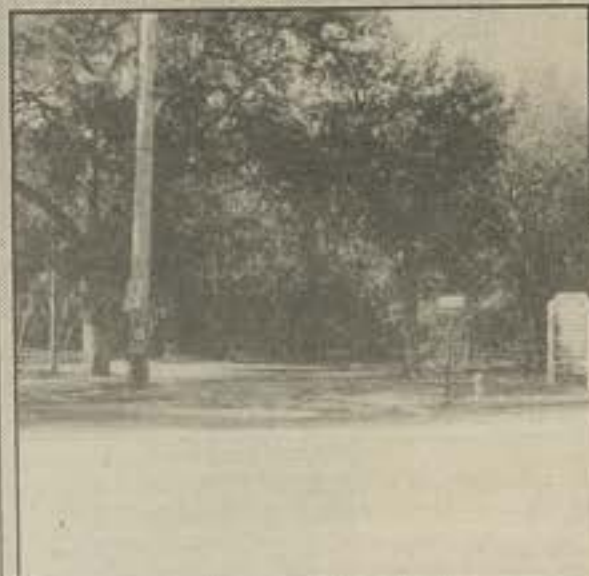


YMCA Coming To Culbreath



Future site of the South Brandon YMCA now serves as a parking lot for Little League parents.

By Gazette Staff

It's official. The YMCA that has been talked about for two years will be constructed at the corner of Bloomingdale and Culbreath with construction beginning as early as the end of 1997.

The land is owned by Ray Campo, a former county commissioner who has been involved in land development. He bought the land so it could be used specifically by the YMCA.

The North Brandon Y has felt the impact of growth even as far south as Bloomingdale and down Lithia Pinecrest.

Y officials said they believe a South Brandon facility is long overdue.

The new YMCA is expected to be 35,000 to 40,000 square feet with 145 parking spaces on the nearly 16-acre property.

Among the many uses for the additional vacant land would be the construction of extra Little League fields to alleviate some of the overcrowding at Bloomingdale Little League across the street. Nearly 200 more parking spaces would also be available.

Little League visitors currently use the land as a parking lot.

Bloomingdale Entitled To Wall

By Chris-Ann Phillips

It may not be as big as "The Wall", but Bloomingdale will get its name back at the corner of Bell Shoals and Bloomingdale Avenue.

As part of the terms of developing that corner, Walgreens had to agree to restore the Bloomingdale signage.

The terms of the final conditions of approval for that development state a subdivision ground sign ... shall be permitted and constructed by the property owner at the time of center construction.

A brick/stucco sign low to the ground (four to five feet high) will be erected at the northwest corner of the property, said Jon Schwartz, spokesman for the Florida Commercial Group which owns the land.

"It will be a much lower sign," he said. "It will have raised (metal) letters with the words 'Bloomingdale'."

The upkeep and maintenance of the sign, said Schwartz, will be the responsibility of the Bloomingdale Homeowners' Association, according to the terms of the county document.

With the near completion of Walgreens and Kash N Karry, the original 20-acre parcel still has 2 1/2 acres for sale for commercial use.

When completed, the parking areas will be landscaped with an entrance through the two retention ponds, which are county-owned.

"Those are not ours," Schwartz said. "The county needed those for drainage during road construction."

Dancer Has Lived Out Her Childhood Dreams

By Shannan Powell

From the first time Alice Holden Bock walked in the door of a dance studio at age five, she knew what she wanted to do for the rest of her life - dance and teach.

"Except for injuries and childbirth, I've been dancing every since," said Bock, who was once even told that she would never dance again due to a knee injury sustained in her early 20s.

She answered that ominous prediction by coming back to dance professionally. Bock spent a year studying with the Joffrey Ballet on scholarship in New York. She then spent three years with the Ballet Repertory of Jacksonville and three years with the Gainesville-based Dance Alive! dance company.

It was with that troupe that Bock toured much of the Southeast and Midwest, from the largest cities to the smallest towns.

"If it was a stoplight, I can probably tell you where it is," Bock said. "We danced in cities like St. Paul, Minnesota, and Atlanta and there were places like Pikeville, Kentucky."

One of her most memorable moments during her professional career came when a tornado threatened the city where her company was performing.

"Thirty minutes before the performance we all had to go to the basement of the theater. We met the audience in full costume and stage makeup and when it was all over,

we went back up and performed."

Bock currently lives in Bloomingdale West with her husband, Roger, and two sons, Brian, 9, and Brandon, 7.

"Roger has supported me throughout my dance career.

He has been very patient, especially when we were traveling a lot and I could only come home for a weekend."

Now her dreams have changed. After years of performing, Bock, who is co-director of the Brandon Centre Ballet Guild, would like to see a successful professional dance company in Brandon.

Bock makes the artistic decisions for the guild, works with the board of directors and holds company classes and rehearsals on Saturdays - all on a volunteer basis.

Founded in 1994, the guild has presented The Nutcracker during the holidays every year since. This spring the guild will perform Coppelia at Armwood on April 26.

"This ballet company means a lot to me, which is why I haven't opened my own school yet. We have a lot of wonderful dancers in

the Brandon area and we want to provide the best training available for them no matter what their futures hold."

The guild occasionally hires professional dancers for its performances, but Bock looks forward to a time when she will be able to hire professionals that have been raised through the company.

See DANCER, page 11



Artwork by June Oros

Alice Bock has been a dancer since she was 5 and now hopes to make her dream of a professional dance troupe in Brandon come to fruition.

Area Business Boom Means More Jobs

By Chris-Ann Phillips

Bloomingdale is busting out all over with new business construction expected for completion in spring and early summer.

From as far east as Albertson's on Lithia Pinecrest to Kash N Karry and Walgreens at the corner of Bell Shoals and Bloomingdale Avenue, big businesses will have a large economic impact on the area in the way of jobs for teens and adults.

But smaller businesses will have an impact, too.

On the north side of Bloomingdale and on both sides of Bell Shoals, three locally owned businesses are springing up.

Animal Medical Center, across from Bloomingdale Woods Apartments, is the closest to completion, but ground has already been broken for a new Dunkin Donuts/Baskin Robbins and a Don Olson Tire and Auto Center, both located across from Bloomingdale Square.

Expected to open in mid-April, Animal Medical Center is no newcomer to Bloomingdale having been in business on Bell Shoals for many years.

It will be four times larger with a 5,000-square foot facility, said Chris Benson, who said they have been trying to expand for more than four years, but various opportunities fell through.

Like the larger corporations across the street, Benson said the new and larger Animal Medical Center means an increase in personnel.

Longtime family owned Dunkin Donuts will open by summer west of Taco Bell. The Apostoleres family opened

Brandon's first Dunkin Donuts in 1973 at Kings and S. R. 60 then moved to its new location at Limona Road and 60 two years ago.

"Customers are always coming through asking when we are going to open a store in Bloomingdale," said Kim Apostoleres Lohkamp. "With Bloomingdale growing the way it is there's a need for another place people can get breakfast."

Besides its famous donuts and fresh-baked croissants, the donut shop will share space with a Baskin Robbins ice cream parlor. The double building also will house another type of food establishment, but Lohkamp said those negotiations are still pending.

She said the location is ideal with access off Bloomingdale as well as Bell Shoals.

Lohkamp said the new business, which is the family's third Dunkin Donuts, the other is in Temple Terrace, will hire about 20-25 people.

"We're looking to hire people from the community, especially students," she said.

Community ties will also be evident at the new Don Olson Tire and Auto Center opening next door to Dunkin Donuts.

The manager, Ken Spalter, is a Bloomingdale resident. He currently runs the store on Brandon Blvd., but this new one, expected to be completed in late spring, is special to the company.

Bloomingdale's store will be Don Olson's 100th store in Florida.

See BIG BUSINESS, page 11



Animal Medical Center is nearly completed and one of three locally owned businesses opening this spring on Bloomingdale Avenue.



BHA REMINDER !!!

Your 1997 Dues Notice Is Being mailed To You This Month

Please Join
The Bloomingdale Homeowners
Association, Inc.
(BHA)

Our Times

Community Safe Despite Signs

By Rozel Sciulli

A friend of mine who got married recently was looking for a community to settle down in and start a family with his wife.

He works in downtown Tampa and she is a nurse in Brandon, so to accommodate her often late-night schedule, the couple began home-shopping in Bloomingdale.

They fell in love with one of the new models being built off Culbreath. Were ready to put a deposit, but my friend wanted to know more about this community he was deciding to commit large sums of money and his future children to.

While schools and roads were important to him, the number one priority was security.

Several years ago my friend was attacked in the parking lot of his apartment complex. With a gun at his head, he was forced to take his attackers to his apartment, where he was bound while the perpetrators cleaned out his apartment of most of its belongings.

My friend hasn't gotten over the fright. So when he and his wife went shopping for a place to live, security was the one most important demand on their list.

While he was disappointed that a gated community home was not available in their price range, he was willing to settle for a home in one of the higher end neighborhoods and a good alarm system.

As he and his bride made return trips to Bloomingdale to visit friends and to take one more walk through their favorite model home, my friend began to see things that concerned him.

On one weekend visit, he observed teenagers hanging out in a still-vacant lot on the street where they wanted to build. He said they weren't abusive or loud, but it was obvious there was drinking going on.

"Okay," he told me. "I remember how hard it was to find a place to hang out as a kid."

Another daytime visit to the neighborhood in which they wanted to build, revealed a newly built, but vacant home had been vandalized, its windows broken and interior trashed.

That did it. Bloomingdale was not the place for him.

I explained about the Mobile Watch and its wonderful staff of volunteers who patrol the streets nightly.

"If they patrol," he said. "Why do these things still go on?"

"Because there aren't enough patrols to blanket the community," I told him.

In light of his horrifying experience of years ago, he said if he had moved here, he would have joined Mobile Watch. Community policing is a good thing, he said.

It may all go by the wayside, I told him. Too big a community, not enough volunteers. The same people doing all the work, gets tiring.

I reminded him that what he had seen was minor. This is not a violent neighborhood. Children can ride bikes up to the ballpark, joggers can use the sidewalks during pre-dawn or after-dark hours. And residents feel safe getting out of their cars when they get home from work.

It's because of Mobile Watch and its visibility that for 17 years the worst problems are minor disturbances or a vehicle parked where it shouldn't be. There have been smashed mailboxes and folks in the park after hours. But this is a safe community, I told him.

Unfortunately, volunteerism hasn't kept up with the growth of the community. Bloomingdale's 5,000 homes can barely provide more than 50 volunteers. When there were 1,000 homes, the numbers were up around 200.

But then something ironic happened. Because Bloomingdale was safe, it was assumed that volunteers and the Mobile Watch were no longer needed. Residents didn't realize that it was because of Mobile Watch that the community was safe and Mobile Watch needed to continue with as much support as possible to insure that security would continue.

The irony was further complicated by the fact fewer volunteers were citing fewer incidents. Not because the number of incidents was declining, but the number of watchers had declined so not as many incidents were being seen.

"I understand what you're saying," my friend said. "But how does that affect me?"

"Well, because of a perception this community wasn't safe, you didn't get to buy your dream house, now did you?"

My friend and his wife have since built a home in Tampa Palms. "It just felt safer up here," he said.

Editors Note: Mobile Watch needs your help a few hours one night a month. Call the community office at 681-2051 to volunteer.

OFFICERS

BLOOMINGDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.
3244 Lithia Pinecrest Road
Suite 103
Valrico, Florida 33594
681-2051

Randy Wolfe President 229-3321
Rick Oros Vice President 685-6866

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Ted Geable 685-7193
Walter Glenn 681-2051
Tim Golden 681-2051
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Alan Devay Administrator 684-6617

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John Britton Treasurer 681-1553
Tony DiLosa Equipment Manager 681-1146

Members

David Guy 601-5943
Paul Katmer 601-0701
Rick Borling 604-2022

Bloomingdale Oaks Special Taxing District

P.O. Box 3132
Brandon, Florida 33509-3132

Bill Grace President 685-2017
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The Bloomingdale Gazette

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HOURS: M & F: 9:30-12:30,
T & TH: 9:00-11:00, W: 9:30-2:30

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Association, Inc.	Publisher
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Rozel Sciulli	Copy Editor
June Oros	Administrative Assistant/Layout & Graphics Editor
Shannan Powell	Writer
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MEETINGS

All meetings take place at the Bloomingdale Community Office. These are monthly public meetings and all Bloomingdale residents are invited.

Bloomingdale Special Taxing District

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

BHA Board of Directors

Second Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m.

Bloomingdale Oaks Special Taxing District

First Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m.

Mobile Watch & Neighborhood Watch

Watch this listing for dates & times. The meetings are held on a per need basis.

Mobile Watch Report

By LaWayne Wyatt

The last survey of residents by the Bloomingdale Homeowners' Association indicated a very high percentage of respondents felt the Mobile Watch was a contributing factor to the safe and secure environment of our community.

If that is true, then why don't we have more volunteers?

Over the years since we were first formed in 1980, membership has fluctuated drastically. At one time we had over 200 members patrolling the streets. At present we only have 64 available for patrols. That is hardly enough to patrol our community, now five times the size it was when we had 200 members, five evenings a week.

I don't really know why people don't volunteer. Maybe it's because they are busy with other activities with the children or because they put in long hours at work. In some cases it appears to be a perception that very little is happening in the community so why should they drive the streets. In many cases it appears to be just plain apathy.

When we had 200 volunteers our log of events would be approximately 12-15 pages long each month. When the number of events went down so did membership. Again, the perception that it was unnecessary to patrol the streets because the problem had been "solved" may have deterred people from volunteering.

I seriously doubt the problem has gone away. With no patrols on the streets, we don't see as much and therefore the number of reported events decreases. Do we really want to return to those times when the number of events was high? I hope not. One of our goals is to act as a deterrent. The only way that happens is to have patrols on the streets.

We don't ask for a lot of your time; just one evening a month for a few hours. Is that so hard to contribute to the well being of your community? If we don't have more residents volunteer soon, we will be forced

to reduce the number of nights we patrol. That will probably lead to more incidents and a deterioration of the community.

The following events have been recorded since mid-November. If you want to continue being informed of items occurring in your neighborhood, then volunteer now or this report also may disappear.

Nov. 15 7-8 cars parked on Golf Manor Blvd. near golf course. Teen party in progress.

Nov. 15 Deputy stopped possible DUI on Natures Way and Lornewood Dr.

Nov. 16 One van backed in at Primary Prep Day Care. Rear doors open. Sheriff notified, deputy responded.

Nov. 27 Resident on Cedar Grove Drive reported there has been a group of male teens targeting houses for theft. Have been seen several times openly checking houses in the area.

Nov. 30 Party of 20-25 teens spilled outside house onto Briarlake Dr. Sheriff notified.

Dec. 28 25-30 kids in yards 3900 block of Briarlake Dr.

Jan. 4 20+ male teens standing on lawns 3900 block of Briarlake Dr. again

Jan. 10 Yellow VW vicinity Culbreath and Golf Manor Blvd. Appears abandoned. Sheriff notified and responded.

Jan. 16 Resident reported kids shooting BB guns at cars on Erindale Dr. evenings. General vicinity of Erin Arbor yesterday. One car was hit.

Jan. 25 Teen beer party in progress vicinity Culbreath Road and Golf Manor Blvd. Sheriff notified and responded. New construction area. Have been several reports of parties in this area.

Jan. 29 Vacant house on Peachfield Drive broken into by teens and trashed.

Bits N Pieces



Easter Bunny Hops Into Town Early

By Shannan D. Powell

The Easter Bunny will be paying a special visit to our area on March 22. The annual "Lunch with the Easter Bunny" will be held at St. Andrew's United Methodist Church, 3315 S. Bryan Road, at 11:30 a.m. and will be followed by an Easter egg hunt.

Advance tickets were available at Center Place, but word from the Bunny Trail is that the event is once again a sell out.

Panfilio named National Merit Scholar

Bloomington East resident Kristen Panfilio was named a National Merit Scholar by the National Merit Scholarship Service based on her score on the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test and on her interests, hobbies, community service and personal essay.



Kristen Panfilio

The award could provide Panfilio with scholarship money for college, but that information will not be

available until later this spring.

Panfilio participates in the International Baccalaureate program at King High. The IB program is among the most rigorous college preparatory programs in the country.

She has applied to Harvard, Amhurst, Haverford (Pa.), and Swarthmore (Pa). She already has been accepted to New College.

Artist takes honorable mention

Watercolor artist and Bloomington East resident Cheryl Jorgensen recently earned an honorable mention for her work "Old Watermill" in the Tampa Realistic Artists Multimedia Show.

The show, which featured 40-45 local artists, was held in Old Hyde Park throughout February.

Jorgensen is a member of the Brandon League of Fine Arts and a watercolor instructor at Center Place. More of her work can be seen on display at the 1997 Florida Strawberry Festival.

Speaking of BLFA... The Spring Arts Festival is scheduled for April 12-13 at Regency Square Mall. The juried show recently got a boost when Time Warner Communications contributed \$2,500 toward award money. A portion of the proceeds from the show goes to scholarships for deserving local high school seniors pursuing careers in fine arts.

Local band makes appearance

Valrico band Allison with One performed music from their latest two-CD set "Static Hum" at the Brandon Barnes and Noble on Feb. 28. The electronic-based band tried something new during their two 45-minute sets by playing a set without the live drums and guitar.

Anyone interested in seeing Allison with One perform, but missed their Brandon appearance, can catch the band at the Carrollwood Barnes &

Noble on March 29.

Three Bloomington High graduates are among the band's founding members: keyboardist Bryan Meng, keyboardist and Bloomington East resident Matthew Jeanes and vocalist Esther Langan. Keyboardist and founding member John Prpich, bassist Gabe Loewenberg, drummer Michael Carlton and guitarist Andy Carlton round out the rest of the band.

"Static Hum" and the group's previous CD "While Drifting" can be found at alternative record stores and through the band's internet site at www.cqeq.com/ -AllisonL.

Catholic education fund-raiser successful

St. Stephen Catholic Church wrapped up a seven-month fund-raiser with a Feb. 7 Mardi Gras/Casino Night. The church raised in excess of \$25,000 for the Catholic Education Fund to be used for construction of a school close to the Bloomington area.



Randy Cunningham proudly displays his wife's new car at his store in Bloomington Plaza. Patrice Cunningham won in the Auto Extravaganza Feb. 7 at St. Stephen Catholic Church.

See BITS, page 4



SMILE WRIGHT

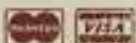
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Important Notice To Home Associations

The Bloomington Community office receives many calls that pertain to specific Homeowners Associations within the whole of Bloomington.

While all residents of Bloomington East, West, South and Estate are entitled to be members of the Bloomington Homeowners' Association (BHA), many subdivisions such as The Greens or Erin Arbor have their own associations.

It is important for the Community Office to have a contact name and phone number for each association.

Mail or drop off the information to The Bloomington Community Office, 3244 Lithia Pinecrest Road, Suite 103, Valrico, FL 33594. For information, call 681-2051. Office hours are 9:30 to 12:30 Monday and Friday; 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Tuesday and Thursday; and 9:30 to 1:30 Wednesday.

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BITS, from page 4

About 800 participants enjoyed casino-style gambling with play money for prizes; the Buddy Verdi Orchestra, a five-piece band that played Mardi Gras music; and food and dancing.

Bloomington West resident Patrice Cunningham won a Grand Prix, and Kevin Kalinowski won a Jimmy sport in the parish's Auto Extravaganza raffle.

Organizer Jack Serio said that the community support for this undertaking was strong, with sponsors contributing prizes worth \$7,000.

Next year's event already has been scheduled for Feb. 20.

Neighborhood store raises money, fun

Many Bloomington residents were seen at a Feb. 16 carnival held at the Bloomington Wal-Mart to raise money for St. Jude Children's Hospital. A total of \$4,000 was raised.

Carnival guests had opportunities to fill themselves with hot dogs and strawberry shortcake while little ones jumped in the Moonwalk, participated in a basketball shoot, played sidewalk games and met a real live Oreo cookie to sample the new spring cookie.

In addition, the store recently held a community art sale, raffled Daytona 500 tickets, gave away t-shirts for donations, held luncheons for its associates and collected donations in canisters by the store registers.

Three little ones welcomed

Richard Tyler Graves was born to River Crossing residents Dean and Melanie Graves on Jan. 18, weighing 8 pounds, 8 ounces. Richard joins sister Giorgie, 3. Maternal grandparents are Dave and Vivian Hensel of Okeechobee and Vern and Tony Charboneau of Solon Springs, Wisc. Paternal grandparents are Gene and

Lynda Graves of Port Charlotte.

Callie Ann Carlson was born to Bloomington East residents Stuart and Nancy Carlson on Jan. 27, weighing 9 pounds, 6 ounces. Callie joins brother, Sam, 2. Maternal grandparents are Hensel and Bette Hendrickson and paternal grandparents are Frank and Raye Carlson, all of Bismark, N. D.

Michael Ray Rivera was born to Bloomington East residents Mike and Ginger Rivera on Jan. 30, weighing 4 pounds, 15 ounces. Michael joins sister Julianna, 11. Maternal grandparents are Bill and Mary Benton of Winder, Ga. Paternal grandparents are Ann and Ron Norris of Beaumont, Texas.

Scholarship deadline set for BHS students

The Brandon Ladies of Elks offers two \$1,000 scholarships for the "determined average student."

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Must be a resident of the greater Brandon area currently attending Bloomington or the equivalent parochial/private school.
- Must have been accepted at a recognized institute for additional learning (college, university or technical school)
- Must have been academically placed in the graduating class with a B to C- average.
- Must have show good attendance, barring serious illness or mishaps.
- Must have been approved by the principal.

Scholarship applications are available in each guidance office. The deadline for applying is April 15 of the graduating year.

For information, contact Kathy Nelson, scholarship chairlady, Brandon Ladies of Elks Lodge #2383, 1210 Mitchell St., Brandon 33511 or call 689-3511.

Calling All Spring and Summer Brides

Your wedding can be prominently and elegantly displayed in *The Bloomington Gazette*. All you need to do is call and leave you name and phone number and someone will return your call to get the details of your nuptials! Best of all it's FREE!!!

Call 681-2051 and we will call you back promptly.

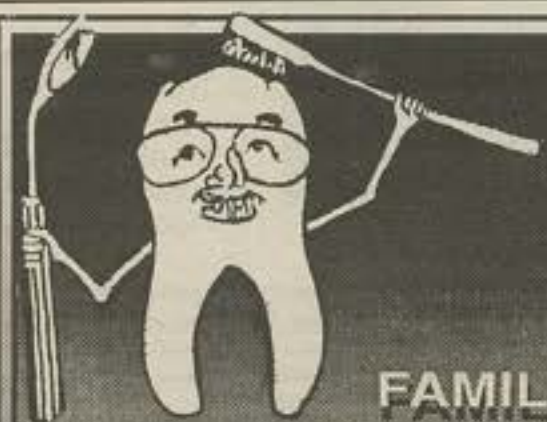
WANTED

Are you concerned about your community? Would you like a say on where some of your tax dollars are being spent?

If yes, you have a chance with a trustee position on the Bloomington Special Taxing District's (STD) board.

The time commitment is approximately 3 hours per month. If interested call our office at 684-6667 or come to the March 10 meeting at 7 p.m. at 3244 Lithia Pinecrest Road, Valrico, Florida. We share office space with *The Bloomington Gazette* and Bloomington Homeowners Association in the Royal Oaks Plaza by Winn Dixie.

Thank you in advance for your interest.



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Church News

Holy Week Observed With Music, Drama

By Ellen Slovacek

Editor's Note: Ellen Slovacek takes this month's column to share why Christians consider Easter the holiest day.

With Easter nearly upon us, I would like to express my thoughts on the holiest of all Christian holidays - Easter.

The life of Christ is an example to all, being the greatest teacher who has ever lived; but it is in his death that we find our true salvation. He alone had the power to give up His life, that we might live eternally. Only He could take upon himself the sins of all the world, from those who have lived in former days, those present and those yet to come - all sins - and offer himself as a sacrifice that we may be able to enter back into the presence of God, clean and pure.

It has been stated of God that He cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance. This being the case, none of us would be able to see our Heavenly Father again. But Jesus Christ was a willing sacrifice for our sin. Taking this tremendous burden upon himself in the Garden of Gethsemane, which caused him to bleed from every pore, our Lord became our Saviour.

Through the atonement of Jesus Christ, we can become one again with God. We can have his spirit to be with us, if we will but keep his commandments. We have been saved from eternal spiritual death, thus the cross symbolizes in many religions not an unthinkably inhumane death, but a new beginning of spiritual renewal, a rebirth.

This is why Christians around the world celebrate Easter. The resurrection brought forth faith, hope and charity. Now we can be forgiven of our sins. Now we can live again after we die. We will see God and stand before him face to face. Eternal life is ours, a precious gift from our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

p.m. - Living Stations of the Cross (youth). Holy Saturday, March 29, 7:30 p.m. - Easter Vigil. Easter Sunday, March 30, services at 8 a.m., 9:30 and 11:30.

Also at St. Stephen's will be a presentation by Reverend Edward Flanagan entitled "The Parish: A community of Life." This event will take place March 10-12 at 7:30 p.m. Babysitting will be provided. Call 689-4900 for more information.

St. Mark United Church of Christ begins Holy Week with confirmation of its 1997 Confirmation Class at the 11 a.m. service on Palm Sunday, March 23. Maundy Thursday will be observed with a 7:30 p.m. costumed re-enactment of Leonardo da Vinci's "The Last Supper" entitled "Live, With The Disciples". Communion will be served Intincture as it will be again at Good Friday services at 7:30 p.m. An Easter Sunday sunrise service will begin at 7:30 a.m. followed by a continental breakfast and children's Easter egg hunt. Communion will be served at the 9 and 11 a.m. services. Child care will be provided for all services.

The Bell Shoals Baptist Church is celebrating Easter with their annual Passion Play. This program boasts a 200-member cast with the Celebration Choir. This dramatic portrayal of Christ's last days on earth will be presented March 27-29 at 7 p.m. with an afternoon matinee on March 27 at 2 p.m., and an evening performance March 30 at 6:15. Admission is free, but tickets are required. Tickets can be picked up at the church office at 2908 Bell Shoals Rd., Brandon. Call 685-0750 for more information.

Southside Baptist Church, 415 Lumsden Rd., will host a multi-media presentation of the Easter story entitled, "No Other Lamb" on March 29 at 4 p.m. and March 30 at 10:55 a.m.

St. Andrews Methodist Church is having a trilogy of events to mark the Easter season. Maundy Thursday, A tenebrae service will be held at 7:30 p.m. This "Service of Darkness" will begin with Holy Communion and portray the Last Supper and the crucifixion through dramatic readings and music. See CHURCH, page 11

Easter Celebrations

Please note Bloomingdale area churches are expecting large crowds for the religious services during the holiday season, so if you are planning to attend services, be sure to arrive early or, where applicable, pick up tickets in advance.

St. Stephen Catholic Church has the following schedule for Holy Week: Holy Thursday, March 27, 7:30 p.m.; Good Friday services, March 28, noon - Stations of the Cross; 3 p.m. - Veneration of the Cross; 7:30

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HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

HOLY THURSDAY-MARCH 27-7:30 p.m.

GOOD FRIDAY-MARCH 28
12:00 Noon -Stations of the Cross
3:00 p.m.-Veneration of the Cross
7:30 p.m.-Living Stations of the Cross (Youth)

HOLY SATURDAY-MARCH 29
EASTER VIGIL-7:30 p.m.

EASTER SUNDAY
8:00, 9:30, & 11:30 a.m.

Gator Tales



March Madness Strikes Alafia

By Phyllis Berlacher

March is heating up to be a very busy month at Alafia. The Shamrockin' Hop bebops in to the school on March 14. From 7 p.m. to 8:30 Alafia families can rock to deejay-spun tunes. Each person wearing green will receive a free popcorn and drink. Cost is \$1 and tickets must be purchased by March 13 as none will be sold at the door. As a reminder, children must be accompanied by an adult.

Monday, March 17, is the last day for children to turn in pledges in the "Read for the Gold" read-a-thon. Funds raised will benefit the new playground, which was formally approved at February's PTA general membership meeting.

Gang awareness is the topic of the March PTA general membership meeting on Tuesday, the 18th, at 7 p.m. in the school cafeteria. A member of the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office will discuss reasons children choose gangs, signs that indicate your child may be in a gang, and ways to recognize gang activity in your area.

In other news...

About 85 children participated in Alafia's recent Bike Safety Rodeo. Sponsored by State Farm Insurance, the rodeo included eight skill stations. A. J. Barnes and Bike Works offered bike inspections, and several area businesses, including Hardees, Columbia Brandon Hospital and the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, helped make the rodeo a big success for participants.



The annual Bike Rodeo at Alafia Elementary mixed fun with bicycle safety awareness. Children maneuvered obstacle courses and passed check points in the school parking lot.

Those individuals and/or businesses wishing to help sponsor the school's new playground can call Michelle Colesanti, PTA president, at 681-8889.

And last, but certainly not least, many congratulations to those Alafia students selected to go on to the state PTA-sponsored Reflections art competition - Vionett-Edith Segarra for literature; Austin Cooley, Troy Lybbert and Grant Novitske in music; and Erin Buchelt and Christian DiPaolo for visual arts. *Good luck, gang!*

The *Bloomingtondale Gazette* is looking for delivery kids for the areas:

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Bulletin Board

Spring Fling

Immanuel Lutheran School will hold its first major fund raiser in the school's 16-year history with a dinner, dance and auction April 19. A highlight of the evening will be a raffle for a free year of tuition to the school.

"Party in the Palms" is the theme for the inaugural Spring Fling when the school gymnasium will be transformed into an elegant setting. Activities include a catered buffet dinner and an auction of unusual gift baskets gathered by parents from community sponsors. Dancing will follow.

Tickets for the event are available from the school office and cost \$40 each. The event is

open to the entire community and the winner of the one year's tuition has up to three years to cash it in.

Student Honored

Bloomingtondale resident James Hanley was selected student of the month at Mary Help of Christians School.

Dates to remember:

Mar. 26	End 3rd grading period
Mar. 27	Half-Day
Mar. 28	Conference Day
Mar. 31-Apr. 4	Spring Holidays

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To all Service Clubs, Business Organizations, Friends of Center Place and Residents of Brandon:

The Brandon Chamber invites you to come help us complete the \$129,000 beautification project of Clayton Lake on Parsons Avenue.

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- Bring a shovel and rake
- Bring grubby tennis shoes
- Bring Gloves (if you disire)
- Wheelbarrows would be nice

Where: Center Place/
Clayton Lake

Date: Saturday, March 15, 1997
Time: 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Any questions please contact:

Sandy MacKinnon, Chair for Project
621-4671

Claudia Yake, Exec. Dir., Center Place
685-8888

Major Steve Saunders,
Brandon Round Table
247-8321

Lithia Lynx

Young Poets Among State's Best

By Ron Pogorzelski
Six Lithia Springs Elementary students took top honors in "Florida's Young Poets Contest - 1997."

Their works will be published in a book entitled A CELEBRATION OF FLORIDA'S YOUNG POETS this fall.

Aided and encouraged by the school's gifted students teacher, Mrs. Stern, the writers are Nadia Halaufia, Danica Trevarthan, Brittney Geil, Sarah Thorne, Samantha Kicak, and Betsy Howe.

Reflections winners

The Reflections program again this year had many participants with some outstanding efforts. In the K-2nd grade visual arts, Miles Anderson took first place and moved on to state level, and Andrew Cross was runner-up. In the K-2nd photography category, Jerry Kent won and his mother was awarded a check at the Reflections reception for the camera club from the "Arts in Education" grant written by Lithia Springs art instructor MaryEllen Houghton.

In the K-2nd literature category, the winner was Amanda Bentson with Josiah Rowland and Jerry Kent in second and third places. Stephen Ronay won the music category for K-2nd.

Visual arts awards in grades 3-5 went to winner Jessica Sievers and runners-up Lindsay Gold and Erica Lynn Hellman. Jessica also won in the photography classification in which Carl Hunter was runner-up. In



State winners in the "Florida's Young Poets Contest - 1997" from Lithia Springs with gifted teacher Mrs. Stern are (L to R) Nadia Halaufia, Danica Trevarthan, Brittney Geil, Sara Thorne, Samantha Kicak and Betsy Howe.

literature the winner was Aylin Saner with Hailey Hobren and Sara Rowland finishing 2nd and 3rd.

Katelyn Mason took a first and a second place in music with Lisa Daniels in third. All music entries have advanced to the state level.

Bike Rodeo

The third annual Bike Rodeo will be held at Lithia Springs on March 22. With contests, refreshments, special appearances, displays and a road training course, the event promises to be great fun for children and parents.

The rodeo tries to bring home the need for safety in bicycling and skating.

Children from the community are invited to participate.

Meeting

A general PTA meeting will be held March 20 in the school cafeteria. It will begin with a spaghetti dinner at 6:30 followed by reports on financing, projects and future plans.

The price of the dinner will be modest and can be an inexpensive family night out.

The Villas at Bloomingdale

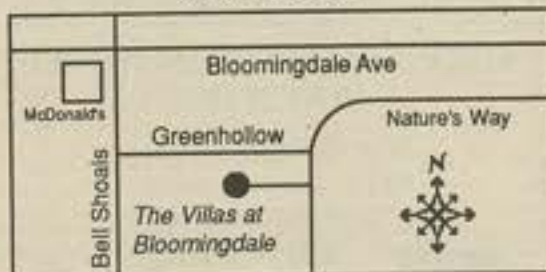
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Bulls Spring Sports Schedule

BASEBALL & SOFTBALL

March 11 Robinson
 March 15 Plant City
 March 18 Leto
 March 21 Gaither
 March 22 at Brandon
 March 25 Chamberlain
 March 17 at King
 April 8 Hillsborough



GOLF

March 13 at Temple Terrace
 vs. King/East Bay
 March 18 at Summerfield
 vs. East Bay
 March 25 at Silver Dollar
 vs. Leto/Gaither
 April 7 Boys at River Hills
 vs. Plant City
 Girls vs. King at
 B'dale Golfers Club



TENNIS

March 10 Chamberlain
 March 13 at Durant
 March 17 East Bay
 March 20 at Gaither
 March 24 Hillsborough
 March 27 at Jefferson
 April 7 King



TRACK & FIELD

March 8 Higgins Relays
 at Leto 9 a.m.
 March 15 Griffin/Manuel Relays
 at Hillsborough 9 a.m.
 March 18 Boys at Ed Wells Invite
 Clearwater 2 p.m.
 Girls at Plant City 6:30
 at Gaither 6:30
 March 21 Charles Johnson Invite
 March 22 at King 10 a.m.
 March 25 vs. King 6:30
 March 29 Florida Relays
 at Gainesville
 April 8 Lady Gaither Invite 3:30
 April 9 Boys at Chamberlain Invite



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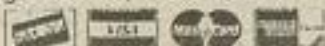


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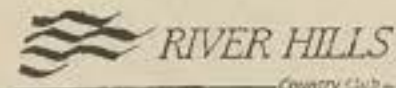
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Sports Salute

Juniors Dominate Bloomingdale Softball

By Shannan Powell

If a team could win on love of game alone, Bloomingdale's girls softball team would be championship bound.

"This team is aggressive," said Coach Mike Clamon, after the Lady Bulls defeated Armwood 10-0 in the season opener Feb. 25. "Even the younger ones and for every ball game. They play softball because they love it."

But Bloomingdale is a young team, with two seniors, 10 juniors, seven sophomores and seven freshmen, so Clamon is emphasizing the need for experience this season.

"I want them to stay in as many games as possible," he said. "I think we'll be even stronger next year."

With inexperience its most obvious weakness, the team's potential can readily be seen now in its batting.

"These girls can hit the ball and we've got good defense. Mainly, we can hit the ball and these girls proved it (in the season opener)," said Clamon, whose team finished third last season.

ished third last season.

Key players to watch this season include junior pitcher Natalie Deckert, junior catcher Heather Wright, junior infielder Jaime Melton and junior infielder Heidi Buchanan. These girls have played together since they were 7 and beginning softball at Bloomingdale Little League. They also have played All-Stars and club softball together. Over the years, Wright has caught Deckert in more than 100 games.



Natalie Deckert

As a sophomore in 1996, Bloomingdale East resident Deckert finished 7-1 with a 0.00 ERA and several shutouts during the team's 25-5 season.

"She's just so intelligent and she keeps her composure on the mound," Clamon said. "She has a good change-up and off-speed pitches. Her fastball isn't that fast, but she's so intelligent and knows how to mix her fastball and change-up so that it seems a lot faster."

See SOFTBALL, page 11

See SOFTBALL, page 11

Bulls Carry Big Sticks

By Gazette Staff

For the first time in three years, Bloomingdale has a returning baseball coach and with it comes the hope of continuity.

K.B. Scull, in his second year with the Bulls after 10 seasons at Armwood, is beginning to see the effects of his teaching - very loud bats.

Rigorous batting cage drills that don't have players swinging away but following a regimen of so many repetitions of a particular kind of hit to dictate precise ball placement, have resulted in a team average above .350 in the very early season.

In the preseason tournament Bloomingdale scored 26 runs in two games with homeruns hit by Steve Albro and Matt Smith (2), whose blast hit a pine tree in the field beyond Brandon High's left centerfield fence.

It will take hitting to keep

Bloomingdale in the win column. Scull said the team will be all right defensively, but young pitching is uncertain and untested.

Senior pitchers include Smith, who also plays first base, Albro, Damien Carapella and Craig Contos who went the distance throwing a two-hitter in the Bulls 3-0 victory against Armwood. Junior pitchers are Brandon Crossland and Chris Heck, and sophomore newcomers Doug Revelle, Travis Crossland and Trey Harris are expected to see limited action.

Scull has infield experience from Albro at third base, catcher Mark Rogers, second baseman Mike Gasparino, shortstop Justin Hancock and Smith at first. The outfield returns seniors Kevin Steinestel and Greg Maslar and senior Jason VanHeule, who didn't play last year.

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Business Notes



Mary Odum Honored

Coldwell Banker Real Estate associate and Bloomingdale Estates resident Mary Odum was named a member of the corporation's International President's Circle

during its annual awards breakfast Jan. 28.

The Circle Award is presented annually to the top two percent of Coldwell Banker's 55,000 sales associates internationally.

A senior sales associate, Odum also received the Chairman's Club award which is presented to the top 10 percent of Coldwell Banker West Central Florida's 1,000 associates.

Odum, who currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Greater Tampa Association of Realtors, has been

with Coldwell Banker for 13 years and is a graduate of Coldwell Banker University.

Russell Earns Award

Realtor and Bloomingdale resident Luana Russell is the recipient of the Crown Club Award from Tam-Bay Realty, Inc., for her 1996 sales production.

In sales, Russell, who has been a realtor for more than 20 years, is in the top one percent of the country's realtors.

Real Estate Moves

Here's A Tip... Turn To A Professional

By Michael Davis

The series on valuable tips to home selling continues...

Tip No. 7: Find a good realtor.

Nearly two-thirds of the people who sell their own home say they wouldn't do it themselves again, according to research by the National Association of Realtors. Sellers surveyed point to difficulties in setting a price, marketing handicaps and liability concerns among the primary reasons they would turn to a realtor next time. And selling a home yourself usually eats up more time and effort than you might initially expect.

Once you understand how much work it will be to sell it yourself, talk to a realtor you trust even if you decide to strike out on your own. Many top professionals are more than willing to help do-it-yourself sellers with the paperwork, contracts, etc. Plus you'll have a relationship with an agent if problems do arise that require professional help.

If you decide to work with a realtor, contact four or five. You probably met a few that you like during your open house tour. Explain to each that you're thinking about putting your home on the market and you'd like to meet to

talk about pricing and marketing. By having this group "evaluation" done, you should end up with a fairly tight price range to help guide your decision. Any realtor who is substantially higher or lower than the group should be able to justify their estimate. Just as you should be concerned with too low of a price, beware of an agent who gives you the highest price - they may be trying to buy your listing.

A good realtor knows the market and your neighborhood in particular. They will supply you with information on past sales, current listings, a marketing plan, something on their own background, and references from past clients. Take the time to carefully evaluate candidates on the basis of their experience, qualifications, enthusiasm, and personality. Most importantly, make sure you choose someone who is going to put in a lot of hard work on your behalf.

Tip No. 8: Give yourself room to negotiate... will be shared with you in the next "Real Estate Moves."

A copy of the complete report, "29 Essential Tips That Get Homes Sold Fast (And For Top Dollar)" can be obtained free of charge by calling 684-8881.

Taxpayer Bill Of Rights II

By Robert Morris, CPA

Congress enacted the TP Bill of Rights II to help the taxpaying citizen when dealing with the Internal Revenue Service. This is not the entirety, but it contains some of the most useful paragraphs.

A form 1099 is not to be presumed accurate when the taxpayer disputes the amount in question. The burden of proof falls on the IRS regarding the accuracy of the 1099 and requires the IRS to make a reasonable effort to confirm the information.

In most disputes, the IRS takes the position that it is your responsibility to prove the inaccuracy. Now the new legislation takes the rationale that your financial records are in your control and not that of the issuer of the 1099. The new law recognizes that the 1099 is nothing more than a third party's assertion that income was paid to you and no longer is the proof of your income.

Issuers of 1099's now are required to provide a telephone number to be contacted if the issuer is disputed. This should make it easier to obtain corrected forms when they are issued in error. The law said this was to begin in 1997, but unfortunately the forms distributed by the IRS did not contain the space necessary to comply with this order. The IRS will not penalize issuers for not providing the telephone number but strongly advises issuers to add the contact number to each form.

If an issuer willfully prepares a false 1099 reporting the incorrect date about how much you were paid, then you can sue for damages. This should deter intentional fraudulent forms. However, the key is willful intent and not just an error.

Prior law said if you defeated the IRS position in court and their position was not substantially justified you could collect your legal fees. The TP Bill of Rights II makes it easier to collect as some cases the burden of proof is shifted to the IRS and not the taxpayer. You no longer have to prove the IRS position was without merit but now the IRS has to prove its position was reasonable under the law.

If you are divorced and you had previously filed a joint return there is a risk the IRS could pursue the former spouse for back taxes without telling you. The former spouse can then concede to settle the tax bill in such a matter that is contrary to your interests. You are liable for any tax that is due on a joint return and the liability remains well after divorce. The law requires the IRS to inform you of any tax collection activity taken on a former spouse if you make a written request for such information.

New also is the right to switch from filing separately to filing jointly. Previously it was required to pay any tax due in its entirety prior to allowing the change but Congress

See TAX, page 11

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BHA Meeting

The monthly meeting of the Bloomington Homeowner's Association will be Tuesday, Mar. 11, at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Office, 3244 Lithia Pinecrest Road, Suite 103, in the Royal Oaks of Bloomington. All dues paying members and new residents are encouraged to attend. Guests may ask questions or raise issues at the top of the meeting.

STD Meeting

The monthly meeting of the Bloomington Special Taxing District will be Monday, Mar. 10 at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Office located at 3244 Lithia Pinecrest Road, Suite 103, in the Royal Oaks of Bloomington. A portion of homeowner property taxes supports the STD which maintains the common areas of Bloomington. All homeowners are welcomed to attend.

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TAX, from page 10

decided the same rights should be allowed as when switching from joint filing to separate filing.

Also, under the new bill, it will be accepted as complying with the "filed when mailed rule" to cover tax returns sent by private delivery services I assume will be UPS, FEDEX or other major courier services but the IRS has not named it yet.

Previously, it was required to file through the U.S. Post Office to comply with the "file when mailed" rule.

Should any of these provisions apply to you then ask your personal expert tax advisor to explain how it affects your situation directly. This is a very general summary and may not be specific enough to cover all criteria necessary for each individual's problem.

WATCH, from page 3

Jan. 30 Resident reported late model dark blue Mustang has parked on Sabal Palm Ct. several times during the past month. Leaves when someone comes home. No one on street knows car. Occupant doesn't leave car.

Feb. 13 Resident on Buttonwood reported cat killed by two dogs, one a pit bull. Sheriff notified and responded. Dogs owners not known.

Feb. 21 Teen beer party south end of Culbreath. Dispersed when patrol arrived.

CHURCH, from page 5

Good Friday celebrations will be held at noon, 2 4 and 6 p.m. This "Stations of the Cross" program is geared toward small children and their parents, and will portray the last days of Jesus. The program will last about 30 minutes and tickets are not required. Easter Sunday services will be held at 8:30 and 11 a.m. to experience the joy of the resurrection. A brass quartet will be added to the services for a special touch.

"Come listen to a prophet's voice and hear the word of God. And in the way of truth rejoice and sing for joy aloud."

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints will hold its annual General conference on April 5 and 6. Live broadcasts from Salt Lake City will be shown at the John Moore Road Chapel at 12 noon and 4 p.m. on both days. The world famous tabernacle choir will perform during the April 6 broadcast. Latter Day Saints from all over the world will gather to listen to the prophet Gordon B. Hinckley and the 12 apostles who are called as special witnesses for Jesus Christ. The public is invited to attend these sessions of the conference.

Aglow International, Brandon Day Chapter will host its monthly Women's Meeting and Breakfast on March 12 from 9:30 a.m. to noon at Center Place. It is free and open to the public.

Musician and inspirational speaker, Margie Sipes will tell of her healing journey out of the depths of depression as she shares hope and insight in overcoming the hurts and disappointment of life.

Child care is available. For information call Linda Green at 677-7041.

SOFTBALL, from page 9

Deckert said her goal this season is to get two strikeouts an inning.

"We have good defense and all-around talent, and we have good coaching," said Deckert, adding that the team is aiming for the state title this year.

With tournaments in Dunedin and Hudson, Bloomington expects to play nearly 30 games this year.

Three key matchups to watch this season are against perennially strong Chamberlain, defending state champion Gaither, and neighborhood rival Brandon, which always is a good draw.

"These are good kids and there's no attitude on this team" Clamon said. "They really want to play and you can see it."

DANCER, from page 1

In order to get to that point, the company needs support from the community, Bock said.

"The arts is a major part of the community. For the arts to stay a part of the circle of the community, we need to raise art-going people.

"Many people return to the arts somewhere in their lives, so now we need to be creating an audience of ourselves."

But community support is only one side of the coin. On the flip side of a successful company are the dancers who make the commitments and sacrifices to make their dreams come true.

"Dancers have to be totally committed," Bock said. "If not, they won't last very long. You have to commit your whole lifestyle and you have to dance from the soul."

For Bock, the most gratifying experiences, besides having her sons, is seeing a dancer "when things click."

"It means a lot to me when a dancer understands what I've been trying to teach - when they show me what I want from them and when they reach that point on stage," she said.

"I always tell my dancers that if there is something in life they really want and are willing to make the necessary sacrifices, they can have it. They can see their dreams come true."

BIG BUSINESS, from page 1

"We're the fastest growing independent in the state," said district manager Ron Tydings. "We have tripled in size in 5 1/2 years."

Tydings said Bloomington was made the choice for the new location because the company saw this area as having the greatest residential need.

"It's also a very well-educated area," said Tydings, who said it's important for consumers to know what they're buying.

The store will have four double bays (eight total) and will carry most major brand and private label tires. It also will offer full automotive service except body work, Tydings said.

Classifieds

NIP(Neighborhood Improvement Program)

Volunteers needed for BHA (Bloomington Homeowners Association) program. Call the community office at 681-2051 for information.

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