

MACK AUSTIN/Photo



In This Issue:

- Inside Connections, 4
- What's Happening, 6
- Community Council, 11
- Letters, 17
- Substation Notes, 17
- Property Manager's Report, 19
- Holiday Decorating Contest Winner, 22
- Yard Of The Month, 23

Featured Story:

**Newsome
Boundary Vote
This Month**

see page 3

New Library Needs Friends, Ideas

The planning team for the new South Brandon Library wants to help form a Friends of the Library group, and to hear residents' design and construction ideas.
See stories on page 2.



Photo courtesy of Bloomingdale High School

Bloomingdale's Best

Bloomingdale Senior High School's 2003 Teacher of the Year is not a teacher by profession. Bloomingdale staff selected Guidance Department Chair Mary Grable for this award.
See story on page 6.

PRIDE Program Starts West Of Bell Shoals, *see page 5*



**Hungry Howie's
Pizza & Subs**

**PIZZA • PASTA • SUBS
WINGS • SALADS**

SEE OUR SPECIALS ON PAGE 7

New Library Needs Friends, Volunteers

By MACK AUSTIN

A very unique opportunity is now available for Bloomington residents excited about the construction of the new South Brandon Library to be built next to Bloomingdale Senior High School.

Hillsborough County staff met last month with a small group of residents to announce that county architects are seeking input from residents on what the library should look like, what features should be designed into it, and what type of landscaping should be incorporated in the design.

Israel Grajales, Senior Architect with Hillsborough County's Real Estate Department, and David Wullschleger, Operations Manager for the Tampa-Hillsborough Library Services, recommended that community residents form a "Friends of the Library" group. This group would represent the community and meet with county officials to present community input and keep residents informed

about the library's construction status.

The \$1.2 million dollar library will cover 10,000 square foot and will be expandable to 25,000 square feet. The facility will contain a community room, children's library, reading room and parking for up to 250 cars. Construction is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2003 and to be completed in December 2004.

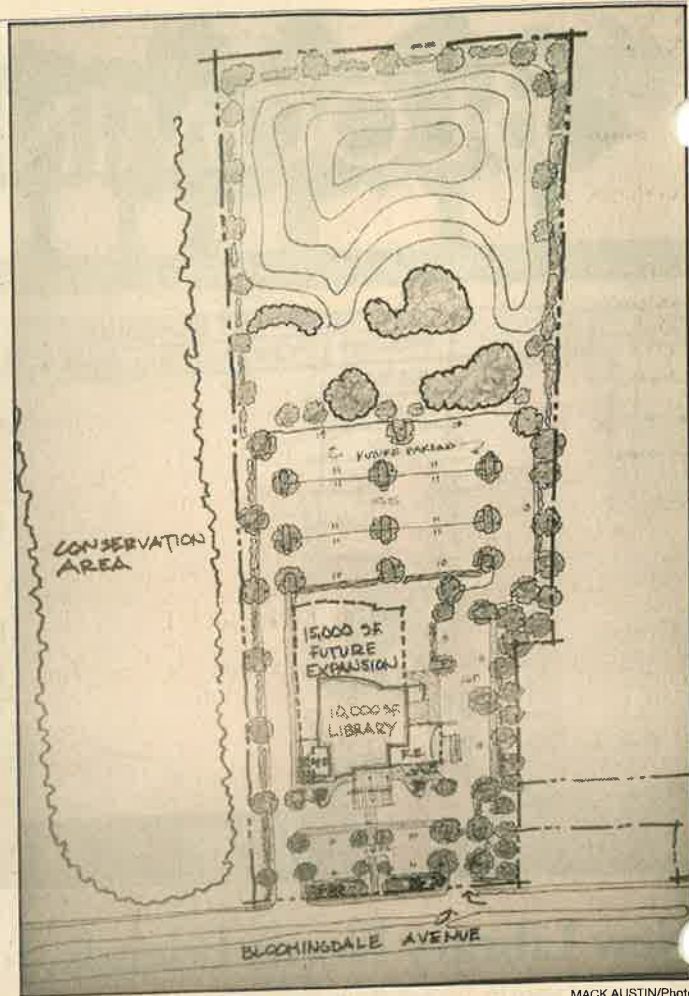
After completion of the construction, the group could expand to meet all of the objectives and purposes of a Friends of the Library organization. These include:

To promote and to aid the establishment and enhancement of library facilities in Hillsborough County.

To foster closer relations between the public libraries and the citizens of the County.

To promote knowledge of the functions, resources, services, and needs of the libraries.

See Friends, Page 9



This architectural drawing shows the basic layout of the new South Brandon Library. Bloomingdale residents will be actively involved in the design of the library through the formation of a Friends of the Library group.

Team Forms To Design New Library

GROUP WANTS RESIDENTS' IDEAS

By MACK AUSTIN

Plans for the new South Brandon Library are in motion.

Attendees at a two-day design workshop held last month included professionals from county real estate and library services departments, architects, representatives of the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, Inc. and residents interested in taking an active role in the project.

Current plans for the library, to be built on Bloomingdale Avenue next to Bloomingdale High School, call for a December 2003



Core members of the team forming to design the South Brandon Library include Mark Smith, the architect's project manager; Dot Smelt, Brandon Area Genealogical Society member; Israel Grajales, Hillsborough County senior architect; and Sol Fleischman, owner of Fleischman-Garcia Architects.

ground breaking and occupancy in December 2004.

Israel Grajales, senior architect with Hillsborough County's real estate depart-

ment, led the workshop. The clinic was held to enable residents to work directly with architects and engineers in designing every facet of the

See Design, Page 10

District Presents Newsome Boundary Proposals

FINAL PLANS TO BE MADE THIS MONTH

By SHANNAN D. POWELL
Correspondent

After months of committee meetings and more than 800 e-mails, faxes and letters, it was finally the residents' turns to speak out about the Newsome boundary proposals. And they had a lot to say.

County representatives, including William Person, director of Pupil Administrative Services, and principals from Brandon, Bloomingdale, Durant and Riverview high schools, met with more than 250 parents at Bloomingdale High School at a public meeting Dec. 17.

While not responding directly to any of the public comments, Person assured those present that their sentiments would be passed on to Superintendent Earl Lennard, who was not in

attendance.

Most of the audience appeared to be looking for viable answers to severe overcrowding at both Bloomingdale and Riverview high schools, and many were unhappy with what they heard.

Riverview junior and student council member Brett Briggs compared the halls at his school to a snowed-in airport during the holidays.

"I feel I have the right to a fair education and you can't get that with 40 people in a class. I want relief for Riverview," Briggs said.

But easing the crush comes at a price some parents and students are resistant to pay.

Only one of the four options, identified at the December meeting as Plan 3, relieved overcrowding at Riverview, but was also the option that divided Bloomingdale communities as well as chopping up the Buckhorn and Kingswood feeders.

Lloyd Radder, whose children currently attend Bloomingdale, but may be moved to Newsome, said, "What people don't understand about Plan 3, is the consequences of that plan, with all the people moving, all the traffic generated, all the potentials."

Radder favors moving more Riverview students to Newsome because, he said, it is very close on the same side of the Alafia River, and students would be traveling opposite of the morning traffic on Boyette Road.

But all four options shuffled students at below-capacity Durant, leaving many people wondering why.

"Anything that does not give relief to Riverview and Bloomingdale does not work," said one woman. "And then you draw Durant, which doesn't need anything, into the mix, taking some out and putting some in. That doesn't make any sense."

Many were concerned that

athletics, band and other extracurricular activities would suffer at a new school, and that scholarship opportunities would vanish. Most of those arguments were bolstered by estimates that Newsome would open at 50 percent capacity or lower under all plans presented.

For example, in one plan, Cimino and Buckhorn feeders would be divided and Lithia Springs would move to Newsome, which would open at 38 percent capacity, while leaving Riverview at 108 percent.

Others pointed out that the committee ignored such natural boundaries as the Alafia River, forcing some students to drive further distances in morning rush hour traffic because of limited crossing points.

Throughout this process, communities like Bloomingdale have staunchly

See Newsome, Page 23

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Your Inside Connections

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, Inc.

3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33594.
 (813) 681-2051. Fax: (813) 651-1129
 E-mail: Bloomingdale.Homeowners@Verizon.net
 Web Site: www.BloomingdaleGazette.com
 BHA meetings are at the community office on the 1st Monday of each month at 7 p.m.

- President** — Ted Grable
- Vice President** — Joe Hickle
- Treasurer** — Pam Liguori
- Director** — Tony Diolosa
- Director** — Steve Heckel
- Director** — Cheryl Kehrmeier
- Director** — Michele Caballer
- Director** — Joseph Grem

Bloomingdale Special Taxing District

3509 Bell Shoals Rd., Valrico, FL 33594
 (813) 684-6667
 BSTD meetings are held at the community office on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7 p.m.

- President** — Thom Snelling
- Vice President** — Russell Jones

- Treasurer** — Dale Kahn
- Recording Secretary** — Alice Burleson
- Correspondence Secretary** — David West
- Trustee** — Myron Magedanz
- Trustee** — Michael Buday
- Property Manager** — Al Devney

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
 3509 Bell Shoals Rd.
 Valrico, FL 33594
 (813) 681-2051
 Fax: (813) 651-1129
 E-Mail: News@BloomingdaleGazette.com

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- Correspondent** — Leslie White
- Restaurant Critic** — Elton Dumont
- Yard of the Month** — Karen Pearson

Published by Sunbelt Newspapers — 505 W. Robertson,
 Brandon, FL 33511. (813) 657-4500

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

Publisher — Carla Rockwell
Advertising Manager — Tami Donaldson; phone: 627-1322; e-mail: tdonaldson@tampatrib.com

Take PRIDE In Your Bloomingdale Neighborhood

NEW PROGRAM STARTS THIS MONTH

By CHERYL KEHRMEYER
 BHA Director



Thank you to those Bloomingdale residents who answered the call to be a part of Team PRIDE - People of Bloomingdale Revitalizing, Improving, Developing and Enjoying our great community. The purpose of this program is to renew the sense of pride in home ownership and pride in community by cleaning up and improving our homes, yards, and streets.

Now that the New Year is here, it's time to roll up our sleeves and take action! Many people have already signed up to be part of Team PRIDE, helping to make a difference right in their own neighborhoods. In response to the needs communicated by many concerned residents who have attended monthly homeowners associations

PRIDE - People Revitalizing, Improving, Developing and Enjoying Bloomingdale

meetings, the PRIDE program will begin in neighborhoods on the west side of Bell Shoals Road. But we need your help!

Beginning in January, up to eight neighborhoods can be trained, cleaned up, and improved each quarter, as long as there is sufficient interest by the residents of each neighborhood. The BHA and the PRIDE Committee will help by providing training for your PRIDE Team Captain(s). We'll provide each

Captain with a PRIDE resource manual that includes tips and ideas on forming a team, organizing volunteers, running a neighborhood clean-up day, and getting helping hands from the community (Boy Scouts, church youth groups, high school service groups, etc.).

The PRIDE program is looking for residents from neighborhoods on the west side of Bell Shoals Road to get involved. Please call the BHA office at 681-2051 or e-mail

January PRIDE Good Neighbor Tip

Make it a point to get to know the people who live in that house on your street where the grass usually needs to be cut or the paint is chipping. The homeowners may be elderly, sick or physically challenged. If so, lend a hand yourself or enlist the services of an able-bodied teen who may live on your street.

Bloomingdale.Homeowners@Verizon.net by January 20, 2003.

We will plan a Clean-Up Day in March for up to eight neighborhoods with sufficient interest.

We look forward to hearing from you!

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Bloomingtondale High Honors 2003 Teacher Of The Year

By LAURA FRAZIER

Bloomingtondale Senior High School's Teacher of the Year is not a teacher by profession.

But principal B. J. Stelter said the school's 2003 honoree - guidance counselor and department chair Mary Grable - is well qualified for the award.

"Mary takes the word 'professional' to a higher level. She is revered by her colleagues school-wide as a mentor," Stelter said.

The instructional staff at Bloomingtondale selected Grable for the award this month.

It's unusual for a guidance counselor to win the award, Stelter said.

But it's also unusual for a new counselor to move into a department chair just one year after they're hired, Stelter said of Grable's appointment three years ago to head up the guidance department.

"She's an absolute go-getter," Stelter said.

Grable has made innumerable improvements to the school's guidance program since her tenure began, Stelter said. Her organizational skills and knack for time management have made it much easier for counselors to meet with an ever-increasing number of students and parents.

"Under Mary's leadership, the overall atmosphere of our guidance program has improved tremendously as far as finding sufficient time to work with students seeking both academic and personal advice," Stelter said.

The principal praised Grable's dedication to her work.

"The lady knows nothing about a clock. She arrives early at school, and remains until it's time to go home. And many times when I'm here for an evening activities, I see her light on back in her office," said Stelter.

Grable once worked in North Carolina as a social



Mary Grable, Bloomingtondale High 2003 Teacher of the Year

Photo courtesy Bloomingtondale Senior High School

worker. School guidance counselors stood out among the many professionals she collaborated with to advocate care for foster children.

When she moved to Bloomingtondale 18 years ago with her husband Ted, current president of The Bloomingtondale Homeowners Association, Inc., and their three children,

Grable decided to go back to college to pursue a master's degree in school guidance.

"It was a good choice for me," she said.

Likewise, Stelter said the school staff's choice for the 2003 Teacher of the Year was a good one.

"Mary is an essential, respected part of our team."

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What's Happening

Send announcements by the 20th of this month for events taking place next month to News@BloomingtondaleGazette.com or Editor, 3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33594.

January 7 - 30

High Schools Hold College Financial Aid Workshops

The School District of Hillsborough County has scheduled financial aid workshops for parents and guardians of high school seniors through Jan. 30, 2003 at district high schools. Workshop topics include directions for completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and accessing scholarship opportunities. Interested students and their parents or guardians may attend any of the workshops listed below, regardless of which school they attend.

Workshops will be held at

Bloomington High, Jan. 7, 6:30 p.m.; Armwood High, Jan. 8, 7 p.m.; Blake High, Jan. 9, 7 p.m.; Gaither High, Jan. 9, 7 p.m.; Riverview High, Jan. 9, 6:30 p.m.; Plant City High, Jan. 14, 6:30 p.m.; Robinson High, Jan. 14, 6:30 p.m.; Leto High, Jan. 15, 6:30 p.m.; Brandon High, Jan. 16, 7 p.m.; Plant High, Jan. 16, 7:30 p.m.; Hillsborough High, Jan. 23, 7 p.m.; Jefferson High, Jan. 27, 6:30 p.m. and Tampa Bay Tech, Jan. 30, 7 p.m. For more information visit www.sdhc.k12.fl.us or call 272-4602.

January 8

LaLeche League PM Meeting

La Leche League, a mothers' group discussion of parenting & breastfeeding with accredited leaders on hand and on call, meets evenings the second Wednesday

See Happening, Page 18

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LUNCH COMBOS

Pepperoni Roll & a Coke	\$3.25	Small Oven Baked Sub & a Coke	\$4.55
Small Greek or Chef Salad & Howie Bread	\$4.55	Baked Pasta for one	\$4.95
Small 1-Topping Pizza & a Coke	\$4.55		

Hungry Howie's Pizza & Subs
Excludes 12/31/02. Not valid with other coupons. 185-100 at participating stores.



The new Eckerd's pharmacy at the corner of Bell Shoals and Boyette roads is part of the new commercial growth in our area being monitored by the Bloomingdale Area Community Council. The talk among area residents: Does our community really need another drug store? How about some nice family restaurants? Photos by MACK AUSTIN

New Year Rings In New Construction

A Gazette Report

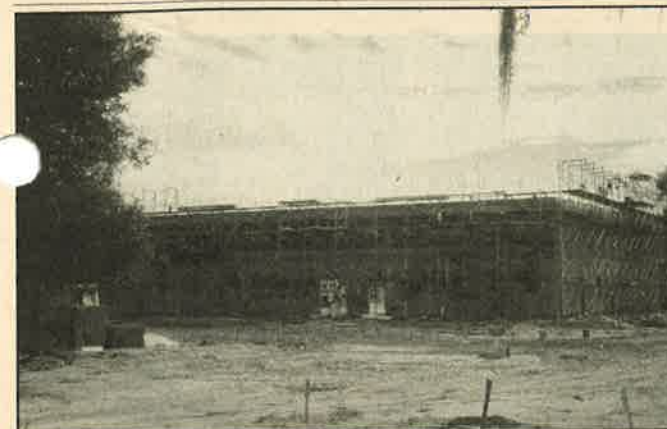
New construction in the greater Bloomingdale area will continue in 2003, with the addition of new business and shopping centers and housing developments in our area.

The Bloomingdale Area Community Council, in cooperation with involved residents, Sheriff's Office officials and Hillsborough County staff, will continue to monitor new development and work to minimize the sometimes negative impacts of infill growth.

See additional photos, page 9.



The construction of Lithia Crossings Shopping Plaza on Lithia-Pinecrest Road is well underway. Many residents say new shopping and dining destinations convenient to our area are welcome additions, but on the flip side, they are sure to result in more traffic congestion.



Many Bloomingdale area residents fought to keep this new Publix supermarket on Lithia-Pinecrest Road out of their back yards. Insuring the developers keep their promises to make the project compatible with their residential neighbors is the next step.



Watching the construction take place next year on the new South Brandon Library next to Bloomingdale High will be a dream come true for residents who campaigned to have it located there. But what will be built on land next to the library? Now comes the task of getting residents and officials involved to ensure that whatever is built there will be an asset to our community.

Friends

From page 2

To lead in the development of programs for the extension and improvement of library services and resources.

To foster public support for the necessary development of these libraries to the end that they may serve adequately the needs of the citizens of Hillsborough County.

To cooperate in the operation and function of such

library facilities.

Having an active, effective Friends of the Library organization has in other communities proven to greatly enhance the services offered by and the use of the library, and to make the library an integral part of a growing community such as Bloomingdale.

We are very fortunate to

have a new library being built in our community; especially one located so close to our homes and schools. Now is the time to take an active role in its future.

Ted Grable, Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, Inc. president, said he would present a proposal to the BHA board of directors that the board take an active role in establishing a local

Friends group.

Grable recommended south Brandon residents interested in forming this new group to contact the BHA by e-mail at Bloomingdale.Homeowners@verizon.net or phone 681-2051.

Check www.BloomingdaleGazette.com for updates on the development of the library and the Friends group.



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- Bloomingdale 4344 Bell Shoals, 689-9176
- Brandon 913 W. Brandon Blvd, 684-4499
- Plant City 2621 Thonotosassa Rd, 752-6631
- Valrico 1985 E. Brandon Blvd, 654-2324
- Bloomingdale 815 E. Bloomingdale, 681-8700
- Brandon 11393 Causeway Blvd, 643-6944
- Providence 1983 Lumsden Rd, 654-4423
- Apollo Beach 220 Apollo Beach Blvd, 645-1499
- Bloomingdale 3248 Lithia-Pinecrest, 654-8113
- N. Brandon 213 Kingsway Ave, 653-4535
- Riverview 11697 Boyette Rd, 672-1832
- Valrico 2511 SR 60 E, 643-4825

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COUPON EXPIRES 2/1/03

Supermarket Makes Super Donation

A Gazette Report

Winn-Dixie Supermarket's Central Florida Division donated \$12,000 in food to the Divine Providence Food Bank at Metropolitan Ministries on Tuesday, Dec. 17.

Winn-Dixie Stores, Inc. is one of the nation's largest supermarket retailers with more than 1,070 stores in 12 states and the Bahamas.

Winn-Dixie Central Florida operates more than 150 stores in the Orlando and Tampa area, including two stores in the greater Bloomingdale area.

According to Hillsborough Task Force on Hunger Collaborative, there are 50,000 hungry people and 5,744 homeless people in Hillsborough County.

Winn-Dixie's food donation produced 40,000 meals for those less fortunate living in West Florida.

Morris Hintzman, President of Metropolitan Ministries, said the organization

was overwhelmed by the generous contribution.

"This is just what we needed, and we didn't even have to call them. Winn-Dixie did this on their own," Hintzman said.

Divine Providence Food Bank and Metropolitan Ministries shelves were replenished last month with much needed holiday dinner items including turkeys, cookies, cake mixes, yams and gravy.

Other products include canned goods, tuna, peanut butter, beans, canned ham and chicken and rice.

Mark Sellers, division manager for Winn-Dixie Central Florida, said the trucks were filled with items requested by Divine Providence Food Bank and Metropolitan Ministries.

"We asked them what they needed most, and that's what we delivered. We did our part to ensure that no one in our area went hungry this holiday season."



Photo courtesy Winn-Dixie Stores, Inc.
Winn-Dixie Supermarkets' Central Florida Division donated \$12,000 in food to Metropolitan Ministries last month.

Design

From page 2

Inc., or BHA, noted the need for adequate parking and future expansion. Heckel also announced the BHA's commitment to help organize a Friends of the Library committee.

In addition, the group discussed basic considerations such as low maintenance, aesthetics and landscaping that complies with environmental requirements.

Other items discussed included the need for safe access to the library from Bloomingdale Avenue and sidewalk access for Bloomingdale High students.

Special considerations to accommodate groups like home schooling families and children were also considered.

On day two, Fleishman-Garcia Architects presented two possible concepts of the rough site and rough floor plan. The concepts were then ranked.

The next phase involves the design of concepts based on the rankings.

Workshop attendees agreed that designing a new library is obviously a challenging project, but an effective design will result in

improved use, better utilization of space and reduced costs.

The next library planned for construction in our area is expected to be built in the FishHawk community.

But no specific date has been set, so the efficient design of the South Brandon Library is critical.

Residents interested in taking part in this project are invited to submit their comments and ideas to the homeowners association by e-mail to Bloomingdale.Homeowners@verizon.net, or by mail to BHA, Library Ideas, 3509

Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33594.

Bloomingdale residents with questions or suggestions about the library are also invited to attend the BHA's next board meeting at the community office, 7 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 6.

As plans are finalized and approved by the Library Planning Board, more meetings will be held to update residents on the project.

Meetings will be announced in local newspapers and on www.BloomingdaleGazette.com.

SAY YOU SAW IT IN
THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

Community Council Update

A Bloomingdale Area Community Council Report

Bloomingdale Area Community Council, or BACC, volunteers meet monthly with local law enforcement and county departments to research and resolve neighborhood issues and concerns. Meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month at the community station. For information, call Bloomingdale Community Resource Deputy Pete Maurer or Community Service Officer Sandy Capitano at 635-8040.

2002 Review

A review of 2002 shows attention was given and solutions found to many issues of concern to our residents.

The council was fortunate to have many distinguished guests during 2002, including State Representative and now Speaker of the House Johnnie Byrd and his staff, Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Chief Deputy



MACK AUSTIN/Photo

David Gee and several other District IV deputies and detectives, Jeff Mauch from Parks Maintenance Unit II, and Barney Taylor from Solid Waste Management.

Direct contact with Steve Valdez, Hillsborough County's Community Relations

Manager, and Audi Canney, County Commissioner Ronda Storm's aide, greatly improved coordination on many projects.

Progress was made in the following areas due to effective teamwork with county officials.

Traffic

Always on the top of the list, traffic increased in volume and intensity due to the unbelievable growth in our community and surrounding areas. Truck traffic concerns were a major issue addressed by residents.

Traffic Calming

This safety issue was addressed by residents in many areas in Bloomingdale neighborhoods west of Bell Shoals Road and on Hurley Road off of Bloomingdale Avenue. Residents worked with county officials to install traffic calming measures.

Growth

Growth continued to go unmanaged. This issue directly affected many other areas of concern like water supplies.

The FishHawk development continued to expand. Changes in county planning

See Council, Page 18

Unsure ABOUT THE Stock Market?

Please join us as Time magazine political writer Hugh Sidey and our panel of financial experts discuss their outlook on the nation, economy and financial markets in 2003.



Hugh Sidey

Together, they'll explore:

- Will corporate reform produce results?
- What role will Congress play in economic recovery?
- Can investors regain what has been lost?
- Opportunities in today's market for every investor

This one-hour program is free, but seating is limited. To reserve your seat or for more information, please call or stop by today. If you are unable to attend, please contact our office for other viewing options.

Tuesday, Jan. 21, 2003
11:30 AM 6:30 PM 8:30 PM

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USF Sponsors Black Heritage Festival

A Gazette Report

The University of South Florida is one of many sponsors of the third annual Black Heritage Festival Jan. 16-20. The week long festival takes place at several venues with live entertainment including lectures, theatre, music, dancing and story-telling.

"The festival is a community event to foster community pride and to encourage people to reflect on unity towards mankind," said Samuel Wright, USF associ-

ate dean of student affairs and festival chair.

The theme of the festival is, "Celebrating Tampa Bay's Heart and Soul." Wright said the festival serves to augment the educational instruction students receive in school. "It also perpetuates the importance of arts and humanities in our daily lives," he said.

Some of the festival highlights include the Martin Luther King, Jr. Convocation at USF's Special Events Cen-

See Heritage, Page 19

Bloomingtondale High School News

Send **Bloomingtondale Senior High School News** and photos to frazier1@tampabay.rr.com or Editor, 3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33594. News received by the 20th of this month will be published in the next Gazette.

College Financial Aid Workshop

A workshop to inform parents and students about college financial aid opportunities will be held at Bloomingtondale High Jan. 7 at 6:30 p.m. Topics include directions for completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and accessing scholarship opportunities. Bloomingtondale students and their parents may attend this workshop or any of many others scheduled at various Hillsborough County high schools (see "What's Happening" in this issue for a list of other dates and locations). Information: 744-8018.

Music Dept. Hosts Japanese Orchestra

The Bloomingtondale High

School Band will host 120 orchestra students from Inagakuen Sogo High School outside of Tokyo.

The Japanese Wind Orchestra students will stay with Bloomingtondale band families on Thursday and Friday night. On Saturday afternoon, there will be a joint concert with the Japanese students and the Bloomingtondale Band. Information: 744-8018.

PTSA Collecting Ink Cartridges

The Bloomingtondale High PTSA is collecting empty laser and ink jet cartridges. Every used cartridge collected is exchanged for cash earmarked to help the PTSA enhance the learning experience at Bloomingtondale High. There is no limit, no minimum and no commitment to participate for individuals, neighborhoods, businesses or organizations. Cartridges will be picked up at your convenience.

For more information, or to set up a drop box in your place of employment or any location, call Nydia Orozco-Davila at 689-3328.



LAURA FRAZIER/Photo

Santa & Co. Were Here

Santa and Mrs. Claus made their 14th annual visit to Bloomingtondale at the community office on Dec. 14.

More than 100 visitors donated food items earmarked for local charities in exchange for the free visit and photo, sponsored by The Bloomingtondale Homeowners Association, Inc.

Some of the teenage elves enlisted to help with the event this year recalled sitting on this same Santa's knee when they were toddlers.

The BHA, and Mr. and Mrs. Claus, extend thanks to all who came to visit and donated food for the needy families in our area.

Look for your neighborhood news
The Bloomingtondale Gazette

Petting Farm Opens On Bloomingtondale Ave.

FARM OFFERS TOURS, BIRTHDAY PARTIES

By SHANNAN D. POWELL
Correspondent

Somewhere in the middle of new housing and strip-mall construction in Valrico, there is a little red barn standing tall.

And at this little red barn, there are cows, goats, chickens, rabbits, turkeys, miniature horses, miniature donkeys, sheep, and eventually llamas, all waiting for little hands to pet them.

In November, the Davidson family, owners of Bloomingtondale Growers, officially opened the Little Red Barn Petting Farm.

"We wanted something for the kids that was more local than other petting farms," said Darlene Davidson, operations manager at Bloomingtondale Growers and administrator of the petting farm.

"We wanted somewhere where people could enjoy the natural part of the land, like



SHANNAN D. POWELL/Photo
Lauren McCullum watches as another child waits to feed a carrot to the Davidson's miniature horse.

it was in old time days."

Owners of Bloomingtondale Growers, a nursery and professional landscaping business for 20 years, Charles and Annie May Davidson have owned a day care for almost 50 years.

So when they decided to

open a petting farm on land they had acquired from a neighbor a few years ago, it seemed a very natural thing to their daughters Darlene and Debra.

"Mother has been taking care of kids for almost 50 years, so this is really for the

kids' enjoyment," Darlene Davidson said.

Debra Davidson greets parties with a call of "suey,!" and the ringing of the bell outside the barn. Visitors are then led on a tour of the barn, which includes glimpses into farm life in the past. Children will see how people ate, bathed, slept and worked. Tours are uniquely designed for each event, from birthday parties to church groups and class field trips.

Visitors get to meet all the animals, including a goofy, hat-wearing goat named George. Not only do they get to look at and touch the animals, they get to feed them, too. Charles Davidson, who oversees farm construction and tends to the basic and veterinary needs of the animals, gives each participant a handful of food or a carrot and demonstrates the proper way to treat the animals.

Every visit to the farm ends with an enjoyable hayride around the back-

See Farm, Page 19

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Photos courtesy Cimino Elementary School

Cool Cougars Net Kudos

A Gazette Report

Each month teachers at Cimino Elementary School in Bloomingdale select one "Cool Cat" from each class to be honored for exemplifying a specific character trait. The students are honored during a special awards ceremony, receive certificates and car signs and have their pictures displayed in the school's multipurpose room for the entire month. Congratulations Cool Cats!

Cimino Cool Cats for the month of October 2002 in



grades K through 2 were Levi Whidden, Andrew Hanson, Andrew Lopez, Judy Reese, Maggie Frost, Zachary Slater, Stephanie Thompson, Glenn Glezen, Morrigan Carsey, Paxton Sims, Sam Miller, Garrett Reeves, Jennifer Scharp, Dominick Garbe, MiKenna Hawkins, Brianna Roman, Rachel Megown, and John Prindle.

Cool Cats in grades 3 through 5 were Madalynn Dare, Kevin Reich, Casey Field, Allie McFee, Kiernan Farmer, Brooke Bartlett, Deena Adeeb, Robert Rhoades, David Ervast, Lauren Gilley, Mark Solters, Kinley Cole, Jared Salterwaite, Lauren Pannell, Avery Kelling, Michael Hoxworth and Matt Neil.

Say you saw it in
The Bloomingdale Gazette

A New You For The New Year

By GREG BANNING
Special To The Gazette

The New Year is here and once again many of us will make the resolution to lose weight and get in shape. Sadly, statistics show some 40% of us that make that commitment will fail to keep it by March, and another 30% will fail by midyear.

Most of us fail to meet our resolution for better health because we don't set ourselves up for success.

Here are ten tips for achieving healthy success in the New Year.

Change your behavior

Recognize the fact that having a happy, healthier life requires changes to your lifestyle. Take inventory of your bad habits, prioritize them and address each one at a time.

Make slow changes

Too often we try and make major changes to our eating and training habits, overwhelming ourselves and ultimately setting us up for failure. Make a slow transition over time. For example, if you are only drinking one glass of water a day, try two glasses a day over the next month and slowly increase over time.

Set realistic goals

It is neither realistic nor healthy to expect to lose ten pounds a month. Set realistic goals that are measurable and objective. Write these goals down and track them, giving yourself credit for the successes and not being too



Photo from Kaprice For Women
Greg Banning

hard on yourself when you are human.

Exercise and eat right

You must incorporate a healthy nutritional plan along with strength training. Eating the right foods in the right portions at the right time is key to losing unwanted fat. Strength training three times a week is essential to toning muscles, increasing your metabolism and shedding unwanted fat.

Don't diet

Diets don't work! Notice the first three letters in "diet" spell "die." Sure, you will lose weight initially, but it is water weight and valuable muscle. Diets set us up for failure and do not have the long lasting results that proper nutrition will have. Consult a professional about a weight management program that is right for you.

Make health a priority

It's true what your parents

told you as a child; "If you don't have your health you don't have anything." What good is the career, the money, friends or family if you don't have your health to enjoy it?

friends and family. Make sure you communicate how important better health and fitness are to you and how their support will help you achieve your 2003 fitness goals.

Plan for success

Plan your workouts and your meals for the week. Schedule your workouts in your daily planner and write down your menu plan for the week. Prepare on the go food items Sunday to help you stay on track for the week.

Track your success

Keep a food journal and a workout log. By keeping a food journal, you can track calories and possible triggers that cause poor eating decisions. Keeping a workout journal helps you stay committed to exercising and ensures your continued progress.

Ask for help

Success will not happen without the support of

Have fun!

Getting fit and eating healthy should be something you look forward to doing. Research shows that those people that work out on a regular basis and eat properly have better self-esteem and ultimately more energy. Want to achieve more in 2003? Exercise and eat right year round.

Greg Banning is the owner and lifestyle coach at Kaprice For Women on Bloomingdale Avenue in Brandon, and is a nationally certified Personal Trainer, Instructor and Nutrition Specialist. visit www.kapriceforwomen.com or call 662-3885

Salvation Army Needs Clothes, More

FREE PICK UP, TAX-DEDUCTIBLE

A Gazette Report

Cleaning out your closets or garage after the holidays? The Salvation Army offers free pick-up of your usable clothing (especially coats), blankets, furniture, books,

toys, shoes appliances and other household items. Just call for pick up, then label and place your donations in your driveway. A driver will pick up your items on the scheduled day, and upon request will leave a tax-deductible receipt on your door. Information: 1-800-330-ARMY.



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New Year, New Issues

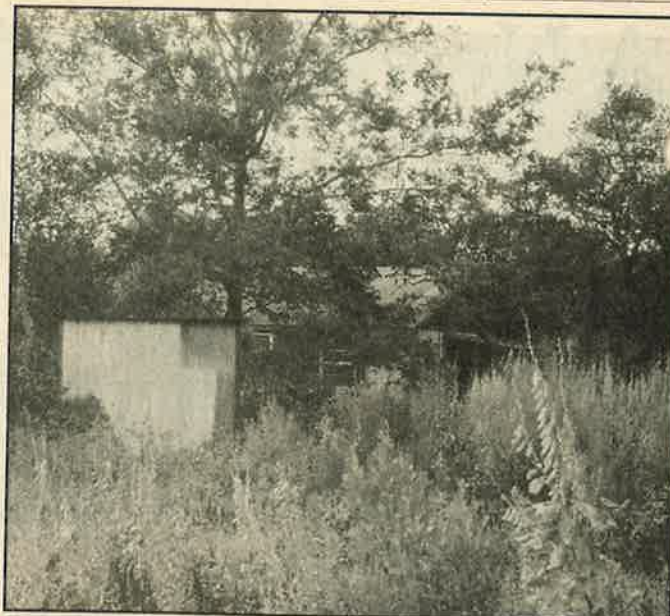
COMMUNITY CONCERNS FOR 2003

Traffic remains on the top of the list of concerns for many residents in the greater Bloomingdale area. All drivers must each do their part to make driving safer. Improved traffic flow issues, like this merge lane at Bell Shoals Road and Bloomingdale Avenue below, are being addressed.

At right, unoccupied or abandoned property in our community is an open invitation for trouble. Deputies need our assistance in

monitoring buildings like this one just west of Bloomingdale High School. Any resident noticing activity around these buildings should call the Sheriff's Dispatch at 247-8200. These sites are being watched closely.

At bottom of page, mixing families crossing a busy street like Culbertson Road and speeding cars is more than dangerous. The installation of enhanced crosswalks in 2003 is a top priority for this area. Please slow down until the crosswalks are completed.



MACK AUSTIN/Photos



MACK AUSTIN/Photo

The driver that made the hole in this wall paid a high price in injury and damage to their expensive vehicle. The walls in our community were hit twelve times in 2002.

Bloomingdale Substation Notes

By DEPUTY PETE MAURER AND OFFICER SANDY CAPITANO

The Bloomingdale Community Substation, at 4342 Bell Shoals Road, near Beef O'Brady's restaurant in the Village Center Plaza, is open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays. Information: 635-8040. For immediate assistance, call the Sheriff's Dept. at 247-8200 or 911 for emergencies.

Safety and Security in 2003

As we begin 2003, we would like to wish every resident of the Bloomingdale and surrounding area a very safe and secure New Year.

We continue to enjoy working directly with local residents in making our community safer and more secure for both homeowners and business owners. Several projects were completed last year that improved the quality of life for residents and their families. The Bloomingdale Area Community Council continues to prove its effectiveness in addressing neighborhood issues of concern (see related story in this issue of The Gazette).

From a law enforcement point of view, we must continue to ask each and every resident to do their part in improving safety and security in our community. One of the most dangerous areas is traffic. With increased traffic volume comes the need for every person who drives to do

so responsibly. Start by obeying all traffic laws. There are no acceptable excuses for breaking these laws - they were put into effect to save lives and decrease damage. Make it your goal to set the right example when you're driving, for other drivers and especially for our teenage drivers.

Keeping our children safe and secure is one of our top priorities. The use of seatbelts and properly installed car seats is the first step. Stopping for school buses in required areas is critical. Constant awareness and watching for kids in and around our homes and schools is essential.

Keeping our homes, cars and other valuables safe and secure are important to all of us. Each homeowner must do their part to make any security system work. Please, close your garage doors. This is a simple act, but some residents don't do it, and that results in an open invitation for theft. Secure your homes and cars when you leave. Don't be an easy target. Watch out for your neighbors. Report suspicious activity. Call the Sheriff's Office dispatch at 247-8200 to report problems.

Working together we can continue to make our community a great place to live and work. It is our pleasure to serve and protect you. Please do your part, and together we will succeed. Again, thank you all for your support.

Letters

Send letters to Letters@BloomingdaleGazette.com or mail to Gazette Editor, 3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33594. All letters are subject to editing.

Show Me The Improvements

Bloomingdale residents last September approved a \$20 annual tax assessment increase. When will the new (\$100) assessment take effect, and when will the entryway renovations planned by the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District begin?

Bloomingdale East resident

Thom Snelling, president of the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District board of trustees, said the \$20 increase approved by resi-

dents won't take affect until the next fiscal year, in October 2003.

As the board plans for the new budget, they will review and prioritize all community maintenance and improvement needs, including the entryway renovations.

"We have already completed the requisite survey and design work for all the entryways," Snelling said. "But that (preliminary) cost was very little in comparison to the actual construction. That's where the \$20 increase, which comes online this October, will help out."

The Bloomingdale Special Taxing District meets at the community office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road, on the second Monday of each month at 7 p.m.

All meetings are open to the public. Information: 684-6667 or BSTD@BloomingdaleGazette.com.



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Happening

From page 6

each month from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at Morris Chiropractic Center, 207 Kingsway Road (between Parsons & Valrico Road, slightly north of both SR 60 & Morgan St.) in Brandon. Healthy babies are always welcome, too. The next meeting is Jan. 8. Information Line: 932-3664.

January 15

Brandon Newcomers Meet

The Brandon Newcomers will hold their January meeting at Center Place on Jan. 15 at 9:30 a.m. The speaker will be Gail Stark, manager of corporate development and volunteer services for the West Central Florida Area Agency on Aging, a private, non-profit corporation which administers public funds, private grants and donations for community based senior care. The agency also implements

volunteer programs. Information: 689-3159 or 246-4142.

La Leche League AM Meeting

La Leche League, a mothers' group discussion of parenting & breastfeeding with accredited leaders on hand and on call, meets mornings the third Wednesday of each month from 10:00 a.m. to noon at St. Andrew's United Methodist Church, 3315 Bryan Road (corner of Bloomingdale Ave.). Healthy babies are always welcome, too. The next meeting is Jan. 15. Information: 932-3664.

January 18

Burns Middle School orchestra parking lot sale

The Burns Middle School orchestra will hold a parking lot sale Jan. 18 from 8:00 a.m.

to 1:00 p.m. The parking lot is off Bryan Road, just south of Brooker Road. Household items of all types, gently used clothing, toys, etc. will be available for purchase. All proceeds will benefit the orchestra in the form of new instruments, much needed repairs, music, etc. Information: 744-8383.

January 21

University Women Meet

The American Association of University Women, or AAUW, Brandon Branch, will meet at 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 21 at Hawthorne Care Center, 860 W. Lumsden Blvd. in Brandon. Member Lucille Wharton will relate her experiences living on a collective farm in Russia as part of a United Methodist Church mission trip. While there, the group built an education and health center. Wharton will

show slides depicting the work that the mission team performed.

Membership is AAUW is open to women who have a Baccalaureate or higher degree from an accredited educational institution.

Information: 689-8457 or 681-4502.

January 25

Dade City Festival

Dade City's annual Kumquat Festival celebrates Florida's tiniest citrus product with a cooking contest, arts and crafts show, antique car show and more.

The festival, held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., features wagon rides and children's activities.

Most events are free. Information: visit www.visitpasco.net or call (352) 567-3769.

Council

From page 11

and growth management procedures are forthcoming.

Security

Increased security measures continued in the aftermath of September 11.

Many Sheriff's deputies were reassigned to port security and other duties.

Security was improved at Bloomingdale Little League Park.

There is an increased need for expanded Mobile Watch and Neighborhood Watch Programs.

Safety

Safety continued as a top priority, including school bus safety - drivers passing buses on Bloomingdale Avenue.

Sidewalks were finally installed in key areas, but more are needed, especially around schools like Cimino Elementary.

Schools

Increased growth resulted in our area caused the redefining of school boundaries, an ongoing issue that will affect many families.

An increased need for crossing guards and school bus drivers was identified.

Library

The new South Brandon Library will be built on Bloomingdale Avenue next to Bloomingdale High School.

Construction plans are underway, with residents and the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association involved at the design stage.

Rezoning

Rezoning continued to require very close monitoring - especially along Bloomingdale Avenue at John Moore Road and next to the new library.

2003 Forecast

What will the main issues of concern be in 2003? Most definitely those listed above that weren't completed, and the following.

Safety

Needed safety improvements identified include enhanced crosswalks that connect Bloomingdale Little League and the YMCA and sidewalks near Cimino Elementary School.

Security

With the War on Terror a long way from being over, the Sheriff's Office has begun enhancing their Neighborhood Watch, Business Watch and Church Watch programs.

Rezoning

Some rezoning issues are still open including property

on Bloomingdale Avenue at John Moore Road and land off Bloomingdale Avenue next to the new library site.

Improvements

Council members are researching the possibility of opening a "dog park" in our Community.

Fire/Rescue

Fire/Rescue Services improved through education and coordination to decrease calls and response time.

In order to make ours an even greater community, the personal involvement of you, the residents, is essential. Get involved now, with the Community Council, Mobile Watch, Little League, YMCA, Bloomingdale High, or as a church volunteer, crossing guard, school bus driver... the list is long. Let's make a difference in 2003.

Property Manager's Report

By AL DEVNEY

Al Devney, Bloomingdale Property Manager and president of Devney Property Management, Inc., can be reached at 684-6667. Excerpts of the Property Manager's report for the month of November 2002 are as follows.

Notice

Residents, please be advised the real estate signs that hang over the community walls and into the right of way are in violation of county snipe codes. Please move them back a few feet.

Irrigation

Brandon Irrigation repaired broken main lines on Natures Way and Canoga Park Drive; Thunder Irrigation repaired broken irrigation on Garnet; DPPI replaced 17 spray heads and 34 light bulbs and repaired two zone lines.

Landscaping

Cardinal Landscaping planted 1,800 red petunias in 11 locations; Neighborhood Pest Control fertilized the

Heritage

From page 12

ter Jan 16. Myrlie Evers-Williams, wife of slain civil rights leader Medgar Evers, is the keynote speaker, a performance by instrumentalist Najee and seminars by John Jackson, national director of education for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Will Packer, Jr., Rainforest Productions and Kenneth Blackwell, secretary of state for Ohio.

Featured artist Michele Wood will have a traveling exhibit on display at the Tampa Museum of Art. Wood will also do storytelling and a book signing for her book, "I See the Rhythm" during the festival.

"As a third year sponsor, USF acknowledges its commitment to the community by hosting events and offer-

area with Lesko 15-0-22 with Atrazine and Bassagram; Boss of Gloss watered the petunias and other landscaping; DPPI planted an additional eight dozen red petunias on Natures Way.

Miscellaneous

Specialty Pressure Washing Services cleaned a heavy coating of mold and pollen from the sidewalks on Culbreath Road between Needham Place and Erindale Drive.

ZK construction replaced six defective columns on Bell Shoals Road, 12 bricks on Garnet and 12 bricks at Rivercrossing; Hillsborough County replaced damaged signs on Springvale and Bell Shoals Road and repaired a section of broken sidewalk on Rosemead; TECO removed a destroyed light pole at Fortuna and Canoga Park; DPPI replaced the American flags at each of the major entrances; Boss of Gloss trimmed three palm trees at Culbreath Cove and some oaks at Garnet; Handy Hands installed the Christmas bows on each of the light poles.

Farm

From page 13

fields of the property, shared with the Davidsons' cows, and the chance to picnic under the large oaks.

Bloomingdale resident Janet McCullum and her daughter Lauren were guests at one of the Little Red Barn's first birthday parties in November.

"I think Lauren liked that the animals were out where you could touch them and see them eating," said McCullum. "What I liked best about it is that it is right down the street."

The farm's proximity may win over more parents than the animals or the journey to past farm life. The Little Red Barn Petting Farm is located on Bloomingdale Ave., 1.5 miles east of Lithia Pinecrest Road.

As with every new busi-

ness venture, the Davidsons are learning as they go and acquiring new animals along the way.

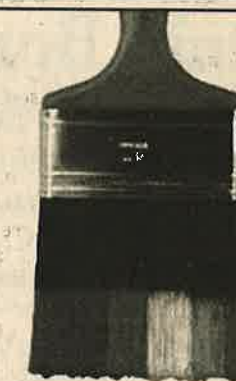
"We hope that it will just get better and better with feedback from the community," said Darlene.

"We hope it is something that mothers and children and whole families will enjoy and find it worth coming back every year."

The petting farm hosts parties for all occasions for ages four and up. The cost is \$5 per child with a minimum of \$125, and a maximum of 50 people. All proceeds from parties go right back into the care of the animals.

For more information about the Little Red Barn Petting Zoo, contact Darlene Davidson at 684-6923.

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LAURA FRAZIER/Photo

A Job Well Done

Bloomington Homeowners Association, Inc. president Ted Grable, right, presents outgoing BHA directors Len Jasczak and Pat Radel with honorary plaques commemorating their dedicated service to the Bloomington community. Jasczak served as vice president of the association and was involved in many community projects, including the installation of streetlights near Cimino Elementary School. Radel helped to implement and coordinate the Bloomingtondale Neighborhood Improvement Program. The BHA extends its gratitude to Pat and Len for a job well done.

Community Questions? Just Ask Joni!

By LAURA FRAZIER



Joni Hickle

If you live in Bloomington and have a question, a complaint - or even a compliment - that you'd like to voice about the community, Joni Hickle is all ears.

Hickle serves as administrative assistant to the Bloomington Special Taxing District, or BSTD, and The Bloomington Homeowners Association, Inc., or BHA. She staffs the Bloomington Community Office part-time Monday through Thursday, greets visitors, answers telephone and e-mail correspondence, and coordinates community meetings and special events.

Joni and her husband Joe, vice president of the BHA board of directors, have lived in Bloomington for the past 15 years.

Hickle said the size and diversity of the Bloomington area make it a unique and enjoyable place to live.

"Bloomington is made up of a wide range of neighborhoods, shopping, eateries, banking, services, and recreation," she said.

"We have basketball, tennis, handball courts, a golf course, baseball fields, a recreation center, and a YMCA. In the near future we will have a new Public Library, more restaurants and new shopping centers close by."

Hickle also appreciates the family-friendly ambience that Bloomington is famous for.

"It's nice to drive along Natures Way or Canoga Park Drive and see all the people out walking, running and biking."

Hickle hears lots of nice things about the Bloomington community, but she also handles her share of complaints.

Much of the correspondence received at the community office involves questions and complaints about non-compliance with deed restrictions. There are over 40 individual sets of deed restrictions for various sections in

Bloomington, and not everyone has a copy on hand to refer to when a problem crops up.

"When residents purchased their homes, they should have been given a copy of the deed restrictions in their closing package. It is the responsibility of the title company to provide this to the resident," Hickle said.

Deed restrictions for many areas within the community are available to download at www.BloomingtonGazette.com, and Hickle offered, "Residents can also stop by the community office to look at any of the deed restrictions that we have on file."

The four most common complaints she receives at the office include parked recreational vehicles, cars parked on lawns, lawns not kept up and trash cans or yard waste left out.

"In most of the Bloomington area, deed restrictions do not allow recreational vehicles to be parked on the property. In some areas, you are allowed to have them if they are not visible from the street or visible to your neighbors," she said.

Although parking cars on the grass is not prohibited by deed restrictions, Hickle said many residents find the practice undesirable.

"It kills the grass, breaks the sprinkler systems and damages the yard when done consistently," she said, noting that it is legal for homeowners to park cars overnight on the street in front of their

homes.

Unkempt lawns, tall grass or yards replaced with gardens and overgrown with weeds are another common complaint.

"One reason people are concerned with this problem is because the overgrowth attracts snakes and other animals which could endanger children," Hickle said.

Trash cans and yard debris should be kept out of sight from the street or neighbors, and should not be placed at the curb until dusk the night before pick-up. They should be removed no later than sundown on the day of pick-up.

"Yard waste is only picked up on Fridays for all Bloomington residents," Hickle noted.

Many residents are surprised to learn that the Bloomington Special Taxing District and Bloomington Homeowners Association operate independently of

each other.

"The taxing district budgets for and coordinates maintenance and improvements for all the community's common areas. The homeowners association works with residents, school and county officials, and local law enforcement towards the betterment of our community and to promote adherence to county codes and deed restrictions," Hickle said.

Both associations, she said, offer definite benefits to Bloomington's 4,500+ residents.

"Have you seen the new entryway at Garnet, the American flags at each entry, and the seasonal plantings at our main entryways?" she asked.

"These are just a few of the recent projects that help keep our community beautiful. The taxing district does a great job maintaining all the

See Joni, Page 22

Restaurant Review

Elton Dubs Bonefish Grill "Classy, Superb"

By ELTON DUMONT
Exclusive to The
Bloomington Gazette

It seems as if there's no limit these days to new restaurants opening in Bloomington's "back yard." Last month I reviewed Smokey Bones, and this month it seems I'm going from ribs to fish. But Bonefish Grill, at 1015 Providence Road in Brandon, is not exclusively a seafood restaurant. It is a full service, multi-variety entree restaurant.

My first prediction is that it will take no time at all for Bonefish Grill to earn a reputation as one of the classiest restaurants in Brandon. This restaurant has it all.

The ambience, atmosphere and interior appointments simply ooze class. If the occasion is your anniversary (sans the kids), impressing your significant other, or proving to your in-laws that you too have class, this is the place.

"Every item on every plate was satisfying beyond description."

ELTON DUMONT
Restaurant Critic

The wait staff is incredibly well trained. Their uniforms, like the white, spotless jackets worn by cruise ship restaurant servers, let you know up front that they are there to serve you.

And ah, the cuisine. The consensus of our party of six was that every item on every plate was satisfying beyond description. Not one negative comment... just a lot of empty plates!

We had 8:00 p.m. reservations (reservations in Brandon!). We arrived at 7:55 p.m. from Quidam in St. Petersburg, and our table for six was ready. Tonto and Kitty Kingsford, along with Diane and Wayne St. Wayne, joined us for this superb dinner.

Appetizers ranging from \$5.50 to \$9.50 included Saucy Rock Shrimp, sautéed in a Lime Tomato Garlic sauce with Kalamata olives and Feta cheese, and Mussels Josephine, Canadian mussels with tomatoes, garlic, basil and lemon wine sauce. Crispy Calamari, Ahi Tuna Sashimi with wasabi and pickled ginger, or Bacon Wrapped Sea Scallops are also offered.

Signature grilled fish entrees ranging from \$14 to \$18.50 (not including Lobster Tails) are Mahi Mahi, Jumbo Shrimp and Scallops, Chilean Sea Bass, Ahi Tuna, Gulf Grouper to name a few. But Bonefish Grill is also proud of its grilled specialties like Pork Tenderloin Piccata (\$14.50), Fontina Boneless Pork Chops with Fontina cheese and mushroom garlic wine sauce (\$14.50), Filet Mignon (\$17.50), and Sirloin Steak (\$13). Sautéed entrees include Grouper Piccata, Chicken Portabella Pasta, Rock Shrimp Fettuccini Dia-

blo or a Pistachio Parmesan Crusted Rainbow Trout.

Pay attention to the daily specials. On this night, five of the six of us ordered special selections. All entrees include your choice of a Caesar Salad or the House Salad. Vegetable choices are Garlic Mashed Potatoes, Potatoes au Gratin, Angel Hair Pasta with Marinara Sauce or Island Rice.

While we waited for our entree, the salad was served. The house dressing was a citrus vinaigrette with pine nuts, two types of lettuce and mixed vegetables. The vinaigrette proved wonderful and earned raves. And the warm bread was served with homemade pesto oil for dipping.

I chose the Rhea's Grilled Trout with crabmeat lumps from the specials, accompanied with Angel Hair Pasta. Mrs. Dumont selected the Pork Chops with the Garlic Mashed Potatoes. Tonto and Wayne had Grilled Grouper covered in Lobster Thermid-

See Restaurant, Page 23

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Kid's Music Class Stimulates, Entertains

By LESLIE WHITE
Correspondent

Did you know that the kazoo is the only instrument a child can play and use every part of their brain? Well, you would if you'd taken a class at Music With Mar.

Mary Ann Harmon, a visiting professor at USF teaching Child Development, is responsible for starting Music With Mar, a developmental class for children that stimulates both the left and right sides of their brain, while at the same time exercising their bodies. Originating in Pinellas County, this

cutting edge class is now available nationwide.

Dawn Cavalier started taking the class with her daughter, and said she was amazed at how quickly the experience brought her out of her shell. Cavalier now teaches a class for children ranging in ages from nine months to five years. Each class involves both parent and child in an interactive, 45 minute music and movement-fest.

The class is unique not only in content, but in concept. It involves the parent to the degree that it teaches them the movements so that

they can practice at home, as well as the "why's" behind the movements, and what those movements accomplish for the child.

The class also teaches parents the meaning of simplistic childhood movements, such as spinning around in circles, and explains why children move the way they do. The classes house diverse age groups, with music to appeal to each level and movements to stimulate brain development. Currently, the class is offered in the daytime, but Cavalier is hoping to be able to offer an evening class in the coming year. She's also

hopeful that a "few good dads" will take advantage of the evening class to have some fun learning time with their kids.

Classes are held weekly at St. Stephen Catholic Church on Bell Shoals Road, and cost \$6 per class per family, no matter how many siblings you register. You come when you like, and if you miss a week, it's not necessary to make it up - you just come again at your convenience.

For more information, or to register your child in Music With Mar, call Cavalier at 643-1097.



LAURA FRAZIER/Photo

Holiday Decorations Contest Winners

A Gazette Report

The Grand Prize winner of Bloomingdale's 2002 Annual Holiday Decorations Contest is Hollis Stiles of 1247 Lornewood Drive.

Hollis and her four children, Hallie, Hillarie, Glenn and Nick Figueroa, along with a host of friends, relatives and neighbors, used untold yards of cotton batting, piles of paper plates and rolls of colored plastic wrap

to turn their Bloomingdale home into an incredibly charming, life-sized gingerbread house.

Stiles and her family received a \$100 Grand Prize Wal-Mart gift certificate, courtesy of The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, Inc.

For news about our second place winner, which one five-year-old judge deemed "awesome," visit www.BloomingdaleGazette.com.

Joni

From page 21

common areas."

Hickle noted the homeowners association most recently worked diligently on the Newsome High School boundary issue.

"The BHA board is very concerned about the boundary committee's suggestion that the Bloomingdale community should be split into two high schools," Hickle said.

The BHA in November sponsored a community petition to keep all students living in Bloomingdale attending one high school.

"Within two weeks we had over 1200 signatures to give to the school board," Hickle said.

Other recent successful projects the BHA has worked on, she said, include the reduction of truck load limits on Bloomingdale Avenue and Lithia Pinecrest Road, and the location of the new library on Bloomingdale Avenue next to the Bloomingdale High.

Hickle added, "The BHA board is presently working on a new PRIDE program (see related story in this issue), and produces the Bloomingdale Gazette and www.BloomingdaleGazette.com.

Perhaps most important she said, The Bloomingdale Special Taxing District and the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association are made up of volunteers.

"Our volunteers take great pride in our community and work very hard to insure that we continue to have a great place to live," Hickle said, noting that additional volunteers are always needed to help with special projects.

The community office is located at 3509 Bell Shoals Road in the SunTrust Bank/Citgo station plaza, across from the Wal-Mart garden center entrance. The office is open Monday through Thursday from 7 to 11 a.m. Information: 681-2051.

LETTERS? COMMENTS? QUESTIONS?

E-mail: Letters@BloomingdaleGazette.com

Yard of the Month



Bloomingdale Yard Of The Month

Felix and Gail Llorca • 3926 Casaba Loop

Congratulations!

Send nominations to: Letters@BloomingdaleGazette.com or Yard, 3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33594. Winners receive a \$25 Bloomingdale Wal-Mart gift certificate, courtesy of the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, Inc.

Newsome

From page 3

announced any plans to divide their neighborhoods.

At the last Newsome boundary committee meeting Nov. 17, Bloomingdale residents submitted a 1,240 signature petition to Person and committee members. The petition asked the district to recognize Bloomingdale both east and west of Bell Shoals Road as a single community, to avoid splitting up middle and high school students, and to allow all students living in Bloomingdale to remain in the school choice region that offers Burns Middle School and Bloomingdale High as options.

If Cimino or any portion of the Cimino attendance area is moved to Newsome, those students would lose even the option of attending their neighborhood high school under the county's school choice plan that takes effect in 2004.

This move would go against promises made by school district staff to Cimino residents less than a year ago to keep their students in Burns Middle School and

Bloomingdale High.

Proponents of dividing Bloomingdale say that with such a mega-community, residents cannot expect to stay together. Opponents contend it is a tragedy to split a neighborhood that even gets PTSA support from its' homeowners association.

But one thing nobody can deny is that 500 to 600 students must leave Bloomingdale High to bring it down to capacity.

Dr. Lennard is expected to bring a single, final proposal to the school board for a vote sometime this month. At Lennard's discretion, the final proposal could be identical to, or a combination of, any of the four plans under consideration. The school board can, and has in the past, approved last-minute changes to the superintendent's proposal. A date for the vote had not been set by the Gazette's January issue deadline. Meeting dates and times will be announced in The Brandon News and on www.BloomingdaleGazette.com.

Restaurant

From page 20

sauce. Kitty and Diane had Kate Margate, a broiled Snapper with lemon butter and artichokes.

And finally, on to dessert. With our coffee, we all shared a Crème Brulee, topped with fresh whipped cream and berries - a wonderful end to a wonderful meal.

We requested separate checks for each couple, and since some of us had wine or a cocktail, it's hard to come up with an average. But I would say that \$45 - \$60 per couple including tip would cover it.

Rating - Based on 5 stars

Food ★★★★★

Service ★★★★★

Ambience ★★★

Overall ★★★★★

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