

**FEATURE STORY**



EMILY FRAZIER/Photo

His name may be Prince Charming, but you don't want to kiss – or even touch – this toxic toad found in Bristol Green. Find out more about the poisonous bufo marinus toad.

**PAGE 3**

**DUES DRIVE**

The BHA's 2005 dues drive kicks off next month. Read an open letter from BHA president Ted Grable.

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# Bloomingtondale Loves Its New Regional Library

**HUNDREDS ATTENDED DEDICATION CEREMONY**

By LAURA FRAZIER  
 Editor

The theme of the Bloomingtondale Regional Public Library grand opening held Feb. 10 was "Love Your Library." More than 300 supporters turned out for the event to do just that.

Representatives of The Bloomingtondale Homeowners Association were among those in attendance. All agreed it was an honor to see a project the community embraced so enthusiastically come to fruition.

The BHA's involvement in what Hillsborough County's Director of Libraries Joe Stines called "the cultural center of South Brandon" began even before the ink on the property deed was dry.

From a hearty rally to build the branch on Bloomingtondale Avenue, to its sponsorship of the grand opening ceremony, the BHA's contribution of time, money and manpower was an integral part of what it took to get the new library built.

County Commissioners Ronda Storms, Mark Sharpe, Brian Blair and Jim Norman attended the ceremony.

Storms praised the efforts of the BHA, under the leadership of president Ted Grable, for its robust cam-

See LIBRARY, Page 8



LAURA FRAZIER/Photos

Student government representatives from Bloomingtondale High School greet patrons at the door on the library's opening day.

**SUBSTATION NOTES ♦ PAGE 4**

## Motorized Scooters, Bikes Illegal On Public Property

Parents Could Face Criminal Charges

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BLOOMINGDALE PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

# Toxic Toad Captured In Bloomingdale

ORAL CONTACT  
CAN BE FATAL TO PETS

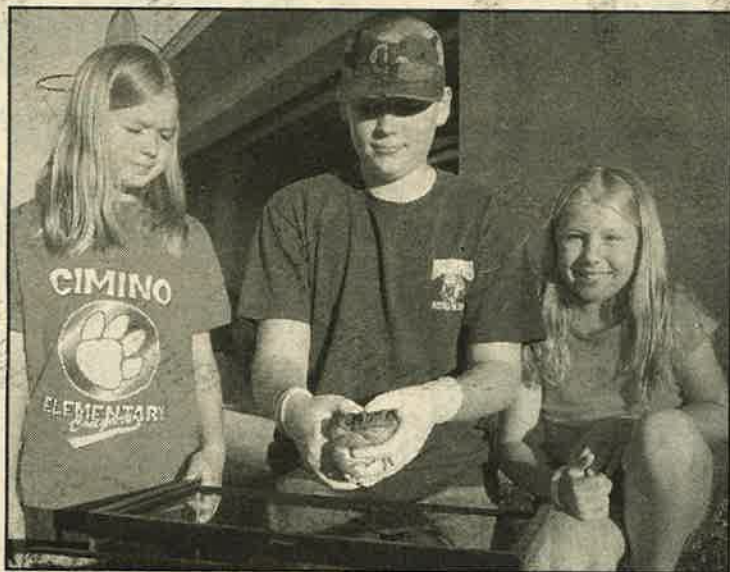
By LAURA FRAZIER  
Editor

When a group of children playing outdoors in Bloomingdale recently spotted a gigantic brown toad on Castlebar Way, they knew they had to do two things. First, they carefully captured the 8-inch-long animal. Next, they paid a visit to Mrs. Plichta, their neighborhood amphibian expert, to find out what kind of frog it was.

Denise Plichta, who has a menagerie of pet reptiles in her Bristol Green home, was glad the children used sticks to gently coax the frog into a bucket, since it turned out to be a giant marine toad. The nonnative bufo marinus species, when handled improperly or threatened, secretes a toxin that is irritating to humans, and can be fatal to dogs and cats if ingested.

The species has established itself in parts of south Tampa and Pinellas County, and further south in Lee County. Plichta said the toad sighting was the first she knows of in Bloomingdale. She wants to caution her neighbors about the probability of more of them popping up.

There are two schools of thought on how to handle the



LAURA FRAZIER/Photo

Harper Kerr, Christian Kerr and Courtney Zanoni caught the giant marine toad they named "Prince Charming" in Bristol Green.

## Symptoms Of Marine Toad Poisoning

Owners who suspect their pet has come in contact with the toad are advised to wash its mouth out with a garden hose and take it to a vet immediately for treatment.

Symptoms are drooling, head-shaking, crying, loss of coordination, and, in more serious cases, convulsions.

Source: University of Florida Extension Service.

species.

Plichta is among the ranks most concerned about children and pets coming in contact with the frogs. She advocates removing the toads from the environment whenever possible to discourage new breeding sites.

"Whether people keep them as pets or choose to humanely euthanize them, I think it's

important to get them out of the environment, without poisoning yourself," she said.

Plichta feels so strongly about removing the toads from the environment, she offered to euthanize frogs found by any of her neighbors too squeamish to do it. The University of Florida Extension Service rec-

See TOAD, Page 14



LESLIE WHITE/Photo

## Stop In The Name Of Safety

Many residents were pleased last month to see a three-way stop sign installed on Culbreath Road near Cimino Elementary School. Parents, school officials and Bloomingdale residents voiced concerns about cars sliding through the intersection since the school opened in 2002.

# Law Requires Residents To Pick Up After Pets

WASTE IS NUISANCE,  
HEALTH HAZARD

Gazette Report

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association recently received numerous complaints about residents allowing their dogs and cats to roam the neighborhood, answering the call of nature whenever, and wherever, the

urge strikes.

This practice — in addition to being in violation of Hillsborough County's Animal Ordinance — is a nuisance according to neighbors, and a genuine health hazard according to the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Hookworms and other

See DOG, Page 14



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**BLOOMINGDALE AREA SUBSTATION NOTES**

# Motorized Scooters, Bikes Illegal On All Public Property

**PARENTS COULD FACE  
CRIMINAL CHARGES**

By DEPUTY PETE MAURER

No priority can be higher than the protection and safety of our children. Law enforcement professionals, many of us parents ourselves, are constantly concerned about ensuring the safety of our kids.

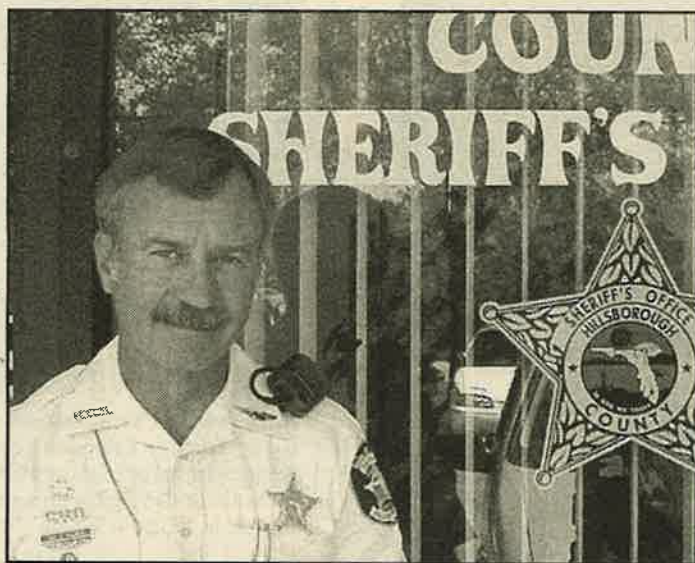
There is one subject of much recent concern that directly affects the safety of many of our kids. It centers on the use of mopeds, motorized scooters and mini-cycles.

This is a very complicated subject, but one that any parent even considering purchasing one of these vehicles must be informed about. Those of us working in your community substation have received numerous calls about these vehicles, not only from residents complaining about the noise they make, but about the serious concern our neighbors have for the safety of kids riding these vehicles.

The following is critical information that all parents need to know concerning these vehicles.

**Legal Information**

Under Florida Statute 322.03, any non-licensed operator of a moped, motor-



LAURA FRAZIER/Photo

**Bloomingtondale Community Resource Deputy Pete Maurer works out of the Bloomingtondale Community Substation on Bell Shoals Road.**

ized scooter or mini-cycle caught operating the vehicle on a public roadway can be issued a "criminal" uniform traffic citation for operating the vehicle without a valid operator's license.

Under Florida Statute 316.1995, any operator of these vehicles caught operating the vehicle under engine power on a sidewalk can be issued a uniform traffic citation for driving a vehicle on a sidewalk.

Under Florida Statute 320.02, all motor vehicles operated on the roads of the state of Florida must be registered. However, since these vehicles do not meet Federal safety guidelines, they cannot be properly registered.

Under Florida Statute 322.35, if the parent of an unlicensed minor under the age of 18 allows a minor to operate a motor vehicle on a highway, the parent may be issued a criminal uniform traffic citation for permitting an unauthorized minor to drive. In addition to the citation, the law requires a mandatory court appearance.

**The Plain Facts**

The vehicles can only be operated on private property with the permission of the property owner. This includes your driveway or yard.

The vehicles are prohibited from being operated on side-

See SCOOTERS, Page 14

**BACC REPORT**

# Bloomingtondale, Bell Shoals Corner Ranks High On Crash List

**CORNER IS NO. 12  
COUNTYWIDE**

By MACK AUSTIN  
Correspondent

The Bloomingtondale Area Community Council, known as the BACC, is a volunteer group of residents who monitor local safety, security and quality of life concerns. The council works with local law enforcement and government officials to promote the best interests of the greater Bloomingtondale area.

The group meets at 7 p.m. on the third Thursday each month at the Bloomingtondale substation, corner of Bell Shoals Road and Glenhaven. For more information, contact Deputy Pete Maurer at 635-8040.

The following items were discussed at the February 2005 council meeting:

**Dangerous, Dubious  
Distinction**

Deputy Maurer briefed members on current law enforcement statistics in the greater Bloomingtondale area. The intersection of Bloomingtondale Avenue and Bell Shoals Road was listed as number 12 in Hillsborough County based on the number of accidents. The primary causes of the accidents are drivers running red lights

*Substation  
Marks 7th Year  
In Bloomingtondale*

**DEPUTY MAURER,  
OFFICER CAPITANO**

A Gazette Report

The Bloomingtondale Community Substation celebrates its seventh year in operation this month. Residents are encouraged to stop by the station to meet our Community Resource Deputy, Pete Maurer, and Community Service Officer, Sandy Capitano.

The Bloomingtondale Community Council would like to thank Deputy Maurer and Officer Capitano for providing many years of outstanding service. The council looks forward to working with Maurer and Capitano for many years to come to improve the safety and quality of life in our community.

and failing to yield the right-of-way when east bound.

**Open Garages  
Are Easy Targets**

Recent crime reports noted

See BACC, Page 14

## Your Inside Connections

**The Bloomingtondale Homeowners  
Association Inc.**

3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33594  
Phone: 681-2051 Fax: 684-2358  
E-mail: [Bloomingtondale.Homeowners@Verizon.net](mailto:Bloomingtondale.Homeowners@Verizon.net)  
Web Site: [www.bloomingtondalegazette.com](http://www.bloomingtondalegazette.com)  
BHA meetings are at the community office on the first Monday of each month at 7 p.m.

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

**Bloomingtondale Special Taxing District**

3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33594  
Phone: 684-6667  
BSTD meetings are held at the community office on the second Monday of each month at 7 p.m.

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

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

**Bloomingtondale Mobile Watch**

**Coordinator/Equipment Manager:**  
Tony Diolosa, 681-1146  
**Treasurer:** Paul Kelmer  
**Patrol Member:** Steven Heckel  
**Patrol Member:** Brad Scharp  
**Patrol Member:** Paul Warr



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**Bloomingtondale Oaks  
Special Taxing District**

P.O. Box 3132, Brandon, FL 33509-3132  
Phone: 685-2817  
BOSTD meetings are held at 3419 Cade Lane on the second Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m.  
**President:** Bill Grace  
**Treasurer:** Fred Englehart

## THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

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# Bloomington *Extreme* Smile Makeover

By Jackie Rowe

When Judy turned 49, her children were grown and gone. Now that they were almost completely independent she could finally do a few things for herself that she had wanted to do most of her adult life. One of which was to fix her smile.

During her career Judy had worked in several jobs, been in business for herself, and participated in the local chamber of commerce. She is now working for a prominent attorney and enjoys mingling and networking with her business peers and customers. As a professional woman she knows the importance of her smile.

Judy doesn't feel that her smile was so bad that it actually held her back in life, but she always appreciated those with a beautiful smile. As the years crept by she had noticed that her teeth were getting a little more chipped and dingy than she would like to admit. She had also been fascinated by the *Smile Makeovers* she'd seen on the ABC *Extreme Makeover* television show and kept the thought of 'maybe some day.'

Well, 'someday' came for Judy last August. She went to see Dr. Scott Arnold, a local cosmetic dentist here in Brandon.

"Now, I can't stop smiling" says Judy. "I couldn't wait to have this done and now I wish I had done it so much sooner. It has truly changed my life. I'm happier and more confident. Everyone around has noticed the change in me. I had no idea that this would affect me so much. I have always been confident and happy, but

now, it's a whole new level."

She continued, "And there have been several benefits I didn't even know were part of the makeover. I have been relieved of a lot of minor pain in my neck and shoulders as well as tension headaches.

Apparently we all grind our teeth a little. The wear and tear shortens our teeth and this can cause stress and tension headaches. Often, the *Smile Makeover* helps alleviate some of the pain. It sure did for me."

"One of the other fantastic benefits has been a kind of non-surgical facelift. When Dr. Arnold realigned my bite and lengthened my teeth, my face actually got longer. Just look at my pictures. I've been told I look ten years younger." Karen beams with joy, "I love it!"

Dr. Scott Arnold has been practicing dentistry for more than nine years now and has advanced cosmetic dental training from the Las Vegas Institute for Advanced Dental Studies, one of the most prestigious training schools. You may have seen their commercials on TV. Sometimes the name is shortened and referred to as LVI.

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BLOOMINGDALE NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT

# Bloomington East Park Improvements

## PARKING LOT CLOSED FOR CONSTRUCTION

By LAURA FRAZIER  
Editor

Residents who use the facilities at Bloomington East Park on a regular basis may find themselves getting a little extra exercise for a few weeks.

While county workers complete improvements to the park, some sections under construction — including the parking lot — will be closed off.

Patrons will have to walk to the park while the lot is closed. The county cautioned residents not to park along Natures Way because citations could be issued.

The project is part of a pilot program intended to improve 75 neighborhood parks throughout the county that have no formal county programs or on-site staff.

The \$200,000 project includes upgrades to the parking area, resurfaced basketball

See PARK Page 15

## YARD OF THE MONTH



LAURA FRAZIER/Photo

Toni and Al Boman's home at 4026 Paddlewheel Drive is Bloomington's Yard of the Month.

By LAURA FRAZIER  
Editor

When Al Boman retired in the early 1980's after a 30-year career with the Army Special Forces, he and his wife Toni bought a brand new house in Bloomington.

Over the next 20 years, the Bomans made their house a home, and made their yard a fine asset to their Bloomington West neighborhood.

The Bomans, both in their 70s, take care of their yard themselves. Al mows, edges and trims, and Toni enjoys

tending to the dozens — maybe hundreds — of plants and flowers all around and inside her home.

Tidy boxwood shrubs trimmed topiary-style line the walk to the front door, where a gently gurgling fountain greets visitors. Palms and oaks add shade and height interest to the yard, while begonias and azaleas add a burst of color here and there.

Ferns and impatiens are Toni's easy-care favorites for shady spots.

She hasn't found anything

exceptionally beautiful that grows well in the harsh Florida sun.

But that's not quite enough to make her miss the harsh winters in Michigan where she and Al lived for awhile after his retirement.

The Bomans received a \$25 Ace Hardware of Bloomington gift card, courtesy of the BHA.

Bloomington residents are invited to send Yard of the Month nominations to laurafrazier@tampabay.rr.com or call 643-2990.

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## Bloomington Estates Plans Entry

### COULD INCLUDE WATER FEATURE

A Gazette Report

Residents in Bloomington Estates, off Bloomington Drive in Bloomington West, are asking the special taxing district to consider subsidizing improvements to the community's John Moore Road entrance.

The taxing district expects to spend about \$15,000 total for improvements this year to entrances at John Moore, Lithia-Pinecrest and Glenhaven.

The John Moore Road entrance, in addition to being recognized as one of Bloomington's eight major entryways, also serves as the entrance to

Bloomington Estates, a section of about 170 homes on the west end of Bloomington Drive.

The Bloomington Estates PRIDE team collected funds at meetings and door-to-door last summer to help pay for the installation of signs and improved landscaping in their section. The neighborhood currently has \$1,500 budgeted for John Moore entryway improvements.

Estates resident Amy McGill, coordinator of the neighborhood's PRIDE committee, said the group will consider the addition of colorful, flowering plants and a water feature at the entryway.

The group has also asked the Bloomington Homeowners Association and taxing district

board to allow the "Bloomington Estates" designation to stay up at the John Moore entrance.

The BHA and taxing district boards have in the past agreed to eventually replace all major entryway signs with identical "Bloomington" signs.

The Estates PRIDE team will meet to review landscaping and sign plans 7 p.m. on March 8 at the Bloomington Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road. The meeting is open to the public.

For information about the Bloomington Estates project, call McGill, 714-8242. For Bloomington Special Taxing District information, call 684-6667 or e-mail [bloomington.homeowners@verizon.net](mailto:bloomington.homeowners@verizon.net).

**ON OUR COMMUNITY WEB SITE**

All landlords are required to register their rental properties with Hillsborough County. For information on the county's new rental housing inspection ordinance, visit [www.bloomingtongazette.com](http://www.bloomingtongazette.com).

## B L O O M I N G D A L E N E I G H B O R H O O D I M P R O V E M E N T

# Dispose Of Household, Garage Junk For Free April 9

## COLLECTION SITE ON NATURES WAY

A Gazette Report

If household discards have taken over your garage, if you have to lean into your closet doors in order to close them, here's an opportunity to get rid of the junk without paying hauling and disposal fees or waiting in line at the dump.

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, in cooperation with Hillsborough County, will hold a clean-up day April 9 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

BHA volunteers and county workers will accept household discards on Natures Way, at the parks maintenance facility just west of Alafia Elementary School.

There is no charge for this service.

Acceptable items include appliances, mattresses, water heaters, televisions, steel and other metals; furniture, non-commercial construction debris and tires.

The Salvation Army will also be on hand to collect tax deductible donations of reusable items.

Hazardous materials (paint,

batteries, propane tanks) and waste from commercial activities cannot be accepted. Residents can dispose of hazardous materials for free one Saturday a month at the South County collection site.

BHA volunteers offer to assist elderly or disabled residents who need help hauling items on cleanup day.

Call the BHA office, 681-2051 before 11 a.m. on April 7 to schedule a pick-up.

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

# NIP: Top 5 Most Frequently Issued Citations

## COUNTY CODES, DEED RESTRICTIONS

A Gazette Report

All homes in Hillsborough County are held to certain standards by county codes and ordinances, but neighborhood deed restrictions in some sections of Bloomingdale go above and beyond county requirements.

Neighborhood Standards, a private company contracted by the BHA, performs curbside inspections of the communi-

ty's 40 neighborhood sections on a rotating basis.

The company mails courtesy letters to homeowners with potential violations. Residents who receive a violation letter are encouraged to call 833-0759 for more information.

Neighborhood Standards reports the top five cited violations:

### Yard Waste, Trash And Cans Left At Curb

Trash may not be set at the

See CITATIONS Page 15

## Report Shoddy Maintenance, Illegal Property Use Online

A Gazette Report

Bloomingdale residents concerned about home maintenance deficiencies or illegal property use in their neighborhoods can file an anonymous online report. Neighborhood Standards, the company contracted by the BHA to promote deed restriction and county code compliance

throughout the community, will investigate your complaint and seek resolution. Complainants may remain anonymous.

To report a problem, visit the Deed Restrictions section on [www.bloomingtondalegazette.com](http://www.bloomingtondalegazette.com). Residents can also submit complaints by calling 833-0759.

# Don't Buy Rude, High-Pressure Sales

## REPORT SOLICITOR COMPLAINTS ONLINE

A Gazette Report

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association recently received a number of complaints about high-pressure

door-to-door solicitors harassing residents.

Although the "No Soliciting Allowed" signs at some of the community's entryways serve to discourage door-to-door sales, Florida law permits solicitors licensed with the state to conduct their business

in a professional, courteous manner.

To file a complaint, or for more information, call the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Services at 1-800-435-7352. You can also file a complaint at [www.800-helpfla.com/ccform.html](http://www.800-helpfla.com/ccform.html).

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# LIBRARY

Continued From Page 1

paign to see the project through.

Library board chair Laura Vickers witnessed firsthand the time and dedication the homeowners association and Bloomingdale residents invested to see their new library built.

"From the very first public siting meetings, I was amazed at how passionately everyone felt about this library," Vickers said.

While county officials considered several different sites for the new branch in 2003, the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association conducted an online poll of its residents. The survey results strongly indicated the community's desire to build the branch next to Bloomingdale High School.

The BHA submitted its endorsement of the site, along with the poll results, to the Hillsborough County Library Board and County Commission. After extensive cost comparisons and site studies, the Bloomingdale Avenue location was deemed best. Property owner Candi Martin's offer to donate one acre of the parcel was an added bonus.

Martin's grandparents, the McLeans, originally lived on and farmed the property on which the library now stands. The branch's main meeting room will be dedicated this month in honor of the McLean family.

When the county announced its initial plans for a 10,000-square-foot facility, the BHA board suggested the branch could not accommodate the community's current needs. The Bloomingdale group



D'ANN WHITE/Photos

Four generations descendant from the McLean family, who originally lived on the property on which the library was built, attended the dedication.

joined hands with residents concerned about the capacity of the (then proposed) Upper Tampa Bay Library.

Together, the two neighborhood groups approached County Commissioners with their request to bump up the initial square footage of both libraries to 15,000 square feet. The commissioners approved their request. Both libraries were built at 15,000 square feet, with accommodations to grow another 10,000 square feet at some point in the future.

Through the support of Bloomingdale residents, whose voluntary annual membership dues are the association's sole source of income, the BHA became the library's first corpo-

rate sponsor in 2004. The association plans to sponsor the branch again this year with a \$500 endowment.

In addition to providing funds to help get the library off to a good start, the BHA offered three other commodities the branch's Friends of the Library group needed - time, space and manpower.

While the branch was under construction, the friends group met monthly in the Bloomingdale Community Office. Time and again, BHA volunteers and members of Girl Scout Troop 935 moved thousands of books donated for the group's first used book sale between the community office, a storage facility, the sale at Blooming-

dale West Park, and finally, the new branch's Friends of the Library meeting room.

The BHA office staff offered assistance with the friends group projects. In addition, the association sent a representative to every library and friends group planning meeting to monitor the progress and help when needed.

Ted Grable, President of The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, said at the opening ceremony, "I couldn't be any prouder to have been involved in this project. Our residents have worked so hard to add this wonderful asset to our community. All of our efforts are sure to reap tremendous returns for generations to come."



Friends of the Library chapter president Pat Boody and Steve Heckel, BHA director and friends board member, were happy and relieved the grand opening went off without a hitch.

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# Library Patrons Invited To Take Heart

FUSED GLASSWORK TO ADORN ENTRY WALLS

By D'ANN WHITE  
Correspondent

Members of the Friends of the Bloomingdale Regional Public Library are putting their hearts into fundraising for the new library on Bloomingdale Avenue.

With the approval of Hillsborough County's public arts coordinator Jan Stein, the friends group plans to decorate the library's interior with one-of-a-kind fused-glass hearts sponsored by library patrons.

Friends President Pat Boody said the idea is similar to the tile sponsorship wall that the Campo Family YMCA created for its opening. YMCA members painted personalized tiles that were affixed to a wall of the interior.

"But we wanted something unique," Boody said. It was Stein who referred Boody to Tampa Bay artist Lisa Vogt, who creates colorful fused glass artwork.

"Lisa did stars for the Largo Public Library so we thought,



LAURA FRAZIER/Photo  
**Girl Scout Morgan Casselton, a seventh-grade student at Burns Middle School, displays one of the glass heart plaques destined to decorate the entryway walls of the Bloomingdale Regional Public Library.**

since the library opened in February, which is Love Your Library Month, we would do hearts."

Fused, or dichroic, glass is created using thin layers of metal oxides that, when melted onto the surface of a piece of glass, creates varied colors.

Library supporters can sponsor a heart for \$100. A silver plate beneath the heart will bear the patron's name. Sponsorships are available at the library.

The funds will be used to host lectures, poetry readings and other library events.

# Used Book Bargains Offered At Bloomingdale Regional Library

PAPERBACKS 50 CENTS, HARDCOVERS \$1

By LAURA FRAZIER  
Editor

Brandon area book-loving bargain hunters don't have to wait for a special sale to find great deals on their favorite reading materials.

The Bloomingdale Public Library's Friends of the Library chapter will use its meeting room at the facility to display and sell used books to benefit the new branch.

The room is presently staffed part-time by volunteers.

As soon as a stationary lock box is installed to receive payments on the honor system, the room will be left open during regular library hours for patrons to browse and buy books at their leisure.

Tax included, paperbacks will sell for 50 cents, hardcover

## Used Book Sale At Bloomingdale Library Today

A Gazette Report

The Friends of the Library will hold a used book sale at the Bloomingdale Regional Public Library March 5 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tax included, paper-

backs will sell for 50 cents, hardcover books for \$1 each. VCR tapes are \$2 each.

The library is on Bloomingdale Avenue, just east of Bloomingdale High School. Information: 635-1644.

er books for \$1 each. VCR tapes are \$2 each.

Pat Boody, president of the Friends group, said the room is already nicely stocked with gently used best sellers, classics, children's books, non-fiction, and more.

"We had hundreds, maybe thousands of book donations left over from our first book sale last September, so those are already going on the shelves," she said.

The library staff expects the

perpetual sale to generate a great deal of interest, and a continuous need to shelve and organize the books.

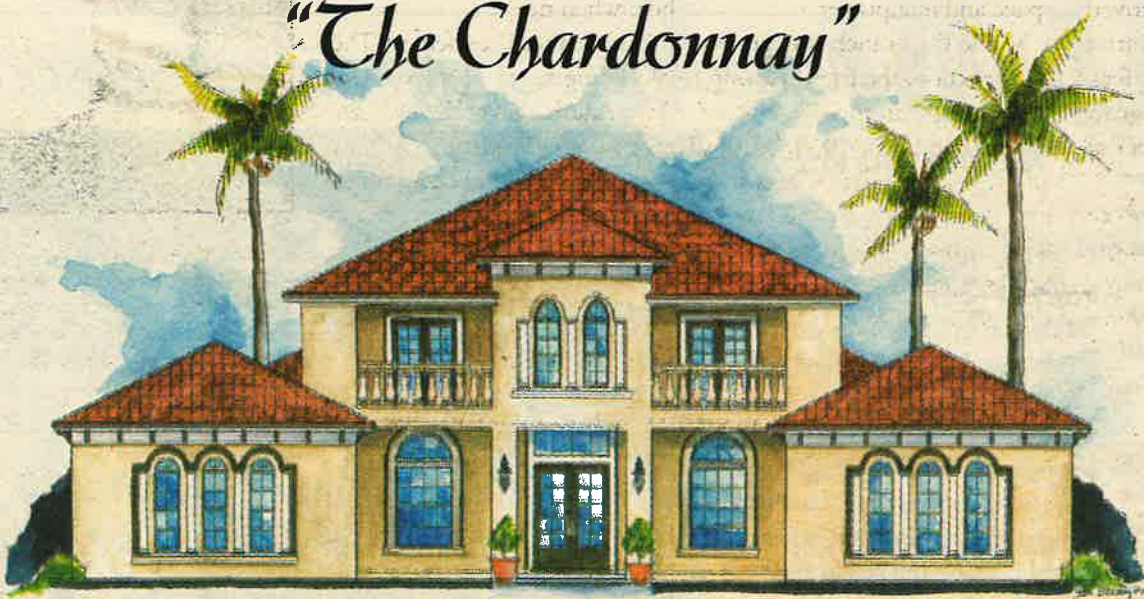
It's not unusual for used book sales to generate more than \$30,000 a year, Boody said.

Volunteer opportunities for all ages are open at the branch. High school students and Scouts can earn community service hours volunteering at the library. For information, call 635-1644.

## ON OUR COMMUNITY WEB SITE

For updates on the "Big Box" development proposed on East Bloomingdale Avenue, log on to [www.bloomingtongazette.com](http://www.bloomingtongazette.com).

## "The Chardonnay"



at the "Vineyards" in Brandon

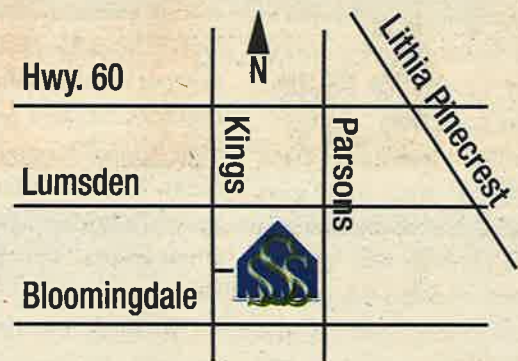
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MACKAUSTIN/Photo

A group of former Bullets players recently returned to the field to help raise money for the Red Cross. The Durant, Bloomingdale and Jesuit high school students all learned to play ball together with the Bullets.

## Bullets Made Marathon Effort To Help Storm Victims

LEAGUE RAISED \$7,000 FOR RED CROSS

By MACKAUSTIN  
Correspondent

The efforts of Little League coaches, managers, umpires and parents often result in players learning some of life's greatest lessons. Most of the players will improve their playing abilities, develop good communications skills and become good team players. Some will even recognize the sacrifice of those who made it possible for them to play ball.

One dedicated group of Bloomingdale parents and players from the Bloomingdale Bullets met recently at Bloomingdale Little League Park on a warm Saturday. It was a gorgeous day, warm with a slight breeze, just perfect for baseball.

The Bloomingdale Bullets Baseball Club has about 50 players ranging in age from 8 to 14. The teams were formed in 1998 by Coach Sal Giardina and Mike Lancaster.

Giardina, known as Coach Sal, said, "We want these guys to learn to love baseball and get good at playing, but we also want them to learn the importance of giving. One of the ways we do this is through our charity events and special projects at Thanksgiving and Christmas."

The organization also holds

baseball marathons to raise funds for special needs.

For those who remember, a seven inning game can be exhausting enough. How about 100 innings? The Bullets decided recently to raise funds for some folks still very much in need of financial assistance after the 2004 summer of storms. They learned there are hundreds still without homes and still in need of help.

The marathon games began at 9 a.m. and continued until 4 p.m.; over seven continuous hours of baseball. The end result was over 196 innings played, a lot of exhausted players and parents, but most of all, the presentation of a \$7000 check to the Tampa Chapter of the American Red Cross to help the hurricane victims.

In the marathon event, nine of the players were original Bullets members, most of whom had moved on to play high school baseball. Over 80 percent of the Bullets players that move on are now playing high school baseball. Two of them, Carmen Giardina and Billy Bullock, both agreed when asked why they came back to play.

"We both love baseball and we love this team. Everyone has been good to us and helped us, and so we wanted to help them give back to others in need."



ROBERT CONE/Staff photo

### State finalist

Bloomington High's Ryan Nye grapples with South Dade's Raymond Stephens in the 125-pound finals at the state wrestling championships in Lakeland Feb. 26. Nye lost a close decision, 7-5, but his points helped the Bulls earn 15th place as a team, just behind Riverview and ahead of Durant.

## Lady Bulls Reached Goal: A Great Season

RECORD WAS 18-2-2

A Gazette Report

The Bloomingdale High School girls soccer team entered the regional playoffs Feb. 3 as the No. 5 ranked team in Class 6A.

The Lady Bulls were victorious in their regional quarterfinal match against St. Cloud and the semifinal match against rival Durant, but fell in the last five minutes of regular play against Wellington, a skilled team from West Palm Beach.

"There's always next year," said Bulls coach, Sue Peet.

Bloomington won a total of 18 games this season, tried two and lost two.

It was a marked improvement over last year's accomplished season.

During the season, under Peet's experienced leadership, the girls practiced after school



DAVE BUYENS/Photo

Bloomington High girls soccer senior co-captain Lyndsey Waters exults while holding the Class 6A-District 6 championship plaque high above her head as her teammates enjoy their 1-0 victory over Durant in the recent district final.

every day, celebrated their vic-

tories, and in the process became a family devoted to helping each other on and off

the field. That closeness and teamwork was evident every time the Bulls stepped on the field.



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BLOOMINGDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

# An Open Letter To All Bloomingdale Residents

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association will be launching its 2005 annual membership drive in April. Your voluntary membership dues are the only source of income for the BHA.

Without your dues, our volunteers would not be able to accomplish our many community programs.

Without your support there would be no community Web site, no Bloomingdale Gazette, no Neighborhood Pride program or Neighborhood Improvement Program.

With your support the BHA can continue to work with our government officials to bring new programs and services to our area like the new Bloomingdale Regional Public Library, roadway and park improvements, a second elementary school and the Culbertson Recreation Center.

For the first time since 1992, the BHA Board of Directors is increasing the annual voluntary dues amount from \$20 to \$25 per home. For the past ten years, the community's growth has



**Ted Grable**

increased membership and revenue.

This allowed the BHA to increase services and keep up with growth.

With Bloomingdale's residential development nearly complete, our new membership growth has slowed down. Increasing the BHA membership dues by \$5 will allow the BHA to continue its great work for only 48 cents a week.

On behalf of the BHA Board of Directors, I'd like to thank you in advance for your continued support of our nonprofit, all-volunteer organization.

We welcome Bloomingdale residents to attend a monthly

See LETTER, Page 14

## BHA Provides Programs, Services, Support

### ANNUAL DUES FUND ALL ACTIVITIES

By LAURA FRAZIER  
Editor

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association Inc. is a nonprofit, all-volunteer organization dedicated to preserving and improving upon the beauty, value, safety and quality of life in Bloomingdale. The following partial list outlines some of the recent programs, services and accomplishments of the BHA, all made possible by residents' voluntary annual dues memberships. For more information, contact the association at 681-2051 or [bloomingtondale.homeowners@verizon.net](mailto:bloomingtondale.homeowners@verizon.net), or visit our community Web site, [www.bloomingtondalegazette.com](http://www.bloomingtondalegazette.com).

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association Inc.:

- Operates the Neighborhood Improvement Program, in cooperation with private

- contractor Neighborhood Standards, to promote the enforcement of neighborhood deed restrictions and county codes and ordinances.

- Coordinates the Neighborhood PRIDE Program, in cooperation with the Hillsborough County Office of Neighborhood Relations, to hold bi-annual clean up days for residents to dispose of household junk and reusable items for charity.

- Operates the Neighborhood Name and Sign Program, a long range plan to give homeowners in unnamed sections of the community an opportunity to name their neighborhood and have entryway signs installed.

- Provides part-time staff at the Bloomingdale Community Office to coordinate neighborhood projects and assist residents, in cooperation with the Bloomingdale Special Taxing

See BHA, Page 15

## Volunteers Needed For Dues Drive

### STUDENTS CAN EARN SERVICE CREDITS

A Gazette Report

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association Inc. needs about 10 volunteers to help affix postage stamps to annual dues notices scheduled for mailing in May.

The group will meet May 14 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road.

Students who help with the project are eligible for community service hour credits.

To volunteer, contact Laura by April 15 at 643-2990 or [laurafrazier@tam-pabay.rr.com](mailto:laurafrazier@tam-pabay.rr.com).

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# Upscale Consignment Shop Opens On Lithia-Pinecrest

## NAME BRAND, DESIGNER LABELS

By LESLIE WHITE  
Correspondent

Susan Maryanski recently opened Olivia's Closet, an upscale consignment shop on Lynx Paw Trail in River Hills Plaza, next to Lithia Springs Elementary School.

The shop bears the name of Maryanski's 5-year-old daughter.

"She's my inspiration," she said.

Olivia couldn't be happier about her new namesake.

"She tells everybody she has a store named after her. She's my helper."

Maryanski grew up with a passion for consignment shopping, as did her mother. She learned you could have more when you shop sensibly.

"That's what consignment's

all about," she said.

Olivia's Closet sells brand and designer label clothes for infants up to size 16, with a special rack devoted to teens. She also carries shoes, furniture, and infant and children's bedding, with a complete Pottery Barn Old MacDonald crib set currently on the shelf.

"Reusing and recycling has become more popular. The popularity of resale has never suffered no matter what the economy," Maryanski explained, "but now it's trendy."

She points out that plaza shopping is also en vogue, as shoppers get tired of fighting the mall traffic and prefer to pull up, go in, shop and leave without having to deal with the parking lot and the traffic.

Customers may be surprised at what they find. A row of brand new Strasburg dresses



LESLE WHITE/Photo  
Susan Maryanski, owner of Olivia's Closet on Lithia-Pinecrest Road, sells brand and designer label clothes for infants up to size 16, with a special rack devoted to teens.

from New York City, with the tags still on, hang behind the counter just waiting for the right little girl to come along.

Parked out front is a row of strollers that look brand new, including one Peg Perego.

Maryanski also offers both

casual and career maternity clothes.

A back corner of the shop is devoted to educational toys, videos and car seats.

There is a coloring table and a video area for kids to entertain themselves while parents shop.

Anyone wishing to drop off items should call Maryanski to schedule an appointment. Consignors receive 50 percent of the sales price. After 30 days the item is marked down 25 percent. After 60 days the markdown is 50 percent.

Items that remain unsold at the end of the 90 days are donated to The Spring of Tampa Bay or ECHO.

Store hours are Monday through Wednesday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Thursday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., closed Sunday.

Information: 655-3727.

## RESTAURANT REVIEW

### Shrimp Boat Offers Plentiful Portions, Cold Brews

By ELTON DUMONT

Move over Shells and Red Lobster. There's a new seafood sheriff in town.

Monte and Lovey Queensbury were in town recently, so they joined Mrs. Dumont and I on a foray to the Brandon area's newest seafood haven in LaViya Plaza on Lumsden Road.

The Shrimp Boat Bar and Grill opened in October last year, and we're kind of sorry it took us so long to investigate it.

If you are tired of taking the family to the burger, wing and sports bar joints in town, The Shrimp Boat is a great alternative. From the laid back, casual atmosphere to the tiki-bar décor, you will immediately feel at home.

The restaurant is open for lunch and dinner. We took the evening adventure.

Appetizer offerings include scallops seared in a sweet and spicy citrus sauce (\$7.99) and fried calamari or garlic or buffalo shrimp (\$6.99).

Monte Queensbury ordered a beer, which he maintained was the coldest bottle of suds in Brandon. We dove right into

ordering our entrees. Lovey Queensbury ordered butterflied fried shrimp, with seasoned French fries and a choice of dipping sauces (\$11.99). Monte decided on the fresh grouper (\$15.99), pan seared with their signature citrus sauce, accompanied by a baked potato.

I opted for the stuffed flounder (\$14.99), filled with shrimp, scallops and crab, and a side of broccoli. Mrs. Dumont, who is allergic to seafood, selected the chicken parmesan (\$13.99).

The portions were ample. Monte commented the grouper was as good as anything he's had "on the other side of the pond."

The fried shrimp were just the right size, prompting Lovey to comment, "Very good, with just the right batter consistency."

The stuffed flounder, alas, was a tad dry on top. But it was moist inside, with an excellent cream sauce and stuffing of crab, shrimp and scallops.

Mrs. Dumont found the chicken parmesan to be delightfully moist, but said the accompanying marinara sauce

was only adequate.

The salads were chilled, and served in a chilled bowl to boot. The bread was a light garlic toasted French bread; quite good. Desserts include ice cream sundaes and root beer floats.

The Shrimp Boat offers a children's menu that includes chicken fingers, fried fish or shrimp, baked spaghetti and macaroni and cheese.

After four months in business, it seems they are still in a learning mode. Service was only sufficient, but not due to any lack of effort. Overall it was a pleasant dining experience.

The total, with tax and gratuity, was \$38.75 for the Dumonts. The Queensbury's racked up a slightly higher bill, since it was difficult to quench Monte's thirst with more than a pair of cold ones.

Yes, we will go back, and soon!

Rating Based On Five Stars  
Food - 3 1/2  
Service - 2 1/2  
Ambience - 3 1/2  
Overall - 3 1/2

## Bloomington Real Estate Market Reflects Nationwide Trend

### PRICES HIGH, INVENTORY LOW

By LAURA FRAZIER  
Editor

If you're wondering how the nationwide real estate boom is playing out in Bloomington, George and Sally Bodmer are your go-to couple.

The Bodmers, longtime Realtors and Bloomington residents since 1992, have front row seats to the current rush of real estate activity and increasing home values in Bloomington.

Sally Bodmer moved to Brandon in 1967. In 1978, she sold one of the first homes built in Bloomington East. The 1,400-square-foot home, built by Pulte, sold for \$39,900. Today, she estimates the same house in average condition would sell for more than \$140,000.

In mid January this year,

prices were hovering around the \$110 per square foot mark. The average Bloomington home sale price in January, Sally said, was \$200,000.

Bloomington homes for sale are hard to come by, George said, with prospective buyers far outweighing the number of sellers. In January, just over 100 homes were available for sale in the entire Bloomington/Valrico area, clearly defining a strong seller's market.

"The market in Bloomington is just crazy right now, and we have very, very low inventory," Sally said, adding that it's not unusual for Bloomington homes for sale to have four or five offers on the table at once.

The couple said rising prices in Bloomington — a desirable, established community — have helped spawn a revitalization of sorts in some sections of the neigh-

See REALTORS, Page 15



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## COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

### Median Near School, Library Up For Adoption

By RONDA STORMS  
Hillsborough County Commissioner

Remember back to the dark and messy days when Bloomingdale Avenue was being widened. Remember the traffic snarls, the dirt, the signs, and the heavy equipment uglifying Bloomingdale? I certainly do, and like you, I was delighted to turn the page of that difficult chapter.

When the county improved Bloomingdale Avenue, we added the grassy median with an increased level of landscaping instead of the standard

ugly concrete medians so common in other communities. We



#### Storms

in county government hoped that service clubs, Scout Troops, or students from Bloomingdale would adopt the median strips and add additional flowers and shrubbery so that the medians would be a blessing and not a curse to Bloomingdale.

With the opening of the

new Bloomingdale Regional Public Library and the ongoing activities at Bloomingdale Senior High School, the Bloomingdale community can do better. I urge everyone to consider adopting the medians in front of the high school and the new library. Won't you consider joining the Beautification Brigade?

Commissioner Ronda Storms is Hillsborough's Board of County Commissioners District IV representative. Contact Storms at 272-5660 or [stormsr@hillsborough-county.org](mailto:stormsr@hillsborough-county.org).

## COMMUNITY MEETINGS

All meetings are held at the Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road. For information, call 681-2051, or e-mail [bloomingtondale.homeowners@verizon.net](mailto:bloomingtondale.homeowners@verizon.net).

#### Monday, March 7

7 p.m.: Board of Directors, Bloomingdale Homeowners Association

Regular monthly meeting. Agenda items to include Neighborhood Improvement

Program, community security, Bell Shoals improvements, Bloomingdale East Park improvements, Neighborhood Naming and Sign Program.

#### Monday, March 14

7 p.m.: Board of Trustees, Bloomingdale Special Taxing District Regular monthly meeting. Agenda items to include bid opening and awarding of the wall painting contract and progress report on

the irrigation contracts.

#### Monday, March 21

7 p.m.: PRIDE Committee, Bloomingdale Homeowners Association Regular monthly meeting. All residents interested in the PRIDE program are encouraged to attend.

#### Monday, March 28

7 p.m.: Landscape Commit-

See MEETINGS Page 15

## BSTD REPORT

### Taxing District Plans Landscaping Improvements

By PAUL SIMS  
Bloomingdale Special Taxing District Trustee

Spring is approaching and the Special Taxing District's calendar for the upcoming month includes projects to give our community a fresh appearance.

Many of the community's walls were recently pressured washed. Others along Springvale and Nature's Way from Greenhollow to Culbreath will be painted along with some sections of black iron fencing.

New irrigation systems will be installed at Natures Way and Culbreath in the Alafia Elementary School area and will be extended to the ballpark entryway at Bloomingdale Avenue. Landscaped areas will receive fresh mulch, and creeping fig throughout the area will be trimmed.

The taxing district begins its plans for this year's landscaping projects with a series of committee meetings to be held prior to the formal solicitation of contract bids. The newly formed Taxing District Landscaping Committee will first address minor entryways

throughout the Bloomingdale West area.

Those areas include sites at Shady Nook, Herlong, Fortuna, Fieldstone, Garnet at Canoga Park and Bloomingfield.

The major entrance at John Moore will also be addressed.

The committee will meet to discuss the Bloomingdale West landscaping projects 7 p.m. on March 28 at the Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road.

Residents are cordially invited to attend the meetings and to share their suggestions with the committee. There will be pictures of each project area and a large-scale architectural rendition of the John Moore entrance.

The second phase of the committee's plan will address landscaping projects in the Bloomingdale East area. Meetings for those areas will be held April 25 and May 23.

For more information contact the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District at 684-6667 or [bloomingtondale.homeowners@verizon.net](mailto:bloomingtondale.homeowners@verizon.net), or visit our community Web site, [www.bloomingtondalegazette.com](http://www.bloomingtondalegazette.com).

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# SCOOTERS

Continued From Page 4

walks in Florida while under engine power.

The vehicles are prohibited from being operated on the property of county parks (including bike trails) within Hillsborough County.

In plain and simple terms, the major problem is not with the operators, but with the vehicles. They cannot be legally operated on public roadways or sidewalks. When they are, the operator and/or parents of the operator face very serious

criminal charges.

In pure safety terms, these vehicles present the greatest danger to the kids riding them. Any kid involved in an accident on one of these vehicles will be seriously injured or be killed.

The major decision for parents: Let your kids ride these vehicles and you could face serious criminal charges while putting your child's safety in jeopardy. Make your decisions very carefully. They could be life changing.

# LETTER

Continued From Page 11

board meeting, held at 7 p.m. on the first Monday each month, to learn more about the BHA and consider becoming actively involved in our community.

If you have any questions about the 2005 membership drive or about our community,

please do not hesitate to contact us at 681-2051 or bloomingtondale.homeowners@verizon.net, or visit our community Web site at www.bloomingtondalegazette.com.

Sincerely,  
**Ted Grable, President**  
 The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association Inc.

## ON OUR COMMUNITY WEBSITE

See upcoming community event listings at  
[www.bloomingtondalegazette.com](http://www.bloomingtondalegazette.com)



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# TOAD

Continued From Page 3

ommends a topical application of benzocaine followed by freezing as a humane method to euthanize this species.

The process is humane, she said, and doesn't faze her.

"I euthanize skinks in my freezer all the time," said Plichta, whose brother, Brian Murphy, is an environmental educator in Lee County.

But the freezing option gives Bobby Rex, owner of Scales Exotic Pets on Kingsway Road, the chills.

Rex, who caught his first bufo decades ago as a 10-year old boy growing up in Brandon, feels the toads should be left alone. They're so established in the environment now, he said, it makes no sense to randomly kill a handful of them.

They can be kept as pets, and Rex will accept captured toads delivered to his store.

"People really exaggerate the harshness of bufo marinas," he said.

The toads have been prolific

in other parts of Florida, and people have learned to live with them.

"They bury themselves during the day, and then they come out at night to eat insects. They don't attack anyone. It's not like they're going to jump out of the bushes and leap at you.

"The toxin is only a problem for people if it's ingested by someone rubbing their eyes or their mouth after touching a toad," Rex said.

But the poison can be fatal to dogs and cats that ingest large amounts of the milky substance.

Tom Green, spokesman for Hillsborough County Animal Control, said the best way to keep the toads away from your yard is to keep pet food out of reach. "They love dog and cat food," Green said, a situation that often puts the frogs in dangerously close proximity to pets.

The county is not in the toad removal business, Green said, but residents have the option

of paying a nuisance animal trapper to remove the frogs.

Charles Carpenter, owner of Animal Capture of Florida in Tampa, said his company can be hired to trap and remove the frogs. Carpenter charges the same fee for any type of animal removal, from raccoons to snakes — \$139 for a service visit and \$49 per animal.

A lot of people would have a problem paying those fees to remove a toad, Carpenter admits. But it wouldn't surprise him.

"We had a customer who hired us to remove a brown anole - a common backyard lizard - from her bedroom," Carpenter said.

Giant marine toads are currently featured in "Invaders," a Florida Aquarium exhibit of invasive, nonnative marine species. Their call is said to be a low-pitched trill that sounds like an idling diesel engine. For more information on the species, visit the University of Florida Web site, [www.ufl.edu](http://www.ufl.edu).

# DOG

Continued From Page 3

parasites commonly found in pet waste can be transmitted to children playing in the grass, or even to adults strolling out barefoot to grab the mail.

Even pet owners who restrict their animal's waste to their own property may wish to reconsider that practice. The EPA suggests that storm water runoff washes over yards, the right-of-way — and decaying pet feces — on its way into storm drains, inevitably making its way into surface water systems.

Adopted in June 2000, the

county's animal ordinance states pet owners who allow their dogs or cats to wander onto public property or the private property of others — and those who do not immediately pick up their pet's waste in those areas — are in direct violation of the law.

The law also requires dogs and cats on public streets, roads, parks or other public property, to be under the direct control of the owner.

Under the ordinance, pet owners may allow their animals

to defecate in their own yard and in front of their own home on the public right-of-way. However, using the grassy area between the sidewalk and road in front of other people's homes violates the ordinance.

Violators could face up to \$500 in fines and a mandatory court appearance.

To file a complaint, call Hillsborough County Animal Services, 744-5660. For more information about the ordinance, visit [www.hillsboroughcounty.org/animalservices](http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/animalservices).

# BACC

Continued From Page 4

14 burglaries in the greater Bloomingdale Avenue. Deputy Maurer emphasized the importance of locking all vehicles and homes, especially garage doors.

## No Loopholes In Scooter Laws

The council discussed extensively residents' concerns about the increased illegal use of motorized scooters. Deputy Maurer said this is a very important concern for law enforcement as well as parents. It has been determined there are no loopholes permitting the use of these vehicles on public property (see story in

this issue).

## Neighborhood Watch Grants Available

Council member Nick Bates, president of the Hillsborough County Neighborhood Watch, provided information on the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office's Neighborhood Improvement grant program. Interested residents can find details at [www.hcso.tampa.fl.us](http://www.hcso.tampa.fl.us).

The Hillsborough County Neighborhood Relations conference will be held March 12 in Tampa. Information: [www.hillsboroughcounty.org](http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org).

## Lawmakers Invited To Council Meetings

The council will be contacting our local state legislators to invite them to attend special meetings of the Bloomingdale Area Community Council.

## New Traffic Lights In Progress

The road improvement project for Bloomingdale Avenue and Bell Shoals Road is in the engineering phase. It will include the installation of traffic signals at the intersection of Erindale Drive and Lithia-Pinecrest Road, and the intersection of Bell Shoals Road and Glenhaven Avenue.

## REALTORS

Continued From Page 12

borhood prone to poorly maintained rental properties.

"We are seeing more homeowners (versus tenants) in place again," she said.

As a result, Sally said, longtime residents and new homeowners alike are starting to fix and improve some of the community's more mature properties.

"There is a renewed sense of pride in Bloomingdale. Some sections had a maze of tenants in the past, and you could see the evidence of that by driving down the street. We are definitely seeing that (rental property) trend turn around."

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association estimated in 2004 that 10 percent of the

community's 4,500 homes were rental properties. Representatives of the community's Neighborhood Improvement Program agree compliance with deed restrictions and county codes is challenging when dealing with absentee homeowners.

But the Bodmers said the number of rental properties — and the evidence of those that are neglected — is dwindling.

"Typically, investors are not looking for something they have to spend a lot of money on, or a home that needs a good deal of repairs or updating. So many of the investors are buying smaller, new homes to rent out," said George Bodmer.

George said although it's true that many original or long time Bloomingdale homeown-

ers do stand to make a sizable profit by selling their homes today, many are staying put.

"If you sell your home and make a great profit, that's terrific, but now you have to replace it with another home. Then you're facing the same high prices and low inventory your buyer just did."

Besides, George said, people like it here.

"I see more people wanting to live in Bloomingdale for the same reason most of us already live here — this is an established, desirable community with some of the best schools, parks, shopping, recreation... the whole package. We find that people are buying older homes and fixing them up. Then they have a nice big house with a backyard you can actually walk around in."

## PARK

Continued From Page 6

courts, new 6-foot-wide sidewalks, a 20-by-20-foot picnic shelter and a modular restroom building. Safety tile in the tot play area, a new tot swing and a play unit for children ages 5 to 12 will also be added.

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association has worked closely with the county's parks department to make improvements to the facility.

At the association's suggestion, the county has already repainted the handball court, replaced the water fountain and added some landscaping and sod. Other plans include replacing barbecue grills and trash cans and installing new security lighting.

The BHA also suggested the park could use upgraded landscaping, shade trees and more picnic tables.

Parks spokesman John Brill said his department would work with the homeowners association to improve landscaping at the park.

"The county does not have

the funds to hire a landscape architect, but if the homeowners association could prepare a basic plan, our staff will work with the contractor to install the plants."

Brill said the county would provide a list of approved heat and drought-tolerant plants to consider, and the irrigation system at the park would be checked and adjusted to maintain any plantings that are added.

The Bloomingdale Special Taxing District is allowing the county to tap into its sprinkler system to irrigate new landscaping at the park.

Brill said funds are not available for picnic tables. He offered to put the homeowners association in touch with a non-profit organization that sells the tables at affordable prices.

"The homeowners association could probably buy a few of the tables for about \$200 each," he said.

The construction should be completed by mid-March.

*D'Ann White contributed to this report.*

## MEETINGS

Continued From Page 13

tec, Bloomingdale Special Taxing District.

Special committee meeting to discuss landscaping improvements in Bloomingdale West. Residents with ques-

tions or suggestions about community landscaping projects are encouraged to attend.

**Thursday, April 14 and April 28**

7 p.m.: Budget Committee,

Bloomingdale Special Taxing District

Special committee meetings to discuss the allocation of funds available for fiscal year 2006, which begins in October.

## CITATIONS

Continued From Page 7

curb before 6 p.m. the night before pick-up or after 8 p.m. on pick up day. All trash must be contained in trash cans, bags, or boxes to preclude access by animals.

### Fences In Disrepair

Fences must be maintained, sound and sturdy. Out of 64 homeowners recently cited for

fence repairs, 42 corrected the problem. After the 2004 hurricanes damaged another 28 fences, 22 were repaired.

### Illegally Parked Vehicles

Vehicles must be operational and intact. No more than two unregistered, untagged, or expired tag vehicles are allowed. Commercial vehicles

over one ton may not be parked overnight in residential areas.

Deed restrictions on where (and how long) boats and RVs can be parked vary among neighborhood sections; check www.bloomingtondalegazette.com for details. Out of 114 homeowners recently cited for illegally parked vehicles, 92 corrected the problem.

### Sheds

If sheds are permitted by your section's deed restrictions, county codes require them to be at least three feet from the property line. Some sections only allow sheds that are not visible from the street. Out of 53 homeowners recently cited for shed buildings, 19 were corrected.

### Yard Maintenance

Weeds, grass, or underbrush shall not exceed 18 inches. Dead or dying trees which may present a hazard are not permitted. Under the current watering restrictions, homeowners are not expected to maintain lush lawns but reasonable, regular maintenance is still required.

## BHA

Continued From Page 11

District.

•Produces The Bloomingdale Gazette, the official publication of the BHA since 1980, in cooperation with The Brandon News and The Tampa Tribune.

•Maintains a community Web site, www.bloomingtondalegazette.com, where residents can register to receive BHA News Alerts by e-mail.

•Operates the Yard of the Month

program to honor homeowners who maintain their property and landscaping in exceptional condition.

•Works closely with Hillsborough County government officials to address issues such as road improvements, park improvements, county services, land rezoning and construction, school boundary changes and safety issues.

•Works closely with the Blooming-

dale Community Substation and Bloomingdale Area Community Council to address neighborhood safety and crime prevention.

•Works closely with the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District, the volunteer organization charged with maintaining the community's common areas, funded by the \$100 per year special tax assessed on each homeowner's Hillsbor-

ough County property tax bill.

•Supports the Bloomingdale Senior High School PTSA with an annual \$500 endowment.

•Supports the Bloomingdale Regional Public Library with an annual \$500 endowment.

•Holds an annual Visit With Santa food drive to collect food donations for local charities.

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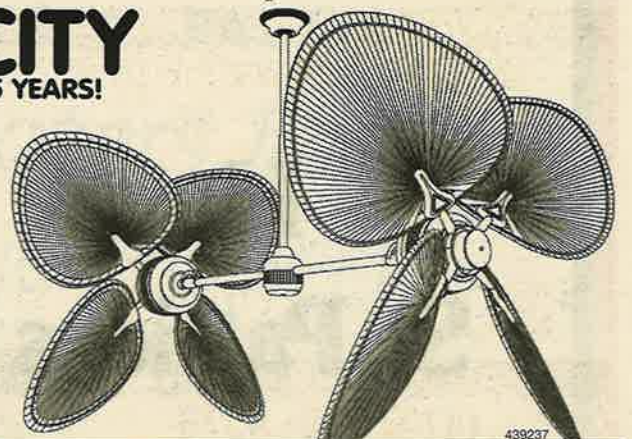
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- 1419 Trail Boss Lane..... \$220,000
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- 2303 Colusa Lane..... \$269,000
- 3709 Eaglewood Street.... \$269,900
- 2618 Allwood Avenue..... \$287,500
- 4406 Kendal Court ..... \$290,000
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- 1432 Crooked Stick Dr.... \$439,900

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