



Award Is All In The Family

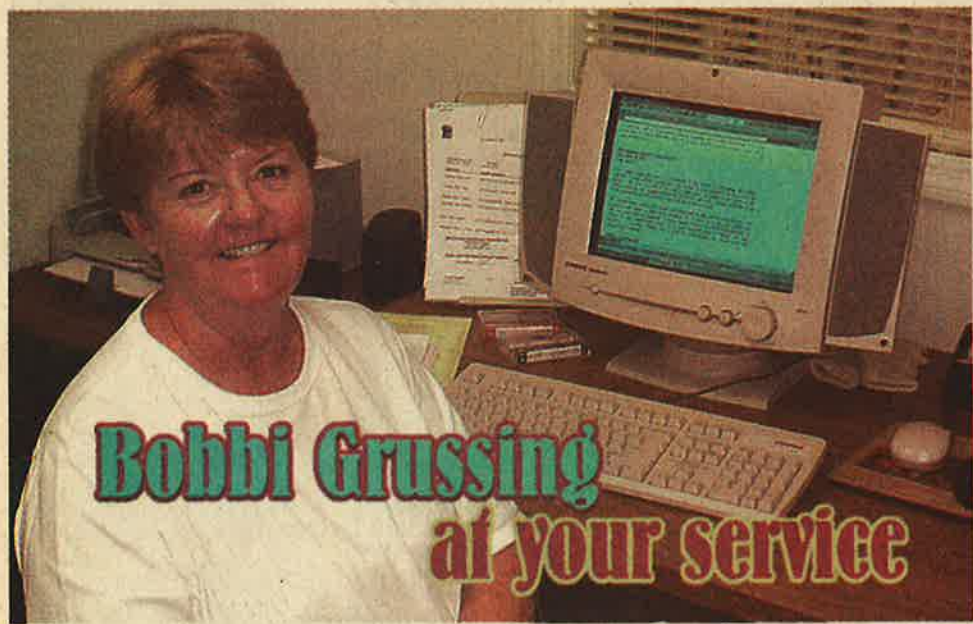
The Mayer family, Patrick and Lee Mayer pictured, were honored in December by the Bloomingdale High PTSA as the school's 2001 Volunteers of the Year. **See story on page 4.**

Photo courtesy of Ellen Gates



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Bobbi Grussing
at your service

Administrator Bobbi Grussing mans the Bloomingdale community office part-time Monday through Thursday from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. **See story on page 16.**

Laura Frazier/Photo

Featured Story:

**Bells Shoals,
 Boyette Cut From
 Truck Route**

see page 10

Your Inside Connections

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, Inc.

3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33594.
(813) 681-2051. Fax: (813) 651-1129
E-mail: BHA@CyberRails.com
Web Site: www.BloomingtonGazette.com

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

President — Ted Grable
Vice President — z
Treasurer — Pam Liguori
Director — Patricia Radel
Director — Rodney Biddle
Director — Tony Diolosa
Director — Joe Hickle
Director — Taya Newberry

Bloomington 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 — Davis West
Trustee — Dale Kahn
Trustee — Myron Magedanz
Property Manager — Al Devney

Bloomington 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

Bloomington 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
3509 Bell Shoals Rd.
Valrico, FL 33594
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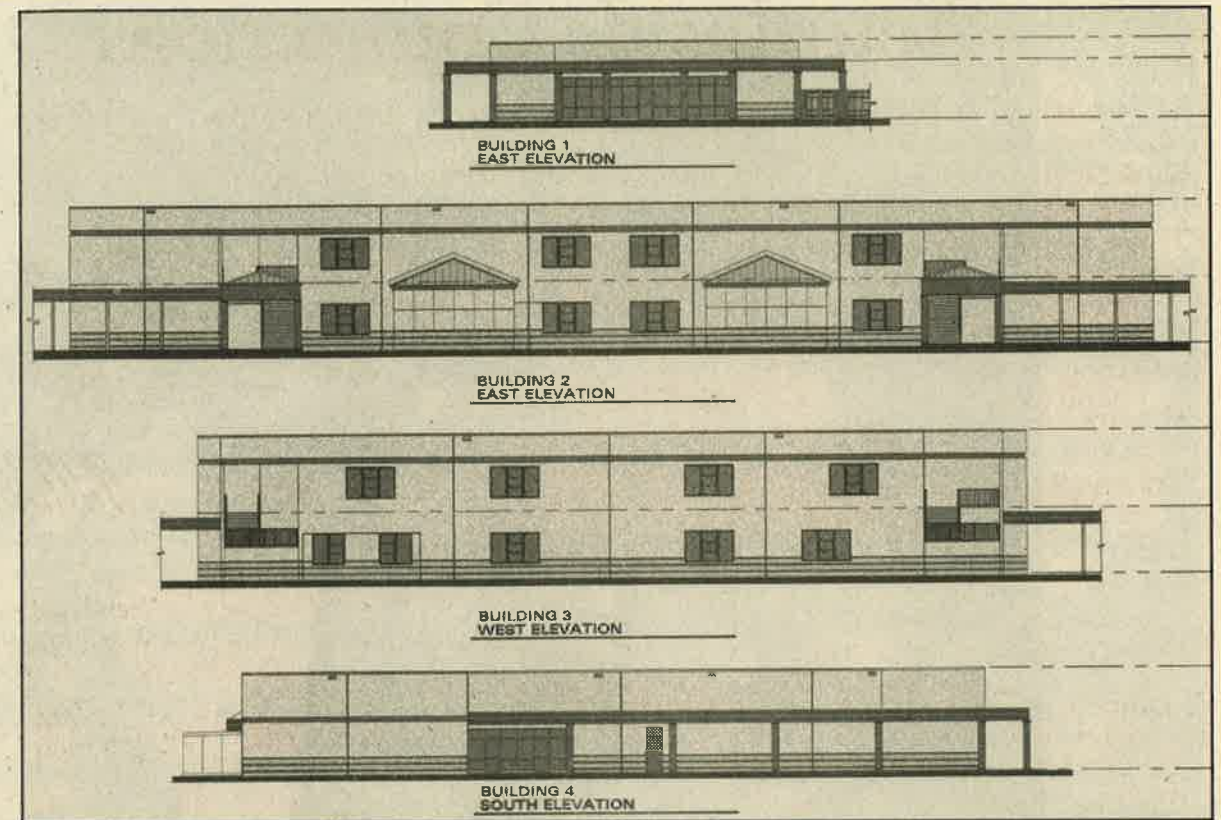
E-Mail: News@BloomingtonGazette.com

Executive Director — Joe Liguori
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Yard of the Month — Rosie Trellis

Published by Sunbelt Newspapers — 1401 Oakfield Drive,
Brandon, FL 33511. (813) 689-7764

The Gazette is delivered free to Bloomingdale residents along with The Tampa Tribune on the 1st Saturday of each month.

Publisher — Carla Rockwell
Advertising Manager — Susie Howell



Representatives of construction manager Batson Cook said Cimino Elementary remains scheduled to open this fall.

Courtesy Howard & Associates, Architects.

Cimino Elementary Going Up On Schedule

By Laura Frazier

Don't believe everything you hear.

Tyson Krutsinger, project engineer at the Cimino Elementary School site in Bloomingdale East, said recent rumors suggesting that construction delays would push the school's opening back to 2003 are just that ... rumors.

"We are right on schedule and everything's going just fine," Krutsinger said.

Jim Lipsey with the architectural firm of Howard & Associates in Tampa said the design and construction plans for Cimino closely mirror those approved for the construction of another elementary school in Riverview this year.

Lipsey said, "The core campus and the arrangement of classrooms, administration and cafeteria buildings will be identical to that of (the Rivercrest area school in Riverview)." He added that



Laura Frazier/Photo

Plans for Cimino Elementary include two 2-story campus buildings and two single-story buildings designated for administrative offices, a media center, cafeteria and multi-purpose usage.

the only differences between the two schools will be those dictated by physical differences between the sites, such as the shape of the property, adjacency to public roads

and the general terrain.

"Those are all factors that play a part in how the campus is oriented, and how parent and bus traffic is routed to and around the site,"

Lipsey said.

Details and drawings of the parent drop-off and bus traffic routes were not available at press time, and will be published in a future issue of the Gazette.

School officials said that although the property runs from Culbreath Road west to Lithia Pinecrest, there are currently no plans to allow through-access.

The school will consist of one single story media center/administration building, one single story foodservice/multi-purpose building, and two 2-story classroom buildings.

The 21-acre site is located on the east side of Culbreath Rd., just north of the southern intersection of Nature's Way and Culbreath.

School district records indicate that the projected \$7,487,594 construction cost will be funded by county impact fees, levies paid by developers to support growing communities with needed facilities and services.



The Mayer family (Patrick and Lee Mayer pictured) was honored as Bloomington High's 2001 Volunteers of the Year.

Photo courtesy of Ellen Gales

It's All In The Family For School Volunteers Of The Year

A Gazette Report

The Bloomington Senior High School PTSA in September honored the Mayer family of Brandon as the school's 2000-2001 Volunteers of the year. PTSA presi-


dent Diane Clare said Lee, Jim and Patrick Mayer received the award for the countless hours they dedicated to the school as a family. Clare said, "All three served on the PTSA board and the School Advisory

Council.

The Mayers spent many hours beautifying the school grounds with new plantings, and Lee has volunteered his time in the guidance office. Patrick graduated in 2001, but has come back to the

school on various occasions to help out."

Clare said the PTSA was grateful for the opportunity to express their appreciation to the Mayers for their tireless devotion to Bloomington High School.



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Bloomington PTSA Earns Top Accolades

A Gazette Report

The Bloomington Senior High School PTSA garnered high honors at the state PTA convention held in November.

The dynamic organization, currently in its fourth year of operation, earned the

state's highest honors.

The group was presented with the presidents' awards for membership, programs and local unit performance, and was the first recipient of the new "Jumping In For All Children" award for overall achievement.

THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE



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Triple Threat Wins "Most Delightfully Excessive" Award

By Laura Frazier

The combined efforts of three Bloomingdale East families garnered the "Most Delightfully Excessive" award last month in the third annual Best Bloomingdale Holiday Decorations contest.

Photos can't do justice to the massive, sparkling, blinking, musical spectacle created by Eastridge Drive's Rigsbey, Rockwell and Cartagena families. As word made it's way around Bloomingdale about "the three houses off Greenhollow Drive," we wondered how difficult it would be to find the collaborative display without an address.

As it turned out, all we had to do was drive down Greenhollow and follow the lights of the Aurora Borealis!

We practically had to shield our eyes as we approached the corner of Eastridge and Briarlake. Blanketing all three properties, from the mailboxes to the rooftops, were snowmen, angels, stars, manger scenes, reindeer, Santas, and thousands upon thousands of lights.

Joe Rigsbey, the admitted ringleader and electrical consultant of the group, said he began decorating to excess nine years ago when he and his wife Jane moved to Bloomingdale from Illinois.

"It was just too cold to (decorate outside) there, so we used to decorate the inside of the house like you wouldn't believe," Rigsbey said. Many of the indoor decorations they had collected over the years eventually took a place in their extreme outdoor display. The lone Christmas adornment inside the couple's house these days is a single fiber-optic tree.

Rigsbey said he takes advantage of the warm weather and after-holiday sales to continuously add to his creation ... right up to Dec. 24.

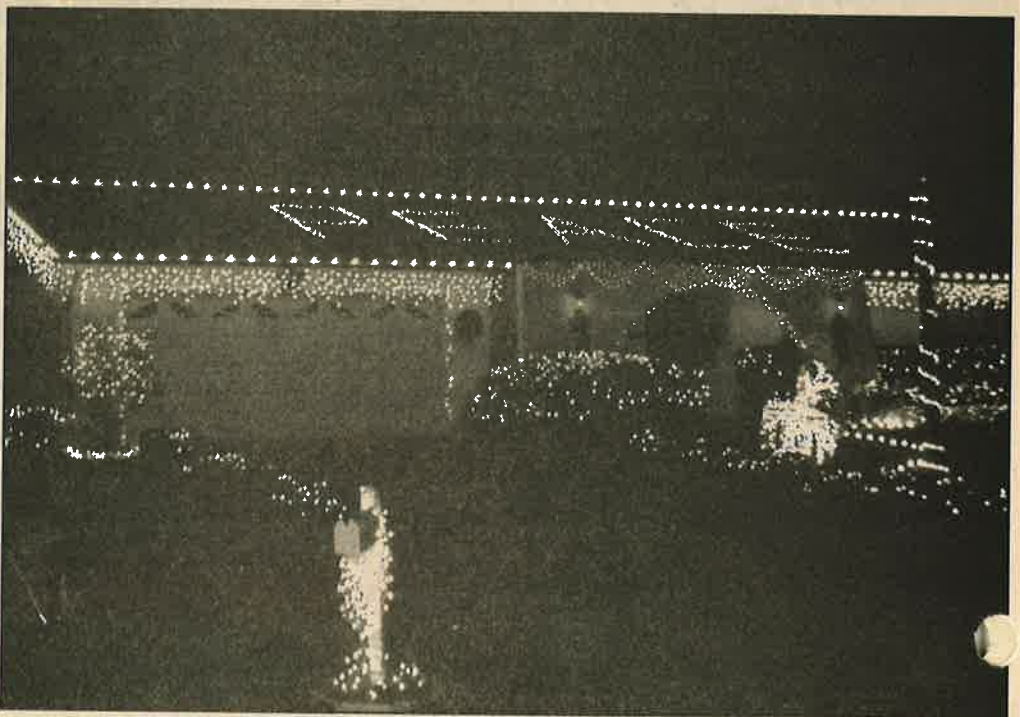
One patriotic design feature the active retiree added

See DECORATIONS, Page 7



Laura Frazier/Photos

Above, the Cartagena family display featured a team of reindeer prancing alongside their front yard balustrade. Below, neighbors said the Rockwell family wisely thought the word "peace" spelled out in lights would be an appropriate sentiment to display on their rooftop this year.



Joe Rigsbey handmade many of the holiday decorations on display at his home, including a decorative concrete flag base and a huge PVC and garland star suspended from trees in his yard.

DECORATIONS

From page 6

this past Christmas will be on display year round; an American flag anchored to a hand-poured concrete pentagon and star-shaped flagpole base. The base and flag were decked out with holiday lights and bows for Christmas. After all the lights are packed away this month, Rigsbey plans to install a plaque on the flag base in honor of the victims of Sept. 11.

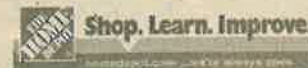
Each family was awarded a \$25 Wal-Mart gift card

courtesy of the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association. Our congratulations go out to all the winners, and our thanks for going above and beyond the call of duty to light up Bloomingdale for the holidays!

The winners of the "Most Charming" and "Most Elegant" displays will be announced this month on our community web site, www.BloomingtonGazette.com.

Free Home Security Class

A Gazette Report



The Home Depot and The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association will present the third in a series of free home improvement clinics at 7 p.m. on Jan. 22 at the Bloomingdale West Park rec center.

The January clinic will focus on home security and will feature product and installation demonstrations.

The BHA will provide refreshments and The Home Depot will award door prizes. For more information, or to suggest a topic for a future workshop, call Kellie Fisher at (813) 684-0516, or e-mail letters@BloomingtonGazette.com.

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| Riverview Goolsby Point Shopping Ctr 672-1832 | |
| Bloomington Royal Oaks Shopping Ctr 654-8113 | |
| Bloomington 3515 Bell Shoals Rd 654-9292 | |
| Brandon Oak Park Plaza 654-9541 | |
| Brandon 913 Brandon Blvd. 684-4499 | |
| South Brandon 11393 Causeway Blvd. 643-6944 | |
| North Brandon Kingsway Plaza 653-4535 | |
| Seffner North Grove Plaza 684-5897 | |
| Valrico Valrico Square 654-2324 | |

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The new median on Bell Shoals Road provides traffic flow improvement, but drivers must familiarize themselves with the new laws as well; u-turns and left turns before the median into the southbound lane are illegal.

Mack Austin/Photos

Bloomingtondale Avenue (Almost) Complete

By Mack Austin

"Good things come to those who wait!" That old adage is what has sustained many of us as we've watched and waited for the Bloomingtondale Avenue widening project to be completed.

Well, for the most part it is. There are four lanes. There are new medians, even if they are shorter than expected, and there are "No U-Turn" signs on the medians on south Bell Shoals Road.

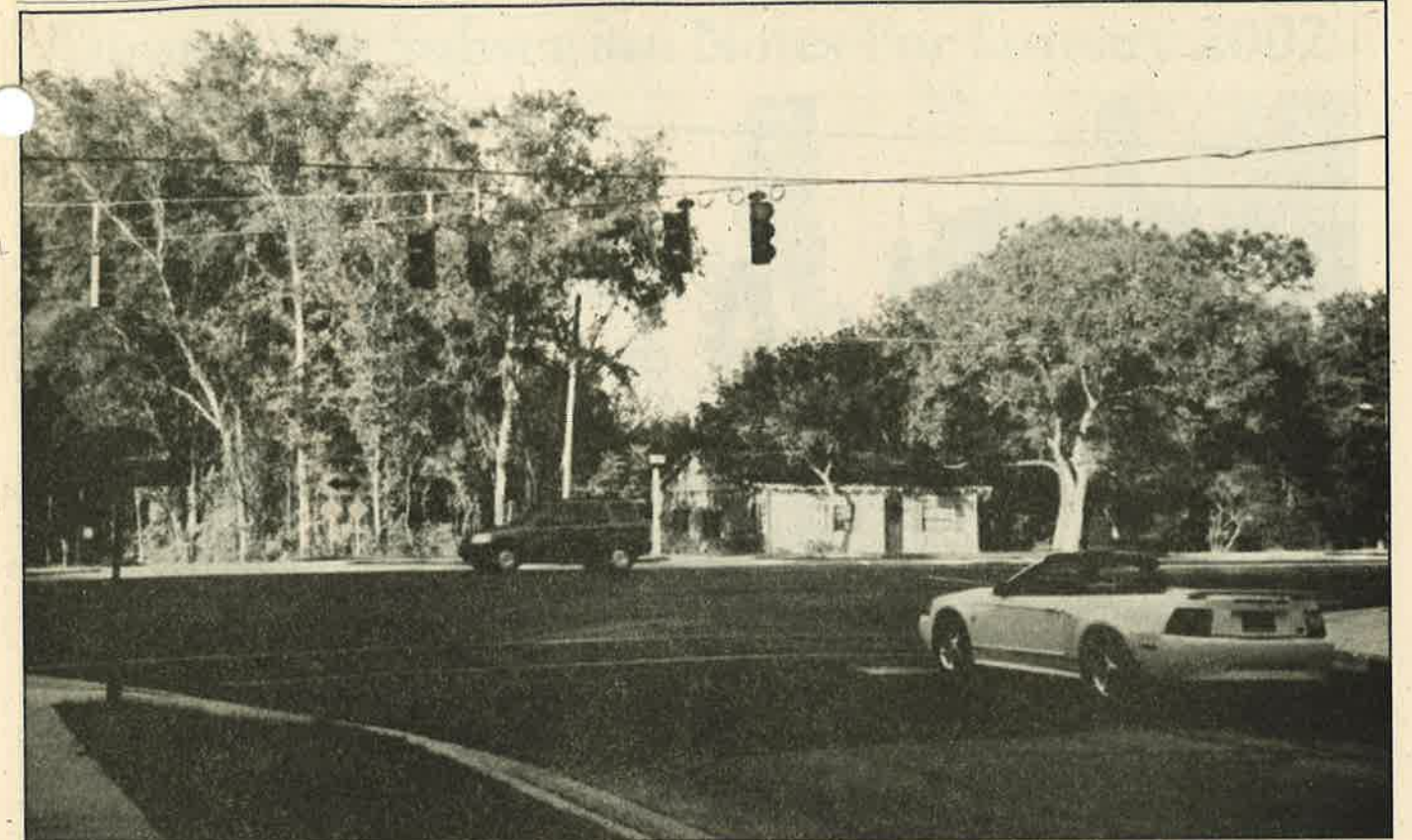
The arrows in the center do tend to confuse drivers, making them think they can turn in by the Bank of America.

There is a new traffic signal at Springvale Drive, and the trees along the right-of-way and in the medians are a nice touch. Traffic does seem to flow better. Overall,



The new median on eastbound Bloomingtondale Avenue helps with traffic flow.

See ROAD, Page 9



Thanks to a new traffic signal at Springvale Ave., drivers won't have to play chicken anymore to get onto Bloomingtondale Avenue.

ROAD

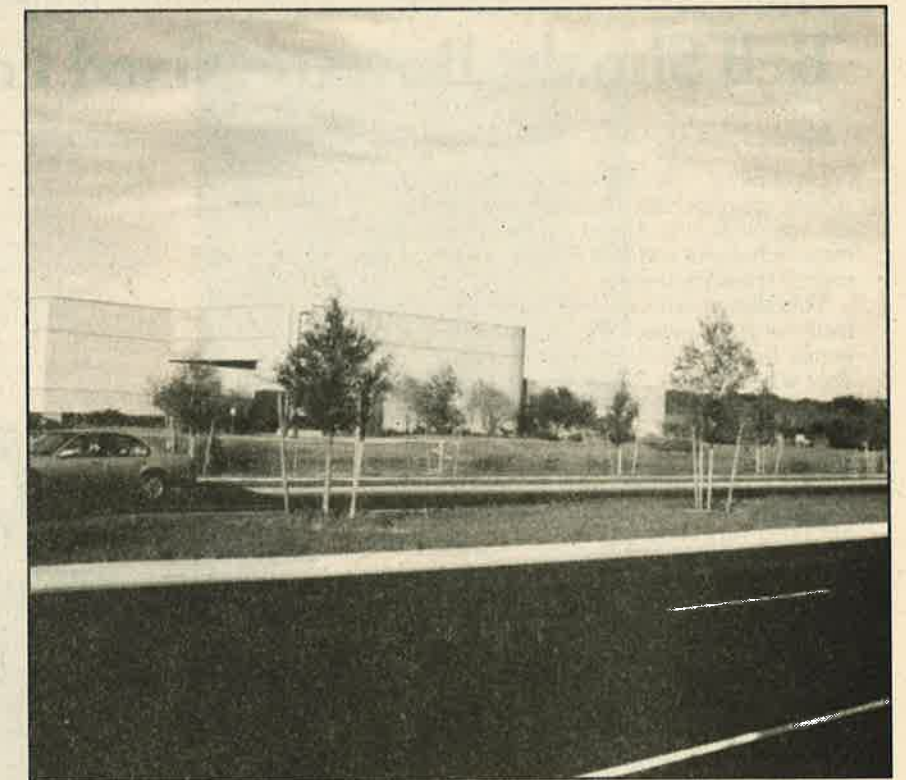
From page 8

it is so much better than it was before.

Now, if only all of the drivers would stop running the red lights, quit speeding, yield to other drivers when required, and slow down to the speed limit, driving just might become a pleasure again.

Greater Bloomingtondale area residents are definitely grateful that this widening project did get funded, scheduled and completed. There are so many roads in Hillsborough County on waiting lists for funding or designing. Our community is also very grateful to county employees like Steve Valdez, Hillsborough County's community relations manager. Valdez and his staff answered hundreds of replies to phone calls and e-mails regarding this project. Their patience and professionalism are to be commended.

With this article are photos showing the changes that are part of the widening project. As with any project of this magnitude, there are always areas that will need fine-tuning. Again, it is great to have the project completed. Now we can concentrate on improving the traffic — it doesn't hurt to dream!



The new medians give back a bit of the natural touch we lost when so many oaks had to be cut down for the widening.



The good news — Bell Shoals and Boyette roads were removed from the county's truck route plan in December.

Bell Shoals, Boyette Nixed From Truck Route

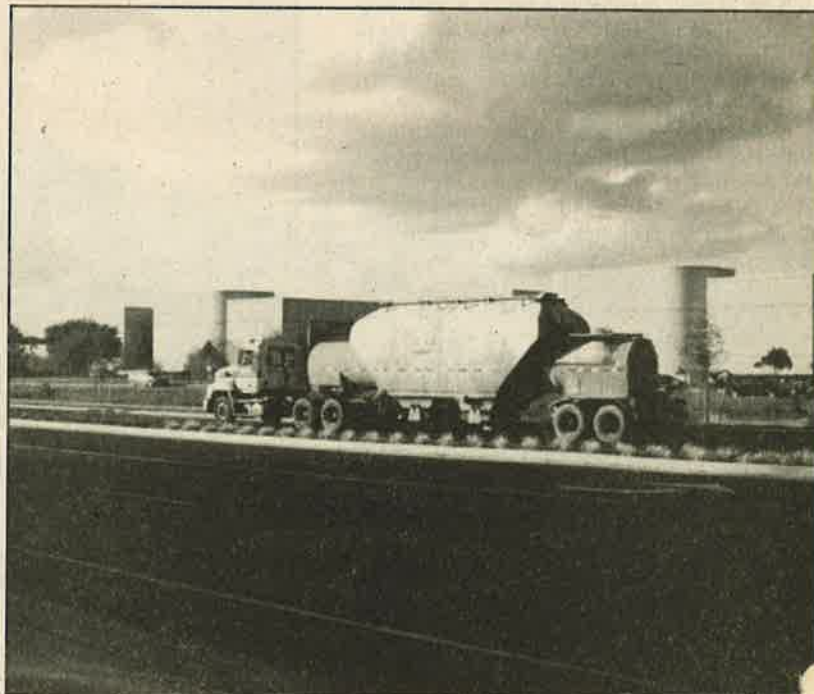
By Mack Austin

Good news — county commissioners last month approved the planning and growth management department's recommendation to remove Boyette and Bell Shoals roads from the county truck route plan.

This change will improve traffic safety, especially with the expected increase in traffic across Bell Shoals Road into Bloomingdale East when Cimino Elementary opens on Culbreath Road this fall.

Now comes the not so good news. As expected, there was no change to the status of Bloomingdale Avenue, a heavily traveled leg of the truck route. It stays on the plan. Some of us have had very close calls with trucks rushing down Bloomingdale, but the trucks are to remain a part of our lives. Unless the mines that many of them are headed to and from close down, they're here to stay.

Bloomingdale Avenue runs right through areas crowded with schools, Little League fields, shopping centers and residential neighborhoods. It is a very dangerous mix, but all we can do now is to be extra careful when we're driving. Watch out for the trucks, especially near the high school. Law enforcement officers will be giving special attention to trucks traveling on Bloomingdale Avenue.



The bad news — county officials say Bloomingdale Avenue will be on the truck route plan for a long time.

Community Substation Notes For January 2002

By Deputy Pete Maurer and Officer Sandy Capitano

As we begin this new year, Officer Capitano and I would like to wish each and every resident of Bloomingdale and the surrounding communities a very safe and secure 2002! Security and safety have recently become even more important to all of us. We've witnessed how just a few moments in time can change millions of lives forever. The



Deputy Pete Maurer

importance of being prepared for emergencies and doing all you can to protect your family, your home and yourself has taken on new meaning.

Those of us in law enforcement and emergency operations want to continue working directly with you and our community in making Bloomingdale a safe and secure community. Even with our nation at war, life does go on. Problems still occur, and they need to be addressed.

Our crime prevention programs continue to be very effective. The new Drug Task Force has made great progress in working with families and teens, and is now developing a web site to provide critical information to parents. In addition, Deputy John Corley is at home in Bloomingdale West as our new park deputy.

The Bloomingdale Area Community Council made significant progress in 2001, and continues to monitor areas of concern to Bloomingdale residents. Residents with concerns should contact us at (813) 635-8040 to let us know your concerns.

The Bloomingdale Mobile Watch needs more support, especially as our community continues to grow. The importance of having an effective, well-organized security team to augment law enforcement is critical. Call us to get involved in this essential operation.



Mack Austin/Photos

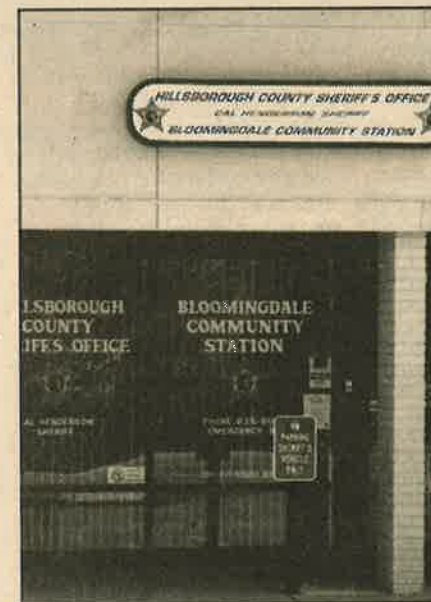
In 2001, a very successful "Cease Fire 2001" removed many dangerous weapons from homes with children.

Many residents demonstrated their willingness to get involved by donating their time or magazines to the Bloomingdale High School reading program, by donating suitcases and gym bags to the TPD "Cases for Kids" Program, or by volunteering to help as crossing guards at our schools. These actions are all very much appreciated.

Traffic continues to be, and probably always will be, a topic of major concern. With the growth in our area comes many more vehicles, some with unfortunately very impatient, disrespectful drivers. We have no problem writing citation, but we would prefer that drivers just slow down and obey the traffic laws. There is no magic answer.

In 2001, the widening of Bloomingdale Avenue was completed. Traffic does flow smoother now, but it slows down when drivers get in a hurry and cause accidents.

New businesses continue to move into our area. Residents in FishHawk, our neighbor to the south, continue to grow in great numbers. Along with this growth comes the need for each of us



Above, Bloomingdale Homeowner's Association president Ted Grable, left, presented a set of United States and Florida flags purchased by the BHA to Hillsborough County Sheriff Cal Henderson and Deputy Pete Maurer at the substation last month. The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Dept. Bloomingdale Community Substation is at 4342 Bell Shoals Road.

to do our part. As President Bush has stated many times, now is the time for Americans to get involved in their neighborhoods, their schools and their communities. We've seen the progress a few small groups like the BHA and BACC can do in making a positive difference in or community. Imagine what many large groups could do?

To those residents who have taken the time to be directly involved in our schools, our community

organizations and with us, we say thank you for your time and hard work. To those who want to help make our community even greater, we say make the decision and give us a call. As your Community Resource Deputy and Community Service Officer, Officer Capitano and I, along with the other officers assigned to our area, look forward to serving and protecting you and your families. We welcome and appreciate any assistance you can give us. It takes a team effort.

Taxing District Decked Entryways, Replaced Trees In November

By Al Devney, President
DPMI Property
Management Inc.

Property Manager Al Devney may be reached at (813) 684-6617. Devney submitted the following property manager's report for the month of November 2001.

Irrigation Maintenance
Brandon Irrigation repaired an electrical problem in the Gotham system. Thunder Irrigation replaced a pump control box in the Rosemead system. DPMI replaced twelve spray heads and two rotors, and repaired one broken main line.

Landscaping Maintenance
Planscape, Inc. replaced two oak trees and two palm trees.

Communities of America installed 850 six-inch poinsettias and watered them twice a week, and in addition put up 424 Christmas bows throughout Bloomingdale East and West.

DPMI hand-watered four oak trees and two palm trees twice a week.

Repairs and Improvements
ZK Construction rebuilt



Property Manager Al Devney wishes everyone in Bloomingdale a very happy New Year.

Laura Frazier/photo

the broken wall at the corner of Glenhaven and Bell Shoals roads.

Russell Electric repaired the severed power line to the lights at the Eagle Bluff entrance, installed power and spot lights at all the major entrances, and upgraded the electrical sys-

tems at each entrance.

Eloquent Displays in Motion installed the Christmas lights and decorations at six major entrances.

Eat, Drink and Pitch It Out The Window
Mr. Devney picked up 30 bags of trash, a magnetic sign,

three towels, three shirts, two diapers, a Genie garage door opener, a plumber's torch, a broom head, parts of a car, five gallons of paint and \$1.25.

The beverages of choice were Mountain Dew for soft drinks, Ice House for beer and Maker's Mark for distilled spirits.

Welcome To Bloomingdale

Bloomingdale area birth announcements courtesy of Brandon Regional Hospital

• Natasia Frances Castillo, 11/9/01
Amanda Bechtel and Harry Castillo

• Kyla Nicole Hicks, 11/14/01
Rebecca and Rodney Hicks

• Matthew Marshall Rainey, 11/15/01
Doris and R. Marshall Rainey

• Riley Christopher Seghi, 11/17/01
Kelly and Ryan Seghi

• Jared Clark, Jr., 11/18/01
Tameka and Jared Clark

• Peyton Blaine Smith, 11/19/01
Lisa and Michael Smith

• Hayden Sebastian Flannery, 11/19/01
Elizabeth and Chauncey Flannery

• Aryn Kathryn Hillary, 11/23/01
Karyn and Brian Hillary

• Haley Marie Russell, 11/24/01
Krystle and William Russell III

• Damian Gauge Smith, 12/02/01
Dana and Christian Smith

• Jordan Ashlyn Bass, 12/03/01
Michelle Gramling and Jeff Bass

• Nyla Skye Hicks, 12/10/01
Pamela and Theodore Hicks

• Dominick Anthony Bijaczyk, 12/12/01
Jennifer and Brian Bijaczyk



County engineers Jerry Dabkowski and Jenni Metzler met with Hurley Road residents. Hurley Road residents met with county engineers at a public meeting last month to address possible traffic calming measures on their residential street.

Mack Austin/Photos

County Program Promotes Traffic Calming

By Mack Austin

Many Bloomingdale area residents have at one time or another experienced traffic speed or volume problems in their neighborhoods. Hillsborough County's traffic calming process provides assistance for neighbors trying to reduce residential traffic problems. Residents of Hurley Road in Brandon recently went through the process.

Hurley Road is an old country road west of Bloomingdale High School. After the school was built and new homes went in north of it, the traffic problems started. Now, with more homes and condominiums going in on their street, Hurley Road residents fear the traffic will get worse.

The concerned residents checked into the county's Residential Traffic Calming program. They used the handbook that is available at the Bloomingdale substation or through public works by calling (813) 272-5912.

The residents of Hurley

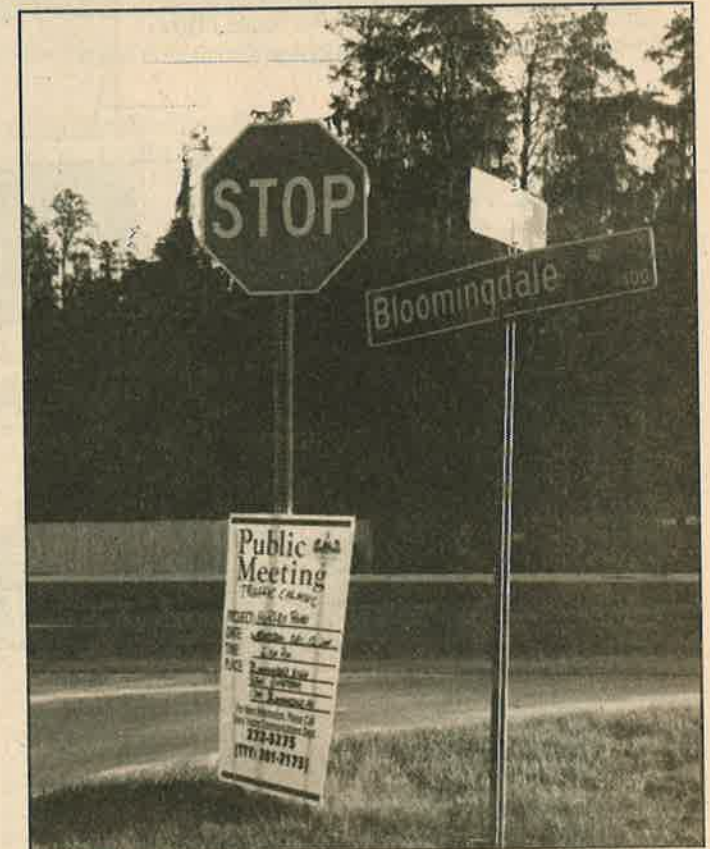
Road followed the procedures described in the handbook. The end result was a public meeting with engineers explaining traffic study findings, descriptions of available traffic calming measures and recommended solutions.

Residents were also given the opportunity to ask questions and make their own recommendations. County engineers explained the timetable for submitting the results of their meeting to county commissioners and, if approved, having the traffic calming measures installed.

The Hurley Road neighbors said the results of the traffic studies were alarming. Calvin and Luanna Huddleston said they couldn't believe some of the speeds recorded on their 25 mph road, ranging from 44 to 75 mph. The Huddleston's said the figures confirmed that they definitely need the traffic calming measures.

County engineers Jerry Dabkowski and Jenni Metzler

See TRAFFIC, Page 19



Santa Delights Kids, Benefits Charities

A Gazette Report

Santa and Mrs. Claus made their 13th annual appearance in Bloomingdale last month at the Bloomingdale community office on Bell Shoals Road. Mr. and Mrs. Claus visited and posed for pictures with nearly 100 Bloomingdale area children. The visit and photos were provided free of charge by the BHA. Santa's visitors and their parents brought in donated canned goods by the armload, which St. Nick promptly carried on his sleigh to local charity food banks.



Above, Santa's trusty elves greeted visitors and offered cookies and juice to anxious children as they waited their turn. Right, lying on the floor beneath the Christmas tree, it looked like Santa had been hitting the egg nog. In reality he was putting his electric train back on its track ... again. Far right, Mrs. Claus had no trouble calming Santa's littlest and most reluctant visitors.



Motorists Must Respect Life And Laws

By Mack Austin

Oftentimes in our lives, unfortunate or tragic things happen that leave us trying to understand why or what could have been done to prevent them from happening. Sometimes there is just no sensible answer.

Recently, one evening in a quiet Bloomingdale West neighborhood, a golden retriever was anxiously waiting for her owner to come home. She was ready to greet him as she always does. Retrievers are very intelligent animals and she knew the sound of her owner's car.

The dog's ears perked up; there was that sound. She sprang up and started circling the yard with the unbelievable energy that retrievers have. There was his car. She kept her eyes focused on her owner, the man who loved and cared for her. She saw him start to turn in, then went out in the road a bit and waited for him to turn in and stop.

Just then, from out of nowhere, a car came speeding down the street. The animal never stood a chance. Witnesses said the car plowed right into her, drug her over one hundred feet down the street, and then kept going — clearly a hit-and-run.

One of the neighbors who had heard all of the commotion ran out to see what had happened. He saw the dog's mangled body lying in the street. He ran up and raised her head. The neighbor said the dog was trembling with pain, blood pouring from her mouth and her eyes frozen in time with a look of despair,



John Belcher enjoys walking his black lab, Essie. She's full of life and energy, just like the golden retriever that was killed on his street last month.

like she too was trying to understand what had happened and why it happened. "Why do I hurt so much," she seemed to say?

A group of neighborhood children moved closer to see what was going on. One of the neighbors at the scene helped move the kids back. The retriever continued to fight for her life in vain.

The man who tried to help her gently laid her head down and watched her eyes as she breathed her last breath.

Another neighbor brought a sheet to cover the lifeless body. She was gone forever.

In trying to understand anything that happens like this we must look at the cause. In this case, the answer is painfully simple. Someone chose to speed through a residential neighborhood where the posted speed limit is 25 mph. The driver knew the speed limit. He didn't mean to hit the retriever, but by purposefully not obeying the traffic laws

he put the lives of everyone in the neighborhood in danger. This type of decision is careless, selfish, and disrespectful of life.

Perhaps the driver will get a citation and pay a fine. Hopefully they'll gain a new perspective and value for life, and other drivers will do the same.

The next time it might be a young child. Hopefully, there won't be a next time. Life is very precious. We must all respect it and the

Kids Essay Contest — Love Is ...

Sponsored by the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association

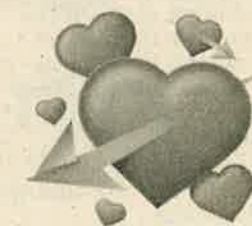
Our Valentine's Day essay contest is open to all elementary school children in the Bloomingdale area. What is love? Start with the phrase

"Love is ..." and tell us in 200 words or less.

Three winning essays will be chosen based on content and expression.

If our judges love your essay, you might win a \$25 Toys-R-Us gift certificate! Send in your typed or

neatly handwritten entry by Jan. 15 to Essay Contest, BHA, 3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33594; fax to (813) 651-1129; or e-mail to letters@BloomingdaleGazette.com. Please include your name, age, school and phone number.



Family Eatery Opens In Bloomingdale Plaza

By Elton Dumont
Exclusive To The Bloomingdale Gazette

Bec's Eatery

147 Bloomingdale Ave.
Bloomingdale Plaza
(813) 662-3000

I have patiently been waiting for a family-style restaurant in greater Bloomingdale that serves all three meals daily. It must be homey, friendly and reasonably priced, with solid American fare. Well, I think this newest Bloomingdale eatery fits all the criteria.

My wife and I had dinner there in mid-December. According to owner Bryan Becton, the menu is still a work in progress. But Becton's credentials are excellent; he recently owned a restaurant on MacDill that

The Weekly Planet newspaper included among its Best of the Bay in 2000 honorees.

The dinner menu featured an interesting appetizer, Bec's Flats, garlic-crusted pizza with spinach, artichokes or chicken honey Dijon. We shared a Crazy Raisin salad, which I highly recommend. It consists of mixed greens, green and red bell peppers, cranberry raisins, sunflower seeds and Gorgonzola cheese; it was really different and sooo good!

Entrees include beef stroganoff (\$9.99), braised beef tips in mushroom sauce over pasta, steak gorgonzola (\$11.99), a New York strip sautéed with Gorgonzola, mushrooms and an optional zesty sauce. We both chose the chicken marsala (\$9.99), seasoned breasts sautéed in

a mushroom wine sauce. It was very good, and the miniature mushrooms were a new twist. Other entrée choices include pasta primavera, baked salmon and eggplant parmesan.

We studied the breakfast menu, which includes an egg casserole served with dirty potatoes, baked French toast with Vermont cinnamon apple, potato pancakes with bacon, cheddar jack and a glaze, eggs benedict, banana pancakes or waffles, and Bec's signature item, palm-lettes; dough-wrapped omelets made to order.

The lunch menu includes Philly cheese steak or chicken cheese sandwiches, honey glazed meatloaf in a dough wrap, croissant sandwiches (pick from chicken salad, turkey club, tuna melt or blackened catfish) and a

Cuban topped with a breaded eggplant cutlet.

All items including salads are ala carte, and the prices are reasonable. Our dinner for two including the special salad and two beverages was under \$28 without the tip. They do have a children's menu and a beer and wine selection. Say hi to Bryan or MJ also; you'll like them both.

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

Until we eat again, your humble gastronomic consultant,

Elton Dumont

Community Office Staffed To Serve Residents

A Gazette Report

The Bloomingdale Community office, at 3509 Bell Shoals Rd. in the Sun Trust Bank/Citgo station plaza, is staffed part-time Monday through Thursday from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m.

The office is maintained in cooperation by the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District and Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, and serves as a meeting place for the BSTD, BHA and Gazette staff.

For meeting days and times, please see "Your Inside Connections" in this issue.

Administrator Bobbi Grussing invites residents to stop by the office with their questions about the homeowners association, taxing district, deed restrictions and other neighborhood information or concerns.

In addition, copies of The Bloomingdale Gazette are now available in the newsstand box outside the office.

For information, call Grussing at the BHA/Gazette number, (813) 681-2051, or the STD line at (813) 684-6667.



BHA/BSTD Office Administrator Bobbi Grussing

Laura Frazier/Photo

Letters

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

Speeding Caused Tragedy On Sandy Creek Drive

Editor's note: This letter refers to the speeding situation addressed in "Drivers Must Respect Life, Laws" in this issue. In December, Deputy Pete Maurer and representatives of the Bloomingdale Area Community Council suggested the Sandy Creek neighbors seek action through the county's residential traffic calming program, referred to in "County program promotes traffic calming," also in this issue.

The week before last we had a dog killed on my street. Every day in the morning

before school and every evening starting about 4 p.m. the high school kids and other young fools decide to drive at speeds exceeding 40 mph on Sandy Creek Drive.

One of my neighbors with two young children recently contacted the sheriff's substation and was advised we need to have a petition to get something done. Since there are several young children on our street, I would like to get this petition working before some innocent baby gets killed.

I note with interest that the deputies are handing out child safety seats. You will not need them if a child gets run over.

By the way, they may want to pull over speeders on Garnett and Canoga Park. The "drive-throughs" (people who do not live in the neighborhood plus some that do) speed through every day. There is more potential danger here since there are at least 4 school bus stops in the area, plus the park has little children running

around and crossing Canoga Park after school frequently.
Bill Jennewine

Reader Likes The Scoop On Dog Parks

Editor's note: Although several residents have expressed an interest in using surplus land near the Natures Way parks maintenance facility for a dog park, the property has not been evaluated for use as a park. Phil Evans of the parks department said officials would monitor the usage of two other dog parks recently opened in Seffner and Tampa before planning any additional facilities. The BHA is not currently involved in efforts to build a new dog park or to convert any existing parks, but encourages residents to continue sending their comments and questions to the Gazette.

I just finished reading the article in the December issue of the Gazette regarding dog parks. I don't have any dogs but I think a dog park would

be great if that would keep residents from walking their dogs around Natures Way, letting their dogs poop everywhere.

While driving daily to and from work, I constantly observe the same dog owners walking their dogs with no clean-up bags in hand. These dog owners are inconsiderate of the walkers, joggers and children. It is disgusting to see this blatant disregard for others. So I would welcome a dog park if that would create a cleaner Natures Way.

Sylvia Bauer

Resident Suggests Limits To Bloomingdale Truck Traffic

Editor's Note: This letter is in response to "Bell Shoals / Boyette Nixed From Truck Route" published on www.BloomingdaleGazette.com in December and in this issue of the Gazette.

Now get them to limit the

See LETTERS, Page 21

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BHA Meeting Time, Place Changes

Special Home Security Meeting Set For Jan. 17

A Gazette Report

Beginning in January, the regular monthly meeting time of the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association board will be permanently changed from 7:30 to 7 p.m.

With the exception of the January meeting, BHA meetings will continue to be held on the first Monday of each month at the community office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road, in the Sun Trust/Citgo plaza.

For January only, the BHA will NOT meet on the first Monday of the month.

An abbreviated meeting of the board, open to the public, will be held at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 17, at the Bloomingdale West Park recreation center.

An abbreviated meeting of the board, open to the public, will be held at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 22, at the Bloomingdale West Park recreation center.

The special meeting will focus on home and neighborhood safety and security, and will be held in cooperation with the Bloomingdale Area Community Council, Bloomingdale Watch programs and Home Depot.

For information, call the BHA at (813) 681-2051 or visit www.BloomingdaleGazette.com.



Laura Frazier/Photo

No paving, just a little lift

The sight of road workers manning jackhammers and routing traffic around sections of Nature's Way in Bloomingdale East last month had residents inquiring as to whether the street was being re-paved. Water Department representatives said manholes on the street were being rehabilitated to sit flush with the road. County officials said Nature's Way is not eligible for repaving or resurfacing at this time.

Community Survey — Kids Internet Usage

By Laura Frazier

It's safe to say that any parent of a teenager who is grasping for autonomy struggles with the balance of allowing the child a certain level of privacy while continuing to monitor potentially dangerous activities.

We might call home while we're away to be sure they arrived safely, check with friend's parents to confirm that a party will be supervised, and surreptitiously "overhear" phone conversations, all in the name of parental concern.

But in this age of instant electronic communication, do we monitor our children's whereabouts on the Internet?

Do we peek in on their "instant message" sessions or monitor their e-mail correspondence?

We hope you will take these questions into consideration,

But in this age of instant electronic communication, do we monitor our children's whereabouts on the Internet?

and participate in our community survey regarding kids' internet usage.

Results of the survey will be published in an upcoming issue of The Bloomingdale Gazette.

All comments received will be published anonymously.

Please e-mail your response to Letters@BloomingdaleGazette.com; fax to (813) 654-6281; or mail to Internet Safety, The Bloomingdale Gazette, 3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33594.

The Questions

Age of children in your household:

Average amount of time spent daily on the computer:

Major computer activity (games, e-mail, instant messages, homework, etc.):

If your child uses an "instant message" utility, how often (if ever) do you monitor the correspondence?

If your child corresponds with friends via e-mail, how often (if ever) do you monitor the correspondence?

Do you know all or most of the persons your child is communicating with via e-mail or on instant messaging?

If your child surfs the internet, how often (if ever) do you monitor the web sites he/she has visited?

Do you know how to check the computer your child uses to see what sites he/she has visited?

Has the problem of inappropriate internet usage come up at your house?

Do you have any suggestions for other parents as to how they can best monitor or limit their child's Internet usage?

Do you feel that it is an invasion of your child's privacy to monitor e-mail and internet activity, and why or why not?

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Taxing District Plans Projects

A Gazette Report

Al Devney, president of Bloomingdale's property management company DPMI Inc., reports plans are in the works to accomplish a number of community improvement and maintenance projects this year.

In addition to the following projects in progress, Devney said the board would consider the installation of fencing along Springvale Drive near Pinegrove Condominiums.

Proposed plans for some of the projects listed will be reviewed at upcoming BSTD meetings, which are open to the public and held at 7:00 p.m. on the second Monday of each month at the Bloomingdale community office,

3509 Bell Shoals Road in the Sun Trust/Citgo plaza.

For information, call (813) 684-6667.

- Improvements to the Garnet Drive entryway — proposed plans may be reviewed at this month's BSTD meeting on Monday, Jan. 14, 2001.

- Wall maintenance and painting of the perimeter wall along Culbreath Road, Nature's Way, Garnet Drive, Greenhollow Road and Bell Shoals Road.

- Improvements to the landscaping and irrigation system on Springvale Avenue.

- Seasonal flower plantings added at all major entryways.

SAY YOU SAW IT IN THE
THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

Bloomingdale Crime Rate Ranks Low, Below Low

A Gazette Report

Recent data documented by the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement reflects low or below low crime rate statistics across the board for the Bloomingdale area.

Visit the FDLE web site at www.fdle.state.fl.us to view crime statistics, the FDLE offender and predator database, stolen merchandise records and more.

TRAFFIC

From page 12

were well prepared for the meeting with information and the results of their studies. They listened carefully and noted suggestions and concerns made by the residents.

With the pending approval of the County Commission, Hurley Road residents may see their traffic calming measures installed next

month.

This example shows clearly how staying calm, getting the facts and following the set process can result in effective communication and desired results.

The residents of Hurley Road made the system work for them by working with the system.

SAY YOU SAW IT IN THE
THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

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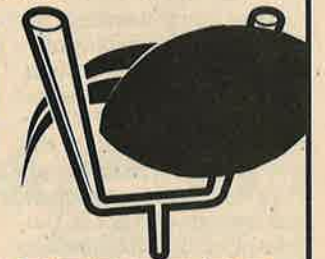
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Mack Austin/Photo

Once pasture and farmland to John McLean and his family will soon be the home to a new Bloomingdale landmark — the South Brandon library.

Group Supports Naming Library For Homesteading Family

"If you went back in time to the library site around the 1880's, you would find John McLean and his family working in the hot Florida sun as they planted their citrus crop."

By Mack Austin

After many meetings and a considerable display of patience, the Hillsborough County library board selected a site just east of Bloomingdale High school for the new South Brandon library. This was both an emotional and historical event in the lives of many Bloomingdale residents. Naming this new Bloomingdale landmark is the next important step.

If you went back in time to the library site around the 1880's, you would find John McLean and his family working in the hot Florida sun as they planted their citrus crop. McLean homesteaded the property. There was a landing on the Alafia River at the end of what is now Culbreath Road.

One of McLean's sons,



Photo courtesy of Candil Martin

Jesse and Jennie McLean, at the left, homesteaded the land next to Bloomingdale High School in the early 1900s.

Jesse, owned Hillsboro Packing, located at what is now the Courtesy car dealership at the corner of Hwy. 301 and Hwy. 60. The packing-house burned down in 1958, shortly after Jesse passed away on New Year's day of that year. Jesse's brother Earnest, founded J. E. McLean and Sons, a citrus growing and shipping concern, which his grandson,

Bob McLean, continues to operate in Valrico.

Jesse's family had their home on the property near one of Bloomingdale's first businesses, a mom and pop store at the corner of Bloomingdale and Lithia Pinecrest roads, where a convenience store now operates. Across the street was a Western Auto. There were no other businesses in the area then, not even a

stop sign or much less a traffic light. Traffic was great!

Back when Jesse wanted a telephone, he agreed to install poles from Hwy. 301 to his house, and the phone company ran the wires. Jesse and his family had cattle that grazed on most of what is now Bloomingdale between Bell Shoals and Lithia Pinecrest roads. He leased the property from a phosphate company.

His family stayed very active in the community, helping form the Bloomingdale Civic Association, the foundation for Bloomingdale Little League.

Jesse's family has many fond memories of their life here in Bloomingdale, back when times were busy but life was slower; feeding the chickens, picking mulberries, working in the gardens, taking care of the cows and simply enjoying being with family. They have carried on his tradition of hard work on this land. This is why they

See LIBRARY, Page 23

Local YMCA's Will Grow, Expand Services In 2002

Tampa Family YMCA will hold open house events each Saturday this month

By Laura Frazier

The Tampa Metropolitan Area YMCA anticipates a year of continued growth of services and facility additions and improvements.

Over the past two years, new YMCA facilities opened in Bloomingdale, New Tampa and Dade City. Additional branches will open this year in Plant City and western Hillsborough. Members may use any facility in the Tampa Metro YMCA district.

YMCA staff and volunteers plan program expansions this year, many in cooperation with local youth service agencies and schools, to benefit children and teens, including migrant and underprivileged children.

Tampa YMCA president Robert Gilbertson announced



Laura Frazier/Photo

The Campo Family YMCA is at Bloomingdale Avenue. and Culbreath Road.

in a press release last month an increase in membership fees, but added, "The Y will continue to offer financial assistance to those who need it. If you know of someone who might want to belong but cannot afford the cost of mem-

bership or programs, please contact your Y branch staff."

Each Saturday in January, the Campo Family YMCA in Bloomingdale will hold open house "Super Saturdays." Admission to the facility will be free and open to the public,

and special events related to New Year's resolutions and how to keep them will be offered.

For information about membership, services or volunteer opportunities at the Campo Family YMCA, con-

High School Grad Planning Advice

A Gazette Report

(813) 744-8449.

Bloomingdale High guidance counselor Karen Aponte welcomes students and parents to visit the guidance resource center to research colleges, vocational and technical schools, scholarship opportunities and SAT information.

Appointments are recommended. For information or appointments call Aponte at

In addition, financial aid workshops provided by the Hillsborough County school district will be held at Riverview High on Jan. 10 at 7:00 p.m. and at Brandon High on Jan. 24 at 7:00 p.m.

Students and parents may attend workshops held at any high school in their district. For information call Linda Cobbe at (813) 272-

LETTERS

From page 17

heavy truck traffic on Bloomingdale; either none, or limit their hours — no trucks allowed from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and between 3 and 6 p.m. Bloomingdale Avenue. has turned into a giant truck lane and/or bypass for trucks with no business in Bloomingdale.

Molten sulfur trucks are breeding like rabbits.

This adds to the congestion during these hours, but they delay the flow of traffic due to their lack of maintaining the speed of the traffic, causing backlogs and eventually accidents.

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Mack Austin/Photo

Bloomington Little League maintenance coordinator Mark West checks out the construction of a new majors field, complete with new lights and dugouts. West said, "This is really great for the players to get such a beautiful field; definitely a field of dreams!"

Field Of Dreams

Bloomington Little League registration will be held at the park on Jan. 5, Jan. 9 and Jan. 12. Call (813) 684-8422 for details.



All South Baseball, Inc. contractors Guy Sheppard and Robert Rose start laying the clay for the new Major field infield. The company has completed several of the new projects at Bloomington Little League Park.

A Light In The Clearing

Workers cleared tree limbs last month in preparation to install new street lights on the east side of Culbreath Road, near the southern intersection of Nature's Way and Culbreath. County officials expedited plans to install the lights in cooperation with requests made by the Bloomington Homeowners Association and County Commissioner Ronda Storms. The BHA cited school pedestrian and bus stop safety as important reasons to accomplish the installation of the lights prior to the opening of nearby Cimino Elementary School.



Laura Frazier/Photo

Program Airs Fridays

A Gazette Report

HTV cable channel 22 recently unveiled a new weekly talk show that the county's director of communications said will allow residents to see government meetings and hear discussions about important local issues.

In a press release announcing the show's debut last month, Mike

Foerster said, "Our County Commissioners are always looking for ways to increase citizen participation in government and to hear from the public. This show will fit in nicely with the Town Hall Meetings, neighborhood initiatives and all the other ways Commissioners have established for residents to get involved in their government."

Mothers Meet Tuesdays In Brandon

A Gazette Report

The "Mothers & More" group invites Bloomington area moms to join them at their next meeting at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 8 at St. Andrews United Methodist

Church, 3315 Bryan Road in Valrico.

The group offers topical discussions, guest speakers, playgroups, a Mom's Night Out and other activities.

For information call (813) 316-0401, Ext. 3788.

SAY YOU SAW IT IN THE THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

LIBRARY

From page 20

were so generous in helping the Bloomington community and Hillsborough County obtain such a great site for the new library.

This is also why the Bloomington Area Community Council has decided to support the recommendation to have the new library named "The McLean Family Public Library."

A formal request for this recommendation has been

submitted to the library board.

If you would like to support this recommendation to name our new library in honor of the McLean family, please contact the Hillsborough County library board at board@thpl.org or call (813) 273-3660.

It would truly be a great legacy to have the library named after the man and the family who worked this land for so many years.

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