



LINDA CHIONKENNEY/Photo

Ryan Stauffer took a break from classes at Bloomingdale High School last week to talk about his perfect score on the SAT. He's now a candidate as a Presidential Scholar.

## Bloomingdale Senior Earns Perfect Score

By LINDA CHIONKENNEY  
Correspondent

Ryan Stauffer is a case study in underrated. The 17-year-old senior at Bloomingdale High School, who aspires to study music and eventually conduct, said he "thought he did well" after taking the SAT late last year. "I looked over a list of vocabulary words, but I don't think it really helped, cause none of those words were even on the test," he said.

He did take a practice math test or two but he wasn't too worried about math, he added, "because a lot of the stuff I do just naturally, I guess."

In fact, Stauffer said, "I didn't think I missed any math problems and English, I wasn't sure."

Well, now he is, as the Hillsborough County School Board this month recognized what Stauffer and his parents already knew, having looked at his scores online two weeks

after taking the test last October. Stauffer had a perfect score.

According to the College Board, the association that administers the SAT, the 1.4 million SAT takers in the class of 2003 earned average scores of 519 on the math portion of the test and 507 on the verbal section, for a total of 1026. As for scoring a perfect 1600, less than 0.1 percent of the high school graduates taking the test since 1997 can

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### Featured Story:

**Investigator hired to find deed violations**  
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# Investigator To Survey For Deed, Enforcement Violations

By D'ANN WHITE  
Editor

Starting in April, the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association is stepping up efforts to enforce the community's deed restrictions.

Last month in an executive session, the BHA board voted to approve a contract to hire an independent enforcement company to inspect neighborhoods for deed restriction and county code enforcement violations.

The new enforcement company, Neighborhood Standards, will regularly inspect neighborhoods, photograph and note any deed or code enforcement violations, and then send letters to the offending property owners.

The BHA previously performed this function through its volunteer Neighborhood Improvement Program. However, BHA President Ted Grable said it was difficult to

get volunteers willing to inspect neighborhoods on a consistent basis.

In addition, it was hard for BHA office administrator Joni Hickle to keep up with the volume of complaints from both neighbors and violators.

Hickle, who works part time and serves both the BHA and Bloomingdale Special Taxing District, said she was spending most of her time on deed restriction and code enforcement violations.

"I think there's a value to having someone who does it all the time and inspects property on a regular cycle," said Grable.

The enforcement company will be charged with inspecting the 3,100 homes in Bloomingdale that do not fall under the jurisdiction of a mandatory homeowners association. Each of these sections has a different set of deed restrictions, some 50 sets total, the new manager will have to

become familiar with. The remaining 1,358 homes in Bloomingdale fall under the purview of mandatory homeowners associations that do their own enforcement.

"I think this is a very positive step," said board member Lydia Harrod. "We get so many complaints about deed restrictions. We need to take a proactive approach."

Already, the BHA has identified the rental properties in Bloomingdale, which tend to be the biggest violators. Letters have been sent out to 300 property owners notifying them of the BHA's stepped-up enforcement effort. About half of those properties have identifiable deed or code enforcement violations.

The BHA also plans to post all the various sets of deed restrictions on its new Web site, currently under construction, so residents will have easy access to them. The Web site also will include a

complaint form. The anonymous complaints will go directly to the enforcement company to be investigated within 24 hours.

Among the items the investigator will look at are the maintenance of the home, including the condition of the paint and siding, whether house numbers are displayed properly, whether fencing is in good condition, overgrown lawns and pest infestation, inoperative or unregistered vehicles on the property, vehicles parked on the lawn or across the sidewalk, illegal recreational vehicles, dirty and stained driveways, unkempt bushes and trees, trash in the yard and visible garbage cans.

The investigator also will look for commercial uses taking place in residential areas and commercial vehicles parked at residences

See DEED, Page 23

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# Your Inside Connections

## The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, Inc.

3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33594. (813) 681-2051. Fax: (813) 651-1129

E-mail: [Bloomingdale.Homeowners@Verizon.net](mailto:Bloomingdale.Homeowners@Verizon.net)

Web Site: [www.BloomingdaleGazette.com](http://www.BloomingdaleGazette.com)

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

President — Ted Grable  
Vice President — Joe Hickle  
Treasurer — Pam Liguori  
Director — Tony Diolosa  
Director — Steve Heckel  
Director — Cheryl Kehrmeyer  
Director — Michele Caballer  
Director — Billy Hightower  
Director — Jane Lee  
Director — Stanley Lee  
Director — Lydia Harrod

## Bloomingdale Special Taxing District

3509 Bell Shoals Rd., Valrico, FL 33594  
(813) 684-6667

BSTD meetings are held at the community office on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7 p.m.

President — Thom Snelling

Vice President — Russell Jones  
Treasurer — Dale Kahn  
Recording Secretary — Alice Burleson  
Correspondence Secretary — David West  
Trustee — Myron Magedanz  
Trustee — Michael Buday  
Property Manager — Al Devney

## Bloomingdale Mobile Watch

Coordinator/Equipment Manager —

Tony Diolosa, 681-1146

Treasurer — Paul

Kelmer, 681-9701

Patrol Member —

Steven Heckel,

654-4266

Patrol Member — Brad Scharp, 643-5000

Patrol Member — Paul Warr, 685-7883



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## Bloomingdale Oaks Special Taxing District

P.O. Box 3132, Brandon, FL 33509-3132. (813) 685-2817

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

President — Bill Grace

Treasurer — Fred Englehart

## THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

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# County Wants To Protect Conservation Lot

By D'ANN WHITE  
Editor

For the 24 Bloomingdale East residents whose homes back up to 10 wooded acres designated for creation, the news couldn't have been better.

At a meeting with the homeowners last week, Mike Kelly, director of the county's real estate department, said the county is attempting to add the property to the county's Environmental Lands Acquisition and Protection Program, thereby protecting it forever from development.

Kelly's comments came as a relief to residents living along Monte Lake Drive in Stratford Trace and River Overlook Drive in River Crossing Estates. Residents in both neighborhoods whose homes back up to the 10 acres paid a premium to live on what they thought was a conservation lot.



D'ANN WHITE/Photo

Mike Kelly, director of the county's real estate department, shows residents the property the county hopes to acquire for the Environmental Lands Acquisition and Protection Program.

"It was sold to us as a conservation lot," said Monte Lake resident and Bloomingdale Homeowners Association board member Joe Hick-

le. "We were told it was going to be woods forever."

When the area was developed by the now-bankrupt Five Star Development Corp. in the 1980s, the builder was required to set aside land for green space. The 10 acres was designated parks and recreation on the subdivision plat and was supposed to be deeded to a homeowners association. However, a mandatory homeowners association for the neighborhood was never formed.

The builder ultimately abandoned the property and the county was willing to sell it to anyone who could pay the back taxes. Over the years, several land speculators looked at the property but there were no takers. As of Dec. 9, the property officially became county land under a process known as escheatment.

But that didn't mean the property was out of the woods. The county could have declared it surplus and sold it to the highest bidder who could have attempted to rezone it for development.

That was exactly the scenario Joe and Joni Hickle feared. The Hickles purchased their home on Monte Lake Drive in 1987 specifically to enjoy the wildlife that inhab-

ited the 10-acre tract.

It wasn't until 1997 that the Hickles became aware that the property could be sold for back taxes and that a new owner could attempt to rezone it for development.

To prevent that from happening, Hickle rallied neighbors as well as the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association to oppose any rezoning. Last fall, he nominated the property for the county's ELAP Program, which allows the county to purchase environmentally sensitive lands with property taxes.

"It just makes sense," said Hickle. "The county already owns the property so all they'd have to do is transfer it to the ELAP Program. They won't have to spend a dime. At the very least, it would keep the natural area the way it is."

His backup plan was to see if the neighbors would be willing to form a nonprofit association and take ownership of the property or lease it from the county for 99 years. The only drawback, he said, would be the \$2,600 annual taxes and insurance on the property.

Kelly, who came to the meeting with Peggy Hamric of the real estate department

See ELAPP, Page 21

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# Association Discusses Traffic Lights, Parks, Library Name

By D'ANN WHITE  
Editor

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association has found an ally in its attempts to get a traffic light installed at the busy intersection of Bell Shoals Road and Glenhaven Drive.

BHA President Ted Grable has been in contact with the Southoak Homeowners Association, which would like to join the BHA's lobbying efforts to get the light installed.

Grable noted that a traffic signal that would periodically stop southbound traffic on Bell Shoals Road will make it easier for residents of Southoak on the west side of Bell Shoals south of Bloomingdale to make left turns onto Bell Shoals.

Southoak also is in favor of adding a left turn lane to Bell Shoals Road at Garnet Drive to prevent traffic backups.

The county plans to make improvements to the intersec-

tion of Bell Shoals Road and Bloomingdale Avenue starting this summer to improve safety and traffic flow. The BHA is requesting that the county include a traffic light at Glenhaven and a turn lane at Garnet in those improvements, keeping in mind that there currently is no funding to widen Bell Shoals to four lanes as the county envisions in the future.

"This will go a long way to making that stretch of road safer," said Grable.

The BHA also has agreed to notify the county's library board that it would like to have the word "Bloomingdale" in the name of the new South Brandon Library. The board is currently soliciting nominations for a permanent name for the library.

"Geographic names have a lot of value because people know where they are," said Grable.

Names are also needed for eight Bloomingdale West neighborhoods that currently

have no names.

BHA director Steve Heckel got estimates of \$250 each to purchase two signs for each unnamed neighborhood. The signs are part of the BHA's PRIDE program and are intended to give those neighborhoods a sense of identity and pride. The BHA is currently taking nominations for neighborhood names. Those names will be published in the Bloomingdale Gazette and residents will have an opportunity to vote on them.

In other association business, BHA director Lydia Harrod said the county's renovation of Bloomingdale Park East are continuing. The county will install new picnic shelters, restrooms, fencing and landscaping. The BHA agreed the county also needs to install a new drinking fountain at the park.

The BHA is still looking for volunteers to participate on the BHA Relay for Life team. The American Cancer Society

Relay for Life will take place March 12-13 at Bloomingdale High School.

Team captain Joe Hickle said the team needs someone to walk the track between 10 a.m. and noon Saturday. Anyone interested can contact Hickle at [jhickle1@tam-pabay.rr.com](mailto:jhickle1@tam-pabay.rr.com).

The BHA team has settled on "The Gong Show" for its themed campsite. All Relay for Life teams have been asked to choose a old situation comedy and decorate their campsites accordingly.

BHA directors also agreed this week to write the Regency Group, owner of Bloomingdale Square, a letter asking Regency to keep the BHA apprised about any changes in leases at the shopping center.

The letter is in response to rumors that Wal-Mart and Publix may move out of the shopping center. The BHA has received no confirmation from the major retailers that they plan to move, however.

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# Public Hearing Needed For Greenhollow Entrance Improvements

D'ANN WHITE  
Editor

In the next phase of a project to refurbish all eight of the Bloomingdale entranceways, the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District solicited bids for the Greenhollow Lane entrance on Bell Shoals Road.

However, the lowest bid came in at \$57,940, and the district has only budgeted \$46,000 for the project.

That means the district will have to hold a public hearing to amend the budget.

Trustees voted at last month's meeting to ask the low bidder J.B.D. Construction to hold the quoted price until the district can amend the budget.

District property manager Al Devney said the budgeted amount was based on the price the district paid last year for the Garnet Drive entrance, \$45,000.

"But no two entrances are the same," he said. "The scope of work is different for each one."

The idea, according to trustee Dale Kahn, is to rebuild all the entrances so they conform.

The program began two years ago and the district plans to reconstruct a different entrance each year until all eight have been completed.

The district has an annual

budget of \$475,200, which funds the maintenance of all Bloomingdale's common areas.

Among the projects taking place this spring is the replacement of confederate jasmine on Springvale Drive and Natures Way with Indian hawthorn and St. Augustine grass.

The district has also cleaned and repaired the signs at the Erindale and Springville drives entrances.

Kahn's proposal to remove the 11 decaying wooden benches in the common areas, however, failed in a 1-4 vote. Kahn felt that, since the school bus stops have been moved, the benches are no longer needed. Devney has received estimates ranging from \$375 to \$1,100 to clean, repair and paint the benches and estimates of \$200 and \$720 to remove the benches.

Devney also obtained estimates for trimming the 172 oak trees on Culbreath Road and Natures Way South. To raise the tree canopy as recommended by a landscaping expert, it will cost between \$5,000 and \$7,000. To prune all the trees will cost an additional \$11,500.

The next BSTD meeting will take place March 8 at 7 p.m. at the Bloomingdale Community Office on Bell Shoals Road. All meetings are open to the public.

## Calendar

### Coffee talk

Starbucks Coffee on Providence Road and Lithia-Pinecrest Road will offer in-home demonstrations March 6 and 13 from noon to 4 p.m.

On March 6, coffee lovers can learn to make the best cup of coffee at home. And on March 13, residents will learn how to create their own Starbucks beverages.

### Tax assistance

AARP Tax-Aide volunteers will provide free income tax assistance to low- and moderate-income and elderly taxpayers now through April 15 at the Stephanie Ann Culbertson Recreation Center at Bloomingdale West, 3940 Canoga Park Drive, Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Taxpayers should bring their 2003 income records and a copy of their 2002 income tax return.

Call: (800) 227-7669 or Web site at [www.aarp.org/taxaide](http://www.aarp.org/taxaide).

### Neighborhood conference

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association is inviting residents to take part in the Hillsborough County Neighborhood Conference March 27 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Hillsborough Community College, 4001 Tampa Bay Blvd., Dale Mabry campus.

The conference will feature workshops that will inform and educate residents of the more than 800 registered neighborhood, civic, homeowners and crime watch associations throughout the county.

The goal is to educate residents on building a sense of community through improving neighborhood safety, community aesthetics, developing effective communications with neighbors, understanding the public and private resources that are available and learning how to work with government to improve their quality of life.

Workshop topics include code enforcement, traffic control, emergency management, deed enforcement, crime watches, building effective associations, zoning, recreation

opportunities, community-based planning, successful youth and teen programs, landscaping and funding neighborhood projects.

Anyone interested can obtain a registration form from the BHA office on Bell Shoals Road behind the Citgo service station. The BHA will pay the \$15 registration fee for any resident wishing to attend. Registration is due by March 19.

### Friends of the Library

The South Brandon Friends of the Library will meet March 25 at the Brandon Regional Library at 7 p.m. to vote on the nonprofit group's new bylaws. The friends also will provide input on a name for the new library on Bloomingdale Avenue, now under construction and scheduled to be completed in December. In addition, the county's Art in Public Spaces program is soliciting comments from the friends about public art to be installed at the new library. The county has set aside \$17,500 for public art for the library.

Anyone interested in joining the friends is invited to attend the meeting. The membership fee for an individual is \$10 a year, a family \$25 a year, supporting member \$50 a year and patron member \$100 a year.

For more information, contact Patricia Boody at [pwboody@tecoenergy.com](mailto:pwboody@tecoenergy.com).

### Showcase of choirs

Bloomingdale High School and the Bloomingdale Ambassadors Show Choir is hosting the fifth annual Showcase of Show Choirs at the Bloomingdale High School Auditorium March 18 at 7 p.m. Four middle school and 10 high school show choirs have been invited from throughout Hillsborough County. This event is not a competition, but a showcase of Hillsborough's best show choirs. Tickets can be purchased from any chorus student for \$5. Remaining tickets will be sold at the door the night of the show.

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## Meet Your Neighbors

### Robert and Jennifer Murphy

By D'ANN WHITE  
Editor

It was a desire to re-evaluate their lives that brought Jennifer and Robert Murphy to Bloomingdale.

Robert's demanding job as a project administrator for an engineering consulting company specializing in bridge and road construction had him traveling around the state. Days would go by when Jennifer, a branch manager at a Fort Meyers bank, wouldn't see her husband.

Then a good friend was killed in a car accident.

"That was a defining moment for us," recalled Jennifer. "You just never know when it will be your last day. We decided it just wasn't worth it to be apart."

They agreed to move to a more centrally located area where Robert could continue the career he loved but be close enough to come home every night.

With its access to Interstates 75 and 4, the Bloomingdale area was a perfect fit.

"I can't imagine living anywhere else," said Robert. "We didn't know a soul when we moved here but we've made so many really good friends."

The couple rented a home in Stratford Trace in Bloomingdale East for six months and then purchased their current home in Cambridge Cove five years ago.

"This is our dream home," said Robert, who said he fell in love with the Ken Franklin Home surrounded by oak trees. "It just seemed so peaceful. I drove in here and I was hooked."

"Now Robert comes home every night," said Jennifer. "It doesn't matter if it's 9 p.m. He drives hours so we can be together."

They are one another's biggest fans.

Robert recalls meeting Jennifer in Fort Meyers at a Christian bookstore. Jennifer insists they met at church.



Robert and Jennifer Murphy have lived in Bloomingdale for more than five years.

However they got together, Jennifer remembers telling friends after her first date with Robert that this was the man she was going to marry.

The couple celebrated their 20th anniversary last November.

A serious medical condition prevented Jennifer from having the children she always wanted. But the couple have compensated for their loss by making sure children are a major part of their lives. They have taught children's Sunday school, surrounded themselves with nieces and nephews and volunteered for their favorite children's charity, the YMCA Giving Campaign, which funds memberships for foster and migrant children as well as programs for disabled children.

She said she knew she had to help the YMCA the first time she volunteered at a Christmas party for migrant children.

"I remember visiting a trailer park where they lived and seeing holes in the trailer floor and 12 to 15 people cramped into this little space," she said. "Ever since then, it's been so real to me. I believe I can help make a difference in their lives. You can't worry about the things you can't change. You just do something about the things you can."

Building a new life in Brandon was no a problem for Jen-

nifer who said she's always been outgoing. Growing up in Cheyenne, Wyo., she was a high school cheerleader and Miss Cheyenne Teen and then was voted Most Talkative and Miss Congeniality in a national Miss Teen pageant.

Now the business relationships manager at Wachovia Bank on Causeway Boulevard, Jennifer is chairwoman of the Brandon area YMCA Giving Campaign for the sec-

See NEIGHBORS, Page 20

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## Property Manager's Report

By AL DEVNEY

### Irrigation

During the monthly maintenance inspection, 61 spray heads and four rotors were replaced and 16 risers were repaired.

Additionally, there were 61 light bulbs replaced.

### Landscaping

Raymow installed the St. Augustine grass and Indian hawthorn bushes along Springvale and removed six inches of soil on Natures Way between Springvale and Greenhollow and installed six

inches of topsoil and St. Augustine grass.

Neighborhood Pest Control applied Lesko Fertilizer to the St. Augustine grass and bushes as required by contract.

Dave Palmer of the Florida Extension Service evaluated the Indian hawthorn bushes in the area.

### Other

I removed, inventoried and stored the Christmas lights, hosted the pre-bid meeting for the Greenhollow renovation (three contractors can bid on the project) and

repaired the vandalized spotlight at Rosemead.

Handy Hands pressure washed the walls on Greenhollow and Natures Way and Greenhollow to Kingsford Place.

Russell Electric repaired a vandalized spotlight at Greenhollow.

ZK Construction repaired the damaged wall on Springvale. Since 1999, there have been 50 reported accidents on Springvale.

There was a car versus car at Natures Way and River Crossing. Both cars lost and there was no damage to the property.

Chris Wurzel installed a concrete pad on Culbreath for the new bench area.

In the land of eat, drink and pitch out the window, there were 16 bags of litter picked up, a twin-size mattress, a window screen, a vacuum cleaner, a set of AM/FM headphones and 81 cents. The beverages of choice were Cherry Coke for soft drinks, Bud Light for beer and Cluny Scotch for distilled spirits.

Ongoing projects for the second quarter include the renovation of the Greenhollow entrance and painting the walls along Canoga Park and John Moore Road.

## Bloomingtondale Substation Notes

By COMMUNITY RESOURCE DEPUTY PETE MAURER

We've all seen, read and heard numerous stories of tragedies on the news, in the newspapers or on the radio. But none has touched our community, our state and our nation like the story of 11-year-old Charlie Brucia in Sarasota.

The long hours of waiting and wondering and praying ended when the man accused of the senseless abduction and murder of this innocent young girl was arrested and Charlie's lifeless body was found.

What I must now ask each parent reading this article is: "Have you taken the time to sit down and carefully explain



Community service officer Sandy Capitano inspects a child car seat. The sheriff's substation offers free inspections.

to your children, boys and girls, how important it is to be aware of their surroundings, to be cautious of strangers and what to do if someone

tries to harm or abduct them?" Your answer is very simple; it's either yes or no.

If it's yes, I congratulate you and ask that you continue to know where your children are, whom they are with and build a relationship and trust with them so they will let you know and take care of themselves.

If your answer is no, then I can only encourage and strongly recommend that you take the time as soon as possible. It only took a few minutes for Charlie to be abducted and, only because her abduction was caught on video do we know her fate.

Most of the people around us are good, but we must all face the fact that some are not. It is critical that both parents and children learn more

about what to do to protect themselves. Many of those that are abducted don't get second chances.

Our community is getting involved in helping prepare both parents and children for the unseen dangers in our world. The YMCA is offering special classes in self-defense. Many Web sites contain excellent information on these critical topics. It's merely a matter of taking the time to get informed and take action.

One additional step that can be very important should such an event occur is having your children fingerprinted. This service is offered through the sheriff's office and other groups. For information, call the Bloomingtondale Sheriffs' Community Station at 635-8040.

And please, remember Charlie. Her precious life was taken away. Make her tragedy count for something positive. Use it to make you take the time to take care of your children by preparing them for life's dangers.

Check out these Web sites for additional information on "Stranger Danger" and other important child safety topics:

[www.childsafetyexperts.com](http://www.childsafetyexperts.com)  
[www.safekids.com](http://www.safekids.com)  
[www.theparentreport.com/resources/ages/preteen/safety](http://www.theparentreport.com/resources/ages/preteen/safety)

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# Bloomington West Focus At PRIDE Meeting This Month

by CHERYL KEHRMEYER  
BHA director

The Bloomington West Focus Neighborhood PRIDE Program is moving forward in the new year with new goals, and one of them is to have residents in Bloomington West give their different neighborhoods individual names.

At the March 15 meeting, we'll also listen to the needs and concerns of these residents, work with the teams to get a list of goals established and provide the resources to get things started. We invite all residents in these sections to come and help build a strong neighborhood PRIDE team for our community.

Through this Neighborhood PRIDE Program, the BHA's goal is to have volunteers in each neighborhood helping the BHA to implement the program in all of Bloomington's 40 sections. We invite you to attend our monthly Neighborhood PRIDE meetings, held the third Monday of each month from 7 to 8 p.m. at the Bloomington Community Office on Bell Shoals Road, so you can see how the BHA and you can work together to help your neighborhood. (We will provide team leaders with a PRIDE Resource Manual that includes tips and ideas on forming a neighborhood

## Next Meeting

Monday, March 15  
7 to 8 p.m.  
Sections C1, C2, C3,  
C4, E, I

Everyone is welcome. Help to give your neighborhood a voice and help to give your neighborhood a name. Wouldn't you prefer to have your neighborhood called "Shady Oaks" or "Park View Estates," rather than just a section? Do you have other concerns or questions?

Call 681-2051 and let us know you are coming so we have enough space and handouts.

team, organizing volunteers and implementing neighborhood-based community improvement projects. Additionally, we will talk about being good neighbors, deed restrictions and county code compliance.)

Volunteers are still needed. For more information on the Neighborhood PRIDE Program, including upcoming meetings and how you can help, call the BHA office at 681-2051 (or send e-mails to [Bloomington.Homeowners@Verizon.net](mailto:Bloomington.Homeowners@Verizon.net) Attention: PRIDE Coordinator). We look

## PRIDE Good Neighbor Tip

Please comply with county codes by storing trash containers, trash and yard waste out of sight until 6 p.m. the day prior to trash collection day. Also, please promptly return trash containers to their storage place after collection.

forward to hearing from you and helping you improve your neighborhood.

If you live on these streets, come Monday, March 15:

Sections C1 & C2  
Fenner Court  
Herlong Court  
Hollister Place  
Isleton Drive  
Redondo Drive  
Wasco Court

Section C3 & C4  
Caliente Drive  
Fortuna Drive

Section E  
Bloomingfield Drive (#s 606 to 714)

Cloverhill Court  
Oakmoss Drive  
Shady Nook Drive  
Sweatleaf Court  
Windtree Court

Section I  
Brinton Court  
Canoga Park Drive (Even #s 4102 to 4126)  
Curran Court  
Kerlien Place  
Sandy Creek Drive (#s 623 to 657)  
Tyndale Drive

♦ Mark your calendars now for the Great American Cleanup Saturday, April 17. See the April Gazette for details.

## Keep That Trash Out Of Sight

By LYDIA HARROD  
BHA director

Keep your trash cans, bags, boxes and all other trash materials out of sight from the street.

This is the standard throughout the entire Bloomington community, according to deed restrictions and Hillsborough County ordinances.

Obviously, you are allowed to put everything out by the street the evening before pickup (Monday and Thursday evenings) so the county's trash collectors can pick it up. If your trash cannot be placed

in a trash can, then you must put it in a sealed bag to prevent animals from getting into it.

Pickup times in our area are from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesdays and Fridays. Each residence is allowed three 35-gallon cans.

Trash cans must be taken back off the street and "hidden" (inside/behind a fence or shrubbery) by the evening of trash pickup (Tuesday and Friday evenings). And don't forget that Tuesdays are recycling pickup days.

Yard waste is another issue.

See TRASH, Page 21



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- Brandon 717 W. Lumsden, 654-9541
- Brandon 913 W. Brandon Blvd, 684-4499
- Brandon 11393 Causeway Blvd, 643-6944
- N. Brandon 1213 Kingsway Ave, 653-4535
- Apollo Beach 220 Apollo Beach Blvd, 645-1499
- Lithia 16739 FishHawk Blvd, 654-7991
- Plant City 2621 Thonotosassa Rd, 752-6631
- Providence 1983 Lumsden Rd, 654-4423
- Riverview 11697 Boyette Rd, 672-1832
- Seffner 1515 N. Parson Ave., 684-5897
- Valrico 1985 E. Brandon Blvd, 654-2324
- Valrico 2511 SR 60 E, 643-4825

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# Bloomington Area Community Council Report

By MACK AUSTIN  
Correspondent

The Bloomington Area Community Council is made up of concerned residents from homeowners associations and neighborhoods in the community. They work directly with Community Resource Deputy Pete Maurer, Community Service Officer Sandy Capitano and other government representatives to coordinate plans and actions on community issues and concerns that will improve the quality of life in the community.

At the February BACC meeting, Community Resource Deputy Pete Maurer updated members on current crime statistics in the community. He noted that, thanks to the efforts of burglary detectives in the area, several crimes have been solved. Also contributing to this good news is the increased support and cooperation from residents, he said.

Maurer also emphasized the importance of all parents taking the time to get with their children and explain "Stranger Danger" and other safety topics that will help protect them.

### School safety

Alafia Elementary School parents are still using the inside area of the Hillsborough County Parks Maintenance Unit to drop off and pick up their kids. Parking here should only be used dur-



MACK AUSTIN/PHOTO

Completion of the enhanced crosswalk between the Bloomington Little League and YMCA is progressing. Markings and signs are ready. The contractor will begin work the first of this month.

ing PTA meetings. This area is dangerous due to large trucks and trailers driving in and out during the day.

### Deputies reassigned

The sheriff's office continually monitors all areas of Hillsborough County to help insure the equal distribution and assignment of deputies. As a result of recent studies, additional deputies have been

assigned to the Bloomington area and will begin their assignments March 15.

### Spiffing up the station

The Bloomington Sheriff's Substation has had some improvements. New carpet has been installed and some used furniture from the county's surplus has been obtained.

### Traffic review

Members also reviewed several topics of concern including the addition of a three-way stop at Natures Way and Culbreath Road. County traffic engineers note that a warrant study has been scheduled for this location and should be completed by the first of March.

Work is under way on the

crosswalk at the Bloomington Little League and YMCA. Traffic engineers note that markings and signs are complete and the traffic signal work order has been issued. The contractor's schedule should be available in early March.

### Community grants

The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office is accepting applications from community organizations for projects that contribute to the betterment of the community. Council member Terry Ward suggested that the Bloomington Homeowners Association look into applying for funds to upgrade the Mobile Watch.

BHA director Steve Heckel will follow up on this suggestion.

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SAY YOU SAW IT IN THE  
THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE



# Little League Begins Season

By MACK AUSTIN  
Correspondent

There is still a chill in the air, especially during the nighttime practices. Players and coaches are wearing their jackets and sweatshirts. But soon the days will be warm and the sounds and sights of spring season 2004 will be in full swing.

The official season runs from Feb. 2 to May 23.

A safety project under the direction of the county's Traffic Operations Section is being completed at the Bloomingdale Little League Park and Campo Family YMCA area. An "enhanced" crosswalk will be installed between the two current crosswalks. It will be located away from the busy YMCA entrance and at a point where a bridge will be constructed to allow players and families access to the park. All parents

and players are asked to use this crosswalk when it is installed to ensure safety.

County parks maintenance workers also will trim trees around the streetlights to improve visibility during the evening hours.

As with every season, the Bloomingdale Little League depends on the time and talents of volunteers to make its season a success, according to Tina Davis, president of the league for her second year.

Some of the areas where volunteers are needed include umpires, special committees, administration, special projects and concessions.

For information on volunteering, contact Davis, at 684-8422 or [tdavis37@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:tdavis37@tampabay.rr.com)

For additional information on activities and schedules for the Bloomingdale Little League, call 684-822 or visit



MACK AUSTIN/Photo

Players and coaches have begun practice to prepare for the spring season at Bloomingdale Little League. The league has more than 1,000 players on 86 teams.

SAY YOU SAW IT IN THE  
THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

# Bloomington Boys Soccer Team Reaches State Title Game

By ROBERT CONE

They started out full of energy and took a 1-0 lead five minutes into the state soccer semifinal game against Miami Sunset High School, but the Bloomingdale High boys ran out of gas in the second half and lost 3-1.

The Bulls, once ranked No. 1 in the nation by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America, finished their season with a record of 26-3-1. In head coach Sam Isajar's three-year tenure at Bloomingdale, it was the first time he led them to the state championships. The previous two seasons the Bulls lost in the region finals.

"I think this was the best team we faced (this year), no question about it," said Isajar about Sunset, the nation's

current No. 1 team, after the game. "It was a difficult loss, kind of hard to explain but when you lose to a team like that, a very good team, you have to respect them. Right there you see what you have to do, though. I'm very proud of my team."

The Bulls' goal was scored by senior David McClelland on a nice cross from Alex Muniz.

Sunset's talent and stamina proved too much in the second half as they tied the game midway through and scored two late goals - despite some fantastic saves from Bulls keeper Chris Sedlak - to win. They went on to win the championship game 2-0.

Bloomington will lose 13 seniors and will try to get back to the state finals next season with a much younger squad.

LETTERS? COMMENTS? QUESTIONS?

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# Bloomingtondale Resident Honored At Banquet

News Report

Adhering to the theme, "100 Years of Flight," members of Cub Scout Pack 610 welcomed 20-year Army aviator Lt. Col. Bert Fortier of Bloomingtondale as the guest speaker at their Blue and Gold Banquet Feb. 22.

Fortier, who began his scouting career as a Cub and went on to become an Eagle Scout, Boy Scouting's highest rank, encouraged the boys to remain in Scouts.

He noted that 65 percent of all military academy graduates are Scouts and, of 293 astronauts who have gone through the space program, 201 of them were Scouts and 41 were Eagles.

Scouts also include Presidents John F. Kennedy and Gerald Ford as well as Wal-Mart founder Sam Walton among their ranks.

"Stay in Scouts," Fortier said. "It's something you'll never regret."

Scouts receiving honors at the banquet included:

Tigers Michael Gray and Daniel Williams led by Kellye



Army Lt. Col. Bert Fortier speaks to members of Cub Scout Pack 610 during the Blue and Gold Banquet at St. Stephen Catholic Church.

Williams; Wolves Joshua Bryant, Bradley Close, Matthew Denhard, Connor Hickie, Todd Jackson, Caleb Moore, Jonathan Nguyen, Dylan Ortiz, Ian Phillips and Ian White, led by David Denhard, Dave Hickie and Deborah Moore; Bears Nathan Lamar, James Perri, Nate Richards and Hayden Schmitt, led by Henry Perri and Patrick Richards; Webe-

los I members Ryan Bowne, Ryan DeMott, Blaise Fortier, Joshua Gransky, John Hunter, Kieran Lynch, Ian Shadwick, Alex Starney, Peter Williams and Trevor Zimmerman, led by Keith Zimmerman, Doug Gransky and Bert Fortier; and Webelos II members Drew Aldrich, Colby Artalona, Bill DeMott, Ryan Denhard, Logan Dodson, Damien Hauser, Laine Moore and

Nicolas Plante, led by Loren Young.

Blue and Gold committee members were Pam Stamey, Christie Lamar and Linda Perri.

Chik-fil-A, Cold Stone Creamery, Cosco, McDonald's, Mitchell Enterprises, Noah's Ark Animal Hospital, Pepperidge Farm and Super Wal-Mart donated food and raffle items for the event.

## Hillsborough County Seeks Residents For Crossing Guards

By MACK AUSTIN  
Correspondent

There's been a lot of information in the news recently emphasizing the importance of parents getting informed and teaching their children how to be safe in the car, in

the home and in public around strangers.

But there is one group of individuals who are directly involved in helping protect children every school day — crossing guards.

Most people just see them

as that friendly, smiling person who helps the kids get safely across the street.

But, according to the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, the work of the crossing guard is critical in insuring the safety of school children at intersections such as Bloomingtondale and Kings avenues and Natures Way and Culbreath Road.

Both of these busy intersections have thousands of cars with impatient drivers, many of whom speed, don't stop at stop signs, run red lights and are preoccupied with cell phones. Add some bad weather and the situation becomes even more dangerous.

Familiar with the faces around the school grounds, the crossing guards also provide protection for children from strangers who may be seen hanging around the

school.

The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Bureau, School Safety Unit, has the responsibility of recruiting, training and scheduling more than 270 part-time crossing guards at designated crossings throughout Hillsborough County.

However, there is currently a shortage. Several school crossing guard positions are now vacant forcing patrol deputies to pull double duty to try to cover these areas.

Anyone interested in filling one of these position can contact Cpl. Patti Morris at the School Safety Unit at 247-8115 for additional information.

This program does provide allowance for workers with work time under the Florida Retirement System.



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# Artist Crafts Clocks Out Of Canvas

By LESLIE WHITE  
Correspondent

With an eye for design and a set of skilled hands for detail, Gallery Clock's Patty Sisco infuses art with practicality to create one-of-a-kind timepieces.

Sisco and her husband, Trent, opened Gallery Clocks eight days before Christmas.

"This is functional art," Sisco said. "People can decorate their space the way they want to."

The business sprang out of a project Sisco created for her own home.

"I wanted something to fill a big space on my own wall," she said. "I did one of these clocks, and our friends would come in and say, 'Hey, can you make one for me?'"

From that point, she established an Internet business more than two years ago to sell her clocks, and eventually decided to open a showroom.

The clocks, ranging in size from 16 inches to 46 inches in circumference, have the appearance of being made of stone or wood, but are actually crafted out of canvas, adding the advantage of having something lightweight to hang that won't damage walls.

"I've been painting and drawing since I was 8," Sisco said. She also has taken several art classes at the University of South Florida.

"We get lots of walk-in traffic, with people just coming by to see what's here," said Sisco, who doesn't mind if they stay to watch her work. "I

enjoy an audience. Most of the time they come in because they're curious. Then when they see the clocks can be customized, they start getting ideas."

Sisco has even reproduced a design from an area rug to coordinate a room.

"People come in knowing where they want the clock, and I help them with color and design," said Sisco, who has a showroom full of her creations as well as an idea book for clients to look through.

One of her creations is a sports clock that looks like a baseball, decorated with a team picture. "This makes a great coach's gift from the team," she said.

Sisco's clocks can be designed with or without an image, and can be kept simple with a faux finish and minimal verbiage if that's the customer's preference.

"My favorite part of this is to see the look on people's faces when they see their clock," said Sisco.

Sisco hopes to eventually offer a hub for other artists to share their work. "I have an art board where I hope eventually other artists will come and post information."

She also wants to eventually incorporate musicians in her showroom on the weekends.

Gallery Clocks is in Lithia Crossing shopping center at 3476 Lithia-Pinecrest Road, right behind Starbucks. For more information, visit [www.galleryclocks.com](http://www.galleryclocks.com) or call 689-7170.



LESLIE WHITE/Photo

Patty Sisco is the owner of Gallery Clocks.

## Taking Stock of Your IRA

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# Furniture Store Offer Log Cabin Look

## Wood Withstands Termites, Rain

By LESLIE WHITE  
Correspondent

What's beautifully crafted, termite and weather resistant and comes with a lifetime guarantee?

It's not a riddle. It's the furniture available at Beaver Creek Log Furniture.

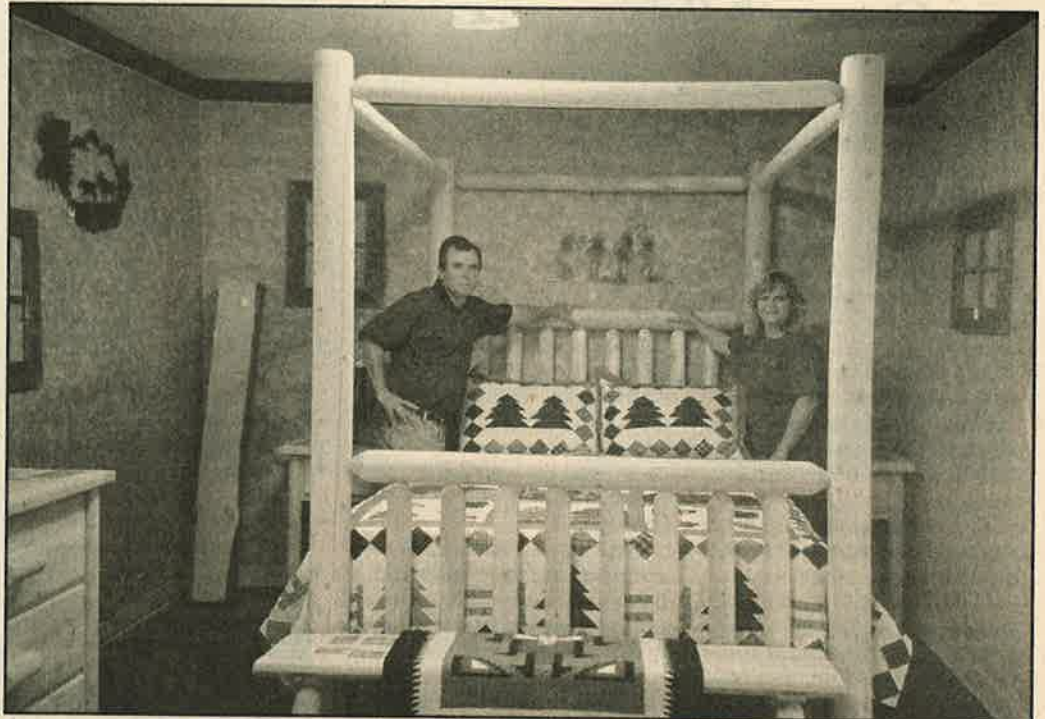
Garry and Nancy Hicks, owners of the new furniture store in Valrico, have imported the look of log furniture all the way from Kentucky.

"A friend of ours in Kentucky makes it, and has been making it for 15 years," said Garry Hicks. "We're the only distributor in Florida for his furniture."

The Northern white cedar creations come unfinished, allowing customers to finish it as they wish. They can be stained, left natural or even painted. The craftsman who makes the pieces is Tommy Mitchell, who chose to work with this type of wood based on its durability.

"This never rots," said Nancy Hicks, who has several pieces in her own house. The collection includes four-poster beds, tables and chairs, benches and barstools, swings, armoires, dressers and even bookcases.

In fact, just about anything to outfit the home or patio can be ordered from a catalog,



Garry and Nancy Hicks have opened Beaver Creek Log Furniture.

LESLIE WHITE/Photo

and some items, like dining tables, can be custom-sized.

"One of the great things about this furniture is its design. The slats on the bed are so thick and sturdy that you get better life out of your mattress. And the dresser drawers are so huge, Nancy Hicks said as she glides one open. "And each can hold up to 75 pounds."

It takes two to four weeks to get most items, though the Hicks' do carry an inventory

of swings, rockers, chairs and a few tables.

One of the most interesting features in the store is a rocker that sat outdoors for many years. Several slats have been left untreated. "All furniture weathers," explained Hicks. "It gives it a great cast, or color. What we've done here is left a few natural, sanded one part, then treated it with a polyurethane coating to show what that looks like."

Still another part was only

treated with the polyurethane to preserve the aged look. A bleach and water solution can be used to clean the furniture with minimal ease.

The showroom at 2224 Bloomingdale Ave., near Lithia-Pinecrest Road, is full of log cabin and Southwest décor. The store is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday.

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# Raccoons Are Major Source Of Rabies In Florida

By MACK AUSTIN  
Correspondent

Many Bloomingdale residents are fortunate to live in areas where they can enjoy what's left of the rural atmosphere. But with this good fortune comes some natural dangers that must be addressed.

Among these are the cute raccoons that roam freely around Bloomingdale neighborhoods, hunting for food and pilfering through trashcans.

This can present a real danger to residents and pets because raccoons are a major carrier of rabies.

Rabies is one of the oldest known viral diseases, affecting the central nervous system of unvaccinated animals that are exposed to the virus.

Controlling the spread of this disease requires a joint effort between residents and government officials, according to Dan McMahan, a Bloomingdale east resident and United States Department of Agriculture wildlife technician.

He said residents can do their part by not feeding the raccoons, no matter how tempting.

In the meantime, the USDA and Hillsborough County have begun to distribute special bait containing an oral rabies vaccine across a 2,400-square-mile area of Central Florida including Brandon and Valrico and the wooded

areas along the Alafia River.

The bait consists of small fishmeal polymer cubes that have a rabies vaccine inserted into the hollow area of the bait and then are sealed with wax.

The fishmeal attracts raccoons and is heavy enough to be distributed by air from airplanes flying at altitudes of 500 feet.

When a raccoon finds the bait and bites into it, the sachet ruptures, allowing the vaccine to flow into the raccoon's mouth. The raccoon then becomes vaccinated against rabies.

The bait has an awful smell but is harmless if consumed by a dog or other animal. Residents should stay away from the bait.

If found, residents should use gloves to pick up the bait and throw it into wooded areas or the trash.

McMahan emphasizes that the baiting program doesn't mean residents shouldn't have their pets vaccinated. Hillsborough County's Animal Ordinance requires that all dogs and cats be vaccinated against rabies every year.

If a resident or pet is attacked or bitten by a strange animal, they should call the county's Animal Services department at 774-5660.

The county will trap and test the animal for rabies.

For more information on the bait program, call the county at 272-5900.

## Computer Corner

By JIM JEUP

Q: Should I leave my computer on or turn it off?

A: Turn it off unless there is a personal need to leave it on. Turn your computer off when:

- You leave for more than one hour
  - You are done using it for the day
  - Electrical storms are in the area
  - Unplug it from the wall if you are going on vacation
- Leave your computer on when:
- It is on a company LAN and is updated at night
  - It is a server for the Internet
  - You like to check your e-mail at 2 a.m. on your way back to bed, and you do not want to wait for it to boot up.

### Dispelling myths

Booting up is bad for a computer ...

There was a time when hard drives were susceptible to heat/cool/heat cycles, but today's hard drives are far better than they were 15 years ago. Today's hard drives spin at rates of 5,400 to 7,400-plus revolutions per minute. Do you want them spinning at this rate without doing any work?

It uses more power to boot up than it does to leave it on ... Today's computers use the same amount of power to startup as they do at rest, with the exception of the floppy drive and CD ROM drive lights that flash on and off once during boot up.

Sleep and hibernation mode save wear on your computer ...

Manufacturers invented "Sleep" features to save power. In most cases, they invented sleep features to

See COMPUTER, Page 21

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Dave Corson,  
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## Births

Dec. 30

Annalee Elizabeth Cooper, daughter of Jacqueline and Albert A. Cooper III of Centennial Falcon Drive.

Feb. 3

Abby Kathleen Panter, daughter of Beth and Brandon Panter of Buckner Road.



# Center Focuses On Female Fitness

By LESLIE WHITE  
Correspondent

The fitness industry is booming — women's fitness, in particular," according to Michael Cooney, who owns and operates ShapeXpress with his wife, Dru.

The women-only fitness center opened in Lithia Crossings shopping plaza in December, offering a 30-minute total body workout using dual hydraulic resistance machines. This allows opposing muscle groups to work simultaneously, maximizing your workout while minimizing the time you spend on the machines, said Cooney.

"Most women can squeeze out 30 minutes a couple of times a week to take care of themselves," he said. "We have a kid's corner, so the kids are never out of sight, and they're happier because they can watch TV, or play, and still look over and see Mom."

This fitness program accommodates women of all ages and fitness levels.

"It's perfect for women with busy schedules who still want to fit in a highly effective workout," said Dru Cooney.

With a 24-station circuit, individuals start where they want, and rotate after spending a minute on each machine. At the end is a six-minute cool-down and stretch. ShapeXpress also offers yoga and pilates day and evening classes, which don't require membership. Currently, there are four evening classes and one day class, and the Cooneys are enrolling for an upcoming Saturday class from 1 to 2 p.m.

"We've found this to be very fulfilling so far," said Cooney. "We're helping people set and meet goals and change their lives and bodies. We measure the results visibly so they can actually see it working, whether it's in inches or weight. The best part has been watching women get excited



Personal fitness instructor Sarah Guzman helps Erin Hannington on the circuit machines at ShapeXpress

about taking care of themselves."

Aside from the circuit, there is a cardio room that offers a treadmill, elliptical machine and a recumbent bike, all set up with access to dish TV. Nearby is a free weight area, with instruction available from the personal instructor.

For women whose fitness goals include weight loss, ShapeXpress offers an all-natural, Ephedra-free, fat-burning nutritional system that targets fat reduction while preserving lean muscle tissue. Cooney said it's scientifically proven to beat even stress-induced weight gain for time-effective, lasting results. According to Dr. Paul Harris, Ph.D., ShapeXpress scientific and medical research adviser, stress plays a significant role in the production and storage of excess body fat. These products promote natural fat

burning while specifically fighting weight gain and fat retention caused by chronic stress.

With membership comes the benefit of speaking with Harris, who will personally address questions.

Another popular program is the Shape Up Challenge, in which participants sign up for the three-month endeavor, setting either weekly or monthly goals, whether it be weight loss or a tailored workout schedule. Once they meet their target, they're entered to win prizes.

"The women really form a camaraderie here. There are two distinctive groups: morning and afternoon. If someone misses a workout, the group asks where they were. Sort of holds them accountable," said Cooney.

Aside from working out, ShapeXpress also has a

licensed massage therapist and an infrared sauna. After the workout, patrons have access to a private shower and locker room.

On March 26 after 6 p.m., ShapeXpress will host a seminar led by nationally renowned women's fitness expert Danny Russo, who is offering to pay the first month's membership for women attending his seminar specifically addressing the fitness needs and concerns of women.

For more information, call ShapeXpress at 657-8500, or stop by at 3438 Lithia-Pincrest Road, behind Chili's. Hours are Monday through Thursday from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Fridays, Saturdays 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Sundays 1 to 5 p.m.

Call for an appointment and receive a tour of the facilities and one free workout.

SAY YOU SAW IT IN THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

## YMCA Child

By LINDA

Corr

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# YMCA Class Teaches Children Self-Defense

By LINDA CHION KENNEY  
Correspondent

The recommended capacity was for 50 people, but the estimate was that 20 people would likely show up. In the end, 80 people were accommodated in the window-lined workout room at the Campo Family YMCA, and it was the same story at six other Tampa Bay YMCA locations that held safety workshops for parents and their children last month.

At each location, the memory of Carlie Brucia burned bright, as the meaning of her short life and its tragic ending — forever captured on surveillance tape — became the rallying cry for preparedness in fighting off abduction.

"I don't want Carlie portrayed as being in any way responsible for what happened to her," said Frank McMahon, a former Marine, who conducted the safety class at the Campo Family. "But she has left a legacy. Her legacy is girls and women will begin thinking more about their own personal safety."

Suzie Eldridge is a staff member for the Ophelia Project of Tampa Bay, which sponsored the classes at the YMCAs. The project aims to teach girls how to become strong women, and the classes were held in conjunction with an international movement to eradicate violence against women and children.

"We're really glad we had thought to put this class on because obviously there's a need for it," said Eldridge. "This is what the Ophelia Project is trying to teach our girls. We're trying to teach our girls to be strong and assertive and not to be so willing to go along with someone else. We're teaching our girls to stand up for themselves."

For McMahon, the effort could be summed up in one word: options.

"We're giving people options," he said. "The more options they have, the more likely they'll be able to find the

right option to get out of a violent situation. And the best weapon they have is their brain. They can think twice about saying or doing something that puts them in harm's way. I see physical resistance as a last resort."

McMahon's class included a discussion about safety in respect to the Internet, relationships and physical abduction.

"I believe the personal safety solution for a child is a balance between parental supervision and child preparedness. That balance changes as your children get older and you can't be with them 24/7 365," McMahon said.

Put the computer in a common room, use firewalls and other security and monitoring devices, know which sites your child is visiting, check the history to see where they've surfed and "get a good data eraser" before you discard or donate a computer, McMahon said.

Alcohol and dating don't mix, he said, and never leave your drink unattended because someone might tamper with it. McMahon reviewed a myriad of drugs that could be used to lure an unsuspecting girl to an unwanted sexual advance or attack. As for out-and-about-safety, McMahon noted the most vulnerable time is in the midst of making transitions, such as leaving the mall for your parked car.

"There is safety in numbers," he said. "If you don't have a friend, ask a security guard to escort you."

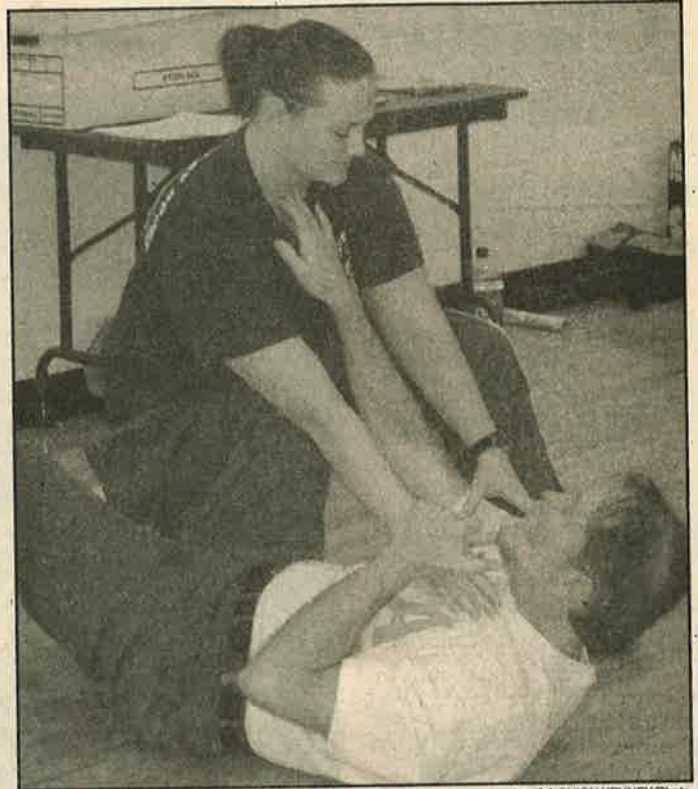
First and foremost is to scan your territory and trust your gut instincts. If something feels wrong, avoid it. And don't be afraid to be loud.

"Safety first, civility second," McMahon said. "That's paramount."

Once inside the car, lock the doors and leave immediately.

Most feared is a physical

See YMCA, Page 23



LINDA CHION KENNEY/Photo

Kristin Stansfield helps Paul McMahon demonstrate a technique to ward off an attacker at a personal safety class held at the Campo Family YMCA in Brandon.



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# Chamber's Fair Caters To Health Education

By D'ANN WHITE  
Editor

You won't find any Italian sausage sandwiches heaped with onions and peppers at this fair.

Nor will you see any hair-raising midway rides.

This fair has an altogether different purpose than last month's Florida State Fair or the current Strawberry Festival. Its focus is on health, and all of the things it takes to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

The 2004 Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce Health Fair, an annual event, will take place March 13 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Campo Family YMCA, 3414 Culbreath Road, in Valrico.

This free event gives residents an opportunity to see exhibits by members of health-related industries, including products and services they offer, said chairwoman of the fair Laura Jones. In addition, residents will have an opportunity to take advantage of a number of health screenings including vision, blood pressure, bone density and body fat.

"The Brandon area community continues to be one



Photo courtesy Brandon chamber  
Laura Jones, Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce 2004 Health Fair chairwoman, said this year's fair will feature a grand prize drawing for a bicycle.

that is health conscious and interested in the considerable number of resources available for families and individuals,"

said Jones. "This event will give vendors the opportunity to inform the community of

what is offered."

In addition to the exhibits and screenings, the event will feature entertainment throughout the day provided by drumming instructor Jana Broder of Drumming Magic, magician Robert Horning of Cards & Stuff Magic and tai chi, dance and youth fitness teams from the Campo Family YMCA.

Drawings will be held throughout the event for prizes including a Mongoose 10-speed bicycle from the Valrico Wal-Mart Supercenter, two six-month memberships to the YMCA and a deluxe gift package including various gift certificates from Brandon area businesses.

The title sponsor for this year's event is Brandon Regional Hospital. Additional sponsors include Platinum Level - BloodNet USA, Hawthorne Village, Southwest Florida College and Access Home Health; and Gold Level - GNC Country, Castle Dental and Gentiva Health Services. The Tampa Tribune/Brandon News is the event's media sponsor.

For more information, call 689-1221.

## NEIGHBORS

From page 9

ond year, has been active in a number of Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce activities including the Leadership Brandon Alumni Association and organizing last year's Hippity-Hoppity Hoedown, and she currently serves as the chamber's chairwoman, the highest leadership role a volunteer can attain at the chamber.

Although admittedly not as outgoing as his wife, Robert is often by her side.

"She's the hardest-working person I know," said Robert. "I don't know how she does it.

She puts so much time and effort into everything she takes on. She amazes me."

Jennifer said she's equally amazed by her husband who has achieved statewide recognition in his field.

Last year, he and his team received the state award for Florida's Best in Construction for his work as project engineer overseeing the construction of the new Lake Panasoffkee/Interstate 75 bridge in Sumter County.

"I was so proud of him," said Jennifer. "It was such a huge honor."

They say it's that kind of love, faith and support that has made their marriage strong.

"We struggled for a long time," said Jennifer, recalling when they first met. She was working as a bank teller and Robert was working for the state Department of Transportation. They delivered phone books to raise enough money for their wedding.

"But we've been so blessed over the years," said Robert.

In their leisure time, the couple love getting together with friends, listening to

music, watching classic movies and television shows and attending Miami Dolphins games. Robert, a Florida native, has season tickets.

But, mostly, said Robert, they just enjoy their time together, whatever they may be doing.

"Jennifer is the best thing that's ever happened to me. I can't imagine going through life without her," he said.

The feeling is mutual, said Jennifer. "Together, we're very powerful. Without him, I wouldn't be near the person I am."

SAY YOU SAW IT IN  
THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE



## ELAPP

page 6

and Pete Fowler of the county's Parks, Recreation and Conservation Department, agreed that folding the property into the county's ELAPP Program is the best solution, especially since the county is currently attempting to purchase an adjoining 1,500 acres for ELAPP on both sides of the Alafia River between Bloomingdale and FishHawk Ranch.

Through ELAPP, said Hamric, the county has acquired 40,000 acres of environmentally sensitive land throughout the county in a program that has received national recognition.

"We have one of the most successful environmental programs in the nation," she said.

"It would be foolish and inappropriate for the county to sell the property," Kelly said, noting that there would be a cloud on the title since the property has long been designated for parks and recreation. "We'd have to go before the county commission and have it declared surplus property, and that's not going to happen. The

best solution is to amend the boundaries of the ELAPP land we're trying to purchase to include the 10 acres. It would be in concert with the original purpose of this property."

The property along the Alafia that the county is now negotiating to purchase is part of a property known as the Thomas Ranch. Kelly said the property owners are negotiating with the county.

"It's just down to a matter of price," he said.

Even if the county's attempts to roll the property into ELAPP aren't successful, River Overlook Drive resident Ed Turnipseed believes the neighbors need to do whatever is possible to protect it.

He brought along a slide show with photographs of wildlife he and his wife, who are certifying their yard as a Florida Wildlife Habitat, have photographed in their back yard. He has even sighted a Florida panther on the property.

"The number of animals in this area has diminished greatly," he said. "We need to protect the ones we have left."

## TRASH

From page 11

It must be separated from other garbage or it will not be taken. Grass/leaves must be in cans, boxes or plastic bags (not to exceed 50 pounds each with a maximum of 12 bags per residence). Branches must be bundled or neatly stacked and not more than 4 feet in length or 6 inches in diameter.

It's a good idea to segregate it from your regular trash, too, so it's not missed by the Hillsborough County Solid Waste Department.

Special pickups are available for a fee by calling 272-5680.

Remember, items such as furniture, appliances, non-combustible materials and motor vehicle parts must be taken to the county waste facility at the South County Community Collection Cen-

ter on U.S. 41 north of Big Bend Road. Or you may hold noncollectible items and bring them to one of the PRIDE collections held twice a year in the spring and fall (see the Gazette for announcements). Household/yard chemicals and paints are also not collected during regular pickups. However the county holds announced monthly chemical collections. You can call 272-5680 to find out more about this.

We all want to get rid of our trash, but we don't want to have to look at it piled up along the street for very long, either. Please remember these local and county laws before setting your trash out prematurely, and let's keep Bloomingdale looking as good as ever.

## COMPUTER

From page 17

ensure an "Energy Star" rating. All computers continue to use power when they are in "Sleep" mode. Power costs will add to your electric bill.

Have you ever attempted a "defrag" with active power management? Your system goes into an endless loop as Windows continually checks your computer for user activity.

Treat your computer as you would treat your television. Modern TVs use a system board similar to your computer's motherboard.

Q: How do I stop the prompt for a password when I start Windows XP?

A: To disable the startup password login prompt in Windows XP:

1. Click "Start" and "Run"
2. Type "Control Userpasswords2" and press enter.
3. Uncheck the box for "Users must enter a user name and password to use this computer."

4. Click "Apply" and "Ok".

Q: Can I set Windows XP to look like Windows 98?

A: Force Windows XP to look like previous versions of Windows:

1. Click "Start", "Control Panel", "Display"
2. Under "Theme:" select "Windows Classic"
3. Click "Apply" and "OK"
4. Right Click on your task bar (in an empty space), Select "Properties"
5. Choose the "Start Menu" tab, "Classic Start Menu"
6. Click "Apply" and "OK"

**Bloomingdale resident Jim Jeup is a certified master technician for Advanced Mobile Tech Computer Service. He can be reached at 508-4378. Computer Corner archives can be found at <http://www.advancedmobiletech.com/computer-corner.shtml>. E-mail computer questions to: [cornerquestions@advancedmobiletech.com](mailto:cornerquestions@advancedmobiletech.com), or on the Web at [www.advancedmobiletech.com](http://www.advancedmobiletech.com).**

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# Emergency Room Doctors Open Urgent Care Center

By LINDA CHION KENNEY  
Correspondent

Luis Aguila said he saw firsthand as a 20-year emergency room doctor the problem of congestion and long waits at hospitals.

And, as a Brandon area resident, he also saw the tremendous growth in the community.

Putting the two together, he and his two partners — also emergency room doctors — believed the time was right to open an after-hours clinic catering to minor emergencies. The result is the Late Hours Urgent Care Center at Lithia Crossing off Lithia-Pinecrest Road.

"Think of us a new niche," Aguila said. "We can take care of any age group and we're here to take care of everything from minor sniffles and colds to the more acute things. Think of us sort of like an emergency room not attached to a hospital."

The Urgent Care Center is open from noon to midnight seven days a week, every day of the year. At any one time, one or more of the founding emergency room doctors will be on duty — either Aguila or



The Late Hours Urgent Care Center is open for business in Lithia Crossing, the Valrico shopping center anchored by Stein Mart on Lithia-Pinecrest Road.

Housam Moursi or Masood Ansari.

Collectively, they have more than 40 years' experience as emergency care physicians. "This is what we have trained and done for a living, seeing emergencies," Aguila said.

No medical condition is refused.

"If somebody comes in and

we feel it is beyond our capabilities, we'll send them to the hospital," Aguila said.

Moreover, Aguila added, "even an earache can be just as much of an emergency, especially if you have a sick child." At the Urgent Care Center, pediatric as well as adult illnesses and emergencies are tended to.

Fees vary depending on the

needs of the patient. Available on site are X-ray and laboratory services, including blood work and urine tests.

"Our goal is not to take any patients away from any other primary care doctors," said Aguila. "In fact, we refer our patients back to them."

Aguila noted that more insurance companies are recognizing the worth of urgent care centers.

"They're definitely recognizing that urgent care centers are a very good alternative for a lot of patients who otherwise would end up in the emergency care center. They recognize the urgent care center as a place a patient can be seen quickly, more cost effectively and receive, for the most part, the same care they would receive in an emergency room."

Insurance companies working with the Urgent Care Center include Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Humana and United Healthcare. Negotiations are under way with such companies as Aetna, Cigna and Tricare.

The Late Hours Urgent Care Center at 3444 Lithia-Pinecrest Road can be reached at 643-9393.

## SCORE

From page 1

lay claim to that achievement.

This year in Hillsborough County, seven public high school students were recognized for perfect scores. Along with Stauffer, the honorees were: Marielle Gross of Plant City High; Chris Farrell, Skyler Smith and Olga Maymeskul of Hillsborough High; and Victor Amin and Sheng Rao of King High scored 1600.

Stauffer is a product for the most part of Hillsborough County schools. He moved here in third grade and attended Alafia Elementary, then studied at Burns Middle School.

He's applied to Florida State, Vanderbilt, Indiana, Mercer and Michigan universities. So far, no word yet from

FSU, Vanderbilt or Michigan, but Indiana has accepted him and Mercer was planning to take him to Bern's Steakhouse this month.

It's a good bet, though, that the remaining admission committees will raise a collective eyebrow when they see the Hillsborough hopeful's perfect SAT score. Stauffer took the test on Oct. 11 and two weeks later retrieved his score online.

There was no whoopin' and hollerin' in the Stauffer household that day.

Remember, Stauffer is a case study in underrated.

"I looked at it and said, 'Okay, that's good,' something like that," Stauffer said. "I never get really, really excit-

ed. I get excited, but I don't go crazy."

Although Stauffer has his perfect score, he may not be the person to turn to for advice on how to take the test. He's stumped a bit when it comes to reading, but not so much when it comes to math.

"I just know the words. I don't know exactly how I know them, I just do," Stauffer said.

"The comprehension, I think that's almost easier. Read the questions first and then read the passages. Or, maybe I did the opposite. I really don't remember."

He was more exact when it came to math.

"Learn how they put together all the questions.

They always use the same types of questions," Stauffer said. "If you can do well on the practice tests, you can pretty much do well on the test."

Don't expect a big head to go along with his perfect score. Stauffer keeps things in perspective. "There's different types of intelligence," he said. "You can be good at tests and have absolutely no common sense, and not enough sense to do anything in your life."

Stauffer, though, has both, and he's ready for his next academic challenge.

"Yeah," he said, "I'm actually kind of waiting for next year."

Bloomington High School also had 17 National Merit Scholar finalists.



**YMCA**

From page 23

confrontation, and the best bet is to set up early and effective boundaries. Look for verbal and visual signs that an approaching individual is not going to back off, and be prepared for an escape.

"Surprise the person and look for avenues of escape," McMahon said. "Run away, run away in a zigzag shape and never give up. As long as you're conscious, put up a good self-defense. You want to be more trouble than you're worth."

With the image of Carlie's abduction fresh in their minds, parents and children re-enacted a confrontation. As a parent placed a grip around a child's lower arm, the child was instructed to extend force against the thumb, the weakest link, and push or pull away.

McMahon demonstrated the rotational, or windmill move, in which a child would pluck away the arms around her neck and swing over and

*"Living in this suburban environment there's an illustration of safety. We tend to let our guard down. But to be involved in classes like this keeps us aware of our surroundings. The more aware we are, the better chance we have of surviving something like this."*

**KAREN ELLIOT**

Parent of Randall Middle School Student

around the assailant's arms to protect her centerline. Girls learned also to attack the GENTS targets, an acronym standing for groin/genitals, eyes/ears, neck/nose and temple/thighs.

In designing a personal safety plan, each situation needs to be assessed with three questions in mind: What do I have available to fight back with? What targets are accessible? And what is the level of threat?

"I took a class like this when

I was a kid at the Y," said Valarie Kager of Lithia, who attended the class with her daughter, Annie, 12, a student at Brandon Academy. "I still remember some of the things I learned and, at times when I had to be alert, I knew I could use them."

Brittany Zurschmit, 16, a junior at Riverview High School, attended the class with her mother, Patty.

"It's good knowledge to have," she said of McMahon's teachings, "especially since I

don't know how to fight or anything."

Like everyone else in the room, the Zurschmits had seen the tape of Carlie's abduction, and it bothered Brittany that there was less of a struggle early on in Carlie's abduction. "I guess he had a good grip on her," Brittany said. "You don't think it happens, especially this close to home, but it does."

Karen Elliot attended the class with her 13-year-old daughter, Asia, a student at Randall Middle School.

"I'm very concerned about safety for her and for myself and for women in general," said Elliott, who grew up in Brooklyn, N.Y. "Living in this suburban environment there's an illusion of safety. We tend to let our guard down. But to be involved in classes like this keeps us aware of our surroundings. The more aware we are, the better chance we have of surviving something like this."

**DEED**

From page 3

overnight as well as other activities that could be a nuisance to neighbors.

If the property owner doesn't correct the problem after two notifications, the matter will be referred to the county if it's a code enforcement violation or the BHA will consider civil action against the owner.

Grable said it's all part of the association's effort to see that Bloomingdale ages gracefully.

"We believe there are certain standards that need to be maintained in Bloomingdale," he said. "We've already

seen a big change in the community since we began our PRIDE program (Bloomingdale's voluntary community cleanup program).

"This is just the next step. We want to encourage everyone in Bloomingdale to be a good neighbor. Everyone wants to live in a friendly, neat, healthy and safe neighborhood."

He added that the effort also will benefit residents by helping to maintain property values.

"Even nice homes in poorly maintained neighborhoods lose value," he said.

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