

**FEATURE STORY**



Brandon artist David O'Keefe's remarkable caricature sculptures of celebrities, including Bucs coach Jon Gruden, are on display at the Tampa Art Institute. See story, page 11.

**BUSINESS**

Plaza Bella, under construction on Bloomingdale Avenue, will feature 18,000 square feet of upscale retail space.

**PAGE 16**

**INDEX**

Neighborhood News ..... 3  
 Law Enforcement ..... 12  
 Special Taxing District ... 14  
 Business ..... 15  
 Public Safety ..... 17

**He's Gonzo For Hurricanes**



Photo courtesy of Rob Poston

NOAA Aircraft Commander Rob Poston pilots the Gulf Stream G4 his crew nicknamed "Gonzo" in 2001 tropical storm Claudette.

**BLOOMINGDALE RESIDENT  
 SKIRTS EDGE OF STORMS**

By LESLIE WHITE  
 Correspondent

Last summer, while hurricanes Charley, Frances and Jeanne crossed the shores of Gulf Coast Florida, Bloomingdale resident Rob Poston skirted the edge of each storm in a Gulf Stream G4.

Poston is a pilot for NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, based at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa. As aircraft commander, Poston's job is to fly his G4, nicknamed "Gonzo," on hurricane surveillance missions around the outer edge of hurricanes and tropical depressions to measure atmospheric conditions that help predict their direction.

NOAA also sends out two P3's, "Kermit" and "Miss Piggy," which

focus on hurricane reconnaissance, flying into the eye wall to get a fix on the rotation of the center of the storm and to measure maximum sustained winds.

"While we're flying, we're collecting data," said Poston, who has been with NOAA for 20 years, now on his fifth hurricane season in Florida. Data is collected from the G4 by dropping a GPS dropwindsonde, which samples

See POSTON, Page 17

**NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS ♦ PAGE 3**

*Eight Neighborhoods Eligible  
 For New Names, Signs*

INTEREST, PARTICIPATION REQUIRED



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# 8 Neighborhoods Eligible For New Names, Signs

**INTEREST, PARTICIPATION REQUIRED**

By LAURA FRAZIER  
Editor

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association is ready to proceed with the naming and signage of another unnamed neighborhood section. Will your section be next?

Most of Bloomingdale's 40 neighborhood sections were dubbed by the original developers with attractive names like Fox Run, Rivercrossing, Somerset, Bloomingdale Estates and Fairway Manors. The developers installed the original signs, which are now maintained and replaced as needed by the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District.

In 2004, BHA volunteers identified 10 neighborhoods officially known only as numbered or lettered sections, a

bland distinction the board of directors felt did not inspire a sense of pride or neighborhood unity for residents.

Homeowners in the section now known as Cypress Reserve initially showed the most interest in the program, qualifying their section as the first in line for a new name and entrance signs last year. Out of 128 residences, 100 voted for the new name. Four new signs were installed in December, two each at Murray Dale Drive and Springvale Boulevard, and at Kingsford Place and Natures Way.

The latest neighborhood section to benefit from the program is Sandy Creek Manors, formerly known only as Section I. Four entryway signs were installed in May on Canoga Park Drive at Garnet Drive and Tyndale Drive.

Residents of Bloomingdale Estates, currently the only

See NAMES, Page 19

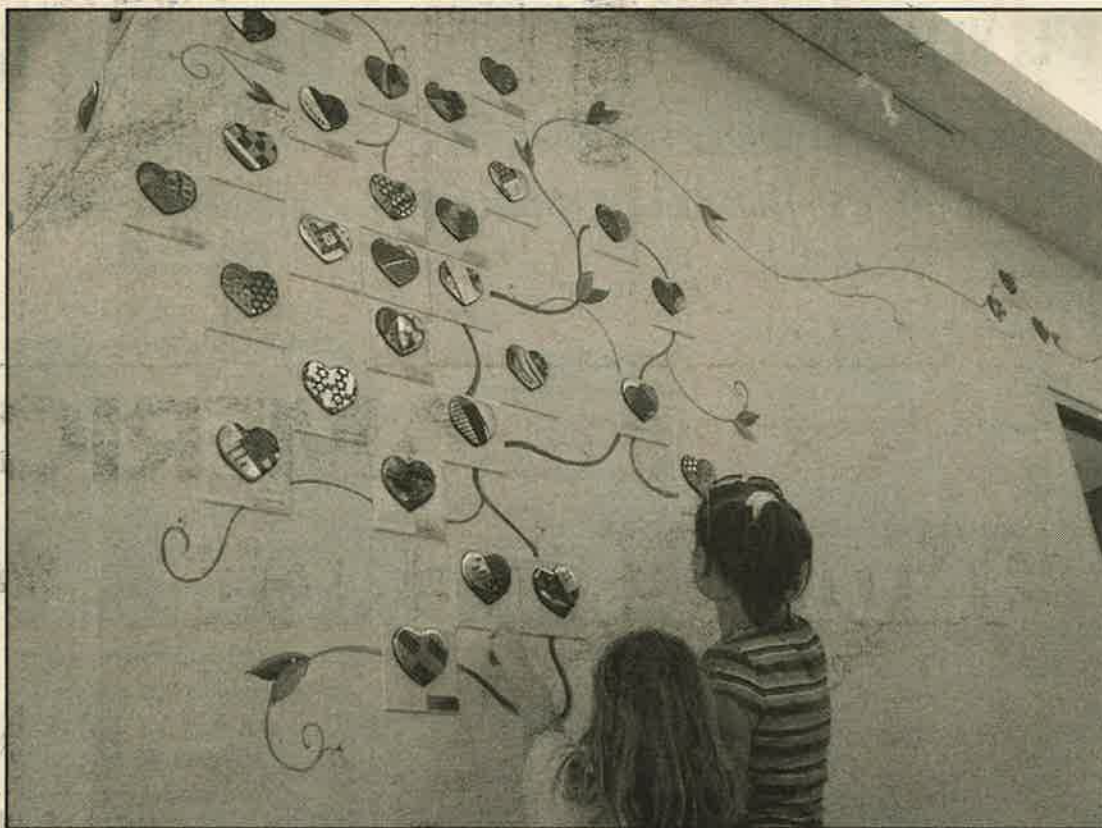


Photo courtesy of Joe Vogt

Before the unveiling of the donor appreciation wall at the Bloomingdale Regional Public Library last week, Jessica and Nicole Vogt admire the artwork created by their mother, Tampa artist Lisa Vogt.

## Library Patrons Are All Heart

**APPRECIATION WALL UNVEILED**

By LAURA FRAZIER  
Editor

A permanent display to honor benefactors of the Bloomingdale Regional Library was officially dedicated on June 26.

More than 30 one-of-a-kind fused glass heart-shaped plaques met with the approval of library patrons and volunteers.

Friends of the Library president Pat Boody said Tampa artist Lisa Vogt, who designed and creates the one-of-a-kind fused-glass hearts, planned the

display to accommodate many more hearts.

Library supporters can sponsor a heart for \$100. A silver plate beneath each plaque will bear the patron's name or that of a loved one.

The funds will be used to host lectures, poetry readings

See HEARTS, Page 19

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**BHA REPORT****Volunteer Board Adopts  
Committee-Based Approach****NEXT MEETING IS JULY 7**By LAURA FRAZIER  
Editor

The nonprofit, all-volunteer Bloomingdale Homeowners Association Inc. board of directors meets at 7 p.m. on the first Monday of each month\* at the Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road. All meetings are open to the public. For more information, call 681-2051, visit [www.bloomingtondalegazette.com](http://www.bloomingtondalegazette.com) or e-mail [bloomingtondale-homeowners@verizon.net](mailto:bloomingtondale-homeowners@verizon.net).

**New Committees Formed**

The homeowners association board of directors, at its June 6 meeting, agreed to implement a new committee-based organizational plan developed by BHA President Ted Grable. Independent subcommittees are being organized for four key functions of the homeowners association.

Neighborhood volunteers are needed to help with many committee activities. Volunteers are welcome to help with one event or on an ongoing basis. High school students can earn community service hour credits for their assistance.

The four key functions of the BHA and their associated subcommittees are as follows:

- ♦ Association Services Committees
- ♦ The Bloomingdale Gazette
- ♦ The Bloomingdale Gazette Online

- ♦ Dues Membership
- ♦ Volunteer Registry

**Neighborhood PRIDE  
Program Committees**

- ♦ July 4 Parade
- ♦ Neighbors In Need
- ♦ Neighborhood PRIDE Groups
  - ♦ Santa and Mrs. Claus Visit
  - ♦ Neighborhood Improvement Program Committees
  - ♦ BHA Enforcement Group
  - ♦ Deed Restriction and Code Enforcement
  - ♦ Neighborhood Cleanup Days

**Government Services  
Committees**

- ♦ Parks and Recreation
- ♦ Public Safety
- ♦ Public Works
- ♦ Schools Liaison (OPEN CHAIR)

**Yard of the Month**

Homeowners and students who would like more information are invited to attend the Thursday, July 7 BHA meeting. Potential volunteers can also call Laura, 643-2990 or e-mail [info@bloomingtondalegazette.com](mailto:info@bloomingtondalegazette.com) for details.

**Board Supports  
Lithia-Pinecrest Widening**

Bloomingtondale resident George May, chairman of the board of the Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce, attended the June 6 BHA

See BHA, Page 18

**Brandon To Honor Military July 4****PARADE,  
FIREWORKS PLANNED**Report Courtesy of  
The Brandon News

Brandon will honor its active-duty military personnel this Fourth of July with a float in the community's annual parade and a post-parade barbecue for military personnel and their families.

Spearheaded by the Greater Brandon Community Foundation, the 16-ft. float will be decorated with banners representing all branches of the service by employees of Whidden Florist. Marches for all branches will be broadcast from the float during the parade, which will begin at 10 a.m. July 4.

Active-duty military personnel of all branches who will be home for the holiday weekend are invited to ride as honored guests aboard the float and then be feted at a barbecue at Whidden Florist, 425 W. Robertson St., after the parade.

"As a community, we want our military personnel to know we're proud of them," said foundation co-founder Arlene Waldron whose son, Ronnie, a member of the Army National Guard, will head to Iraq the evening of July 4.

"This is our way of thanking

them for their service to our country."

The nonprofit foundation raises funds for local charities and events, and serves as a clearinghouse for benefits taking place in the community.

The foundation's funding is generated through the Greater Brandon Community Foundation Golf Tournament, consisting of the Tournament of Champions and the Celebrity Pro-Am Classic in February.

"This Fourth of July tribute to our military goes right along with the foundation's goal of caring for and honoring those who make up our community," Waldron said.

Military personnel who wish to reserve a spot on the float can call 972-9363.

During the parade, preferred seating for the families of military personnel riding the float will be available in front of Whidden Florist. Then, after the parade, service men and women, along with their families, are invited to enjoy a chicken barbecue lunch with baked beans, potato salad, rolls, drinks and chili dogs and hot dogs for the kids. Sponsors will have their names listed on banners on the float and at Whidden Florist.

To continue the Fourth of

July tribute to Brandon's military personnel, the Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce will host the Brandon Blast: Military Appreciation and Community Celebration at Westfield Shoppingtown Brandon from 4 to 9 p.m.

The event is free. All active-duty, reserve and retired military personnel and their families will receive a free hot dog or hamburger, beverages, ice cream and children's activities. Military ID will be required. Food and refreshments are available to non-military personnel for a fee.

Opening ceremonies at 4 p.m. will feature a flyover by a refueling tanker from MacDill Air Force Base.

Live entertainment will take place throughout the event on two stages starting at 4:30 p.m. Among the performers will be bands Strange Brew, The Rosemary Reach, Fatal EQ and Out Drive and demonstrations by Mad Science of Tampa Bay and the Earl Harris School of Karate.

The event will culminate with a professional fireworks display starting at 9 p.m.

The title sponsors are The Tampa Tribune and The Brandon News.

**ON OUR COMMUNITY WEBSITE**

For Bloomingdale community meetings and events,  
visit our Web site at [www.bloomingtondalegazette.com](http://www.bloomingtondalegazette.com)

**Your Inside Connections****The Bloomingdale Homeowners  
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3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33594  
Phone: 681-2051 Fax: 684-2358  
E-mail: [Bloomingtondale.Homeowners@Verizon.net](mailto:Bloomingtondale.Homeowners@Verizon.net)  
Web Site: [www.bloomingtondalegazette.com](http://www.bloomingtondalegazette.com)

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

**President:** Ted Grable **Vice President:** Joe Hickle  
**Treasurer:** Pam Liguori **Director:** Tony Diolosa  
**Director:** Lydia Harrod **Director:** Steve Heckel  
**Director:** Dale Kahn **Director:** Jane Lee  
**Director:** Stanley Lee **Director:** Myron Magedanz  
**Director:** Ken Pyse

**Bloomingtondale Special Taxing District**

3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33594  
Phone: 684-6667

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

**President:** Thom Snelling  
**Vice President:** Russell Jones  
**Treasurer:** David West  
**Correspondence Secretary:** Paul Sims  
**Recording Secretary:** Michael Buday

**Trustee:** David Steck  
**Trustee:** Joe Harless  
**Property Manager:** Al Devney

**Bloomingtondale Community  
Security Program**

The Bloomingdale Community Security Program committee meets the third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m..

**Coordinator/Equipment Manager:**

Tony Diolosa, 681-1146  
**Treasurer:** Paul Kelmer  
**Patrol Member:** Steven Heckel

**Patrol Member:** Brad Scharp  
**Patrol Member:** Paul Warr

**Bloomingtondale Oaks  
Special Taxing District**

P.O. Box 3132, Brandon, FL 33509-3132  
Phone: 685-2817

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

**President:** Bill Grace  
**Treasurer:** Fred Englehart

**THE BLOOMINGDALE  
GAZETTE**

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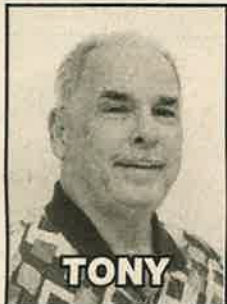
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# Commission Vows To Fast Track Lithia-Pinecrest Widening

## STATE FUNDS MAY BE AVAILABLE

By D'ANN WHITE  
Correspondent

It was good news for the hundreds of frustrated drivers who wait in traffic on Lithia-Pinecrest Road every day.

Last week county commissioners opted to see if the widening of Lithia-Pinecrest from two to four lanes could be pushed ahead on the county's list of road priorities.

The unanimous decision came after lobbying by members of the Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce and Brandon residents.

At the chamber's behest, county staff prepared a study to determine how much it would cost to widen the road from State Road 60 to State Road 39. Currently, the widening is on the county's list of 106 unfunded transportation projects, although the county's transportation agency, the Metropolitan Planning Organization, has recommended widening Lithia-Pinecrest from

S.R. 60 to Bloomingdale Avenue to four lanes.

Last week, Scott Cottrell of the county's Public Works Department presented the results of that study to commissioners, giving two options. "We tried to look at development activity, the location of schools, other sorts of neighborhood-type impacts that would affect growth in traffic," said Cottrell.

With a 20-foot median in the center, 12-foot travel lanes, turn lanes and bicycle lanes, the cost would be about \$159 million. However, by eliminating the grass between the sidewalk and the road, the cost could be reduced to \$147 million. Some of the funding, Cottrell said, could come from transportation impact fees and concurrency requirements from new development.

"There are some large developments nearby with concurrency obligations that could provide some seed money toward some of the improvements," he noted.

State Rep. Trey Traviesa, R-Brandon, also was on hand at the meeting, pledg-

ing to do what he can as a member of the House Transportation and Economic Development Appropriations Committee.

"We have tried to shake a few trees on this issue to understand what's possible," said Traviesa. "I live in fear of the headline of one of our children or families in our community losing their life because we have failed to get together and make this a priority and put the money behind that priority."

Designated a truck route, Lithia-Pinecrest supports about 1,000 trucks a day and had 269 traffic accidents in 2004. The road is averaging about 25 a month this year, noted Cottrell. On the county's road rating system of A to F, it's a failed roadway all the way to State Road 39, he noted.

"Trucks and truck traffic is certainly an issue," he told commissioners.

The county has already allocated \$5.5 million to improve the intersection of Lithia-Pinecrest, Bell Shoals Road and Durant Road and that project is expected to begin in January. The county's also

looking at installing a light at Miller Road and Erindale Drive this year and is doing a traffic analysis to see if a signal is warranted at Valrico Road.

County Commissioner Ronda Storms made the motion to ask staff to look into financing the road project with the help of the state's newly adopted growth management legislation combined with some federal dollars. The study will cost \$2.5 million.

"We need to do that as rapidly as possible," she said.

County Commissioner Jim Norman concurred.

"It's a parking lot disguised as a road," he said. "It's very difficult to contemplate that this road is not scheduled or even on any plans. It's very clear this is probably a 10-year project, maybe a 15-year project but we have to start."

Storms also asked Traviesa to remind his fellow legislators that the county is kicking in \$5.7 million in funding to help widen U.S. 301.

"You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours," she told him.

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## BHA Membership Dues Drive Continues

\$25 PER HOME

A Gazette Report

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association's 2005 Membership Dues Drive, launched in May, is the non-profit, all-volunteer organization's only means of financial support.

A recent community survey found that almost 90 percent of respondents felt the BHA was a valuable asset and made a positive difference in Bloomingdale.

Through the voluntary membership and support of Bloomingdale residents, the BHA provides leadership for the community and works to maintain and improve the quality of life that attracted many of us to Bloomingdale.

The purpose of the BHA is to organize and operate a homeowners association. The principal objectives include:

- The promotion of a spirit of neighborly relations and cooperation among property owners and residents of the community.

- The achievement of cooperation in obtaining improved utilities, governmental services and other beneficial improvements for the community.

- The maintenance of a high standard of morality in the community and vigorous opposition to any encroachment or conduct of whatever kind and description which may tend to lower the moral standard of the community.

- The promotion of physical improvements of the community for the common good of its property owners and residents and opposition to any act whatever which may tend to

depreciate the property values in the community.

This year, the BHA continues its work to improve Bloomingdale.

The association produces The Bloomingdale Gazette, now in its 26th year of publication, maintains a community web site, [www.bloomingtondalegazette.com](http://www.bloomingtondalegazette.com) and provides free BHA News Alerts by e-mail to residents who sign up to receive them on the web site.

Newly formed committees will allow our volunteers to better focus on specific BHA projects such as public safety, deed restriction and county code enforcement, community cleanup days, parks and recreation improvements, road improvements, helping neighbors in need and a volunteer outreach program to encourage more neighbors to get involved in their community.

The BHA welcomes all residents to one of its monthly board meetings, held at the Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road, at 7 p.m. on the first Monday each month.\*

If you are not a member of the BHA, please take a minute to send in your check for \$25 to BHA, 3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33594. Please be sure to include your name, address and phone number.

For Bloomingdale news and events — and for more information about the BHA — visit [www.bloomingtondalegazette.com](http://www.bloomingtondalegazette.com). For membership dues information, call 681-2051 or e-mail [bloomingtondale.homeowners@verizon.net](mailto:bloomingtondale.homeowners@verizon.net).

\* Due to the July Fourth holiday, this month's meeting will be July 7.

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# Can You Guess Why I'm Smiling?

By Jackie Rowe

My teeth were so bad that while I was talking to people I would notice their eyes occasionally drift to my mouth. It was embarrassing. I would consciously try not to open my mouth so wide when I spoke and often found reasons to discreetly cover my mouth while speaking. I've actually caught myself trying not to smile!

Did you know that there are studies that prove smiling is good for your mental health and not smiling is bad for your mental health? I can tell you first-hand that I not only lacked the confidence to smile but confidence in general. I felt I wasn't quite as good as other people, that maybe I didn't deserve as much as others. After all, look at all those pretty people on television. I didn't look like them.

Then, all this makeover stuff started showing up on the TV and I believe the most important change in every case was the Smile Makeover. Almost every person on the show received one and boy did it ever seem to change the way they felt about themselves. Most of them cried when they saw their new smile for the first time. Suddenly they seemed like they had the confidence to see themselves differently...like they belonged back in society.

Self confidence is obviously one of the deciding factors between winning and losing at nearly anything in life. Even in a beauty contest, the person who exudes confidence is likely to be the winner. I didn't want to win any beauty contest. I just wanted to feel better about myself while around other people and enjoy smiling again.

So when I decided to look into getting a Smile Makeover I knew I didn't want just any dentist to do it. I've always hated going to the dentist and I really hated the idea of spending week after week going back and forth to someone to correct my smile.

After a fair bit of research I found a local dentist who

is well trained in the art of cosmetic dentistry. He is a graduate of the prestigious Las Vegas Institute for Advanced Dental Studies. The very institute I had read so much about in my research. He is Dr. Scott Arnold. He is our local LVI doc.

His office is really nice too. It is very comfortable and the staff is incredibly



after



friendly. I think they knew I was scared. They were all so sweet and kind. The doctor was especially nice and he helped me to relax right away. There was no pressure to do anything I didn't want to. I knew I was in the right place.

Everyone helped me understand what my options were and explained in as much detail as I wanted to hear, exactly what the procedures would be. After my initial evaluation I was able to have a complete makeover in just two visits! And when I got up out of that chair and looked in the mirror, I now had a great smile too. I also cried with joy.

I recommend the team at Arnold Dentistry to all of my shocked friends. They can't believe the difference in my appearance and many thought that I had a

complete makeover. I have to admit, I am taking better care of myself since I like my smile better. I guess the truth is I've been going out more and feeling much better about myself overall.

If you don't smile with confidence, maybe you should call my friends at Arnold Dentistry. I know they can help. They are a great team.

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# Bloomingtondale Girl Donates Locks For Love

## PROGRAM PROVIDES WIGS FOR CHILDREN

By LESLIE WHITE  
Correspondent

Twelve-year-old Sarah Verble spent the past three years of her life in an endeavor to provide a lifetime of confidence and self-esteem to children suffering from medical hair loss.

Always complemented on her long, thick hair, Sarah took it to heart when her aunt suggested she donate her hair to the Locks of Love organization. Sarah, then nine, decided she wanted to help other children, and began letting her hair grow out until it nearly reached her waist.

"It felt great to know that I was helping someone who can't grow their own hair," she said.

After three years of growth, Verble was ready for the big night. Her mother Vicki, friends Whitney and Bethany Wallace and Sarah's brother, Jake, accompanied her to the salon to lend moral support.

"I was pretty excited until I



LESLIE WHITE/Photos

Twelve-year-old Sarah Verble had decided three years ago she wanted to grow her hair to donate to Locks of Love, an organization that provides wigs for children with medical hair loss. After a trip to the salon, Verble ended up with a new hair do and 14 inches of hair for the charity.

went into the place where they were going to cut it - then I wasn't so sure," she said. But a bad case of nerves didn't stop her. Verble's hair was gathered into a tight pony tail in three places, lending guidance to hairstylist Dana, who cut just below the first ponytail holder.

When it was over, Verble held in her hand 14 inches of

thick, healthy blond hair that would enable other boys and girls with medically induced baldness to have hair of their own.

Locks of Love is a nonprofit organization that produces and provides hairpieces for children 18 years and younger, with hopes of each prosthesis helping to restore self-esteem and confidence hit hard by hair loss.

Most of the recipients have lost their hair due to a medical

condition with an unknown cause and no cure; alopecia areata. Locks of Love also provides hairpieces for children suffering from any type of hair loss brought on by other medical conditions.

To donate, hair must be healthy, not chemically processed, and at least ten to 12 inches long from the top of the ponytail. Each piece is custom made and vacuum fitted, requiring six to ten ponytails to

create just one hairpiece. Due to the density of Verble's hair, several children will be able to benefit from her donation.

Though donors and recipients do not usually meet, Verble did provide her contact information so that she may one day be contacted by the children she was able to help.

"I hope I hear back from them," said an anxious Verble.

See LOVE, Page 18

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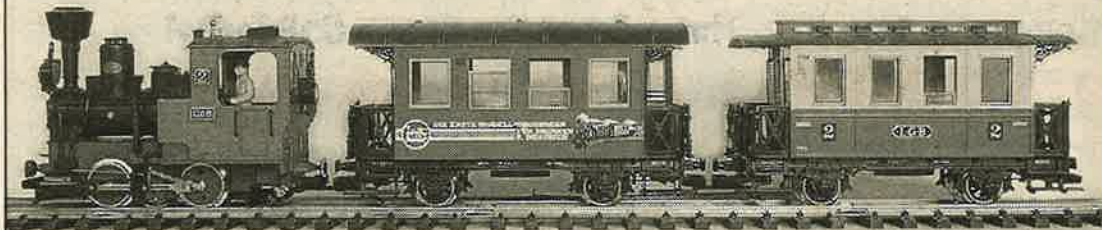


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## YARD OF THE MONTH



LAURA FRAZIER/Photo

Appreciative neighbors nominated the home of Anthony and Graziella Dumich in Windsor Woods for the July Yard of the Month award, writing in, "They don't have much space for flowers, but they have surely used their imagination to make it look pretty all year round." The Dumich's received a \$25 Ace Hardware of Bloomingdale gift card, courtesy of the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association. Send nominations to info@bloomingtongazette.com or BHA, Attn: Yard of the Month, 3509 Bell Shoals Rd., Valrico, FL 33594.

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## NEWS BRIEFS

### Annual Water Quality Report Published

Hillsborough County annual water quality report was mailed to Bloomingdale area county water department customers last week. The report contains information about drinking water sources, quality and safety.

If you missed it in the mail, call 272-6680 to request a copy or pick one up at the Bloomingdale Regional Public Library.

### Agriculture Study Defines Economic Impact

A study on the contribution of agribusiness in Hillsborough County presented to the Board of County Commissioners in June indicates that although the amount of agricultural lands has decreased countywide, their economic impact has increased.

According to the study, the county's 2,969 farms, encompassing 229,875 acres, generated sales of more than \$667 million.

It also found the farms and industries that support agriculture have an annual economic impact of \$1.4 billion and create 20,122 jobs in Hillsborough County.

The report also indicates that agriculture contributes more in taxes to the county government and schools than it requires in return for services.

For every \$1 that agriculture contributes in taxes, it only requires \$0.25 in services, thereby providing a surplus to county government and schools.

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# Brandon Artist Carves Out Unique Career Niche

## WORKS ON DISPLAY AT ART INSTITUTE OF TAMPA

By LESLIE WHITE  
Correspondent

"I'm ready for my close-up, Mr. O'Keefe."

Alright, so the sculptures don't actually talk, but that doesn't detract from the realism present in each celebrity creation fashioned at the hands of artist David O'Keefe.

Unmistakable faces and irrepressible essences are O'Keefe's specialty.

The Beatles, Oprah Winfrey, John Gruden and George W. Bush all keep O'Keefe company, with a myriad of other famous faces.

Since he was 10 years old, O'Keefe, a Bloomingdale area resident, has known what he wanted to do with his life. He wanted to be an artist, despite a well-meaning guidance counselor's attempts to deter him along the way.

"It's all I ever wanted to do and all I can do," O'Keefe said last month at the premier of his first gallery showing at The Art Institute of Tampa.

O'Keefe has been drawing since the age of 10, sketching people. His father, Bill, would make a funny face and David would draw it.

His father also suggested, "Draw the nightly news. It's a good way to draw somebody. You get what's real while you're sketching their features."



LESLIE WHITE/Photo

**Bloomingtondale area resident David O'Keefe mugs with two of the famous mugs he illustrated, John Travolta and Bill Murray, at his Art Institute of Tampa gallery premier. The artist's works often grace the pages of The Tampa Tribune and have appeared in Sports Illustrated, Time, Mad Magazine and many other publications.**

O'Keefe still sketches "real" people to this day — in church, at the mall. "I draw all the time."

O'Keefe turned his love of sketching into a career as a special projects illustrator with The Tampa Tribune, cover-

ing, you guessed it: the news. Whomever or whatever is in the media spotlight is likely fare for his imaginative sculptures. First he sketches his subject, and then spends time watching them on video to catch their mannerisms and

personality, which he believes tend to get lost in still shots.

He views his subjects from all directions and in slow motion to understand how they move, and he weaves it all into a three dimensional caricature. The sculptures are placed in a mixed-media setting, which is then photographed.

His creations have made the cover of Sports Illustrated, Sports Illustrated for Kids, Dow Jones and Mad Magazine, and have appeared inside Time magazine and The Village Voice.

His resume also includes advertising work for such big names as Coca-Cola and Fuji.

O'Keefe's wife, Janice, said at the premiere she was very proud of her husband.

"This is the first time his work has been displayed like this, all in one place," she said.

As for O'Keefe, he's always in creative mode, no matter where his work is being featured. "I hope to keep doing what I'm doing. I can't see myself doing anything else."

O'Keefe's work is being featured at The Art Institute of Tampa Gallery, off North Himes Avenue in Tampa. The exhibit is free. Gallery hours are Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Saturday 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information, call the art institute at 873-2112 or visit [www.davidokeefe.com](http://www.davidokeefe.com).



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### GOLF COURSE VILLA

This 3BR/2.5BA pool home overlooks hole one on prestigious Riverhills Golf Course. The family room is open and airy with 2 sets of sliders opening to the screen enclosed lanai. Spacious secondary bedrooms and loft. The huge lanai area is perfect for entertaining featuring an outdoor kitchen. Oversized pool and spa. Enjoy the view of the golf course from almost every room in the house.

MLS# T2102143 • 2400 sq. ft. • \$365,000



### BLOOMINGDALE POOL HOME

This 4BR/2BA pool home is one to see. The spacious family room features 10ft ceilings and has a wood burning fireplace. The open and airy kitchen has plant shelves and the kitchen nook has tray ceilings. Formal DR and LR. Huge screen enclosed lanai with 2 new ceiling fans. Plenty of room to roam in the fenced in back yard. Don't miss this one.

MLS# T2103196 • 2250 sq. ft. • \$265,000



### STUNNING POOL HOME

4BR/3.5BA pool home, located in Fishhawk Trails. Kitchen has plant shelves, corian cntrtops, 42" custom cabinets w/crown moulding, work island & built-in desk. Bay window in kitchen overlooks the pool. FR has brick wood burning fireplace & french doors. DR & LR has crown moulding & french doors leading to wrap porch. Jacuzzi tub in mstr bath. Huge pool & spa. Brick paved sun deck on side. Upstairs balcony. Beautifully landscaped yard.

MLS# T2104328 • 3240 sq. ft. • \$600,000

\*According to the 1st quarter Kenst report.



**BACC REPORT**

**Detectives Brief Council  
On Identity Theft**

**TAKE MEASURES TO  
SECURE YOUR ID**

By MACKAUSTIN  
Correspondent

The Bloomingdale Area Community Council, known as the BACC, was privileged to welcome to its June 2005 meeting two detectives from the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, Sgt. John Campo and Steve Irwin. The detectives made a special presentation about a particular white-collar crime issue of great current interest — identity theft.

Campo began the briefing by explaining to the council how Sheriff David Gee has reorganized resources within the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office into a special Economics Crime Unit, under the Criminal Investigation Division.

"With white collar crimes being the fastest growing crimes in the world, Sheriff Gee consolidated all of his resources relating to white collar crime," Campo said.

"Bringing together law enforcement officers from all over the county into one unit has significantly improved both coordination and communication. Eight detectives



MACKAUSTIN/Photo

**Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office detectives Steve Irwin and John Campo present a special program about identity theft at the BACC's June meeting.**

are dedicated full time to working these types of crimes. This concentrated effort has resulted in an outstanding increase in crimes solved."

Irwin said, "Our efforts are producing good results. But the best source for stopping these types of crimes lies with each member of the community. We must all be careful, vigilant and cautious with every type of financial transaction we make."

Irwin explained the following key points involving identity theft that all consumers could use:

- ♦ Identity theft involves the

See BACC, Page 13

**BLOOMINGDALE SUBSTATION NOTES**

*Have Fun, Stay Safe This Summer*

**PREVENT ACCIDENTS,  
THEFT, INJURIES**

By DEPUTY PETE MAURER

Summer is on a roll. We've already had the first tropical storm of the season. Even with high gas prices, millions of families are on our highways traveling to enjoy all that Florida has to offer. Add the residents that know it's fantastic to be able to vacation right here in the state they live in, and we have more traffic than we can keep up with. To insure you and your family enjoy your leisure time together, please drive safely, obey all traffic laws, use your seat belts and don't drink and drive. Have fun all summer and don't spend any of it in an emergency room or at the Falkenburg jail.

**Protect Your Home  
While You're Away**

You work hard all year to pay for and keep your home safe and secure. So when you finally take that much needed vacation, take the time to prepare your home to insure it is secure while you're gone. Make special arrangements to have your yard cared for, your mail held up or picked up, and ask your neighbors to keep watch while you're gone. Help

take care of each other. You can also complete a "Security Watch" form at the Bloomingdale Community Station.

**Keep Kids Safe**

We keep hearing it on the news and reading it in the newspapers — take the necessary precautions to insure your kids are safe from sexual predators. Now more than ever, with all of the recent tragic events involving young children, this is critical. With school out our kids are everywhere — at the parks, at the playgrounds, at the malls and up and down the neighborhood streets and some are even home alone. Take whatever time it takes to teach them how to be careful and cautious and how to look out for one another. It only takes a few minutes for a tragic event to occur. Take a few minutes to stop them from happening.

**Party On, Safely and Legally**

Summer parties can be very cool. But, when they end up with confrontations and people getting arrested, the fun disappears. Take note of the precautions and know the rules that can be followed to be sure everyone has a good time and gets home safe. Parents, it is your responsibility to insure no

one under age is drinking or using drugs. Do not purchase or furnish teens with any type of alcohol. Insure all personal medications are properly secured. Learn the specific guidelines that must be followed concerning noise laws. Have fun, but respect your neighbors too. Don't let a great party have a bad ending with someone getting cited for DUI, being involved in an accident or being killed. Celebrate the Forth of July, but remember that Florida statutes make the possession and use of all fireworks illegal.

**You Drink And  
Drive, You Lose**

Florida law enforcement agencies including those in Hillsborough County will utilize checkpoints and saturation points throughout the summer to catch those drivers who voluntarily put others at risk. The campaign's title says it all — "You Drink And Drive, You Lose." Law enforcement officers are also tracking down businesses and individuals that sell alcohol to minors or purchase alcohol for them. Don't be in one of these groups. The fines are high and the penalties are tough. There's a new Sheriff in town and he means business.

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## New Security Program In Place

### MORE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

A Gazette Report

The Bloomingtondale Homeowners Association is preparing to launch a new community security program. The Bloomingtondale Community Security Program committee is calling for volunteers to help patrol our neighborhoods in an effort to identify — and deter — undesirable or potentially illegal activities.

The group wants to provide patrols in every neighborhood section of the community, 365 days a year. At least 60 volunteers willing to dedicate about three hours of their time just one night a week are needed.

The Bloomingtondale Community Security Program replaces the Bloomingtondale Mobile Watch program, formerly in operation since 1980.

Mobile Watch, a highly successful program supported by the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office as a prototype for community-based crime prevention, was initially structured to patrol neighborhoods under construction and to monitor desolate, undeveloped sections of the community.

Most of the construction in Bloomingtondale is now completed, and the community has matured since the BHA formed in 1979. The BHA board recognized this year a need to

revise and improve the Mobile Watch program to keep up with the changing times.

The new program will focus primarily on after-hours park activity, reckless driving and speeding, potential residential security problems, identification of nuisance and gang-related activity, and generally unsafe or potentially illegal activities occurring within the community.

Volunteers on duty are provided with magnetic car signs to identify themselves as community security members, and cell phones to communicate with each other and the sheriff's office.

Patrol members do not interact with, confront or pursue potential offenders.

If suspicious, dangerous or illegal activities are encountered, patrol members act as passive observers and alert the Sheriff's Office with details for further action.

The Bloomingtondale Community Security Program committee meets the third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Bloomingtondale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road. All residents with questions about the program or a desire to help are welcome to attend. For more information, call committee chairman Tony Diolosa at 681-1146, or the BHA at 681-2051.

## BACC

Continued From Page 12

unauthorized use of a person's social security number, name or other personal information with the intent of obtaining money or credit.

• If you are a victim of identity theft, immediately call at least one of the three major credit monitoring companies. This will lock down your credit.

• To prevent such incidents from occurring, one of the best actions to take is to check your credit report at least quarterly. Thanks to Congressman Bill Davis, Florida resident can now do this once a year for free.

• Monitor your credit cards carefully, especially in circumstances such as restaurants, where your card is taken out of your sight for processing a charge.

• Mail fraud and theft is prevalent. To counter this crime, take all bill payments to the post office. Don't put them in the mailbox. Also, shred all credit solicitations and other documents containing any of your personal finance information.

• Memorize all key identity numbers and passwords.

• Cyber theft can be very appealing and very sneaky. "Phishing" uses e-mails or pop-up messages to entice users into giving out personal information. Don't fall for them. Keep your computers up-to-date with anti-virus, spyware and firewall software.

• Watch out for scams like the "Nigerian Advance Fee" fraud, the 411 scam and

the work-at-home business scam. Remember that the only way to make money is to work. Nothing comes free.

• Guard your credit cards carefully. Small readers can be used to steal all of the information contained on them. Keep your credit cards to a minimum. Beware of debit cards that have no limit on their unauthorized use, as do credit cards. Keep track of your receipts.

• In short, guard your credit as if your life depended on it because it can severely damage your credit. Never give your social security number out unless you are positive of the source. Shred old financial documents. Only use secure Internet sites. Mail your bills directly through the USPS.

The information shared by detectives Irwin and Campo was extremely valuable. The BACC is grateful to them for their time and dedication to protecting our finances. They can be contacted at 247-8773.

The BACC is made up of residents from homeowners associations and neighborhoods in our community. They work directly with Community Resource Deputy Pete Maurer, Community Service Officer Sandy Capitano and other local government representatives to coordinate actions on community issues and concerns to improve the quality of life in our community. For more information about the BACC, call 635-8040.

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## BSTD REPORT

## Next Fiscal Year Budget Approved Unanimously

## NO PUBLIC OBJECTIONS

By LAURA FRAZIER  
Editor

The Bloomingdale Special Taxing District (BSTD) board of trustees meets at 7 p.m. on the second Monday each month at the Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road. All meetings are open to the public. For more information, call 681-6667 or e-mail [bloomington.owners@verizon.net](mailto:bloomington.owners@verizon.net).

## Next Annual Budget Approved

The taxing district board of trustees, at a public hearing held June 13, unanimously approved its proposed budget for the next fiscal year, October 2005 through September 2006. Prior to the June 13 hearing, the volunteer board spent several months identifying, prioritizing and budgeting for community maintenance, repairs and improvements. Bloomingdale residents were invited to attend any one of several open meetings held prior to June 13 to submit comments and questions about the proposed budget. No public input or correspondence was received on or before the June 13 meeting.

## Assessment To Remain \$100

The board of trustees, at its June 13 public hearing, voted unanimously to maintain the annual special tax assessed by the Hillsborough County Property Appraiser at \$100 per

## The Gripe About Snipe Signs

A Gazette Report

"Lose 20 pounds in a week!"

"Will trim trees 4 cheap!"

Snipe signs — those tacky advertising notices often placed along the public right-of-way or tacked to trees and utility poles — are illegal and an eye sore. Hillsborough County codes prohibit the signs and ask road crews to take them down when possi-

ble, but the things breed faster than rabbits.

Bloomingdale Special Taxing District property manager Al Devney, on his monthly quest to keep the community free of trash and debris, personally removes each snipe sign he comes across on a regular basis.

In the month of May, Devney removed and disposed of no less than 72

snipe signs.

Bloomingdale residents are asked to please comply with the ordinance prohibiting such signs. If you wish to post garage sale signs for a few hours on occasion, please take care not to trample the entryway landscaping when staking signs, don't nail the signs into trees, and please remove them promptly after you close up shop.

home. Bloomingdale's special taxing district is a non-ad valorem district; each property owner pays the same assessment regardless of the value of their residence.

## May Financial Report Approved

At the board's June 13 regular meeting, Vince Ferraro of Ferraro, Higginbotham & Hayes presented the financial report for May 2005. The balance sheet showed cash on hand in AmSouth Bank at the end of the month was \$359,695. Some year-to-date expenditures noted were \$27,035 for wall painting, \$3,950.40 for wall painting and \$2,328.83 for legal advertising.

## \$500 Reward Offered

The BSTD offers a \$500 standing reward for informa-

tion leading to the arrest and conviction of people responsible for the vandalism, destruction or theft of Bloomingdale community property (entry signs, walls, landscaping, irrigation, benches, lighting, etc.).

Vandals destroyed a significant amount of new landscaping planted at the John Moore Road entrance in June, one day after the improvements were completed. Anyone with information about community property damage is urged to call the BSTD, 684-6667, or Deputy Pete Maurer, 635-8040. Callers may remain anonymous.

## No Funds Available For New Wall

A group of residents petitioned the taxing district board to place a block wall along Natures Way from Dunaire to

Callista (between two homes) to stop egress to the adjacent lake.

The original home builder did not install a wall; currently there is only fencing (belonging to the homeowner) along one of the two properties. The board determined the cost to construct the block wall would be more than \$30,000; there is currently no money in the budget to cover the expense. The board agreed to table the issue for future consideration.

## Last Major Irrigation Section Installed

In June, property manager Al Devney reported the last two zones of irrigation were completed on the Springvale system, thus completing all major irrigation installations planned for the community. In addition, 1,500 annual plants were

installed in seven locations, landscaping improvements for entrances along Canoga Park Drive were completed, and irrigation timers were changed to the new watering schedule. Common property can now be watered two days a week, Wednesdays and Saturdays from midnight to 8 a.m. or 6 p.m. to midnight.

## Repairs, Improvements Slated for July

Property manager Al Devney reports the following activities will take place in July: A pre-bid meeting for Bloomingdale East landscaping will be held; 200 four-inch spray heads will be replaced with six-inch spray heads in the Bloomingdale Cove system; walls and entrances along Natures Way and Culbreath will be pressure washed; landscape improvements for the John Moore Rd. entrance will be completed.

## Eat, Drink and Pitch Out The Window

In the month of June, property manager Al Devney picked up 16 bags of litter, two towels, one hubcap, two shirts, one vehicle cell phone charger, one telephone, a screen door opener and 13 cents.

The beverages of choice were root beer for soft drinks, Heineken for beer (Natural Light was a close second), Woodbridge Chardonnay for wine and Jack Daniels for distilled spirits.

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# BLOOMINGDALE BUSINESS

## RESTAURANT REVIEW

### La Cubanita Quality, Quantity Hard To Beat

**SERVES BREAKFAST,  
LUNCH, DINNER**

By ELTON DUMONT  
Exclusive To  
The Bloomingdale Gazette

If you recognize the name of the new Cuban restaurant in the Winn Dixie plaza on Bloomingdale Avenue at Lithia-Pinecrest Road – La Cubanita Café – chances are you’ve dined at the original location on Lumsden Road. Yes, it’s the same owner, taking a cue from other restaurants that the Bloomingdale area is the right place to open a second location.

So on a recent Friday night, Mi Esposa and I, along with our friend and neighbor, Sandy Wynwood, decided to try it for dinner. Sandy incidentally had very strong credentials. She grew up in Miami and considers herself an aficionado of authentic Spanish and Cuban food, so we were fortunate she decided to join us.

La Cubanita was very clean, although the décor reminded us of any number of fast-food restaurants. You know the type — tile floors, drink machine on the wall and nondescript table and chairs. But that is where the similarity ends. The food is served semi-cafeteria style, displayed behind a glass counter. You order by what you see, and it is served right from the hot table into your dish.

The food speaks for itself — in both quality and quantity, it is hard to beat.

Entrees include baked chicken, roast pork, picadillo (ground beef), ropa viejo (shredded beef), or chicken fricasse, all for \$6.99 with two sides. The palomilla (steak) is a little more at \$7.49.

Sandy ordered the picadillo with yellow rice and plantains. She commented it was as good as any she had in South Florida; high praise indeed.

Mrs. Dumont had the roast pork with black beans and yellow rice. The pork was tender and very good, although a tad fatty. Like Sandy, she was satisfied with the yellow rice and her black beans were also very good.

I chose the ropa vieja and it was the best I’ve had in the Brandon area. The plantains were sweet and fried just right; soft but not mushy. And remember the portions were extremely large, just like the Lumsden location. This is one of the few instances where

large portions and quality and taste go hand in hand. You just gotta try it!

The restaurant opens at 7 a.m. for breakfast and offers Cuban toast, cheese toast and omelets for less than \$4. Sandwiches include the traditional Cuban (\$4.99), media noche, Alex Special and a gyro to name a few, ranging from \$3.99 to \$5.99. The side orders are intriguing, with deviled crab, yucca, tamales and ham croquettes.

We had fresh brewed iced tea and lemonade, but authentic Spanish beverages include Iron Beer (like root beer), Inca Cola and Malta India.

Desserts, also authentic,

include flan (\$2.09), guava and cheese or apple pastry (\$1.69).

You can call ahead for take out and they also offer catering. Our total including tax and gratuity was about \$24 for the three of us. We all agreed we will go back. Breakfast — including Cuban toast — is what we’re craving for on our next visit, as well as a Cuban sandwich for lunch.

Rating based on five stars  
Food ★★★★★  
Service ★★★★★½  
Ambience ★★½  
Overall ★★★

Until we eat again, I remain your humble gastronomical servant, Elton Dumont.

### ON OUR COMMUNITY WEBSITE

For Bloomingdale community meetings and events, visit our Web site at [www.bloomingtondalegazette.com](http://www.bloomingtondalegazette.com)

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# Plaza Bella Takes Shape At Bloomingdale, Bell Shoals Corner

## CENTER TO BECOME GREEN BOUTIQUE'S NEW HOME

By D'ANN WHITE  
Correspondent

It wasn't difficult to decide on a name for the new plaza she and her family are developing.

Roz Creager said she only had to look at the artist's rendering of the buildings with their Mediterranean influence.

"Plaza Bella was the perfect name," she said. "It means 'beautiful plaza,' and that's just what it's going to be — beautiful."

Creager, her husband, Mark, and son, Matt, never set out to become developers. Instead, she said, Plaza Bella simply evolved over the years.

The Creagers purchased a home on the then-two-lane Bloomingdale Avenue just east of Bell Shoals Road 28 years ago,

never imagining the rural area would one day be transformed into a thriving community and that the intersection of Bloomingdale and Bell Shoals Road would become one of the busiest in the county.

"I was pregnant with Matt at the time," Roz recalled. After first living in the quaint ranch-style home, the couple turned it into a nursery, The Green Boutique, in 1979, later buying the house next door and expanding the business into a basket and gift shop.

As the market changed, so did the business. The house where Matt took his first baby steps became an upscale gift shop specializing in Brighton purses, jewelry and accessories. Next door, Mark transformed the other business into an antique furniture and home accessories shop.

Longtime customer and friend Cindy Martin said Roz

would often talk about developing a plaza with businesses that would complement her gift shop. "It was a dream of hers," said Martin, who said she often comes into the shop just to chat and inspect the new merchandise. "They were one of the first businesses out here and we've developed a strong friendship over the years. Plus Roz offers items you can't find anywhere else and she gives back to her community."

That dream became a reality when the Creagers were able to purchase pieces of property surrounding them, providing a 6.5-acre tract on which to build.

Roz recalled how their idea for Plaza Bella breezed through county zoning reviews.

"The county commission loved what we're doing," said Roz. "They liked the concept and the attention to detail."

The two-story Mediterranean-

style plaza with its terracotta tile roof and stucco exterior will provide 18,000 square feet of retail space and another 13,000 square feet of office space, mostly on the second floor, which will be accessible by an elevator camouflaged in a tower and will open onto a veranda. In keeping with their nursery roots, the Creagers have included lush landscaping plans as well. Architect Luis Lara designed the building and Brandon builder Mitch Burley will oversee its construction. The Creagers are anticipating a spring grand opening.

"The Green Boutique will be larger but we have major plans not to lose our charm," said Roz. The new shop will have 5,000 square feet of space. "If anything, it will be more charming."

The Creagers are seeking accompanying businesses that will complement The Green Boutique. Already, Salon

Essence, now located on Bell Shoals south of Bloomingdale, has signed on to relocate into Plaza Bella. The Creagers also are talking to independent restaurateurs about opening an Italian restaurant in the plaza.

A separate parcel with access to Bell Shoals has been rezoned for an 8,300-square-foot day-care center and two outparcels at the front of the property along Bloomingdale have been rezoned to accommodate a 5,000-square-foot and a 7,000-square-foot building.

The converted home that now houses The Green Boutique will be torn down, but Roz hopes to salvage the hardwood floors and incorporate them into the new store.

Both retail and office suites starting at 750 square feet are now available for lease. Contact Mark Creager, who will manage the new plaza, at 685-3106.

## Lithia-Pinecrest Produce Stand Offers Fruits, Veggies, Recipes

### HOT BOILED PEANUTS, SHRIMP AND BBQ

By LESLIE WHITE  
Correspondent

Health and diet trends have vegetable consumption at a new high. But to one local grower and produce stand owner, this is more of a way of life than a trend.

Keith Robie recently opened Robie Produce on Lithia-Pinecrest Road, just across the street from Car Wash On The Greens. Robie stocks his stand with mostly homegrown, local produce.

"We have access to over 600 acres, and what I don't have growing my friends have growing. They're all local farmers,"

said Robie, who distributes throughout Canada and to several supermarkets and downtown Tampa fresh markets.

His goal for the stand is to offer everything Mother Nature provides, emphasizing that in his eyes, sometimes fresh is better. "I'm very health conscious for the people who need it," he said.

Robie was raised on a farm where he learned how to make the best use of nature's bounty, tips and recipes he frequently shares with his customers.

"I learned from the best," he said, alluding to his mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, who all taught him healthy cooking throughout his years.

The biggest mistake cooks

make today, according to Robie?

"People slaughter their food."

He whole-heartedly believes in preserving the taste and texture of the vegetables he sells by not over-cooking, and by seasoning with the right mix. Simple ingredients can yield incredible flavors; just ask Robie. He'll share a mouth watering recipe using fresh vegetables and raw brown sugar. He also whole-heartedly believes in helping those who need it, and offers free delivery for orders over \$15, in his words "to your door and with a smile."

"There are sick and elderly people that can't get out. Believing they need the nutrition, Robie wanted to help by offering what no other produce stand does. He provides the

same service to any of his clientele. "I like to spoil my customers," he said.

Patrons are encouraged to try before they buy, making sure their tomato is to their liking and their peach is just as juicy as they want it to be. That includes a taste of his award winning hot Cajun boiled peanuts, as well as the salted variety.

Along with the fresh vegetables, Robie offers barbeque, its scent wafting into nearby parking lots in June, literally drawing curious sniffers to his stand, just to see where that delicious smell was coming from. On Friday, Saturday and Sunday he also offers jumbo shrimp from B&P Shrimp Company in Tampa.

Future plans include room in the back to spotlight different

diets and their fare, again emphasizing healthy eating and easy food preparation. To accompany the barbeque, Robie will soon offer all the fixin's to go with it. With the help of his wife, he hopes to have that area up and running soon. He also offers a free watermelon for every \$12 or more purchase.

"People work hard and don't have a lot of time. I want to accommodate them," he said.

Robie Produce accepts checks and cash and is open Tuesday through Sunday from 9:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. The Exotic Plumeria, an on-site nursery featuring palms, plumeria and a variety of other indigenous plants, shares a home with Robie. For information call 654-2486 or 763-5090.

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## B L O O M I N G D A L E P U B L I C S A F E T Y

## Hurricane Prep, Recovery Advice

A Gazette Report

The Florida Municipal Electric Association, which represents the unified interests of 33 public power communities across the state, published in June its list of hurricane preparedness and survival tips.

♦ Following a power outage, unplug all of your large appliances and electronics to prevent power surges when electricity is restored, which can often damage equipment and create fire hazards.

♦ Remember the "three don'ts" when using generators: don't run a generator in the house; don't run a generator in the garage; and, don't plug the generator directly into your home's main electrical system.

♦ If your home is flooded, turn off your electrical power until a professional inspects it

thoroughly.

♦ If you smell gas, evacuate immediately and contact your gas company's emergency number.

♦ Make sure that you have current identification.

♦ After the storm, check to see if your home's weatherhead is damaged — it is above the electric meter. Utility workers cannot reconnect service if this piece of equipment — which is the homeowner's responsibility is damaged.

♦ Utilities often cannot respond to customers with special needs during or immediately after a storm.

♦ Visit [www.floridadisaster.org](http://www.floridadisaster.org) to determine your hurricane evacuation route.

♦ Capture water in your water heater by turning off power to the unit and closing the water

valves. If you lose water pressure, you will have about 40 gallons of fresh water stored in the tank.

♦ Clear your patio and yard of lawn furniture, toys, potted plants, and other debris that could blow around in high winds and cause damage or injury.

♦ Prior to the storm, identify the places around your home where to shut off your gas, water and electricity.

♦ Create a hurricane survival kit that includes: first aid supplies; water; batteries; flashlights; battery powered radio; manual can opener; prescriptions; baby food and diapers; pet food; canned foods; cash; tarps; rope; bleach; trash bags; charcoal or gas grill with plenty of fuel; wooden kitchen matches; and, a portable cooler.

## POSTON

Continued From Page 1

the surrounding air while dropping on a parachute towards the ocean.

During the drop, the drop-windsonde transmits information back to the plane, which is full of technicians, meteorologists and visiting scientists, along with two pilots and a crew chief. The surveillance flights, which leave from St. Croix or Barbados, last for eight hours, with NOAA making two of those a day.

The information collected on the missions are then relayed to a satellite, which transmits the data to the hurricane center — the whole process taking only two minutes from the time the GPS splashes down.

The hurricane center is responsible for issuing the warnings seen on local news broadcasts, but it's actually the National Center for Environmental Protection that assesses the data and lets the hurricane center know what warning to issue, which takes place every 6 hours.

Poston and his crew flew all the storms last year, sharing the load with another crew.

"Last year the six month hurricane season was basically compressed into six weeks," he said.

The crews spend so much time together in the air that

Poston said they all know each other's life history.

Poston isn't apprehensive when flying near a hurricane.

"It's easier being the pilot and being in control. The guys in the back may not feel as comfortable because they don't know where I'm taking them."

This year's hurricane season is predicted to have as many storms as last year, though not necessarily aimed at Florida. But off course, nothing is certain.

Since Hurricane Andrew in 1992, which caught Homestead completely off guard, breakthroughs in computer modeling and data collection have enabled more accurate storm predictions.

Poston estimates the G4 increased forecasting accuracy by 20 percent, and that on average, every mile of shoreline evacuated costs the government a million dollars. The G4 Poston flies narrowed last year's landfall predictions by several miles.

The NOAA Aircraft Operation Center has been based at MacDill since just after Andrew in 1992. At the time, MacDill was on the list for base closures. Poston said NOAA coming to Tampa from Miami helped MacDill remain open.

"We're considered a tenant on the base, but it's great. We have one hangar which houses all 12 of our planes. We hope to stay there a long time."

## Vehicle Owners Can Support Guide Dog Program

## DONATE \$1 AT REGISTRATION RENEWAL

A Gazette Report

A bill signed in June by Governor Bush now allows vehicle owners renewing their registrations to make a voluntary \$1 contribution to Southeastern Guide Dogs Inc.

The Palmetto organization provides professionally and

humanely trained guide dogs to blind and visually impaired individuals free of charge.

The group is one of ten non-profit organizations Florida vehicle owners can choose to contribute one dollar to when renewing their vehicle registrations.

In a company press release issued last week, Southeastern Guide Dogs representative Kimberly Marlow said since

1982, the southeast's only internationally accredited guide dog school — the only one of its kind in Florida — has relied solely on private funding to breed, raise and train more than 2,000 guide dogs, placing each with a visually impaired or blind master at no charge.

Currently, the cost to train one guide dog team — a guide dog and his visually impaired or blind master — is \$37,000.

## Welcome Aboard Dr. Mathews



Dr. Tim Conway is very pleased to welcome Dr. Michael S. Mathews whom he has known for the past 15 years on a professional and personal level. Dr. Conway feels his skills in dentistry and ethical practices are the values we all can trust.

Dr. Mathews joined the U.S. Army after high school serving as a combat medic. He then received his undergraduate degree from the University of South Florida and his doctoral degree from the University of Florida dental school in 1997. He has practiced in the Brandon/Riverview area over the past 7 years and has now committed to a long-term relationship to our practice. Dr. Conway and Dr. Mathews are committed to providing the most advanced and comprehensive dental care available for their patients. Our web site is a valuable source to learn more about our practice. You can visit us at [www.conwaymathews.com](http://www.conwaymathews.com).



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# BHA

Continued From Page 4

meeting. May updated the board on the progress of the chamber's initiative to work with county officials to find funding to widen Lithia-Pinecrest Road between State Road 60 in Brandon and County Road 39 in Lithia. The Public Works Committee made a motion, which passed unanimously, to support the Chamber's initiative (see related story in this issue).

### Public Safety Committee Takes Note of Offenders

The Bloomingdale Public Safety Committee said at the June 6 BHA meeting they would contact Deputy Pete Maurer for an up-to-date list of registered sex offenders living in the community. The committee will ask Maurer to inform the BHA if any new concerns should arise.

It was noted that several registered sexual offenders, but no registered sexual predators,

currently are living within the community. For more information, contact Deputy Maurer, 635-8040 or check the Florida Department of Law Enforcement Web site, www.fdle.state.fl.us.

### Residents Concerned About Boat Parking

Two residents from the Windsor Woods section attended the June 6 BHA meeting to voice concern about potential deed restriction and county code violations in their neighborhood. The homeowners said boats illegally parked in yards and driveways are of major concern. The Deed Restriction and Code Enforcement Committee reported Neighborhood Standards recently mailed numerous violation notices to homes with illegally parked boats, including those in the Windsor Woods section.

The committee indicated Neighborhood Standards, the

company hired by the BHA to promote deed restriction and county codes compliance, would follow up on the complaints as planned. For the month of May, Neighborhood Standards reported 1,298 curbside home inspections were completed, and 321 violation notices were mailed. In addition, the BHA Enforcement Committee is working to promote compliance among ten properties identified by the board as the most egregious deed restriction and county code violators.

### BHA Withdraws Participation From The Association of Valrico Communities

The BHA board, at its June 6 meeting, unanimously passed a motion to withdraw from future participation with the Association of Valrico Communities. The board cited several reasons for the withdrawal, including recent news reports

stating AOVC positions on several Valrico area issues. Unfortunately, the BHA board was not given an opportunity to participate in a process to validate its position on any of the AOVC's published position statements.

### BHA To Contact Ronda Storms Re: Bell Shoals

After several failed attempts by the Public Works Committee to obtain satisfactory updates from county staff about the status of the Bell Shoals Road improvement project, a motion was made and passed unanimously at the June 6 BHA meeting to contact County Commissioner Ronda Storms for information and assistance. BHA president Ted Grable agreed to draft a letter for the board's review.

### Membership Dues Drive Continues

The Membership Committee

reported the 2005 dues drive launched in May has resulted in more than 1,000 residents submitting dues payment thus far, and 88 requests for Bloomingdale license plates.

For more information about membership dues, call 681-2051 or e-mail [bloomingtondale.homeowners@verizon.net](mailto:bloomingtondale.homeowners@verizon.net).

### Next Cleanup Day In October

The Neighborhood Cleanup Day Committee agreed at the June 6 BHA meeting to hold the next cleanup day in October.

Details will be announced in upcoming issues of The Bloomingdale Gazette and on [www.bloomingtondalegazette.com](http://www.bloomingtondalegazette.com)

\* Due to the Fourth of July holiday, this month's BHA meeting has been rescheduled to Thursday, July 7. All Bloomingdale residents are welcome to attend.

# LOVE

Continued From Page 8

In the meantime, she has had an adjustment period to her newly shorn look.

"When it was first cut off it felt so weird because it was so much lighter, but I like the way it looks when I look in the mirror," she said.

Vicki Verble smiled as her daughter told her story, then added, "I was very proud of her. It was a decision she made on her own and followed through. I thought it was very brave because she had always been complimented on her hair

— it becomes part of your identity."

Verble's donation has been an inspiration to other young girls, with another friend recently donating her own ponytail to Locks of Love. As Verble enters seventh grade at

Burns Middle School next school year, she goes in not only with a new look, but with a sense of accomplishment. She was able to provide other children with more than hair, restoring a sense of confidence and pride taken from them by

something out of their control.

For more information on the Locks of Love organization, visit [www.locksoflove.org](http://www.locksoflove.org). The Web site features galleries of donors and recipients as well as local salons that offer free cuts when donating to the organization.

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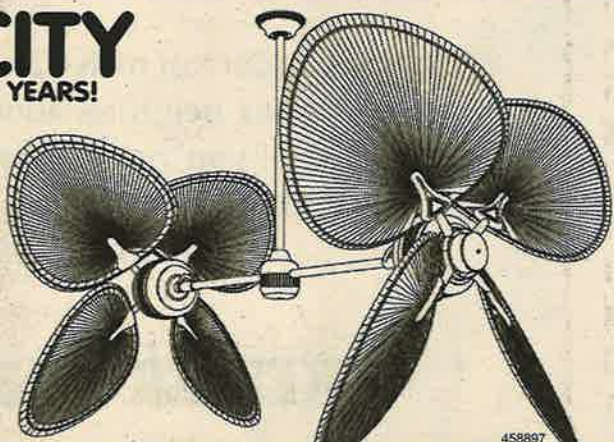
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# NAMES

Continued From Page 3

named section in Bloomingdale West, held a fundraiser last year and applied for a county minigrant to install signs at the rear entrance to their section, on Bloomingfield Drive at Paddlewheel Drive. A sign at the section's main entrance on John Moore Road was installed by the original developer.

If residents of sections E and H (adjacent and just east of Bloomingdale Estates), show interest in the program, the back of the Bloomingdale Estates sign on Bloomingfield Drive will display the name of their choice.

Residents of unnamed sections who wish to participate in the program are encouraged to speak with their neighbors and circulate petitions or ballots door to door to rally support. Petitions or ballots can be submitted by mail or in person to the Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33594 (office hours Monday through Thursday, 7 to 11 a.m.; phone: 681-2051).

Interested neighbors are also invited to attend the BHA's next meeting, set for 7 p.m. July 7 at the community

office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road.

Neighborhood participation and future selections will be announced in the Gazette and on [www.bloomingtongazette.com](http://www.bloomingtongazette.com). If you have any questions about the program, please call Laura at 643-2990 or e-mail [info@bloomingtongazette.com](mailto:info@bloomingtongazette.com).

## Neighborhood A (sections A1, A2, A3, A4)

Includes 201 residences on Greenstone Place, Casaba Loop, Orangepointe Road, Orangecrest Street, Greenford Street, Greenhook Place, Sandpebble Drive and Briarpark Way.

Suggested names: Spring Hollow Estates, Greenvale Estates, Springvale Greens Reserve.

## Neighborhood B (sections B1, B2)

Includes 117 residences on Highgrove Court, Briarlake Drive, Eastridge Drive, Orangefield Place and Greenmark Lane.

Suggested names: Briarlake Villa Park, Park Villa Estates, Natures Way Village.

## Neighborhood C (sections C1, C2, C3, C4)

Includes 226 residences on Redondo Drive, Fenner Court, Wasco Court, Hollister Place, Herlong Court, Isleton Drive, Caliente Drive and Fortuna Drive.

Suggested names: Casa Canoga, Park West Estates, Parkview Estates.

## Neighborhood E (section E)

94 residences on Bloomingfield Drive, Windtree Court, Cloverhill Court, Sweatleaf Court, Shady Nook Drive and Oakmoss Drive.

Suggested names: Bloomingfield Run, Bloomingfield Homes, Shady Hills Court.

## Neighborhood F (section FF)

85 residences on Elm Grove Lane, Cameo Crest Lane, Springway Circle and Fown View Place.

Suggested names: Natures Glen, Glenhaven Way, Cameo Crest Glen, Pinewood Retreat, Cameo Crest Cove, Springhaven Reserve, Springway Cove.

## Neighborhood H (sections H1, H3, H4)

228 residences on Paddlewheel Drive, Sweatleaf Drive, Fallon Court, Cedar Grove Drive, Denage Court, Fieldstone Drive and Encina Drive, Bloomingfield Drive, Van Reed Manor Drive.

Suggested names: Encina Heights, Sweatleaf Village, Bloomingdale West Village.

## Neighborhood M (sections M1, M2)

154 residences on Turnbury Street, Dunaire Drive, Callista Avenue, Letona Lane, Kristen Place, Santee Way, Holleman Drive, Bell Grande Drive, Haney Court and Braun Way.

Suggested names: Bell Grande Heights Hacienda Grande, Callista Heights, Parkside, Valrico Heights.

## Neighborhood O (section O)

126 residences on Lornewood Drive, Carrie Wood Drive, Ellenville Place, Havenstone Way and Monte Lake Drive.

Suggested names: Bloomingdale Trace, Grand Oaks, Oakmont.

# HEARTS

Continued From Page 3

and other library events.

Boody said the wall is dedicated to the Friends of the Library, and everyone who sponsors a heart automatically becomes a member of the friends group.

Special stories are behind many of the hearts, Boody said.

"The one for the Winslow family is dedicated to my par-

ents, who loved to read and were active in the library in my hometown," she said.

The heart dedicated to Matthew and Megan Gillis was purchased for them as a Valentine's Day gift.

A single large heart incorporated into the display is dedicated to Ron and Kitty Smaller of Brandon, who donated funds

to install the American flag and pole outside the branch.

Eight heart plaques from the original commission are still available. Once those are sold, the friends will commission another 20 from Vogt.

"We've also had folks indicate they would love to have something similar to take home with them, so we're working

with Lisa to develop that idea."

Boody said the friends group is very excited that the Hillsborough County Public Arts Committee liked the concept they developed for the donor recognition wall.

"We may also be looking for canvas and fabric/textile projects soon," she said.

Jan Stein, the county's public

arts committee coordinator, is working with the friends group to develop a plan to commission more artwork for the branch. "We will be issuing a 'call to artists' in the near future," Boody said.

For information about the friends group contact Boody at 275-3642 or [pwboody@teco-energy.com](mailto:pwboody@teco-energy.com).



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