



Meet the BSTD

Laura Frazier/Photo

Meet the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District board of trustees on pages 22-23. Also in this issue, frequently asked questions about the BSTD organization on page 24. Pictured standing, BSTD President Thom Shelling, trustees Myron Magedanz and David West; seated, secretary Alice Burleson, trustees Dale Kahn and Rusty Jones. Not pictured, Treasurer Don Cassels.



Mack Austin/Photo

YMCA program director Shon Torgenson, Bloomingdale High senior and community council member Amber Smith, Campo YMCA branch manager Cindy Benson and Ellen Gates, director of the South Brandon Substance Abuse Task Force, joined forces at a special community meeting last month. See story on page 10.



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Thomas The Tank Engine Coming To Florida

A Gazette Report

It's a bit of a haul from Bloomingdale, but a trip to Tavares to take a ride with the popular television and storybook character is sure to be worth it for Thomas's biggest little fans.

Thomas The Tank Engine will make his first visit to Florida March 9 - 17, giving fans of all ages the opportunity to meet Sir Topham Hatt's "number one engine," and to take a 20 minute ride on board the train pulled by Thomas, from Tavares, Florida (about a two-hour drive from the Brandon area).

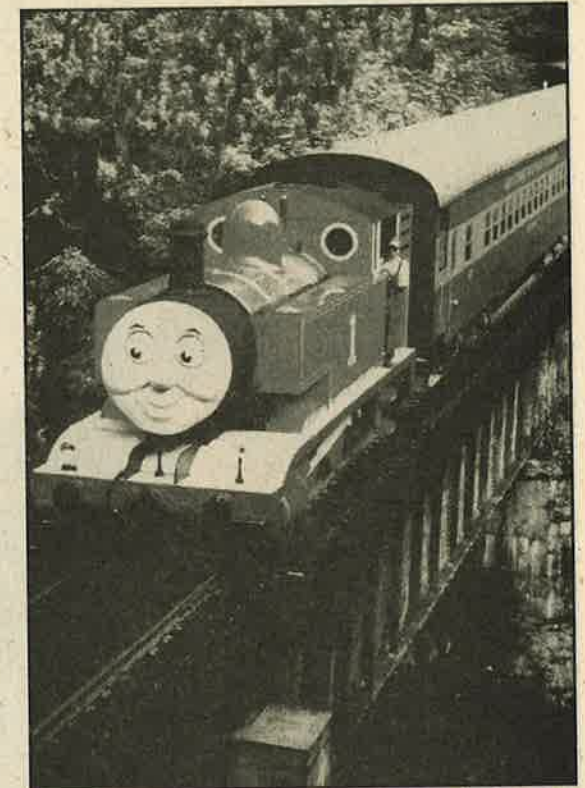
Thomas will be running under the sponsorship of the Orlando & Mount Dora Railway, which also operates steam locomotive train trips on a regular basis.

"We are thrilled to bring the children of Florida this wonderful opportunity to enjoy one of their favorite characters," said railway General Manager Neil Bagaus.

The railway is also planning a unique day of entertainment at Wooton Park in Tavares. In addition, there will be a special viewing station for Thomas & Friends videos, story time and a large selection of Thomas & Friends merchandise.

Trips with Thomas will operate March 9 - 17, starting each day at 10 a.m. with departures every 45 minutes until 4 p.m. Thomas will operate from Wooton Park. The ticket price is \$14 for each rider, one year and older, and includes the train ride and all entertainment provided in Wooton Park. Information is available at www.mtdoratrains.com or by calling (352) 735-4667 (10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.).

"This is Florida's first visit from Thomas The Tank Engine, and wherever he's gone his popularity has resulted in sold out trips," said Bagaus. "So we are urging our passengers to buy their tickets now to avoid disappointment."



Fans can take a ride with Thomas The Tank Engine in the popular character's first and only Florida visit this year in Tavares next month.

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State Rep. Johnnie Byrd (center) visited the Bloomingdale substation in January. Pictured are Byrd staff member and USF student Paul Bolan (left), BSHS senior and community council member Amber Smith, Deputy Pete Maurer and Byrd staff member Ed Howlette. Mack Austin/Photo

State Rep. Byrd Visits Bloomingdale Substation

By Mack Austin

State Rep. Johnnie Byrd and his staff met last month with Bloomingdale area residents at a meeting hosted by Deputy Pete Maurer at the community substation on Bell Shoals Road.

Discussions covered a full spectrum of topics including transportation, the current state budget, education, juvenile crime, consumer laws, homeland defense, traffic safety and taxation.

In addition, recommendations and ideas were shared

regarding voter education, education laws, budget management, and school environment improvement.

Byrd staff members Ed Howlette and Paul Bolan, a USF student, listened attentively and took notes to aid Byrd in following up on several issues. Byrd said one important personal policy he has is a commitment to follow through on issues that are raised by the community.

"There is no way to effectively cover so many topics in such a short time. Many require research, and I want

each of my constituents to be able to make reasonable decisions, as I strive to. This requires detailed, current information," he said.

Byrd added that he and his staff are ready and willing to provide information and assistance to any resident within their district. They can be contacted at their office in Plant City at (813) 752-5863 or by e-mail at jbbyrd@gte.net.

Byrd holds regular quarterly satellite meetings throughout his district to meet with residents at

restaurants, community centers and substations. The meetings are informal and open to all topics of discussion.

Future meetings will be announced in the Gazette and on our community web site at www.BloomingdaleGazette.com.

Incidentally, Byrd will assume his role as Speaker of the House just after the next legislative session this month.

Our congratulations go out to Johnnie, his family and his staff.

SAY YOU SAW IT IN
THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

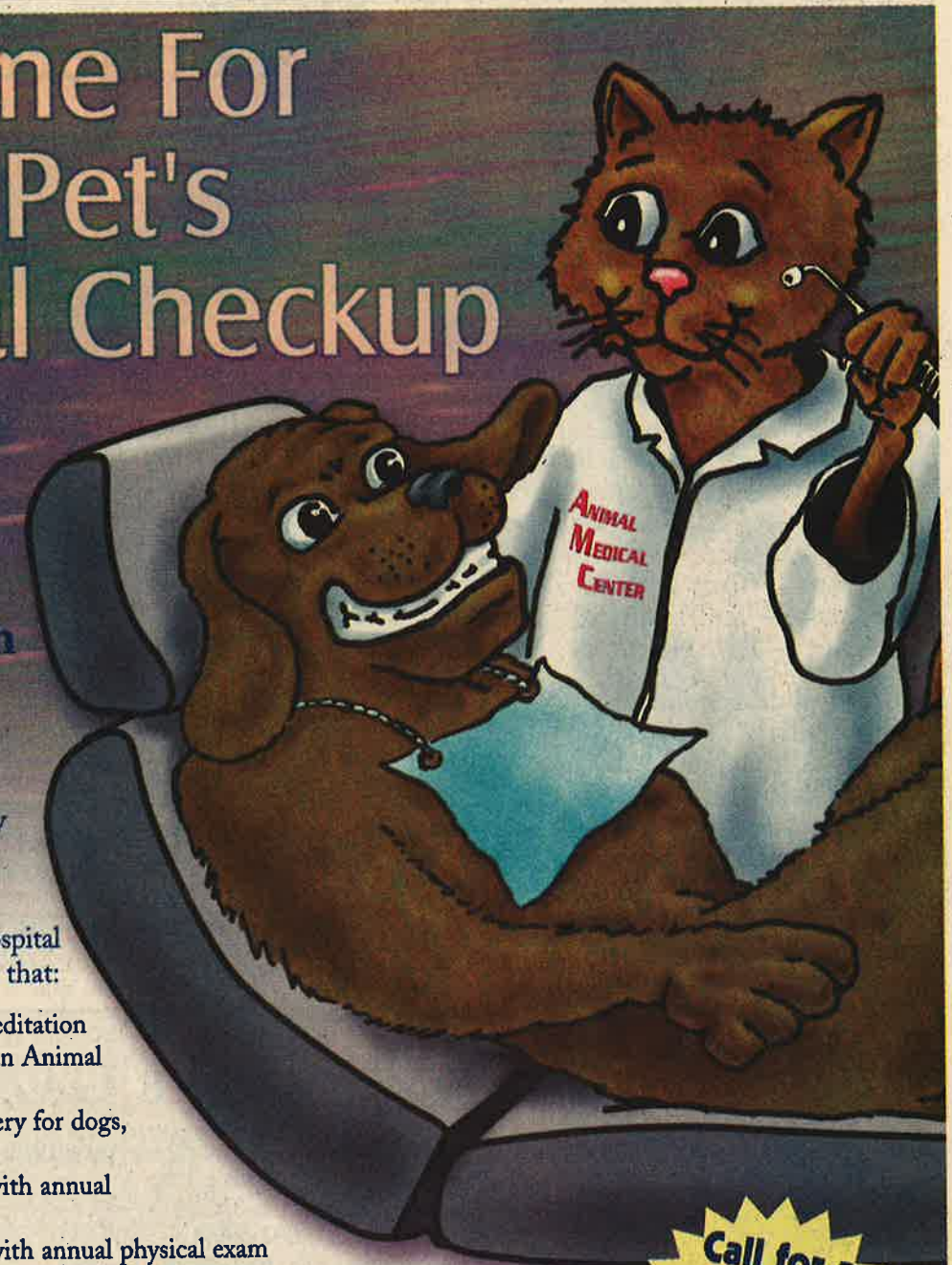
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 (813) 681-2051. Fax: (813) 651-1129
 E-mail: BHA@CyberRails.com
 Web Site: www.BloomingdaleGazette.com

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

- President** — Ted Grable
- Vice President** — Len Jaszczak
- Treasurer** — Pam Liguori
- Director** — Patricia Radel
- Director** — Rodney Biddle
- Director** — Tony Diolosa
- Director** — Joe Hickle
- Director** — Taya Newberry

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
- Treasurer** — Don Cassels

- Recording Secretary** — Alice Burleson
- Trustee** — Russell Jones
- Trustee** — David West
- Trustee** — Dale Kahn
- Trustee** — Myron Magedanz
- Property Manager** — Al Devney

Paul 157

Bloomingdale Mobile Watch Coordinator/Equipment Manager — Tony Diolosa, 681-1146
Treasurer — Paul Kelmer, 681-9701
Patrol Member — Steven Heckel, 654-4266
Patrol Member — Brad Scharp, 643-5000
Patrol Member — Paul Warr, 685-7883



Bloomingdale Oaks Special Taxing District
 P.O. Box 3132, Brandon, FL 33509-3132. (813) 685-2817

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

- President** — Bill Grace
- Treasurer** — Fred Englehart

THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

The official publication of the BHA since 1980
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- Yard of the Month** — Rosie Trellis

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- Publisher** — Carla Rockwell
- Advertising Manager** — Susie Howell

Proposal Calls For Third Lane On Bell Shoals

By Mack Austin

Improving traffic flow in and around the Bloomingdale community continues to be a subject of major concern. The recently completed widening of Bloomingdale Avenue demonstrates how traffic can flow more smoothly when given the room to do so.

The county commission approved last month preliminary plans to allocate funds for a long list of road improvements, including several in the Bloomingdale area (see related story in this issue). According to Steve Valdez, county Community Affairs Director, "This includes \$18.6 million to widen Boyette Road into four lanes divided by medians, and \$3.4 million to add a third lane to Bell Shoals Road."

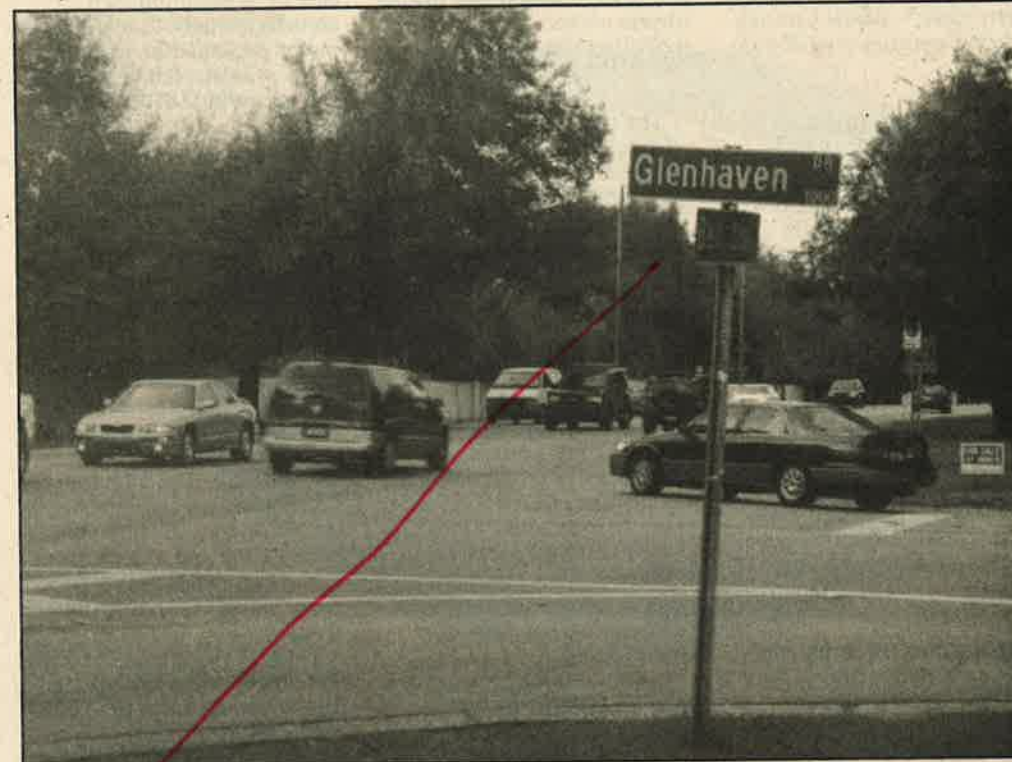
Adding a third lane to Bell Shoals should help improve the flow of both northbound and southbound traffic during peak hours.

The road will surely continue to face an increase in traffic due to the growth in FishHawk, River Hills and South County.

Depending on construction timetables, traffic could be significantly affected when the widening of Boyette Road begins and the new Cimino School on Culbreath Road is finished.

Many parents will be traveling from Bloomingdale West to get to the school in Bloomingdale East.

One item that has not



Traffic at the intersection of Bell Shoals Rd. and Glenhaven Dr. is likely to increase once Cimino Elementary in Bloomingdale east is completed. Having a third lane will be a big help.

been mentioned is funding for improvements to the Alafia River bridge on Bell Shoals.

It could need upgrading to handle the increased traffic. Hopefully, this will be included in the improvements planned.

Our residents welcome any and all improvements to our roads, and the time and effort that it takes our county officials to make these improvements are greatly

appreciated. Now if we can only get all the drivers in our community

to obey the traffic laws and drive with respect and courtesy!

Welcome To Bloomingdale

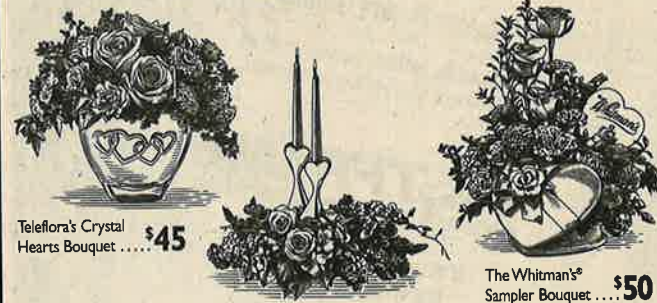
Bloomingdale area birth announcements courtesy of Brandon Regional Hospital.

- Austin Christopher Virtue, 12/10/01
- Kimberly Barone and David Virtue
- Freddie Michael Carter II, 12/08/01
- Krysta and Freddie Carter
- Aiden Taylor Griffin, 12/11/01
- Katrina Faison and Thomas Griffin



- Natalie Marie Jacqueline Corbett, 12/18/01
- Rebecca and John Corbett
- Isabella Marie Jimenez, 12/23/01
- Tammy and Anthony Jimenez
- Rebecca Isabelle Lewis, 1/1/02
- Alicia and Anthony Lewis
- Alexis Grace Snay, 1/2/02
- Jessica Barlow and John Snay, Jr.
- Joseph Patrick Dougherty, 1/3/02
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County Shows Taxpayers The Money, Road Improvement Plans

"It's not free money, but it's pretty close." - Audie Canney, aide to Commissioner Ronda Storms.

By Laura Frazier

Proponents of the long-awaited road widening of Boyette and Bell Shoals roads say a newly available bond funding option is very good news for the Brandon area.

For many years, residents eager for improvements to both congested, heavily traveled roads were told by county officials that project funding just wasn't available. Last month, the county outlined a plan to show taxpayers the money, and more than a few heads turned in pleasant surprise.

At the Jan. 9 county commission board meeting, four of seven commissioners voiced their support of a plan to use long-term bond financing to help pay for \$133 million worth of Hillsborough

road, intersection and bridge improvement projects, including the widening of Boyette and Bell Shoals roads.

The commission was scheduled to vote again on the plan at a Jan. 30, 6:00 p.m. public hearing, after the February Gazette press time.

A strong tax base increase projected by the county's property appraiser is expected to pump up community investment tax funds by at least \$10 million annually over the next five years. The projected windfall prompted commissioners to explore debt-based funding options. The availability of 1.98 percentage rate bonds made the plan even more attractive.

"It's not free money, but it's pretty close," said Audie Canney, aide to Commissioner Ronda Storms.

Canney said financing the projects with low-interest, long-term (25-year) bonds, instead of waiting for stages of funding to come online, would allow multiple proj-

ects to be accomplished simultaneously. In addition, major projects like widening the 3-mile stretch of Boyette Rd. between U.S. 301 and Bell Shoals Rd., could be accomplished in one stage instead of piecemeal.

"We've accomplished so much in terms of transportation improvements in the Brandon area," Canney said, referring to the recently completed widening of Bloomingdale Ave., the nearly completed Providence Rd. widening project and the Brandon Parkway currently under construction.

"With this (bond-financing) option, we can have everything on the plan done in less time and at less cost to the taxpayers. It will be a great benefit to the Brandon area."

Several other county facilities and services are also in line to benefit from the 2002 - 2007 five year plan.

Three new public libraries are currently being planned, including the South Brandon library on Bloomingdale Ave. and a South County area library. In addition, four existing branches will be expanded or renovated.

Other projects planned include ongoing stormwater projects, parks and recreation facility repairs and



Commissioner Ronda Storms was one of four county commissioners who voiced their approval in January of a bond financing plan that would step up needed Bloomingdale area road improvements.

improvements, and solid waste service and facility improvements.

The community investment tax is a half-penny sales tax approved by voters in Sept. 1996.

About 25 percent of the revenue is generated by tourists and visitors. County officials said the program funds dozens of projects annually that might otherwise cost taxpayers millions of dollars in property taxes, while the CIT program costs the average resident just \$10 a year.

St. Stephen Rummage Sale Slated For Feb. 16

A Gazette Report

The St. Stephen Catholic Church Community for Women will host its annual rummage sale Feb. 16 from 8:30 a.m. to noon at the church, 5049 Bell Shoals Road.

In addition to yard sale items, there will be a bake sale and craft show.

Craft booths are available

for \$15. Residents who have items they wish to donate to the yard sale can drop them off at the church Feb. 2 and Feb. 9 from 10:00 a.m. to noon or Feb. 15 from 4 to 7 p.m.

To arrange for pickup of appliances, furniture or other large items or to reserve a craft booth, call Roxanne Salabarría at 654-6609 or Lynn Walther at 654-0013.

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218383

Internet Chef Shares Favorite Chicken Recipe

Stuffed Chicken

Chef Franz says this great chicken recipe, stuffed with ham and cheese and topped with creamy Alfredo sauce, will be a family favorite. Cooking time: 30 minutes. Servings: 2

Ingredients:

4 oz. Alfredo sauce
2 oz. bleu cheese crumbles
2 - (8) oz. boneless chicken breasts
1 tablespoon chopped garlic
pinch of parsley
pinch of pepper
pinch of salt
1 oz. seasoned flour
2 - (1) oz. slices smoked ham

Directions:

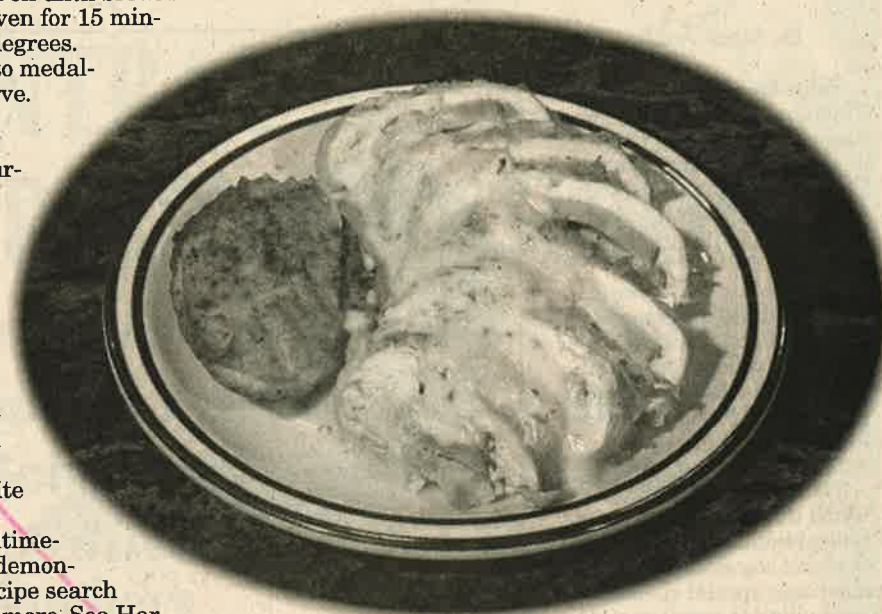
1. Pound boneless breast with mallet.
2. Place sliced ham and bleu cheese on breast and fold breast in half.
3. Dip in seasoned flour.

4. Sauté in oil until brown.
5. Place in oven for 15 minutes at 350 degrees.
6. Slice into medallions and serve.

Recipe courtesy of The Internet Chef and the Sea Harvest restaurant in Plant City.

The Internet Chef is a locally produced web site offering on-demand multimedia cooking demonstrations, recipe search engines and more. Sea Harvest owner Chef Franz hosts the site.

For information call (813) 661-8860 or visit www.TheInternetChef.com.



Chef Franz's Stuffed Chicken

Psst ... Let's Talk Trash

A Gazette Report

Hillsborough County provides solid waste collection services to all residents of detached single-family units, with limited exceptions. The charges for these services appear annually in November on your residential property tax bill. Two separate charges are assessed for solid waste disposal and solid waste collection.

Trash collection hours start at 6:00 a.m., so if you're on the beginning of the route, you must get your collection to curbside before 6 a.m. Ordinances prohibit homeowners from putting their trash out prior to 6:00 p.m. on the day before collection. If you have a complaint about a consistent violator, call the solid waste department at (813) 272-5680. According to department spokesperson Dave Ransom, county code violations will result in a citation.

As far as the weekly yard waste collection (grass clippings, leaves and tree and

shrub trimmings), you are allowed up to 12 30-gallon containers per week. For normal household garbage, the limit is three 35-gallon containers twice per week. Some of the items that cannot be put out for collection include furniture such as couches, tables, mattresses and box springs. Also prohibited are appliances like refrigerators, ovens, water heaters, and TVs, as well as non-combustible materials like steel, concrete, brick, glass, asphalt roofing materials, motor vehicles and vehicle parts, tires, machinery and equipment.

The prohibited items can be disposed of at no charge if you bring them to one of five community collection centers. The closest one to Bloomingdale is the South County facility on US 41 just north of Big Bend Road. The phone number is (813) 671-7706.

For more information, call the Solid Waste Department at (813) 272-5680, or visit www.hillsboroughcounty.org/solidwaste/home.html.

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Homeowners, Community Council Join Forces

By Mack Austin

Volunteer members of the Bloomingdale Homeowner's Association and the Bloomingdale Area Community Council held their first joint meeting last month at the Bloomingdale West Park rec center.

Since many of the issues addressed by both groups have common interests, this was an excellent opportunity for residents to meet with members of both committees to discuss current issues and neighborhood concerns.

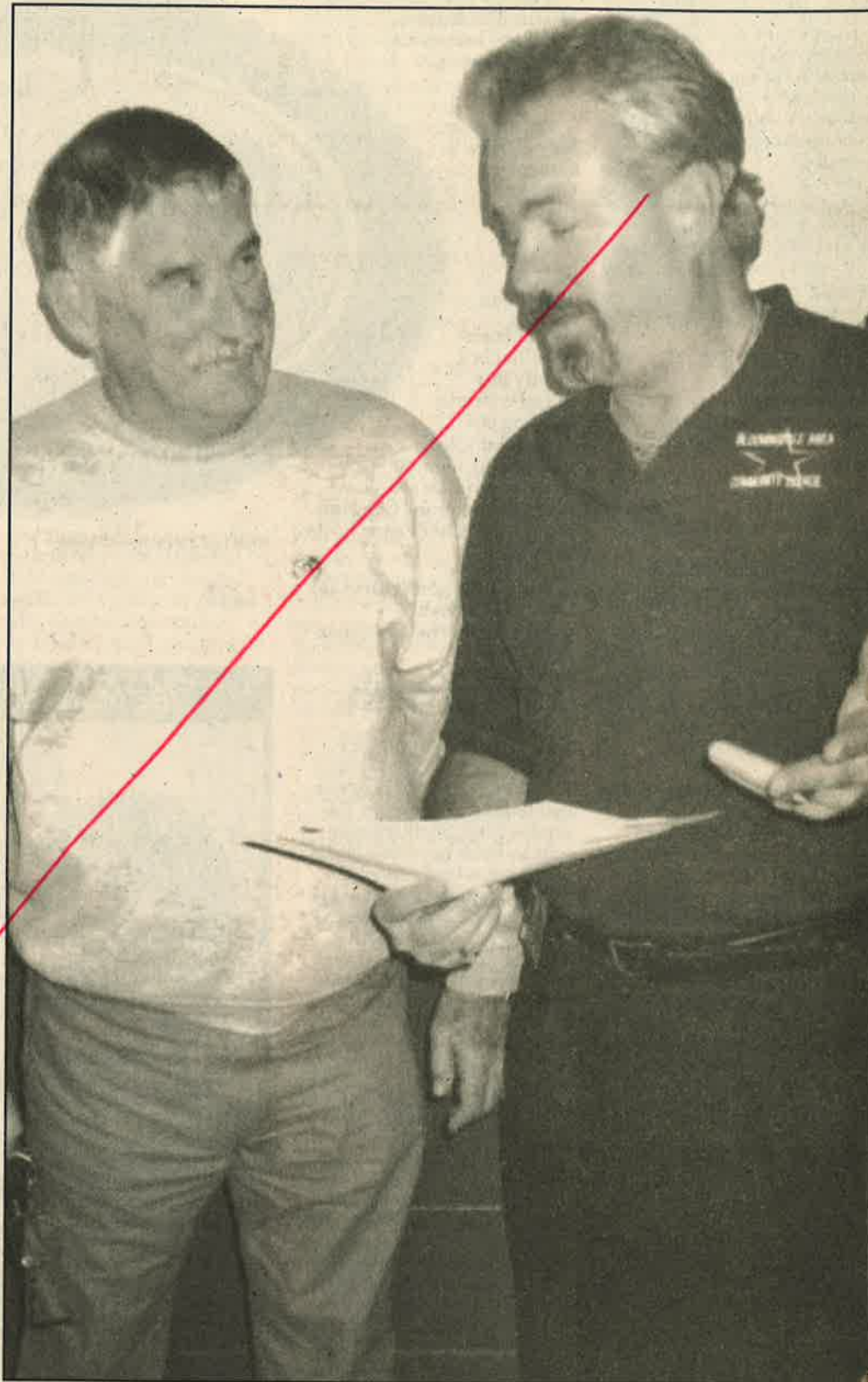
The meeting agenda followed the same format as a typical homeowners association and community council meetings; special speakers are invited to cover current areas of interest, and residents are welcome to attend and present information about any areas of concern they might have.

Len Jaszczak, president of the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, presided over the meeting.

The first item at the meeting was a special presentation by Bloomingdale resident Ellen Gates, founder and director of the South Brandon Substance Abuse Task Force. Gates discussed the background of the task force and its serious concerns about teen drug use and the critical need for effective communication with teens.

Gates said, "There are many groups that address the issues involved in this area but very few in our community." She added that most parents have no idea what to do when they are faced with a teen using drugs. One of the group's goals is to improve communication between parents, teens and organizations that are available to assist them.

"Drug demand reduction is one of our primary objectives," Gates said, adding that the task force is continually seeking volunteers, especially parents. Interest-



Bloomingdale residents and active community council members Paul Hooper and Terry Ward discussed some of the high-tech devices available to improve home security.

See MEETING, Page 12



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Below, BHA vice president Len Jaszczak, community council member Terry Ward, Mobile Watch coordinator Tony Diolosa, and Deputy Pete Maurer attended the first joint meeting of the BHA and BACC to discuss home security issues. At left, YMCA program director Shon Torgenson, Bloomingdale High senior and community council member Amber Smith, Bloomingdale YMCA branch manager Cindy Benson and Ellen Gates, director of the South Brandon Substance Abuse Task Force joined forces at a special community meeting last month.

MEETING

From page 10

ed residents are asked to contact their local YMCA for information.

Gates also presented a proposal to the homeowners association requesting financial assistance to sponsor a professional speaker for the joint Florida YMCA Leadership rally to be held in March at the Bloomingdale YMCA. The association board offered unanimous approval to support the community program. Details about the rally will be published in the March issue of the Gazette.

Jaszczak shared current information on several community concerns, including issues associated with the opening of Cimino Elementary School in Bloomingdale East. The school is presently under construction on Culbreath Rd. and is scheduled to open for the 2002-03 school year. Jaszczak said improved lighting had finally been installed in January on Culbreath Road near the school site, thanks to coordination by the county, school district and County Commissioner Ronda Storms.

Jaszczak also discussed the issue of sidewalks needed for students walking to the

school.

One Bristol Green resident in attendance addressed concerns for the possibility of drivers cutting through their neighborhood to by-pass new school traffic.

Jaszczak indicated that school district area director Bill Maxwell was in the process of coordinating a special meeting in February with residents, school district and public works officials to "head off" potential safety and traffic problems in the area of the new school. Meeting details will be announced as soon as they are available in local newspapers and on our community web site, www.BloomingdaleGazette.com.

The proposed addition of a third lane to Bell Shoals Road was discussed with concerns about possible increases in traffic noise. Coordination is being made with county engineers to evaluate this concern.

Bloomingdale resident and community council member Terry Ward offered a presentation on improving home security. Ward discussed several very inexpensive ways to upgrade and improve home security, noting several high-tech methods available. He suggested homeowners check out www.x10.com for a



MACK AUSTIN/Photos

variety of choices available.

Bloomingdale Deputy Pete Maurer covered some of the common mistakes many homeowners make that help burglars, including leaving garage doors open and vehicles open with valuable items in them. In addition, Maurer added, "One of the best security methods is neighbors watching out for each other."

The following items of concern and ideas were offered during an open floor session at the end of the meeting. The homeowners association and community council will research these items and give them special consideration:

- Hiring an off-duty deputy to patrol Friday through Sunday.

- Providing detailed information on the Bloomingdale Mobile Watch program with the purpose of increasing program activity.

- Illegally parked cars blocking sidewalks.

- Dogs running loose.

- Speeding within our community.

- Problems with motorized scooters.

- Solicitors.

- Contractors leaving materials at job sites after completing their work.

This first joint meeting of the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association and the Bloomingdale Area Community Council concluded with Deputy Maurer's suggestion that a joint meeting be held at least annually.

Signature
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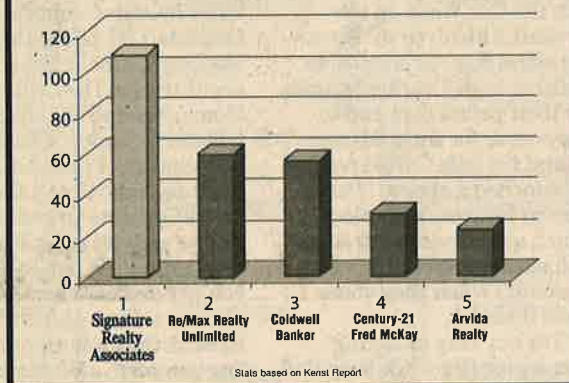
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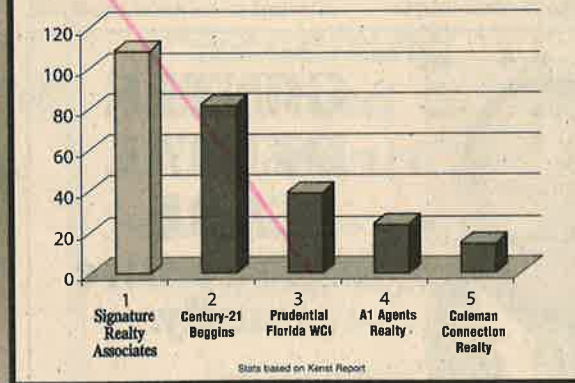
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Bloomingtondale Business Celebrates 1st Anniversary

"This first year has been fantastic." - Al Kleinotas, Car Wash on the Greens owner.

By Mack Austin

The challenges met during the first year of operating a new business can say a lot about the business and the community.

Celebrating the one-year anniversary of their new business at the corner of Lithia Pincrest Rd. and Erindale Dr., Car Wash on the Greens owners Al and Carole Kleinotas both agree, "This first year has been fantastic."

"We're very proud of the success we've enjoyed in this new location," said Kleinotas. "Everyone has been great. We're excited about providing a professional service to the residents of the Bloomingtondale community and the surrounding areas. Even more, we're excited about being part of a truly great community."

Kleinotas said one of the most important elements to



Al Kleinotas, owner of Car Wash On The Greens, is thanked by Hillsborough County Deputy Warren Curtis for the great job they did on servicing his patrol car.

a successful business is community involvement.

"We've been very blessed over my thirty-three years in the car wash business and we want to be more than just

another business. We believe totally in giving back."

This community involvement is clearly seen in the numerous programs and projects the Car Wash on the Greens is involved in. Kleinotas offers free car washes to Hillsborough County deputies for their patrol cars and to fire-rescue for their Blazers. Al and his wife Carole recently launched a special "Partners in Education" project in which school administrators and teachers receive special discounts when they show their ID cards.

"It's our way of saying thanks for the work they do," said Kleinotas.

The long list of organizations the car wash has sponsored or provided services to includes Bloomingtondale High School's Band Boosters and Chorus Group, Bloomingtondale-Valrico Volunteer Fire Sta-

tion, Bell Shoals Baptist Academy, St Andrews' United Methodist Church, Bloomingtondale Little League, St Stephen's Catholic Church, Hillsborough County's Guardian Ad Litem Program, Nativity Catholic School, Girl Scout troops, The Children's Home, Randall Middle School, Greater Brandon "Old Timer's Association," Pincrest Elementary School, and the Disabled Veterans Organization.

The car wash itself is also very unique. Where else can you get your car serviced, pick up a Blue Mountain Arts birthday card, eat some free popcorn, and find a beautiful scented candle for a gift all at the same time?

Car Wash on the Greens is open Monday through Saturday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For information call (813) 657-6500.

We're seeing stars

The restaurant review rating for Della's After Dark in the December issue of The Bloomingtondale Gazette was partially in error.

We regret the omission of one star in the "food" area of the rating chart.

Elton Dumont assures

readers that the 4th star was duly earned.

The correct ratings, based on 5 stars, are as follows:

- Food: ★★★★★1/2
- Ambience: ★★★★★
- Service: ★★★★★
- Presentation: ★★★★★
- Overall: ★★★★★

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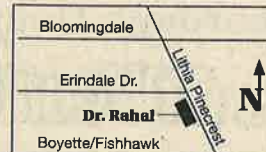
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Letters

Send letters by e-mail to Letters@BloomingtondaleGazette.com, fax to (813) 651-1129 or mail to Editor, The Bloomingdale Gazette, 3509 Bell Shoals Rd., Valrico, FL 33594. All letters are subject to editing.

Reader Suggests Truck Limits

I'm glad Bell Shoals was removed from the truck route. Now get (the county) to limit the heavy truck traffic on Bloomingdale Avenue. Either remove it from the truck route, or limit the hours; no trucks allowed between 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. and between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Bloomingdale has turned into a giant truck route and/or bypass for trucks with no business on Bloomingdale Avenue. Molten sulfur trucks are breeding like rabbits. Their failure to maintain the speed limit adds to the congestion and delays the flow of traffic, causing backlogs and eventually accidents.

Dale Quade

Gazette reporter Mack Austin followed up on Mr. Quade's suggestion by contacting Hillsborough Transportation Division Director Thomas Thomson. Excerpts of Thomson's written response are as follows:



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presented by Della's Delectables
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608 Oakfield Dr. • Brandon • 684-3354 • Credit Cards Accepted
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"Time restrictions on truck traffic have been considered in the past. The transportation division does not support such restrictions for truck routes, as they would be difficult to enforce, would increase the average number of trucks in the traffic stream during the hours they are permitted, and may place hardship on retailers and others that depend on deliveries and service calls. Speeding trucks on Bloomingdale Avenue should be called to the attention of the Sheriff at (813) 247-0402. Changes to the truck route resolution are approved by the Board of County Commissioners. The next scheduled update of the truck route plan is in 2004. If you have any further questions, please call me at (813) 272-5170."

Send Trucks To Hwy. 60

I'm not so sure the removal of Bell Shoals and Boyette roads from the county's truck route is good news for those living in the Bloomingdale Ave. area. The number of trucks has increased since the construction has been completed. No trucks on Boyette and Bell Shoals will only mean more trucks on Bloomingdale Ave., increasing the chances of a terrible accident near schools, churches and homes. The trucks need to be on Route 60 where they belong!

Suzan Barkley

Bloomingdale Avenue was

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retained on the truck route when commissioners approved changes to the route in December. County officials say the road is a necessary part of the route that will remain on the plan for the foreseeable future. In a Gazette story last month, reporter Mack Austin wrote, "Unless the mines that many of (the trucks) are headed to and from close down, they're here to stay." The next truck route review is scheduled for 2004.

Reader Envisions Improvements

We received our Bloomingdale Gazette with this morning's Tampa Tribune. I enjoyed reading it very much. I do request that photos be somehow clearer; not even a magnifying glass could make the road signs in some of the photos readable. Also, please avoid printing clever cartoons underneath the print (as in the charming restaurant review), as it makes it more difficult to read. We appreciate receiving this little paper so packed with local news and written with such an upbeat, positive, practical attitude.

Susan Blake

We appreciate your kind words and interest in the Gazette, and welcome your suggestions. We are still fine-tuning the new layout, printing and delivery methods we launched in December 2001, and will certainly take your suggestions into consideration as we continue our efforts to improve the Gazette.

How Many Lanes On Bell Shoals?

In a local newspaper story printed on Jan. 6 about the proposed project to widen Bell Shoals Road between Bloomingdale Ave. and Boyette Rd., the article stated that Bell Shoals would be

widened to five lanes to accommodate left turns into subdivisions lining the road. In the same article a conflicting statement said the plan is to add a third lane in the middle. So is it 5 lanes or 3 lanes?

Debbie Meacham

Hillsborough Community Relations Manager Steve Valdez confirmed for us that the current plan is to add one lane to the center of the road, for a total of 3 lanes. Please see the related story in this issue.

Clarification

Bloomingdale Community Resource Deputy Pete Maurer requested a clarification of a letter published in the January issue of the Gazette.

A resident of Sandy Creek Drive in Bloomingdale West wrote that a representative of the sheriff's substation had advised his neighbors to start a petition in order to enact speeding and traffic enforcement on their street. Deputy Maurer said it is not necessary for residents to petition the sheriff's department for traffic enforcement, nor does such a petition exist.

Maurer said he met with the Sandy Creek neighbors last month to discuss possible traffic enforcement measures, and has in addition referred the group to the county's residential traffic calming program for further action.

Maurer added that the county's traffic calming process does involve the need for residents to gather signatures to show a consensus for permanent measures like speed humps or new signage. "The neighbors may have misinterpreted the county traffic calming requirements as being the sheriff's department requirements, but that's certainly not the case," Maurer said. "If anyone in the Bloomingdale area is experiencing traffic or speeding problems on their street, we are here to help, no petition necessary!"

Deputy Maurer can be reached at (813) 635-8040.

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Property Manager Outlines Projects

A Gazette Report

Property manager Al Devney of DPMI Property Management, Inc., submitted the following list of projects recently completed or funded by the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District. For more information, contact the BSTD at (813) 684-6667 or e-mail BSTD@BloomingdaleGazette.com.

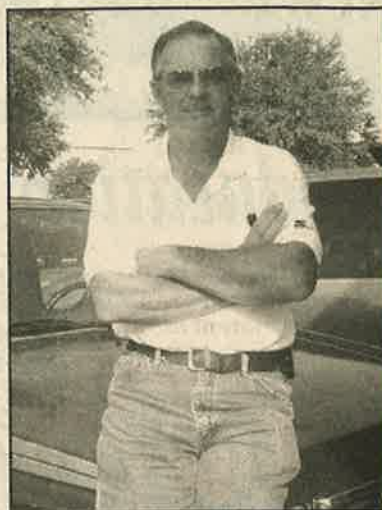
Completed projects, 1st quarter fiscal year 2002

- Pressure cleaned the walls on John Moore.
- Installed Christmas bows, poinsettias and lights.

- Installed electricity to the medians at all 8 major entryways.

Funded projects, 2nd quarter fiscal year 2002

- Install an irrigation system on Springvale
- Pressure clean the walls on Greenhollow.
- Paint the walls on Culbreath, Natures Way and Garnet.
- Install 2000 flowers.
- Renovate the Garnet entrance.
- Install landscaping on Springvale.
- Install a metal fence on Springvale.
- Install eight 20-foot flagpoles.
- Repair 20 feet of wall.



Laura Frazier/Photo
Bloomingdale Property Manager Al Devney

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New Restaurant Offers Cure For The Munchies

By D'Ann White

The doors of Said and Sue Hamada's Bloomingdale restaurant had yet to open when their Buffalo wings were declared the best in Brandon.

That's because the Hamadas, owners of the new Munchies restaurant at 118 E. Bloomingdale Ave., just east of John Moore Road, entered their wings in the Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce's Ho-Ho-Hoe-down All-Tel Rib Fest & Wing Ding in December.

An illustrious panel of judges including Tampa Tribune columnist Steve Otto, known for his discerning palate when it comes to spicy foods, sampled the Hamadas' wings and promptly declared them the winner of the Wing Ding. Munchies also received a first-place trophy for its wing sauce.

It was an auspicious welcome to the community the Hamadas have called home 10 years.

Said Hamada honed his cooking talents at an Italian restaurant in New York City for 11 years before he and his wife of 21 years opened their first Munchies restaurant in Jersey City, N.J. But warmer climes eventually beckoned them to Florida, and the Hamadas opened their second Munchies at 901 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., near St. Joseph's Hospital.

In the meantime, the couple, who settled in Brandon with their two children, Kari and Tarik, both students at Bloomingdale High School, kept their eyes open for a prime spot closer to home.

"I knew I wanted to be in Brandon, but I could never find the right location," said Said.

That changed a few months ago when a space became available in a strip shopping center on Bloomingdale Avenue, literally minutes away from the Hamadas' home.

They opened the doors of the new Munchies in mid-



D'Ann White/Photo
Kari, Sue and Said Hamada display one of Munchies' hand-tossed New York-style cheese pizzas. The restaurant is a family affair. Both children along with nephews, nieces and other relatives help out at Munchies.

December to rave reviews from residents in the area for not only the wings but also for their hand-tossed New York-style pizza and eclectic takeout and delivery menu.

Although the restaurant has four tables for dining in, the bulk of their business so far is from busy families seeking an easy alternative for dinner and business people needing a quick lunch.

For hungry patrons, the menu includes a bit of everything, from Italian and Greek specialties to American favorites and even a Mexican chicken quesadilla.

Sue Hamada said they wanted to offer residents an alternative to the usual delivery selections of pizza and Chinese food. Customers were thrilled when they discovered they could have fried clams, shrimp poppers, rib-eye steak on a roll, Texas wieners smothered with onions and chili, a ham and cheese sandwich or a bacon cheeseburger delivered.

"The response has been excellent," said Sal. "We're really happy. Everyone who's come in has come back again."

But the hands-down favorites at Munchies, said the Hamadas, remain the wings and pizza.

The Hamadas prepare the wings using fresh chicken and a recipe handed down from a friend in the business. The recipe remains a closely

guarded secret.

The pizza, whether it's New York-style with a thin crust or Sicilian with a thick crust, is made from dough and sauce prepared from scratch daily and all-fresh toppings.

"We don't skimp on anything," said Sue.

Each day Munchies offers a different specialty pizza that can be purchased by the pie or the slice.

Prices at Munchies range from \$16.35 for 40 wings, \$7.25 for a fried seafood combo of cod filet, scallops, shrimp and curly fried or \$15.95 for a 16-inch stuffed pizza to \$1.50 for a slice of cheese pizza or \$1.75 for a wiener.

The Hamadas also offer daily specials including a large pizza and 30 wings for \$19.75 on Monday and two large pizzas for \$11.99 each Wednesday.

Hours are Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. and Sunday from noon to 10 p.m. For information call (813) 662-6800.

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Snipe signs tend to stack up each weekend at Bloomingdale entryways.

Rodney Biddle/Photo

Sign, Sign, Everywhere a Sign...

By Rodney Biddle
BHA Board Member

Have you seen the temporary advertising signs that continuously pop up on Bloomingdale area roadsides and entryways? The staked or tacked-up advertisements,

Are snipe signs a nuisance and an eyesore? Take our community poll at www.BloomingdaleGazette.com.

collect in numbers. Hillsborough County considers snipe signs to be "trash signs," and they are illegal. Unfortunately, the county is not able to police the signs on a regular basis and therefore rarely picks them up. The Bloomingdale Special Taxing District property manager removes and disposes of the signs each week, but new signs tend to pop up again over the weekend.

In addition, the Bloomingdale Home-



Original cartoon courtesy of Matt Foley

owners Association and Special Taxing District have received calls from residents complaining about the loss of their signs. The callers are usually not aware that they are breaking county code regulations by posting the signs.

We occasionally ask residents for their opinions on topics of community concern through a polling system on our website. We'd like to find out how residents feel about the snipe sign issue. To participate in the poll, visit our web site at www.BloomingdaleGazette.com. You may also fax your response to (813) 651-1129 or mail to Snipe Signs, The Bloomingdale Gazette, 3509 Bell Shoals Rd., Valrico, FL 33594. Results of the poll will be published in a future issue of the Gazette. The questions are as follows:

- Do you believe that snipe signs are a nuisance and/or an eyesore?
- Do you think snipe signs are beneficial for the promotion of home sales or garage sales, even when multiple signs are posted in one location?

Catfish Country Comes To Brandon

By Elton Dumont
Exclusive to the Gazette

Catfish Country
706 E. Brandon Blvd.
East of Bryan Rd.
(813) 689-0246

If you've ever lived in or traveled the Gulf Coast or delta country, you've probably experienced the wonderful taste of meaty catfish and deep-fried hush puppies. But in these parts, if you're like me, you'll settle for anything that comes close when the desire for catfish is at hand.

Well, Brandon finally has attracted a catfish restaurant that brings to mind the old, Deep South. As their menu proclaims, Catfish Country offers "relaxed seafood dining with a Cajun flare." If you've never experienced Cajun cuisine, this quaint little restaurant is the place to start. And when

you review the menu, you'll notice they can nicely accommodate non seafood eaters too.

I picked from the quick lunch portion of the menu and ordered the two-piece fried catfish fillets for \$5.45. It was served with homemade hushpuppies and your choice of two sides including coleslaw, cheese grits, baked beans, turnip greens, black-eyed peas or French fries.

The fillets were light and just-right crispy, not too crunchy. I took the coleslaw and baked beans. Both were good and southern style; sugar, molasses, etc. I also had a taste of the cheese grits... very good! The only down side was the hush puppies; good but very doughy and not light enough.

Other menu selections include fried or broiled gulf shrimp and sea scallops for \$6.25 and sirloin steak,

chopped steak, chicken tenders, clam strips or BBQ ribs for \$5.65. Sandwiches offered for \$4.95 with a choice of two sides include catfish, grouper, steak burger, chicken breast and BBQ beef.

Like any good southern catfish restaurant, they have the "all you can eat" catfish platter all day, every day, for \$9.95, with all the extras including homemade coleslaw, hush puppies, fresh green onions, buttermilk biscuits and your choice of one of country fries, baked potato, black eyed peas, turnip greens, cheese grits, regular grits, baked beans or baked sweet potato. Other dinner selections include stuffed crab, oysters, alligator, frog legs, pasta dishes and land-lubber entrees including New York strip for \$12.95, rib eye for \$11.45 or BBQ ribs for \$8.95.

"Starting nibblers" appe-

tizers include fried dill pickles, Louisiana style gumbo, Buffalo wings, corn fritters or stuffed crabs. "Tummy ticklers" desserts include Mississippi mud pie and peanut butter pie. There is a children's menu and they also offer beer and wine. Catfish Country is open Monday through Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. and until 8:00 p.m. on Sunday. For lunch or dinner, give it a try. Tell them Elton Dumont sent you!

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

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Pictured standing, BSTD President Thom Snelling, trustees Myron Magedanz and David West; seated, secretary Alice Burleson, trustees Dale Kahn and Rusty Jones. Not pictured, Treasurer Don Cassels.

Meet the BSTD Board of Trustees

By Laura Frazier

Thom Snelling: President

At the January meeting of the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District board of trustees, BSTD president Thom Snelling expressed his enthusiasm for the new year and a new board of trustees. "The BSTD always needs new blood and new ideas. We're off to a fresh start with a great board, four of whom are brand new members. This board has a lot of great ideas and a desire to get things done," he said. Snelling said an active community assures that it remains a vibrant, safe, attractive and appealing place to live. He added that although government support of neighborhoods is very important, "Government does not have the resources or the ability to create a good neighborhood and a great place to live. That's up to the residents." Originally from Cleveland,



Snelling

Ohio, Snelling moved with his family to Bloomingdale Estates in 1994. "Bloomingdale was and is attractive to us because it is a stable residential neighborhood. It has a fair degree of human diversity, and there are lots of kids," he said. Snelling is a manager with the City of Tampa in the Land Development Coordination department. He currently serves on the Bloomingdale Little League board of directors and manages a little league softball team. Snelling said the biggest challenge of the BSTD is to get people to understand that the community exists on both side of Bell Shoals Rd. He said the concerns and issues of either side (Bloomingdale East and Bloomingdale West) affect the community as a whole. "There can not be an artificial 'line of demarcation' that separates us," he said. "The entire community suffers when any part suffers, and the entire community prospers when any part prospers." Snelling encourages his fellow Bloomingdale residents to attend any of the

taxing district's open meetings to get informed and involved in community maintenance and improvements. "People might be surprised to learn the size of the budget and how quickly it is utilized in basic maintenance projects," he said.

Don Cassels: Treasurer

Originally from Manhattan, NY, Don Cassels said quality schools and daycares initially attracted he and his wife Karen to Bloomingdale in 1997. The family's two young daughters attend top



Cassels

rated Burns Junior High and Alafia Elementary, where Cassels volunteers as a reading Dad in several classes. He also coaches soccer for the Brandon Area Youth Soccer League, and is vice president of Kids For Life, a non-profit organization that raises money for pediatric organ transplant patients. In addition, Cassels serves as vice president of the Krewe of

Shamrock, an organization that participates in community parades and charity work. The BSTD treasurer said the taxing district's biggest challenge is to effectively maintain and improve the integrity of Bloomingdale's common areas. "As the infrastructure ages, the walls and the main entryways need to be repaired or replaced to uphold Bloomingdale's status as a premiere place to live." As a residential plans examiner with the City of Tampa, Cassels said he volunteered for the BSTD because he thought his desire to help maintain the community, along with his municipal codes background, would be beneficial to the board. Cassels said residents might be surprised to learn that Bloomingdale boasts the largest taxing district in the county, with an annual budget of close to \$400,000.

Alice Burleson: Secretary

Alice Burleson likes to tell the story of how she got involved with the special

Trustees

From page 22

taxing district. Burleson often crossed paths with property manager Al Devney on her daily walks along Natures Way. "I'd see Al out checking the sprinklers or picking up trash and I'd fuss at him about all the other things



Burleson

that needed to be done. Finally he said 'Hey lady, why don't you join the board?', and I did!" Originally from North Carolina, Burleson decided to downsize her residence a few years ago after living in her Fairway Manors home for 15 years. She didn't look any further than the Villas at Bloomingdale. "I really like Bloomingdale, it's such a nice, clean community," she said.

Burleson said the biggest challenge facing the BSTD is to prioritize projects equitably throughout the community. "There are so many things on our agenda that it can be very challenging to keep our priorities in order while being fair to all the different sections of the community."

Russell Jones: Trustee

Originally from Cartersville, GA, Russell Jones moved with his family to River Crossing in 1997



Jones

from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. He is currently assigned to U.S. Special Operations Command at MacDill. Jones said he and his wife Joyce were drawn to Bloomingdale's top rated schools. "The school system is one of the best in the county, and we enjoy the peaceful atmosphere."

As one of the newest

Jones supports his son's Boy Scout troop 610, and frequently volunteers assistance to Habit for Humanity and Big Brothers/Big Sister of Tampa. After recently completing a graduate degree program, Jones said he found himself with some free time. "I saw an article in the Gazette asking for volunteers to fill in and thought it was a great opportunity to support the community," he said.

Jones said one of the biggest challenges the board faces is prioritizing projects. "There are a lot of proposed projects on the drawing board for the next few years and, with limited tax dollars, it can be difficult to determine which projects should have priority."

Dale Kahn: Trustee

Originally from Cleveland, Ohio, Dale Kahn and his family moved just last year to the Greens in Bloomingdale East. Kahn works in



Kahn

Information Technology at Verizon's Temple Terrace office. He is also a member of the Bloomingdale Ridge Homeowners Association and Bloomingdale Ridge Mobile Watch. Kahn said his primary attraction to Bloomingdale was the quality of the schools in the area. "Once that (the schools) got us looking here, we found that we liked the well-kept neighborhoods and proximity to shopping and recreation. We also liked the semi-rural feel of nearby areas, which is similar to where we lived in Ohio," he said. Kahn sees a need to be equitable when investing in repairs and improvements throughout the community. "We need to try and spread the money around so that everyone feels they are getting value for their tax dollars," he said.

As one of the newest

Bloomingdale residents and trustees, Kahn joins president Thom Snelling's enthusiasm and high hopes for the continued maintenance and improvement of Bloomingdale. "The majority of our members (four out of seven) are new to the board, five months or less. The new board has an opportunity to take the BSTD in a new direction."

Myron Magedanz: Trustee

As one of the board's newest members, and one of the community's longest-standing residents, Myron Magedanz said more input



Magedanz

from his fellow residents would make it easier to assess the wants, and needs, of the community. Originally from LeSueur, Minnesota, Magedanz moved with his family to Bloomingdale East over 20 years ago. "Bloomingdale was country back then," he said. Magedanz is a steel bridge layout man with Tampa Steel Erecting. He also owns and manages some residential rental properties. He said the biggest challenge the board faces this year is, "Spending within our budget."

David West has lived in the Valrico area since 1972.

David West: Trustee

David West has lived in the Valrico area since 1972.

Originally from Illinois, he moved with his family to Bloomingdale East in 1992. West said the Alafia-Burns-Bloomingdale school district attracted his family to the



West

area. West is a Senior Sales Representative for Sherwin-Williams Paint Company. He is a member of the Brandon Rotary Club and also volunteers as an assistant coach for the Brandon Area Youth Soccer League. West said he volunteered for the taxing district board to give something back to the community. "I believe in trying to make the world a better place, and being involved in your community is one small way of doing just that," he said. West sees broader advertisement and news coverage about the special taxing district as one way to make the community aware of the taxing district's activities and expenditures. "This is a great community, but there is definitely room for improvement. If we can make more residents aware of the organizations that work to enhance our standard of living and property values, that will increase community pride and benefit us all."

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See Trustees, Page 23

Special Taxing District FAQs

By Laura Frazier

The Bloomingdale Gazette and Bloomingdale Homeowners Association often receive questions from residents about the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District. Here we address some of the most frequently asked questions.

What does BSTD stand for?

The Bloomingdale Special Taxing District.

What is a special taxing district?

Special taxing districts are groups of county taxpayers with a common interest that requires special funding. Special taxing districts allow members in any given district to share common expenses equitably by adding a special tax assessment to the property tax bill of each district member.

Why does Bloomingdale have a special taxing district?

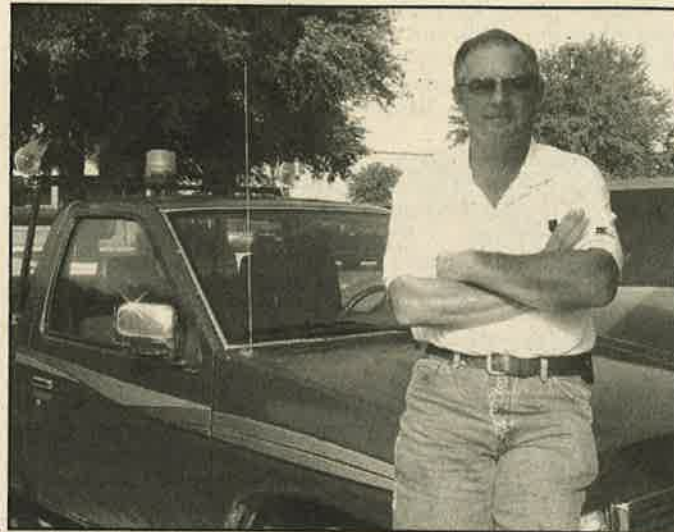
The purpose of the BSTD is to maintain a reserve of funds to pay for community repairs and improvements.

How long have we had a special taxing district?

A group of Bloomingdale residents petitioned the county in the mid 1980's to create a special taxing district for the Bloomingdale area. The Board of County Commissioners approved the petition and the BSTD was formed.

What area does the BSTD encompass?

The BSTD area includes every home in Bloomingdale East and West, with the exception of River Crossing



Laura Frazier/Photo

Property manager Al Devney and his little green truck are a familiar sight in Bloomingdale. Devney coordinates community repairs and improvements and performs daily inspections of our common grounds and irrigation system.

Estates in Bloomingdale East.*

How much does the BSTD cost residents?

The taxing district assessment is \$80 per year; the amount has not changed since the district was created. The assessment is added to each homeowner's annual property tax bill. With over 4,200 homeowners currently in the district, more than \$330,000 will be added to the taxing district's coffers this year.

The STD is a non-ad valorem district; every property owner pays the same \$80, regardless of the value of their residence.

Who decides how to spend the money?

A volunteer board of trustees manages the expenditure of BSTD funds. The trustees, all Bloomingdale homeowners living within the district, hold open meetings once a month to plan maintenance and improvement projects. There are currently seven members serving on the BSTD board.

Each May, the board

invites all Bloomingdale residents to attend the taxing district's annual budget meeting.

The meeting is advertised in local newspapers including the Gazette and on our community web site at www.BloomingtonGazette.com. Resident input is taken into consideration in deciding which projects are to be included in the upcoming budget.

Once the budget is approved by the Board of County Commissioners, it is put in line for capital expenditures approval, a process that can carry over into the next fiscal year.

Who oversees maintenance and improvement projects?

Bloomington's property manager, Al Devney of DPMI Property Management, Inc., serves as a project coordinator for maintenance and improvement projects approved by the board of trustees. Devney also provides regular inspections of Bloomingdale's common areas, entryways and irrigation systems.

What are the responsibilities of the BSTD?

The taxing district is responsible for the maintenance of and improvements to the community's common areas including landscaping along our feeder roads (Natures Way, Culbreath, Bloomingfield, etc.), perimeter walls, all major and most minor entryways, landscaping, irrigation, etc. The taxing district's area of responsibility does not include county-owned property such as roads, parks, sidewalks, street signs, etc.

Is the taxing district a division of the homeowners association?

The Bloomingdale Special Taxing District and Bloomingdale Homeowners Association operate independently of each other. For more information about the homeowners association, call (813) 681-2051 or visit www.BloomingtonGazette.com.

How can I report a maintenance or improvement need to the BSTD?

Bloomington residents are invited to attend special taxing district meetings on the second Monday of each month, 7:00 p.m. at the Bloomingdale community office, 3509 Bell Shoals Rd. Residents can call the BSTD at (813) 684-6667, send e-mail to BSTD@BloomingtonGazette.com or fax to (813) 684-2358.

* River Crossing Estates was built in the mid 1990's on a parcel of land that was not identified on the original Bloomingdale plats used in the 1980's to determine the taxing district area.

The Gazette staff is gathering information about this issue and will address the subject in an upcoming issue of The Bloomingdale Gazette.

Free Whale of a Tale For Kids

A Gazette Report

The Coast Guard Auxiliary offers free presentations about marine ecological preservation and other topics to Brandon area schools, clubs and youth groups.

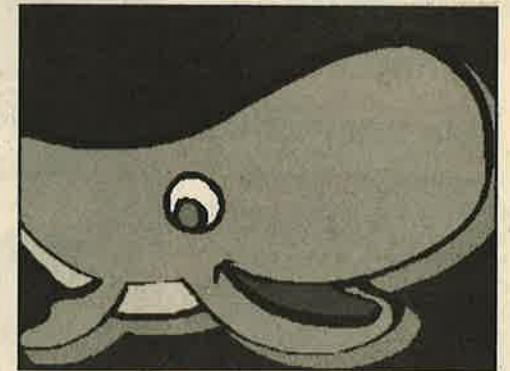
Kay Lori, public affairs officer of the U. S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 75 of Ruskin, said the group's latest presentation centers on an animated film, "The True Story of Inky

the Whale."

"The film is about how garbage and debris almost destroyed one of the ocean's beautiful creatures," Lori said.

Free coloring and activity books and posters are given to each child at the end of the 45-minute presentation.

For more information about the Coast Guard Auxiliary's youth group presentations, call Lori at (813) 671-8255.



Inky the Whale

SAY YOU SAW IT IN
THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE



Did you say SOCCER?

Registration dates for indoor soccer league will be Feb. 8th from 6-9p.m., Feb. 9th & Feb. 16th from 10am-2pm

- Over 30 Coed
- Under 30 Coed
- Men's League
- Youth League (ages 7-12)
- Micro Soccer (ages 4-5)
- High School

Leagues begin March 2nd and end April 27th

For more info call
Brandon Indoor Soccer at
813-654-5400
930 Lithia Pinecrest Rd, Brandon



SAY YOU SAW IT IN
THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

Substation Notes For February 2002

The Bloomingdale Community Substation is located at 4342 Bell Shoals Rd. next to Beef O'Brady's restaurant. The station is open weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Deputy Maurer can be reached at (813) 635-8040.

By Deputy Pete Maurer and Officer Sandy Capitano

Someone recently asked why we talk about traffic problems so much. Well, look around. Never a day goes by without having to deal with it.

Ironically, it's not the traffic that's the problem; it's the drivers who openly disobey the traffic laws. They run red lights, speed, cut in front of you without signaling, don't stop for school buses and provide excellent examples of rudeness and disrespect for the law.

Special projects are being put in place to identify specific laws that need increased enforcement. Citations are being written and they are expensive.

Special emphasis is also being placed on home security in our neighborhoods. We all work hard to obtain the possessions we have and it is up to each one of us to provide the proper security for our personal items.

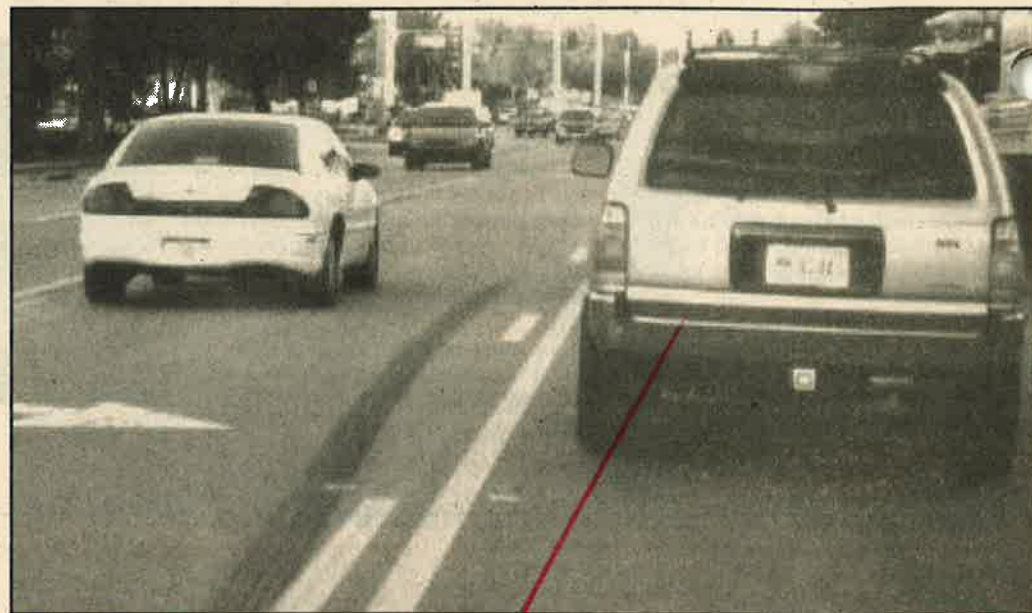
The No. 1 rule is don't make it simple for a criminal to ruin your day.

Don't leave your car unlocked, especially with handbags or cell phones in them.

Take the time to carefully secure your home before you head out for even a short errand.

Keep a watch out for your neighbor's home too.

Report any unusual activity or suspicious strangers you see in the area, especially those in vans, as soon as possible.



News flash! The center lane on Bloomingdale Avenue is a turn lane, not a lane for speeding up and passing 10 cars.

Be prepared to give as much detail as possible.

And please, if you don't close and lock your garage doors, you're making it easy for potential thieves.

Another current safety issue in our community involves the increasing popularity of motorized scooters.

So have the number of calls complaining about noise, unsafe riding and speeding. Many kids using them are not using safety gear. These scooters are unlicensed motor vehicles and should not be ridden in our neighborhoods.

If you're going to allow your children to ride them, at least require them to wear the proper safety equipment and tell them not to speed. They have absolutely no protection when a vehicle hits them, and the injuries sustained are usually more than serious, they are deadly!

These motorized scooters have already proven to be deadly in our area. A truck hit two teens riding on one; one child was killed instantly and the other is in fair condition.

They simply cannot compete with vehicles! The riders are open targets.

And finally, a note of thanks to the caring residents of our community. The "Suitcases for Kids" program



Deputy Maurer and volunteer Greg Ford load up another van with gym bags and suitcases donated for kids in need as part of the very successful "Suitcases for Kids" program.

being conducted in conjunction with the Tampa Police Department continues to be a great success. We know the kids who receive the gym

bags and suitcases are grateful. Keep up the good work. Bring new or used bags and suitcases to the community station for distribution.

Bloomington High School News

By Diane Clare
PTSA President

Nancy Pursino at (813) 653-0732.

The Bloomingdale High PTSA has established an Exceptional Student Education Committee and is currently looking for members.

The ESE program is provided by the state to benefit students with special needs including those identified as gifted and emotionally handicapped. The committee will consist of parents, students, teachers and ESE professionals.

Our plan is to gather and share information and to provide support for each other. Even if your student has not been placed in this group but you have questions and concerns, please join us.

If you have any questions, call committee chairwoman

The next conference night for parents and students is Wednesday, Feb. 6 from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. No appointments are taken; it is first come, first served.

This is also BRAG night, where all of the student groups and clubs show off what they have been doing this year. Concession stands will be available for those of you coming from work or other activities.

A general meeting of the PTSA will be held in the cafeteria on Wednesday, Feb. 6 at 7:00 p.m. The main topic will be volunteer opportunities available at the school.

The Bloomingdale High PTSA's newsletter can now be viewed in full on the school's website. Look for the PTSA icon.



This two-person sailboat, valued at \$1,000, is one of the items up for bid at Bloomingdale High School's Band Boosters 14th annual Band Auction.

Sail Away With Bargains At School Auction

A Gazette Report

Bloomington High School's Band Boosters invite the community to their 14th annual Band Auction fundraiser at the school on Saturday, Feb. 23. A spaghetti dinner and auction preview will begin at 5:00 p.m., and the live auction will start at 6:30 p.m.

The school will accept donations of new, unused items or services from residents or businesses through Monday, Feb. 19.

"The Brandon/Valrico community has been very generous with their contributions to our auction in the past," Booster volunteer Barb Warner said. "Last year we collected close to 300 items."

Warner said auctioneer Rob Hennessee is a seasoned professional who has presided over the school's

auction for many years. Col. John Jernigan will join Hennessee at the podium this year.

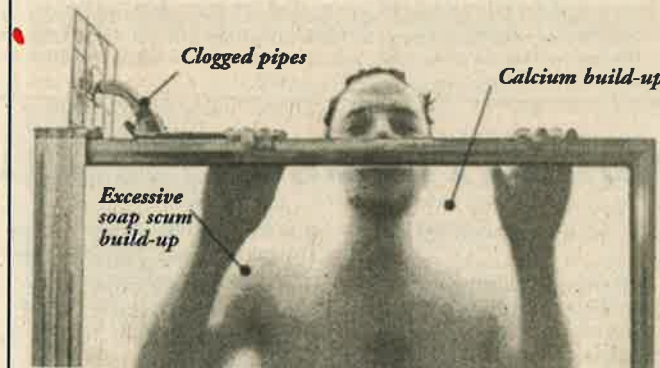
"Col. Rob can auction off anything," Warner said. "Some of the items sold last year were truckloads of sod, 400 flashlights, antiques, weekend getaways, a trumpet, and dozens of gift certificates."

One item sure to draw attention this year is a fully restored two-person sailboat complete with sails, rigging and more, valued at \$1,000.

A portion of the auction proceeds will help offset band student expenses for a trip to a festival competition in New Orleans this year. Proceeds will also be used to purchase new instruments and music.

For more information or to donate items or services, call Warner at (813) 689-6893 or e-mail email@bwarner.net.

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New Flotilla 75 Officers Sworn in

Capt. Bonnie Eaton and Vice Capt. Steve Plass administered the oath of office in December 2001 to Joe Lori of Riverview as Flotilla Commander and Rudy Thomann of Tampa as Vice Flotilla Commander of U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 75 of Ruskin. Also present for the swearing in were Cmdr. Kurt Nancarrow, Director of Auxiliary, U.S. Coast Guard from Miami and Capt. M. Larosa of U.S. Coast Guard Group, St. Petersburg. Pictured are Plass, Eaton, Lori, and Thomann.

Photo courtesy Kay Lori

Group Promotes Financial Independence For Girls

A Gazette Report

On Monday, Feb. 25, American Association of University Women Brandon Branch members Joyce Gardner and Ruth Crittenden will join

representatives of the North Tampa, Tampa, and Sun City Branches to present a seminar entitled "Financial Independence for Girls" at the PACE Center for Girls. The seminar will focus on

the uses and pitfalls of credit.

The club's literature group will meet at the home of Barbara Reed at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 5 to discuss

"Girl With a Pearl Earring" by Tracy Chevalier. For membership or event information call Nancy Hollowell at (813) 757-3137 or Mary Ann Walters at (813) 681-4502.

You Better Check Out These Fun-E Forwards

The comical results of this survey were passed along by friends via e-mail.

If you have an amusing item in good taste that you'd like to share with your neighbors, please forward it to us (no attachments please) at Letters@BloomingtonGazette.com

Elementary school student marriage survey

How do you decide whom to marry?

You got to find somebody who likes the same stuff. Like, if you like sports, she should like it that you like sports, and she should keep the chips and dip coming.

Alan, age 10

No person really decides

before they grow up who they're going to marry. God decides it all way before, and you get to find out later who you're stuck with.

Kirsten, age 10

What is the right age to get married?

Twenty-threes the best age because you know the person FOREVER by then.

Camille, age 10

No age is good to get married at. You got to be a fool to get married.

Freddie, age 6

How can a stranger tell if two people are married?

You might have to guess.

See SURVEY, Page 30

MacDill Puts Erindale Property Up For Sale

By Mack Austin

Just over two years ago, the Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce donated an estimated \$500,000 five-acre parcel of property in Bloomingdale East to the MacDill Air Force Base Education Council. The property is on Erindale Drive near Lithia Pinecrest Road.

In addition to the five acres, the chamber also donated \$15,000 to the education council, a program that provides continuing education programs for MacDill personnel.

The chamber's generous donation helped form a mutually beneficial relationship between MacDill and the communities of Brandon and Valrico, where so many military personnel and retirees live. There was some initial speculation that the property might become a convenient home to a new MacDill Family Outreach Center. But plans to open a new outreach center are apparently not on the horizon, and now part of the property is listed for sale. Proceeds from the sale of the



Mack Austin/Photo

A 2.24-acre parcel of this five-acre property owned by the MacDill Education Council is currently for sale.

land would benefit the MacDill Education Council.

The property has been split into a 2.24-acre site and a 1.85-acre site. Fred McKay Century 21 Realty currently has the 2.24 acre plot listed for \$92,000. It is presently zoned for residential use and could accommodate up to three home sites.

Anyone interested in inquiring about the property can contact the realtor at (813) 681-3118.

Cimino Community Meeting Planned This Month

A Gazette Report

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association has requested the assistance of school district and county public works officials to address the need for sidewalks on the west side of Culbreath Rd. near Cimino Elementary School. The school is presently under construction and is scheduled to open for the 2002-2003 school year.

Hillsborough County School District area director Bill Maxwell is coordinating a public meeting this month to discuss the sidewalk issue and other areas of concern.

The meeting was not scheduled before Gazette press time. Details will be announced in local newspapers and on our community web site at www.BloomingtonGazette.com.

For more information, call Maxwell at (813) 744-8630.

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Bloomingtondale Resale Market

Bloomingtondale single-family residential re-sale homes fourth quarter 2001* are as follows:

Total Sold — 61
 High Sales Price — \$ 339,000
 Low Sales Price — \$92,000
 Median Sale Price — \$151,000
 High Cost Per Sq. Ft. — \$100
 Low Cost Per Sq. Ft. — \$45
 Median Cost Per Sq. Ft. — \$77
 Median Age — 1992
 Median Home Size — 2,065
 Median Days To Close — 71

Price Range	Units Sold	Median Days To Close	Median Home Size
\$ 90,000 - \$120,000	18	55	1,286
\$120,000 - \$170,000	20	70	1,936
\$170,000 - \$200,000	13	95	2,493
\$200,000 - \$230,000	3	63	2,657
\$230,000 - \$250,000	2	36	2,595
\$250,000 - \$300,000	3	154	2,812
\$300,000 +	2	73	3,378

*"Michael's Bloomingtondale Tally" provided courtesy of Michael Davis Realty. Analysis includes home sales in Bloomingtondale East and West. Information taken from the Multiple Listing Service database is believed to be accurate but is not guaranteed. For more information call Davis at (813) 662-2600 or visit www.MichaelDavisRealty.com.

SURVEY

From page 28

based on whether they seem to be yelling at the same kids. Derrick, age 8

What do most people do on a date?

Dates are for having fun, and people should use them to get to know each other. Even boys have something to say if you listen long enough. **Lynnette, age 8**

On the first date, they just tell each other lies, and that usually gets them interested enough to go for a second date. **Martin, age 10**

What would you do on a first date that was turning sour?

I'd run home and play dead. The next day I would call all the newspapers and make sure they wrote about me in all the dead columns. **Craig, age 9**

When is it okay to kiss someone?

When they're rich. **Pam, age**

The law says you have to be eighteen, so I wouldn't want to mess with that. **Curt, age 7**

The rule goes like this: If you kiss someone, then you should marry them and have kids with them. It's the right thing to do. **Howard, age 8**

Is it better to be single or married?

It's better for girls to be single but not for boys. Boys need someone to clean up after them. **Anita, age 9**

How would you make your marriage work?


Tell your wife that she looks pretty even if she looks like a truck. **Ricky, age 10**

CLASSIFIED

The Bloomingtondale Gazette classified office is located in the Brandon News building at 1401 Oakfield Dr., Brandon Fl 33511

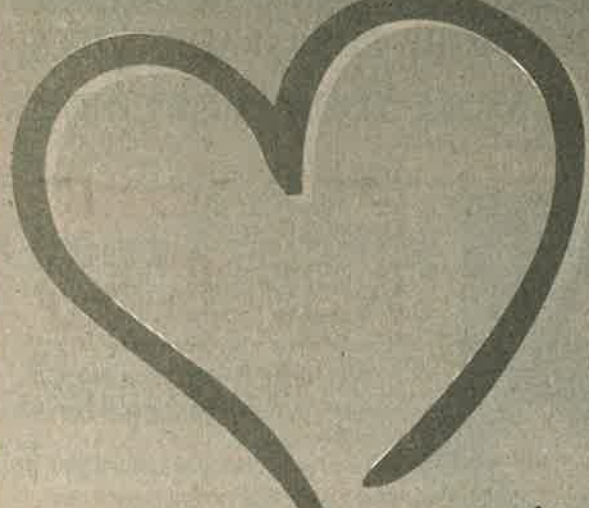
TO PLACE AN AD	RATES	GENERAL POLICIES:	AD DEADLINE
call: Ashley Hager or Ruby Brooker at: 689-7764 or fax to: 689-9545	SUPERSAVERS: Private parties may run a three line ad free of charge for merchandise under \$250 (price must appear in ad). Not available to businesses. Other restrictions apply. Free ads must be submitted in writing, by fax or in person. Five ads per person per month on a space available basis. RATES: Five lines for \$7, additional lines are \$140 per line. Ask about our discounted rate available if you advertise in the Brandon News, Plant City Courier and Shopper or other Sunbelt publications. HOURS: Mon. - Fri. 8 A.M. to 5 P.M.	CANCELLATIONS: Cancellation numbers are issued at the time of cancellation. It is necessary you have it in the event of any misunderstanding or adjustments. Ad deadlines are applicable to cancellations as well. ADJUSTMENTS: Please check your ad for errors the first day it appears. Sunbelt Newspapers will not be responsible for errors, except to the extent of the cost of the first insertion; and then only for that portion of the ad that may have omissions of copy. Corrections of errors must be made within the above ad deadlines also. CREDIT: Some classified categories require payment in advance.	to place cancel or change an ad is Friday, 5 P.M. 1 week prior to publication.

98-149 Real Estate	205 Apartments Unfurnished	320 Medical	380 Employment General	380 Employment General	410 Furniture
104 East Hillsborough	210 Houses Unfurnished	340 Hospitality	STOP SECURITY OFFICERS Port of Tampa \$8.50-\$11.00 All shifts, weekly pay, med/dental, paid vac, prom. oppty's. DFWP. Fox Prof Svc. 289-8744	STOP STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL Now taking applications for parking lot person- nel, traffic directors, su- pervisors, ticket sellers, and festival gate ticket takers. Apply at Festival Maintenance office, 2703 W. Reynolds St., Plant City, Feb 5., 8:30- 11:00am only.	SOFA, 3 cushions, med Blue, scattered design \$100 813-684-0840 Sofa, Lane recliner \$350 w/ Matching Loveseat \$300. (813) 626-4940
155 Mobile Homes in Parks	300-390 Employment	350 Clerical/ Secretarial	STOP Service/Production FT/PT, Pd Vac, Pd Hol, Fun place to work. Silk Plants Plus, 813-684-7400	400-499 Merchandise	600-649 Transportation
165 Mobile Homes With Property	302 Management- Supervisory	ADMIN Asst. P/T, \$8 hr, computer skills, Mike Rivera Re/Max 685-2090	PARK YOUR CAR IN CLAS- SIFIED and see it take off in the fast lane!	400 Misc for Sale	649 Automobiles For Sale
	303 Professional	Retired? Want to work Again? MATURE, Experi- enced to work in Medi- cal Office. Past exp & in- surance a +. File, Billing, phone. Will train. 685-1220 or fax 654-5660	CLASSIFIED WORKS	400 Misc for Sale	FORD 1998 MUSTANG 49kmi, fully equipped, Excl cond. For sale by original owner. \$8,500. 813-681-6110
	306 Accounting	370 Sales		400 Misc for Sale	NISSAN 1987 Maxima New tires, new bat. 115,026 mi. New timing belt, 100K. Clean \$ best offr over 2,300 661-2993
	200-249 Rentals	OUTSIDE SALES REP • Competitive comm. • Flexible hrs. • Existing Accts. • Pleasant office Are you goal oriented? Call TODAY For your interview The Brandon-Valrico Journal 661-2900	CLASSIFIED WORKS		
	205 Apartments Unfurnished	REAL ESTATE Agents Earn What your worth, some leads furnished. 653-2914 for appt.	CLASSIFIED WORKS	FIREWOOD, SPLIT OAK bundles, wheelbarrow/ truck loads, del avail. 813-681-9499	CLASSIFIED WORKS
		380 Employment General		CLASSIFIED WORKS	CLASSIFIED WORKS
		CHILD Care Giver, FT/PT, Exp desired but not req. Brandon. 813-294-8742		CLASSIFIED WORKS	CLASSIFIED WORKS
		CHILD CARE WORKERS FT/PT Days Only. Bran- don Area. Call 626-4864		CLASSIFIED WORKS	CLASSIFIED WORKS
		DRIVER-A local delivery company needs driver. \$500-\$600 week. M-F, 8-6. Call 813-684-0913		CLASSIFIED WORKS	CLASSIFIED WORKS
		✓THIS DRIVER FT position, inter-store delivery for Brandon area dry cleaners. Clean MVR & ability to lift up to 50lbs a must. Call 654-2323.		CLASSIFIED WORKS	CLASSIFIED WORKS
		GREENHOUSE work F/T Mon-Fri 7-3:30. Call for interview 689-7679		CLASSIFIED WORKS	CLASSIFIED WORKS
		Real Estate new licenses or No exp nec. Training provided--new classes forming. Busy Brandon ofc hiring now. Bayside Realty Group 654-5099		CLASSIFIED WORKS	CLASSIFIED WORKS
		Turn to Classified - you can Bank on our Bargains!		CLASSIFIED WORKS	CLASSIFIED WORKS



You have many ways to place your classified ad in the Bloomingtondale Gazette:

- by phone:** call Ruby or Ashley at: 689-7764
- by fax:** 689-9545, attention: Bloomingtondale Gazette
- in person:** The Brandon News, 1401 Oakfield Dr.
- by mail:** The Bloomingtondale Gazette, c/o the Brandon News, 1401 Oakfield Dr. Brandon, Fl 33511



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2206 Longmore Cr.	\$195,000
4329 Glendon Pl.	\$234,900



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