red Ryder's sidekick?
- Name Porky Pig's girlfriend.
- What animals were Tom and Jerry?
- Who keeps trying to eat Tweety Bird?
- What is Dagwood and Blondie's last name?
- Name the boy that Betty and Veronica were both after?

20 questions, worth 5 points each. The winner will receive a trophy and acknowledgement in the March issue of the Gazette. Send your answers to:

The Bloomingdale Gazette
3509 Bell Shoals Road
Valrico, FL 33594

The deadline for receiving your answers is February 22, 1999. Good luck to all.

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Our Elected Officials

Continued from page 10

To Contact Congressman Canady:

Washington: 2432 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515

Phone: (202) 225-1252

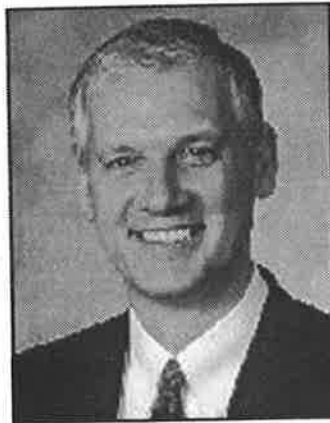
District: 124 S. Tennessee Ave., Suite 125, Lakeland, FL 33801

Phone: (941) 688-2651

E-Mail: rep.Charles.Canady@mail.house.gov

Florida House Representative Johnnie B. Byrd, Jr.-R, District 62

Johnnie Byrd was first elected to the Florida House of Representatives in November 1996. Byrd graduated from Auburn University and the University of Alabama Law School. He is a practicing attorney in Plant City, and has been married for 22 years to Melane Byrd, a schoolteacher in Hillsborough County. The Byrds have four children attending Hillsborough County public schools.



Representative Byrd has been involved in many aspects of the local community, as Past President of the Plant City Chamber of Commerce, Plant City Sunrise Kiwanis Club, and Friends of the Bruton memorial Library. He has been an elected Board Member of the Plant City American Heart Association and the Brandon American Cancer Society, and has been involved in community projects such as the Drugs Don't Work Task Force, National Day of Prayer and the Marshall Middle School FFA Greenhouse Project.

Representative Byrd's legislative committee assignments include Civil and Justice Claims, Finance & Tax, Health Care Services, Agriculture, Public Safety Coordinating Council and Business Development & International Trade. Byrd was one of 40 State Representatives and State Senators to receive "Top Forty" legislator status from the Florida Chamber of Commerce for supporting pro-economy issues. Byrd received a 100% rating from the Christian Coalition of Florida for his fight to defend the institution of marriage. He also received the Lifesaving Legislative Award from the American Heart Association

for sponsoring legislation to expand the use of automatic external defibrillators. He is a strong proponent of agriculture, and was selected for the 1997 Harvest Award for outstanding Public Service, given by the Hillsborough County Fair Board and Agricultural Committee.

To contact Representative Byrd:

Tallahassee: Florida Capitol, Room 204 House Office Building, 402 S. Monroe St., Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Phone: (850) 488-0807

District: Suite 202, 121 N. Collins Street, Plant City, FL 33566

Phone: (813) 752-5863

E-Mail: byrd.johnnie@leg.state.fl.us

Ronda Storms, County Commissioner, District 4

Hillsborough County voters elected Ronda Storms as the District 4 County Commissioner in November of 1998. Commissioner Storms is a former Hillsborough County School Board Employee, having taught English at Bloomingdale Senior High School and McLane Junior High School for seven years. Storms graduated with honors from Stetson University College of Law in 1985, and currently maintains a private law practice in the area. She is also part owner in her husband's landscaping business.



Commissioners are directed to perform legislative functions of government by developing policy for the management of Hillsborough County. As our county commissioner, Ms. Storms is Vice Chairman of the Environmental Protection Commission, and also serves on the Expressway Authority, Head Start Policy Council, Health Care Advisory Board, Juvenile Justice Council and Tampa Bay Water. She serves on the Board of Directors of the Hillsborough County Farm Bureau, and is a member of the Leadership Class for the Brandon Chamber of Commerce and is an officer of the Gideon Auxiliary.

To Contact Commissioner Storms:

P.O. Box 1110, Tampa, FL 33601

Phone: (813) 272-5740

Continued on page

OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

Florida Statewide Officials

Governor Jeb Bush
Lt. Governor Frank Brogan

Congress

U.S. Senate

U.S. Senator Bob Graham – Senior Senator
U.S. Senator Connie Mack – Junior Senator

U.S. House – District 12

U.S. Representative Charles T. Canady

Florida Legislature

Florida Senate – District 23

Senator Tom Lee

Florida House of Representatives – District 62

Representative Johnnie B. Byrd

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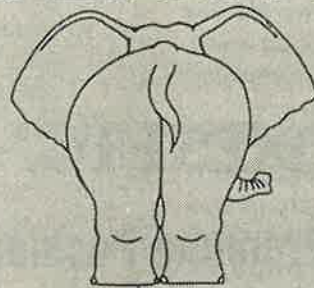
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Debbie and the Beanstalk

By Laura Frazier

After a few years of crafting decorative items for herself and as gifts for family and friends, Bloomingdale resident Debbie Dixon is in the process of turning her hobby into a full fledged business. Dixon's imagination was sparked last year when she spotted a bean bag doll storage and display rack at a local craft show. Dixon's wheels began to spin. Her children Ashley and Austin collect the popular "beanie" dolls, and she immediately began to envision her own version of what she believed would be a very popular and practical item. By October of 1998, Dixon began taking orders and is already brainstorming for ways to keep up with the growing demand for her creation - "Beanstalks".

The Beanstalks stand 60" tall and are constructed of grade A spruce/fir wood. Elastic tabs of varying lengths are secured to the "stalk" to store and show off up to 40 beanie dolls. The stalks can be topped with either a wooden heart cutout or a shelf for additional display space. Custom colors, as well as staining, whitewashing and natural finishes, are available. The Beanstalks can be personalized with your child's name. But Dixon points out that Beanstalks are definitely not a kids-only item. "There are many adults who wait in line and scour the stores and ads for beanies. I have one customer who has purchased eight Beanstalks for herself as a means to store and display her collection as it grows. She has one in the bedroom, one in the guest room, even in the family room". The stalks are custom finished to compliment any decor.

When Dixon realized that if things went as planned she would find herself doing a lot of painting, she took a decorative painting class in Panama City under the tutelage of Master Decorative Artist Priscilla Hauser. "Ms. Hauser has taught students all over the world. The class was intensive and extremely helpful", says Dixon. My sister Karen took the class with me and actually earned a teaching certificate," she says. My dream is to build this business to the point where I can bring my sister in with me, full time". Karen is living in New York and working at the Fashion Institute of Technology in Manhattan. My sister would like to someday focus on decorative furniture painting, so at some point we may even look into expanding the product line," says Dixon.



Debbie Dixon displays her creation, the "Beanstalk".

Dixon is quick to mention that she has had some expert assistance in launching her business, "Beanstalks, Unltd.". During the prototype stage of development, she relied on her husband Garry to fine-tune the design, and he continues to be in charge of cutting, sanding and assembling the Beanstalks. "Garry's loving support and his endless hours behind saws, drills and sanders has been crucial to getting this business off the ground, and I could not do this without him," says Dixon. Garry is a Project Developer/Construction Manager with his own business, Signature Development Associates. His experience with woodworking is credited to his many years in the construction business and is complimented by the fact that his father earned the distinction of Master Carpenter. "He has been working with wood all his life, and is an absolute perfectionist. The more we got involved in the design of this product, the more excited we became. We knew we had a sturdy, beautiful crafted item that would also be extremely useful".

Although her business is in the very early stages of development, Dixon is making plans to branch out a bit this year. To date, marketing has

Continued on page 22

Winterizing Your Pool – Florida Style!

By Laura Frazier

Unless you have a solar or mechanically heated swimming pool, you probably haven't been doing too much swimming since last October. Our swimming season runs roughly from May through October, with more cold tolerant swimmers braving another month or so at either end of the swimming season. As Central Floridians, we are spared the necessity of fully winterizing our pools as is common in the harsher northern climates. We don't need to, or even want to, drain and cover our backyard oasis. But by switching to a modified winter maintenance plan, we can benefit both financially and time wise. Once the evening temperatures have dropped and it becomes apparent that pool use will be dwindling, clean the pool and equipment well. This is a good time to clean or change filter elements or sand (see chart) and lubricate equipment valves. Filters don't need to work as hard or as long in the winter. You should be able to run your pump for 4 to 6 hours daily instead of the typical 8 hours in the summer.

Usually, the same amount of chemicals that are used in the summer will last 2 to 4 times longer in the winter, depending on daily average temperatures. It is recommended that you keep your chlorine level up with the use of chlorine tablets or your automatic chlorinator, to maintain clear and sanitary water throughout the winter. You should find that you require fewer tablets during cooler weather. And once the pool temperature approaches the 70-degree mark, you may only need to super-shock every 2 or 3 weeks, instead of weekly as in the summer.

Terri Larsen, Assistant Manager of Leslie's Swimming Pool Supplies at Bloomingdale Square, recommends pool owners test the water at least once a month during the winter, and balance the chemicals accordingly. "Be sure to request a water hardness test at least every two months, even during the cooler weather, to prevent damage to the pool's finish. The resulting scale and mineral deposits can cause staining or softening of the marcite", Larsen cautions.

Pool vacuuming needs decrease in the winter months. Rare or no use of the pool by swimmers, the decreased bug population and dormant lawns and trees mean less debris to clean up. Empty

skimmer baskets as needed to keep the water circulating freely, and skim, brush and vacuum only every few weeks or as needed to keep the marcite free from scale or calcium deposits. Depending on the type of filter you are running, you may need to backwash once or twice a month (see chart).

When freeze warnings are announced for our area, it is recommended that pool owners run their pumps continuously through the night. At temperatures of 32-degrees or below, standing water in the equipment and plumbing will freeze and the pipes are likely to burst. Wayne Walker of Pinch-A-Penny Pool Patio & Spa in the Royal Oaks Plaza on Lithia Pinecrest advises pool owners, "At the first sign of a freeze, set the pump (and the solar if you have it) to run continuously until the temperature rises again". Walker has seen too many formerly northern pool owners covering their delicate tropical plants for a freeze and neglecting their swimming pool, a much bigger investment, with expensive consequences.

"We can't totally winterize our pools and equipment here in Florida because there is too much fluctuation in the weather, but we do need to keep the water circulating throughout the occasional freeze to avoid very costly damage." And pool experts caution; never add antifreeze to your pool equipment and plumbing.

Aside from the possibility of damaging your pool finish and equipment, this can create an environmental hazard.

Continued on page 22



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Beanstalk

Continued from page 19

been via word of mouth. "We are considering farming out the woodworking to a woodshop that can handle a higher production rate than our 2 car garage," says Dixon. "I hope to do some craft shows this year and fill requests I have gotten from area craft stores for Beanstalk displays. We also may be looking into constructing a website to market the stalks".

Debbie and Garry have owned their home in The Greens for ten years. Three years ago, the Dixons rented out their home and moved to Fort Myers. But it wasn't long before the family heard Bloomingdale calling them back home. "Our children were begging us to move back. They missed their friends, their house, their neighborhood and their schools. We all did," says Dixon, "And two years later we moved back into our home, and are so happy to be here! We really missed the family-oriented atmosphere of Bloomingdale".

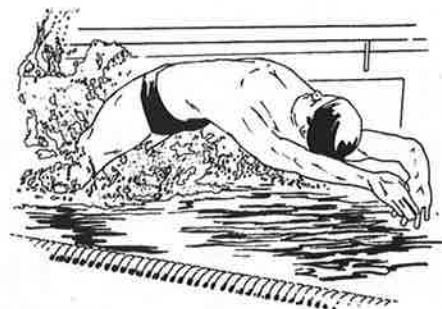
Prices for the stalks vary due to the finishes and personalizing available, and begin at \$29.00. For information or to order your own "Beanstalk", contact Debbie Dixon at 662-2022.

Winterizing Your Pool

Continued from page 20

Most pool owners have noticed the need to add water to their pools more frequently, at times on a weekly basis. The air is cooler and dryer and continues to evaporate without the free daily refills of summer showers. It is not uncommon to add 1 inch to 2 inches of water weekly to a winter pool. Be sure to keep the water level high enough for the skimmer to function properly or you will risk damage to the equipment.

For most of us, the swimming pool is the focal point of our back yards, whether it is in use or not. During our mild southern winters, we can at least enjoy looking at a beautiful, clean pool with a minimum of maintenance and a bit of preventative care, until it's time to take the plunge again.



Suggested Schedule of Pool Maintenance

Task	Summer	Winter
Test Water	Weekly	Monthly
Empty Skimmers	Weekly	As Needed
Empty Pump Basket	Weekly	As Needed
Backwash Sand Filter	Weekly	Monthly
Backwash D.E. Filter	Monthly	Every Other Month
Brush Pool	Weekly	Every Other Week
Vacuum Pool	Weekly	Every Other Week
Add Water	As Needed	May Need Weekly
Test Water	Weekly	Monthly
Add Chemicals	Weekly	Monthly
Change Sand in S.F.	-Every 2 to 3 Years As Needed-	
Change Cartridge in D.E.	-Every 1 to 2 Years As Needed-	
Change D.E. Elements	-As Needed, Usually 3-6 Years-	
Change Media in D.E.	-As Needed, Usually 3 Years-	
Run Pump	8 Hours	4-6 Hours



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TIME: 7:00 p.m.

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