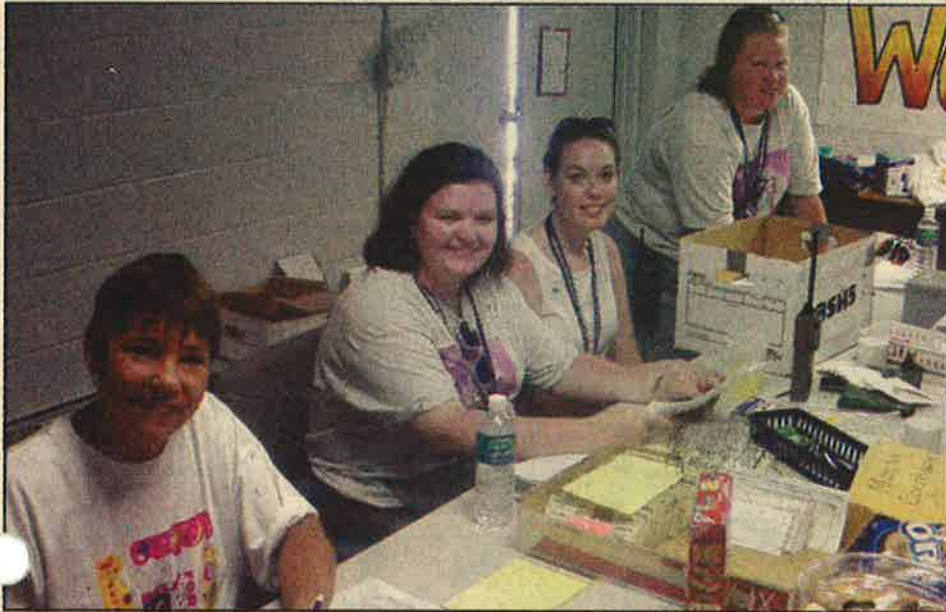


Relay For Life



Bloomingdale High School hosted the American Cancer Society's 18-hour Relay For Life April 17-18. Event chairwoman Debbie Sage, second from left, said organizers expect the event to raise more than \$100,000.

The Bloomingdale High students took a rest and hammed it up a bit to show their level of exhaustion at the end of the 18-hour event. [See story, page 2](#)



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BSTD Starts Entryway Project

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Summer Fun For Kids, *see page 18*



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SEE OUR SPECIALS ON PAGE 7

Bloomingtondale High School Hosts Relay For Life

A Gazette Report

Twenty-eight teams of Bloomingtondale High School students joined dozens of south Brandon elementary and junior high school schools, churches and community groups in hosting the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life April 17 - 18. The 18-hour event kicked off at Bloomingtondale High Friday evening, April 17 and continued through noon on Saturday.

Participants formed teams challenged to have at least one member walking on the track for the entire 18 hours.

During opening ceremonies Friday night, Bloomingtondale principal B.J. Stelter and News Channel 8 reporter Lance Williams led the cancer survivor's lap around Charlie Harris stadium.

Volunteer event chairperson Debbie Sage said organizers expect to meet their goal of \$130,000 to fund cancer awareness, treatment and research programs. A golf tournament sponsored by Bausch & Lomb to further benefit the cause will be held June 8 at Heritage Isles in Tampa.

Information: Cynthia Grabau, 685-0670.



Saturday morning, as they left the day-long event, Bloomingtondale students Kyle Jones, Giovana Rodriguez, Makenzie Mcanough and Christine Cocchiola said they participated in the relay to honor family members stricken by cancer.



The Campo Family YMCA group took advantage of the event's Broadway show theme by portraying "Suessical the Musical."



This group of Bloomingtondale High students pulled an all-nighter and raised over \$1,000 for the cause.

Community Council Update

Community Council Report

The Bloomingtondale Area Community Council, composed of volunteers from area subdivisions, works with local law enforcement and county officials to research issues and concerns brought to the attention of council members. Community Resource Deputy Pete Maurer and Community Service Officer Sandy Capitano.

BACC meetings are held on the third Thursday each month at the Bloomingtondale Community Station on Bell Shoals Rd. Residents with concerns should contact the station so their questions can be added to the agenda. Call: 635-8040.

The following topics were discussed at the last BACC meeting.

Deputy Maurer noted that the Bloomingtondale area has a new code enforcement officer,

Andy Fisher. Maurer noted that we are all very glad to have Fisher working in our area and look forward to working with him.

Deputy Maurer noted several calls had been received from homeowners about other residents trespassing on their waterfront property. He explained that waterfront or pond view lots and surrounding areas are private property, not to be used for fishing, picnicking or other activities without the owners' permission.

Concerns over the increase in truck traffic on both Bloomingtondale Avenue and Lithia Pinecrest Road were expressed.

The county is currently researching ways to improve safety in this area. Residents from River Hills and Fish Hawk have organized an effort to work with county officials to improve this safe-

ty problem.

Concern was mentioned over the recent article regarding another plan to build a Target department store next to Bloomingtondale High School (see related story in this issue of the Gazette). Basically at this point there is a request going forward to change the county's comprehensive plan for this site, not a rezoning request, as rumored.

More joint meetings are planned for safety concerns with the new Cimino School, specifically the need for sidewalks.

There is still a critical need for crossing guards and school bus drivers.

With one month of school left, the summer will give additional time for coordination. Parent participation is needed.

Bloomingtondale Gazette executive director Joe Liguori

briefed members on a special security project being coordinated with TECO. The project involves volunteers working with TECO to identify street lights out in our area and having them repaired.

Problems continue with Alafia parents parking on the right of ways to drop off their children. This action put the children at risk. Plans are being researched to improve the situation.

Ed Howlette, legislative assistant to State Rep. Johnnie Byrd, attended the meeting. Howlette updated members on the status of key bills and the ongoing legislative sessions in Tallahassee. He listened to members and took note of several issues to take back to Rep. Byrd, including the current lack of funds to enhance crosswalks between the Campo YMCA and Bloomingtondale Little League.

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 E-mail: BHA@CyberRails.com
 Web Site: www.BloomingtonGazette.com

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

President — Ted Grable
Vice President — Len Jasczak
Treasurer — Pam Liguori
Director — Patricia Radel
Director — Rodney Biddle
Director — Tony Diolosa
Director — Joe Hickle
Director — Jim Jeup

Bloomington 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
Treasurer — Don Cassels

Recording Secretary — Alice Burleson
Trustee — Russell Jones
Trustee — David West
Trustee — Dale Kahn
Trustee — Myron Magedanz
Property Manager — Al Devney

Bloomington 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

Bloomington Oaks Special Taxing District

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

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

President — Bill Grace
Treasurer — Fred Englehart

THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

The official publication of the BHA since 1980

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

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Publisher — Carla Rockwell



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Buca's Serves Family-Style, Family-Sized Italian Meals

By ELTON DUMONT
Exclusive to The Gazette

Buca Di Beppo
11105 Causeway Blvd.,
Brandon
681-TINA

We saw it being built, we heard from others who said it is a must, we witnessed the large crowds going in, and still we waited to try out the newest Italian restaurant in our area. Big mistake! We should have gone there sooner.

Leave all your preconceived notions about Italian dining at the door of Buca Di Beppo. And even if you have a reservation (yes, they do take reservations!) plan to show up early, because the large number of photographs and biographies on display (over 2,600 according to our server) are extremely interesting and will take some time to peruse.

Buca's is billed as family style Italian immigrant dining, home of the freakishly large entrée, and it is true. There is not one item on the menu that won't feed three or more people. Keep that in mind; it is very important! I suggest no less than three in

your party, or plan to take lots and lots of leftovers home.

You will be taken on a tour of the kitchen as you are seated. The booth you see in the kitchen is available for your party if you make reservations in advance. Imagine sitting right smack in the kitchen of a very busy Italian restaurant. Another room has a gigantic round table in it, known as "The Pope's Table," with a commensurately large lazy susan in the middle of it, necessary since the table holds up to 16 people and you can't reach across it. The seat of honor is known as the Pope's chair (hint: for the one that pays!).

Don't look for paper menus at Buca's. The menu is on the wall at various locations throughout the restaurant. And do pay attention to the extensive wine list - 100% Italian imported with not one domestic item. According to our server Lisa, the vineyards are owned or managed by Buca's.

At first glance it might appear pricey, but it really is not. If anything, the food is reasonably priced. For example, the chicken cacciatore is \$20.95, but it is "seven

pounds (really seven pounds) of love over garlic mashed potatoes," and can easily serve three or four. The veal marsala and veal parmigiana serve two to four at \$19.95.

Buca's offers antipasti, side dishes, entrees, pasta, baked specialties, pizzas, and our favorite, the Buca per Due. For \$22.95, you can "marry" an item from the baked section with a choice of eggplant, chicken or veal parmigiana or chicken with lemon. We selected the meat and spinach cannelloni with the chicken parmigiana. The three of us ate heartily and we still took some home.

We skipped antipasti and ordered the mozzarella caprese salad, with fresh mozzarella cheese, vine ripened tomatoes, roasted red and yellow peppers with fresh basil. Only \$13.95, and the three of us could not finish it. Fresh mozzarella means that it is "wet," not the dry type that you get in the supermarket. It is like no other. One of the higher priced salads, but worth every penny if you long for grandma's mozzarella and bread.

And the desserts? How about spumoni or tortoni? Maybe bread pudding

caramello or chocolate cannoli? The cannolis are fresh filled, made to order and three of them are served for \$8.95.

We spent about \$55 for three of us including the tip, one glass of wine and a take-home box that served one more complete meal.

They don't have a children's menu, but it just isn't necessary. Buca's says it this way, "Huge helpings of immigrant southern Italian favorites. Fresh garlic. Oregano. Imported pecorino romano cheese. You pass it on to mama; she passes it on to Nonna. The smiles get big, the laughs get loud, and there's enough left over for the neighbors."

Just keep in mind — family style, family sized servings! Family style, family sized servings!

Rating based on five stars
Food ★★★★★
Service ★★★★★-1/2
Ambience ★★★★★-1/2
Overall ★★★★★

Until we eat again,

Elton Dumont

Fire and Ice

This photo of an award-winning ice sculpture, a tribute to the NYC Fire Department and 9/11 victims, was passed along to the Gazette by friends on the Internet. If you have an amusing or poignant e-mail item you'd like to share with your neighbors, please forward to Letters@BloomingtonGazette.com.




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Couple Sends Wake-Up Call To Parents Of Teens

By LAURA FRAZIER

Sharron Cosby said turning her teenage son over to relative strangers for drug and alcohol abuse treatment was the hardest thing she's ever had to do. But the day that 16-year old Josh checked into a Tampa detox facility was the beginning of a successful recovery journey for the entire Cosby family.

The Cosby's, now Riverview residents, lived in the upscale Colonial Oaks subdivision behind Bloomingdale High in the early 90's. Their three children attended top-rated Burns Middle School and Bloomingdale High. Their father Dan was a successful executive for a fortune 500 company, and Sharron doted on the children, making sure they had everything they needed or wanted. But it wasn't enough, Cosby said.

"Our wake-up call came in 1996 when Josh, then a Bloomingdale High sophomore, overdosed on LSD," she said.

The incident came as a shock to the Cosby's. They knew Josh was a poor student, and they were concerned about some of the friends he hung out with. But his history of drug and alcohol abuse was a rude awakening.

"We found out through the course of counseling that he



Riverview residents Sharon and Dan Cosby

Photo courtesy of Sharron and Dan Cosby

had been drinking and smoking marijuana since the age of 12."

The Cosby's were caught off guard again a year after Josh's overdose when their eldest daughter asked Sharron to take her to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. Caron confessed she had been hiding her drinking problem from her family for years.

The couple decided it

would take a concerted joint effort to get their children, and their family, back on track. In 1997, Dan left his lucrative, travel-intensive career. After attending numerous support groups and counseling sessions, the couple decided to organize a program of their own. They attended various training programs individually, and in March of 2000 graduated together from the NET Insti-

tute training course. NET is a fellowship of Christian ministries devoted to helping people struggling with life controlling problems including alcoholism and drug abuse.

The couple began counseling at the Overcomers Counseling Center of Crosstown Community Church in Brandon, and in 1999 formed Wake-Up Call Inc., a non-profit education program designed to educate and inform parents about substance abuse.

"Our theory is that this is not just my child's problem, it's our family's problem," Cosby said.

Cosby added, "That's not to say that the parents are to blame. We want the parents to evaluate the family system and find ways to improve it. That way, when your child asks for or needs further help, you'll be able to do it calmly and confidently."

"Even if you get to the point where your child goes away for treatment, until you improve the family dynamics before he returns, you may find yourself back at square one."

Josh's problems continued when he returned home from the detox facility in 1997. Cosby said the training she and Dan had been through indicated only one possible

See WAKE-UP, Page 22

Availability, Acceptance Sends Mixed Drink Message To Teens

By SHARRON K. COSBY
Wake Up Call Inc.

"But Mom ... it's just a beer. It's not like I'm shooting heroin or doing drugs!" It started out with just a beer and ended with drugs, including heroin.

Our son began drinking at age 12 and was in rehab for the first time at age 16 for alcohol abuse. Five more years would pass before he stopped drinking and doing drugs.

Why is it so easy for our

kids to drink? Availability of alcohol is one reason for underage drinking. Many families have fully-stocked liquor cabinets and bars in the homes.

It seems that no matter what the occasion, alcohol in some form is available. From church carnivals to football games to backyard barbecues, alcohol is present.

Social acceptability is another contributing factor to the problem. Parents drink in front of their children, ask the child to get them a beer

from the refrigerator, laugh about the times they got drunk and did something stupid.

Impressionable children listen to the stories of the "good times" mom and dad had and want to have them, too.

Sports heroes promote beer ads. TV shows and movies depict good times that include alcohol. What message is being sent?

Did you know research shows that the brain is not fully developed until about

the age of 21? The latest research from Duke University shows that alcohol affects adolescents differently that it does adults and can cause irreparable brain damage to youth.

Teen drinkers suffer the most damage in the hippocampus, the part of the brain responsible for many types of learning and memory, as well as damage to the prefrontal cortex, the brain's top decision maker.

See COSBY, Page 22

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Developer Has Plans For Land Near Bloomingdale High

Keep your eyes on the Target

By Mack Austin

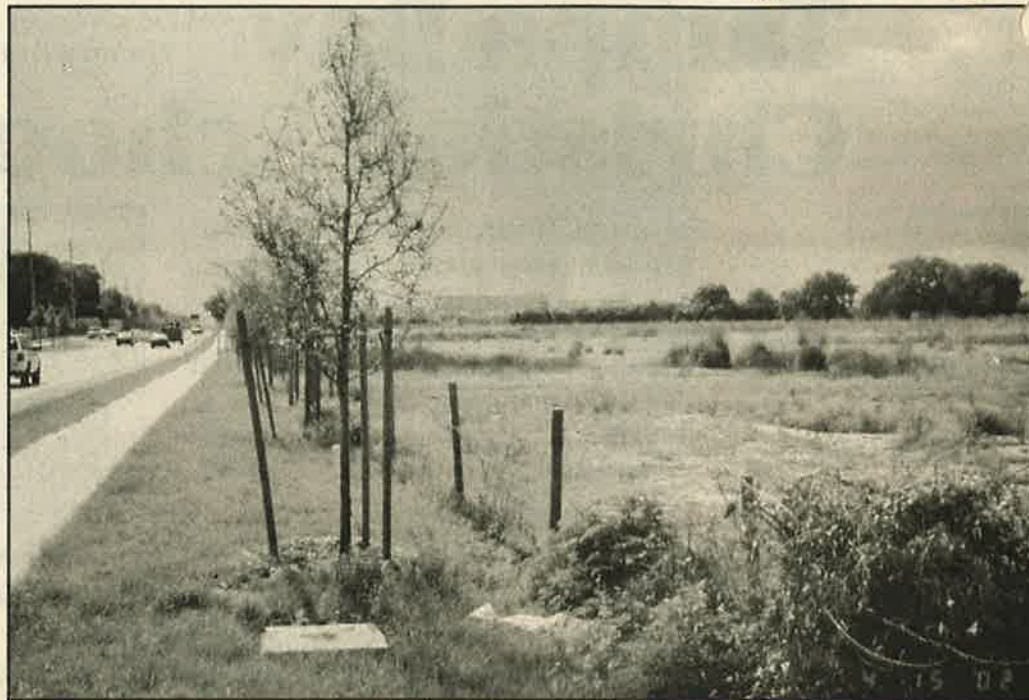
Many of us remember when, several months ago, a developer quietly came in and started the process necessary to develop the land next to Bloomingdale High School and build a Target department store store. A well-organized community effort let the developers know that this wasn't what our community wanted next to our high school.

Since then, progress has been made and a new community library will soon start to take shape on the area closest to the high school. This will definitely be something the community needs and wants.

However, we all knew it would be only a matter of time before another developer would start the process again to build on this property.

That time has come. The first step has been taken. The landowners have requested a change to the county comprehensive plan to convert the allowable land use from residential to urban mixed use.

What this means is that the use of this 42-acre parcel of land or what can officially be built on it could change. The proposal is not for a "big-box" type business like the typical Target store, but what the developers call a village-type business complex, similar to the one planned for the community of Winthrop at the corner of Bloomingdale Avenue and Providence Road. This complex would be



MACK AUSTIN/Photo

Residents concerned about the possibility of the construction of Target department store next to Bloomingdale High should get involved in the process now.

situated to where the major business, Target, would be built off a proposed access road running from Lithia Pinecrest Rd. to Bloomingdale Ave. Developers say the store and its' major entrance would face Lithia Pinecrest.

The next step in the process for the developer would be a rezoning request. Current procedures call for the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association to be notified of any proposed rezonings within one mile.

Thanks to an article by Tom Brennan of The Tampa Tribune, residents in our community are finding out about this project prior to the rezoning request. By being

better informed, they can now be directly involved in the complete process.

It is a matter of opinion as to what is the best thing to be built on this property. The landowners have every right, as any of us would, to sell their land.

Hopefully, what is built there will be an asset to the community, since we will all have to live with it for a long time, especially those residents living across from the property.

For those residents that would like to become involved in the process for this project, there are scheduled meetings you can attend. The first is a planning

commission workshop on May 13 at County Center in Tampa.

In addition, there will be a planning commission public hearing at County Center on June 10. A meeting with the Board of County Commissioners is also planned for July 31. Details will be announced in local newspapers including the Gazette and on our community web site at www.BloomingdaleGazette.com.

As we can see, this is a long and detailed process. Anyone interested in this project can contact the planning commission at 272-5940 for additional information and to verify meeting times.

Bloomingdale Joins Public Access TV Debate

A Gazette Report

Bloomingdale residents* are invited to participate in the Gazette's new community poll on www.BloomingdaleGazette.com.

The poll asks residents how they feel about public access TV programming and

funding. Votes are tallied by an automated system and authenticated by BloomingdaleGazette.com staff, and will be provided to county commissioners for their consideration.

All comments are posted anonymously. Following are excerpts of comments cur-

rently posted on the site.

"I am appalled that anyone would support this kind of trash on public TV. My 12-year-old often surfs through the channels and could come upon this kind of programming at any time.

I do not want any of my tax

dollars going to this nonsense."

Bloomingdale West

"I rarely watch public access TV but it is a format for people to present ideas which they might not other-

See DEBATE, Page 22

Association Needs Board Members

A Gazette Report

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association needs volunteers to serve on the BHA Board of Directors. Board seats are open to all residents living with the BHA area, which includes all neighborhoods within Bloomingdale East and West, Bloomingdale Estates, Bloomingdale Oaks, Hickory Creek, Hickory Ridge and Dogwood Hills.

The board meets monthly to hear and discuss current community concerns and to work towards the following ongoing objectives:

- * To promote a spirit of neighborly relations and cooperation among residents of the community.

- * To facilitate improved utilities, governmental services and other beneficial improvements for the community.

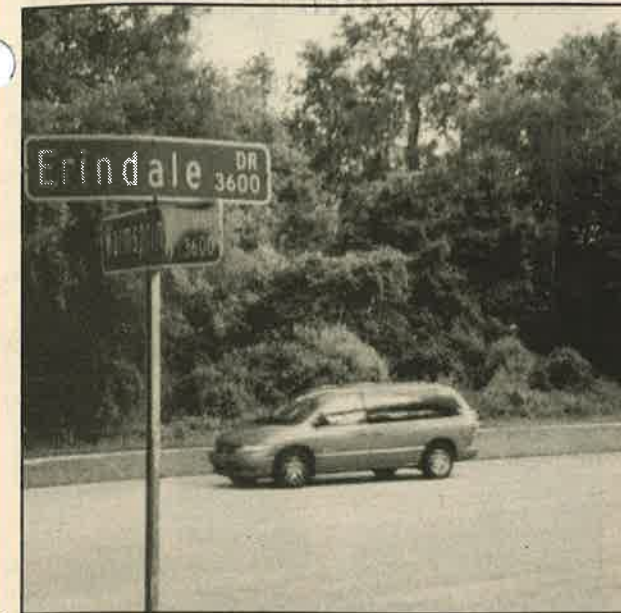
- * To maintain vigorous

opposition to any encroachment or conduct that may tend to lower the standards of the community.

- * To promote physical improvements of the community for the common good of it's residents, and to oppose any act that may tend to depreciate the property values in the community.

The homeowners association produces The Bloomingdale Gazette, maintains our community web site, www.BloomingdaleGazette.com, operates the Neighborhood Involvement Program, conducts the Deed Restriction Enforcement and Mobile Watch programs, works with Hillsborough County government agencies for improved services including sidewalks, street lighting and road signs, and is an active participant in the President's Roundtable of Greater Brandon.

See MEMBERS, Page 13



MACK AUSTIN/Photo

Home Developer Buys Erindale Property

The Brandon Chamber of Commerce donated this 5-acre parcel of land on Erindale Drive in Bloomingdale East, just south of Lithia Pinecrest Rd., to MacDill AFB in July 1999. Developer Mainstreet Homes of St. Petersburg recently purchased the property. Proceeds from the sale will benefit the MacDill Education Center.



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School Celebrated Earth Day, Unity

A Gazette Report

The Brandon Montessori School at River Hills in Lithia celebrated Earth Day April 22 with a preschool sing-along, breakfast buffet and earth-friendly activities. Director Rohini Rustogi said the program, designed to introduce pre-schoolers and their families to earth-friendly living, had special significance this year.

"Earth day is also about unity, to love one another and to live in harmony," Rustogi said.

Students participated in a number of theme related activities, including sowing an earth-box planter. Each student took home a little heather plant previously sown and grown in the Montessori classroom.



LAURA FRAZIER/Photos
Maggie Allen of Brandon shows off a not-quite-ripe tomato specimen she picked in the Montessori school garden.



Four-year-old Aaron Connolly displays heather seedlings the students planted and cared for this spring. Students took their plants home to transplant on Earth Day.

St. Mark Church Auction Set For May 11

By LAURA FRAZIER



LAURA FRAZIER/Photo
Auction chairwoman Heidi Adams, left, the Rev. Bob White and volunteer Army Fleming display some of the items up for bid at St. Mark's 7th annual auction.

St. Mark Church will hold its 7th annual auction event on Saturday, May 11, 6 p.m. at the church, 2914 Lithia Pinecrest Road in Valrico.

Auction chairperson Heidi Adams said the community is invited to dine, socialize and enjoy live entertainment headlined by nationally recorded country singer Wendy Manley and also featuring a local blue grass band.

Adams said, "This is so much more than just an auction."

This year we've added a barbecue picnic, wine tasting and dessert bar. It's definitely not just about raising money. Whether or not you're interested in bidding on anything, we hope you'll join us for a fun event."

Featured items up for bid include a Royal Doulton demitasse set made exclu-

sively for Tiffany & Co., a patchwork "Fancy Quilt" circa 1890, a late 19th century gold-handled walking cane, a Baldwin grand piano, a two night stay at the Bungalow Beach Resort on Anna Maria Island, a sailboat cruise, grandfather clock, oak dining room table with six chairs and a large selection of merchandise and certificates from local businesses including furniture retailers, restaurants and more.

A \$5 donation is requested at the door and includes admission to the live and silent auction and entertainment. A portion of the proceeds will benefit The Spring, Tampa Bay's home for battered and abused women and families. Remaining proceeds will benefit church outreach programs including Meals On Wheels, Habitat For Humanity, ECHO and youth scouting programs. Information: 685-0998 or 651-9449.

Letters

Send letters by e-mail to Letters@BloomingtonGazette.com, fax to (813) 651-1129 or mail to Editor, The Bloomingdale Gazette, 3509 Bell Shoals Rd., Valrico, FL 33594.

All letters are subject to editing.

CommUNITY Works Thanks BHA

On behalf of the CommUNITY Works anti-substance abuse coalition, the Campo Family YMCA and Bloomingdale High School, we would like to thank the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association for their financial contribution and community outreach support of the coalition's youth rallies held in March at Blooming-

dale High and the Campo YMCA.

With the support of the BHA these rallies, which promoted anti-substance abuse prevention, intervention and treatment programs, touched the hearts and minds of hundreds of Brandon area teens and families.

It is our hope that we can continue to build these types of mutually beneficial partnerships with homeowners associations, schools, community groups and businesses to let our youths and families know that we care.

It is our intent to provide awareness, education and resources to help Brandon area families make healthy life choices and stay free of substance use and abuse.

Ellen Gates, Volunteer Founder and Coordinator, CommUNITY Works Coalition

University Women Election

By BARBARA REED
American Association of University Women

The annual dinner and installation of newly elected AAUW officers will mark the culmination of Brandon Branch American Association of University Women's 2001-02 year. The event will take place Tuesday, May 21, 6:30 p.m. at Hawthorne Village, 851 West Lumsden, Brandon.

The ninth annual Girls Can! Recognition Tea will

take place Saturday, May 11, 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. Twenty-eight eighth- and 12th-grade girls will be presented with \$4,200 in U.S. Savings Bonds for excellence in math and science. Since its inception, the Girls Can!

Program has awarded \$22,000 in U.S. Savings Bonds to 49 girls in the Brandon Area.

For meeting and membership information, call Nancy Hollowell, 757-3137 or Mary Ann Walters, 681-4502.

MEMBERS

From page 11

The efforts of the homeowners association are funded by the financial support of Bloomingdale residents' \$20 annual voluntary membership dues.

The BHA is an IRC 501(c)(4) not-for-profit corporation. It is run strictly by non-paid volunteers who live in Bloomingdale.

All dues collected go back into the community.

For more information about the BHA, or to volunteer for the board of directors, call 681-2051 or attend the next board meeting 7 p.m., Monday, May 6, at the Bloomingdale community office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road.

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Buckhorn PTA Mom Bids For School Board Seat

By LAURA FRAZIER

When Valrico resident Jennifer Faliero enrolled the eldest of her two children at Buckhorn Elementary in 1998, she launched a personal campaign to make sure they would receive the best education possible.

This March, after four years of serving on numerous school committees, working with and at times fighting the system, the 39-year-old Alabama native kicked off a public campaign for the Hillsborough County School Board District IV seat.

Faliero said her campaign focus is to promote cooperation between parents, schools and county officials, and to ensure equitable representation for all the communities in District IV. The district includes Brandon, Lithia, Plant City, Riverview, Seffner, Thonotassasa, Valrico and

Wimauma.

Faliero faults a decades-long lack of planning for what she called the current travesty of problems in Brandon area schools; overcrowding, traffic flow and safety issues, inadequate school site choices and school name and boundary



Faliero

disputes.

"The greater Brandon area has over 165,000 people in it. It's time that District IV had someone on the school board who is committed to long-term planning and equal representation for the entire district, without favoring any one community," Faliero said.

She hopes her experience as a mother of two public

school students and an active member of numerous school and PTA committees will appeal to voters.

"The school board members' average age is 62. Collectively they have no children currently in the public school system. I have two children that attend public elementary school, and I see first hand the good and the bad things coming from our district."

She said the school board and the county should solicit and give high priority to the concerns of the parents, teachers and students.

"Somewhere along the way, our school board has become unreceptive to parents' concerns and appears to follow their own agenda. That, along with the county and schools' working relationship, must change."

She noted that a new "inter-local agreement" law passed in Tallahassee last month will mandate better coordination between county and school officials.

The new legislation requires Florida counties and schools to work together and with the public to coordinate new school construction from the earliest stages of planning. The inter-local plan, Faliero said, should help head off the sort of site selection problems, boundary disputes and safety concerns that surfaced during the planning and construction

phases of the new Cimarron Elementary school in Bloomingdale East. Parent groups are still working to resolve pedestrian and traffic safety issues near the school, which opens this fall.

Faliero will serve on the boundary committee for the new elementary and middle schools planned for construction off Durant Road in Valrico. Both schools are scheduled to open in 2003.

"I'm going to make sure we have sidewalks, road improvements and traffic flow plans set before any concrete is poured, and that's the way it should be with every school in the county."

Faliero said her professional background would also be an asset to the school board. She worked as public relations manager at St. Joseph's Hospital in Tampa from 1986 to 1990.

Plant City resident Joe Newsome, who retires this year after 24 years on the school board, is vacating the District IV seat. Former school area director Larry Martin of Plant City, school district supervisor of professional standards John Werner of Brandon, and Bevis Elementary parent volunteer Cliff Roberts of Lithia are also in the running.

The school board primary election will be held on Sept. 10 and the general election takes place on Tuesday, Nov. 5.

College Notes

Send announcements to the Gazette, 3509 Bell Shoals Rd., Valrico, FL 33594, fax to 651-1129 or e-mail Letters@BloomingtonGazette.com.

Jessica Poole of Valrico, daughter of Col. and Mrs. Thomas B. Poole, was named to the Honor List of Oxford College, the two-year liberal arts division of Emory University in Oxford, Ga., for the 2001 fall semester. Students must have a cumulative

grade point average of 3.5 or higher to be named to the list.

Matthew Bryington of Valrico, son of Dr. and Mrs. Scott Bryington, was named to the Dean's List of Emory College, the undergraduate, liberal arts college of Emory University in Atlanta for the 2001 fall semester. Students must be in the top 20 percent of Emory College or have a 3.788 GPA or higher to be named to the list.

Bloomingtondale Substation Notes

The Bloomingdale Community Sheriff's Substation is in the Village Plaza at the corner of Bell Shoals Rd. and Glenhaven Dr., near Beef O'Brady's restaurant. Station hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays. Information: 635-8040.

By DEPUTY PETE MAURER AND OFFICER SANDY CAPITANO

Law Enforcement Appreciation Week

During the month of May many communities will be observing Law Enforcement Appreciation Week. For most it is the third week of the month. During this time special recognition is given to the many men and women who serve and protect our communities. Also, special remembrance is given to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. All of us in law enforcement would also like to express our special appreciation to those who assist us in serving you. Working together we make our communities safer. It is our honor to serve you.

Mobile Watch Needs Volunteers

One way members of our community provide outstanding assistance to those of us in law enforcement is by participating in the Community Mobile Watch Program. This effective program provides the extra eyes and ears

This section of S. Miller Road is creating new problems for local law enforcement officers, including illegal dumping and late night gatherings. Anyone noticing suspicious activity in this area is asked to call the Sheriff's Dispatch at 247-8200.



essential to any security program. With a shortage of law enforcement officers due to the current world situation, the program is even more critical for our community. Bloomingdale Mobile Watch is currently in need of volunteers for both day and evening shifts. Call the Community Station at 635-8040 for details. Become a part of this community law enforcement program.

Ponds Are Private Property

Many Bloomingdale homeowners are fortunate to have views of ponds on their property. The homeowners of these "waterfront properties" paid for these views. It is their property. Anyone found loitering, picnicking or fishing on private property is subject to being charged with trespassing. Homeowners with this type of property should consider posting signs to make trespassers beware.

Crime Tracker Stats

Many residents have asked for statistics on various types of crime in our area. These include drunken driving incidents, residential burglaries, traffic crashes, and other types of criminal activity. For detailed information unique to your area, check out www.tbo.com and type in the keyword "crime tracker." You can also access the Hillsborough County Sheriff's website for statistics and information on crime prevention, safety and security at www.hcso.tampa.fl.us



MACK AUSTIN/Photos

This type of waterfront home site is great to have, and the homeowners who enjoy it pay for it with the price of their homes. Residents should be aware that ponds and the areas surrounding them are private property.

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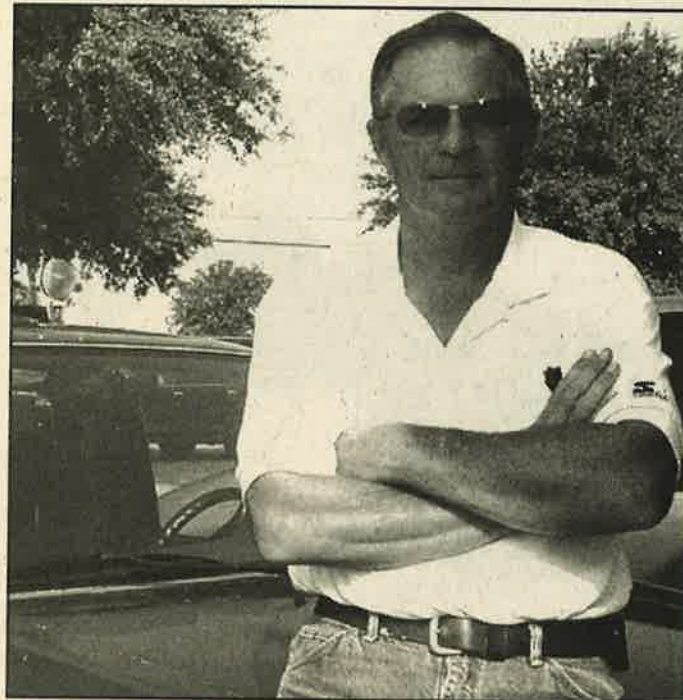
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Property Manager's Report



Bloomingtondale Property Manager Al Devney

LAURA FRAZIER/Photo

Excerpts from the March 2002 Bloomingtondale Special Taxing District property manager's report, submitted by Al Devney, president of DPMI Property Management, Inc., are as follows. Information: 684-6617.

Renovations to the Garnet entrance started in March and should be completed by the end of April (see related story in this issue).

The walls on Culbreath, Natures Way, Glenhaven and Garnet were scheduled to be painted beginning in March and should be completed by the end of May.

Landscaping and plugging on Springvale was scheduled to be completed by the end of April.

Landscaping for the Murray Dale, Orangepointe and Briarpark entrances should be completed by the end of May.

The issue of removing the school bus benches is ongoing.

The request for a variance from Hillsborough County to install white PVC posts on Culbreath, vs. the current barricades, had not been resolved at the time of this report.

In the irrigation department, repairs and improvements were made to the Golf Manor system and in the area of Erindale and Lithia Pinecrest Rd. In addition, DPMI replaced 46 spray heads, 5 rotors, 1 solenoid and 28 flood lights, and repaired 4 risers.

In the landscaping department, 12 azaleas were replaced at the Rivercrossing entrance and 10 burford hollies were replaced at the Big Pine entrance. Greenturf trimmed the creeping fig and was scheduled at the time of this report to begin fluffing the mulch in all the landscaping beds.

Accident damage in March included car vs. light pole and tree at the corner of Natures Way and Glenhaven, and another car vs. tree at the corner of Natures Way and Oak River.

Wall repairs in March included the repair and painting of damage on Natures Way and Springvale, and fresh paint on two sections of wall on Canoga Park Drive.

New Bloomingtondale directory signs were installed at Natures Way and Springvale, and at Culbreath and Natures Way. The Deed Restriction sign at Bloomingtondale and Springvale was heavily damaged by vandalism and cannot be repaired.

In the land of eat, drink and pitch out the window, Devney picked up 28 bags of litter, a spare tire, a blue blanket, four golf balls, a yellow ball, 8 gloves, half a skateboard, two hubcaps, a toy gun, four shirts, three towels, three pairs of socks and \$1.21. The beverages of choice were Ice House for beer, Diet Coke for soft drinks and Smirnoff vodka for distilled spirits.

Brandon Newcomers Meet May 15

A Gazette Report

The Brandon Newcomers will meet Wednesday, May 15, 9:30 a.m. at Center Place, 619 Vonderburg Drive, Brandon. Special speaker David Hackett will offer a presentation on "Angie's List," a publi-

cation listing local business and service providers identified by members as being fair, honest, reliable and reputable.

Visitors are welcomed. Information: Emma Jean Smith, 689-3159, or Doreen Freid, 643-1110.

SAY YOU SAW IT IN THE
THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

Aviation Essay Contest Open To High School Students

A Warbird Adventures Press Release

Calling All High Schools Students: Enter WWII Aviation Essay Contest and find ... yourself airborne at the controls of the mainstay of our WWII fighter training program ... take your place in the front seat of a T-6 and experience a taste of what it was to be a WWII combat pilot.

Warbird Adventures of Kissimmee is sponsoring an essay contest that will honor the history of Florida's tremendous contributions to World War Two's military aviation campaigns.

The theme of the essay contest is "How Florida's aviation community contributed to the Allied Victory in WWII," and may incorporate any aspect of military aviation in Florida from 1935-45, including personal history/interview, unit history, citations, tactics, technical development, political ramifications, aircraft development and production, and/or balloon activities.

"We want to excite and inspire young people about the field of aviation," said Warbird Adventures' president, Graham Meise. "We are challenging students to find out more about this proud aspect of Florida's and our nation's history. Our mission is to provide a point of departure for high school students to investigate and explore Florida's aviation heritage."

Open to all Florida high school students (public, private, charter, and home schools) in grades 9-12, the contest will run to May 15. For more information on entering the contest go to www.warbirdadventures.com

m/essay/Florida or e-mail essay@warbirdadventures.com, or call (407) 870-7366.

The winners will be announced on June 1. First prize is a full flight experience in WWII fighter trainer including pre-flight orientation, front seat checkout with dual control flying aerobatics and combat maneuvers, a video and 35mm pictures of the flight. Other prizes include a scenic flight, Warbird Adventures crew gear and passes to Flying Tigers Warbird Air Museum.

The winning essay entrants need not be pilots to fly in the front seat of Warbird Adventures' T-6 because a certified flight instructor will be onboard in the rear seat. The instructors have thousands of hours flying the T-6's, and employing dual controls and headsets, they're ready to demonstrate, instruct and encourage during every flight. The first prizewinner will take the controls and learn to execute the offensive and evasive tactical maneuvers employed by United States military aviators and combat pilots from World War I to the present.

All prizewinners will receive passes to The Flying Tigers Warbird Restoration Museum, located right next to Warbird Adventures, where they will see, smell and touch the history that many only heard about on newsreels in the forties or read about in the classrooms generations later.

Based at Kissimmee Municipal Airport, 233 N. Hoagland Blvd., Kissimmee, more than 6,000 people customers have flown with Warbird Adventures. Visit its Web site at www.warbirdadventures.com.



Photo courtesy of Warbird Adventures

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Part-Time Office Help Wanted

Wanted — Part-time office administrator for the Bloomingtondale community office. Flexible morning hours, 15 to 20 hours per week at 3509 Bell Shoals Road. Greet visitors, answer telephones, open

and direct mail, maintain logs and reports, some correspondence. Must have basic knowledge of PC — Word & Excel.

Call 684-6667 for salary and more information.

Summer Fun Around Bloomingdale

To list your summer camp or kids' activity in the June issue of the Gazette, or as early as next week on www.BloomingtonGazette.com, e-mail Letters@BloomingtonGazette.com, fax 651-1129 or mail to Summer Fun, 3509 Bell Shoals Rd., Valrico, FL 33594.

Summer Bowling Camp

Brandon Crossroads Bowl at 609 Crater Lane off Falkenburg Road offers two summer bowling camp sessions for kids ages 4-12, starting May 31 or June 3. The 10-week programs are from 3 to 4:45 p.m., once a week, Mondays or Fridays. Weekly fees range from \$9.95-\$12.95 (includes bowling ball and bag) plus a \$10 registration fee. Information: 621-2363.

Fun For Crafty Kids

Center Place Fine Arts and

Civic Association at the Brandon Library on Vonderberg Dr. offers a wide selection of summer workshops for children ages 4 — teens. Classes begin in June and include decorative painting (ages 7-teens), drawing (ages 8-10), kid's clay and t-shirt painting (ages 6 — 12). For a complete schedule of classes, fees and registration information, visit www.CenterPlaceBrandon.com or call 685-8888.

Bulls Volleyball Camp

Bloomington High School and Coach Bonnie Hess invite boys and girls ages 8-18 to participate in the Bulls' 2002 Volleyball Camp held at the school in June. A variety of sessions are offered for all levels of play to improve skills, fine tune techniques and make the sport fun. Cost is \$65 - \$75. Registration forms are available in the

school's main office. Information: 744-8018.

Get In The Swim

Brandon Swim and Tennis Club has a new series of programs for parents and their children. "Mom and Me" gymnastics is for toddlers ages 15 months up to 3 years. An experienced coach leads all activities by instruction and moms help their children get the needed repetitions to learn the skills.

"Parent and Tot" swim lessons consist of eight 30-minute classes for children 6-18 months and 18 months — 3 years. Parents are in the pool with their children as an instructor teaches water awareness, safety and introductory swim lessons.

Water Aerobics classes resume for the season on Wednesday and Friday mornings. The 45-minute classes are offered alone or in combination with a "Tots Gymnastic" program.

Program fees vary depending on the classes and membership level.

BSTC also has a new aquatic program designed to offer young children with dis-

abilities. The program will explore individual needs related to the child's specific disability and promote social interaction during group activities.

Information: 689-0908 or www.mybstc.com.

Kids Acting Up?

The Creativity Gym at 142 S. Moon Ave. in Brandon offers classes in art, drama, beginning voice and more for children in grades 1 - 12. Summer sessions begin June 11. Information: 653-1836.

Ballet Boot Camp

The Brandon Ballet, in residence at the Dance Center, 161 E. Bloomingdale Ave., offers Ballet Boot Camp, a fun dance program for ages 4 - 11, July 8 - 26. Introductory and intensive programs are also available. Register early to ensure placement. Information: 684-4282.

Horsing Around

Paragrism Riding Academy off Bell Shoals Rd. in Bloomingdale offers a summer riding camp for ages 5 - 14 in June. Information: 689-1814.

Bloomington Art Students Win State Awards

A Bloomingdale High PTSA Report

The artwork of Bloomingdale High School students Jennifer Costello and Stephen Gady advanced to the state level of the National PTSA Reflections program and was selected from among 150 entries in each category to receive the State Award of Distinction.

Costello entered a piece entitled, "My Guide," and

Gady's piece was entitled, "The Hand of God." The students will be honored at the PTSA County Council's award luncheon May 9.

Reflections is an arts program that promotes and awards the creativity of students in the areas of literature, music, photography and visual arts. The program was begun in 1969 and is the longest continuously run program of the National PTA organization.

Bloomington's Big Win In The Big Easy

By AMANDA COOLEY
Bloomingdale High Senior

I'm sitting in second period calculus, watching the minute hand's slow creep around the clock. How can I

concentrate when in just 21 minutes I will be on a bus, sitting next to my best friend, headed to New Orleans, Louisiana?

See BAND, Page 23



Photo courtesy of Diane Clare

Bloomington students Stephen Gady and Jennifer Costello each received the National PTSA State Award of Distinction for artwork they entered in the 2002 Reflections program.

Check Web Site For Offenders

A Gazette Report

The Bloomingdale Gazette and Bloomingdale Homeowners Association encourage residents to check the Florida Dept. of Law Enforcement web site at www.FDLE.state.fl.us for public records listing the current residences of registered sexual offenders and predators.

The database is easily searchable by street, city or code. Information is also available by calling 1-850-410-7000.

Parents should be aware that according to Florida law, there are no residential restrictions on former convicts who have served their jail time and completed their probationary sentence. In addition, sexual predators and offenders convicted prior to the 1996 Jimmy Ryce act may not have residential restrictions attached to their probation sentence.

The site also offers information about missing children, stolen property, fugitives, domestic security issues and more.

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Kevin Chadwick, Broker of Keller Williams Realty of Brandon is pleased to announce that BRENDA CARTER recently joined the rapidly growing Keller Williams Realty market center.

"We are proud to welcome Brenda! It is exciting to be working with such an accomplished and highly respected real estate professional!"

Carter, a Bloomingdale resident, has been selling real estate in the Brandon/Tampa area for twenty three years. She is a consistent multi-million dollar producer. Brenda holds the designations of Certified Residential Specialist (CRS), Graduate Realtor Institute (GRI), and Senior Real Estate Specialist (SRES). Let her years of experience and excellent service assist you to buy or sell your home.

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Bloomington Yard Of The Month

Nominate your friends and neighbors (or yourself) for the Bloomingdale Yard of the Month award.

Winners will receive an Ace Hardware of Bloomingdale gift certificate courtesy of the Blooming-

dale Homeowners Association.

Submit entries by mail to Yard, 3509 Bell Shoals Rd., Valrico, FL 33594, by fax to (813) 651-1129 or by E-mail to Letters@BloomingtonGazette.com.

Your name and phone # ...

Nominee's name, address, phone # ...

Outstanding yard features ...

Special Taxing District Starts Entryway Project

Three of Eight Entryways Scheduled For Redesign

By JOE LIGUORI

The Bloomingdale Special Taxing District's long-awaited entryway refurbishing project has begun with the complete overhaul of the Garnet Drive entrance off Bell Shoals Road.

This new entryway design will go a long way toward improving the overall appearance of our community. The taxing district's board of trustees made another important step when they voted to drop the word "West" from the "Bloomingdale West" signage, and refer to it just as "Bloomingdale."

At the April taxing district meeting, the trustees voted to continue the project, contingent upon budget considerations, by identifying Greenhollow and Culbreath as the next two entryways to be refurbished, estimated in 2003. But when the trustees were asked to prioritize renovations to the remaining five entryways, they were reluctant to do so.

Taxing district president Thom Snelling said, "The remaining entryways are all close in terms of condition and need. I think the board felt that we wanted to complete Garnet, get the infrastructure in the Culbreath entry, and then re-evaluate where we are. I believe we will systematically move



Bloomingdale Special Taxing District president Thom Snelling, left, and board trustees, discuss plans for refurbishing the community's entryways with Tom Schaub of Planscape Inc., right.

through the community and give each project strong consideration."

Although the board's comments are optimistic, it is important to note that the Bloomingdale entryways on John Moore, Rosemead, Glenhaven, Springvale and Erindale are not officially prioritized to be refurbished, and in fact are not even on a five-year program. The reason this is important is because it is not a budget issue.

The trustees were not

Although the board's comments are optimistic it is important to note that the Bloomingdale entryways on John Moore, Rosemead, Glenhaven, Springvale and Erindale are not officially prioritized to be refurbished, and in fact are not even on a five-year program.

asked to approve the funding, just to commit to prioritizing the five remaining entrances. This could mean that at any time in the future, the board can put an end to the entryway program, and you wouldn't be aware of it until after the fact, unless you happened to be at the meeting when the trustees voted to discontinue the program.

Rick Pitrowski, past president of the BSTD, identified the need to refurbish the entryways about four years ago. When Pitrowski left the board, there was an agreement that the project would be completed, even if it took five years to fund and finish. But the change in officers as well as the change in trustees has made it difficult to keep the program ongoing and in

the forefront.

A majority of the seven trustees, including officers, were recently appointed to the board and now have the responsibility of spending \$350,000 of your money wisely.

Bloomingdale residents who wish to have the trustees commit to a five-year program that includes the refurbishment of all community entrances are encouraged to attend the next taxing district meeting, Monday, May 13, 7 p.m. at the Bloomingdale community office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road.

Residents may also comment by mail to the attention of the BSTD at the office address, by phone at 684-6667, or by e-mail BSTD@BloomingdaleGazette.com.

April Home Depot Clinic Focused On Windows

By MACK AUSTIN

Thanks to the outstanding efforts of Bloomingdale resident Kellie Fisher and representatives of Valrico Home Depot on Sate Road 60, Bloomingdale residents were again treated in April to an excellent seminar on home improvements, sponsored by the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association.

Some folks even walked away with prizes courtesy of The Home Depot.

These special seminars are held monthly at the Culbertson Recreation Center on Canoga Drive in Bloomingdale West.

The purpose of the seminars is to provide a convenient way for Bloomingdale residents to obtain first-hand information on how to improve and take care of their most expensive investment - their homes.

No waiting at the store for a professional to give you a few minutes of their time, usually with another customer waiting.

You meet with the representative one on one, learn about projects and get to ask lots of questions in a very relaxed atmosphere. Can't beat it, and it's free. You can even walk away with a door prize.

They didn't give away any doors this time, but they did provide excellent information on a very important but often overlooked topic - the windows in your home.

Most of us have bought homes, new and pre-owned, at one time or another. In either case, but especially with a new home, Larry Turnipseed, The Home Depot window expert, said, "Most home buyers don't really give the windows in a new home the attention they need. After all, the windows are one of the major sources of energy savers in the home, and are a key security area."

Homebuyers and those looking to seriously improve the look and energy savings in

The next home improvement clinic, "Installing Tile," will be held Tuesday, May 14, 7 p.m. at the Stephanie Culbertson Rec Center, Bloomingdale West Park. Information: 681-2051 or e-mail Letters@BloomingdaleGazette.com.

their homes should look at the quality of their windows. The Home Depot has an outstanding program for evaluating windows. Turnipseed said, "We offer free estimates and no high pressure sales. We are a company that is going to be around for a long time, so you the customer can know your purchase and the product will have the service and company to stand behind them."

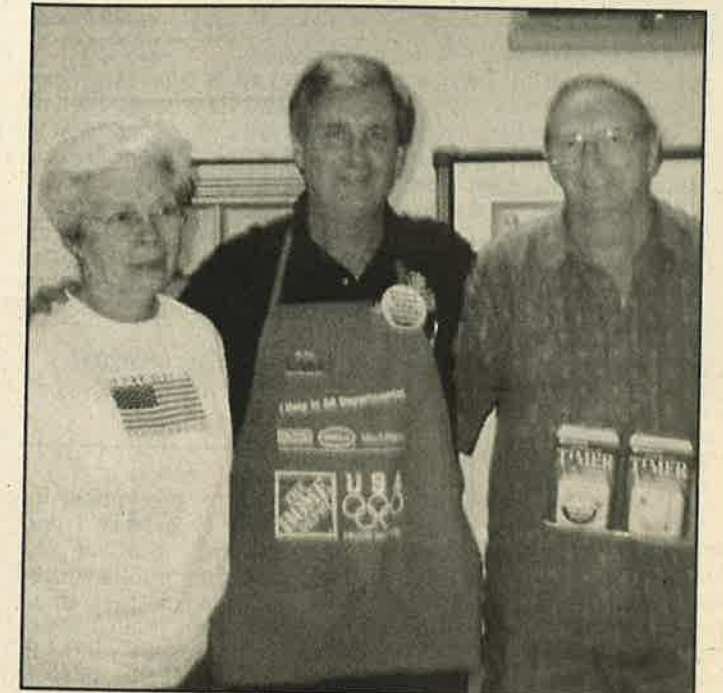
Turnipseed explained the engineering that goes into quality windows. The long range savings provided by energy efficiency is one of the key factors to consider. Warranty is another. The Home Depot windows are warranted for the life of the buyer and have a carry-over warranty for the next homeowner. Another critical factor is meeting the new building codes that are now in place. Special consideration for providing security is also found in these windows, Turnipseed said.

"Quality windows also improve the lifetime of your air conditioning system - big bucks saved! Decreased noise is also one of the most often missed improvements."

He added, "A permit is required to install windows. Get one and protect your insurance coverage."

For more information on windows for a new home being built or upgrading the windows in your current home, see Turnipseed at The

See CLINIC, Page 22



Bloomingdale residents Sally and Ralph Snoke enjoyed the April Home Depot seminar and even walked away with a door prize.

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CLINIC

From page 21

Home Depot of Valrico on State Road 60.

Special thanks to Bloomingdale resident and home-improvement expert Kellie Fisher and Barry Brinson from The Home Depot for putting this seminar together for our residents.

With the support and interest of our residents, the BHA would like to continue

the monthly seminars. Contact The Gazette and let us know what topics you would like to see presented, and what day and time is most convenient for you to attend.

The next seminar, "Installing Tile" will held at the Culbertson Recreation Center on Tuesday, May 14, 7 p.m.

Information: 681-2051.

DEBATE

From page 10

wise have an opportunity to air.

Considering the consolidation of ownership of much of the news media, it may still be one of the last bastions of independent speech.

However, there is a difference between free speech and sexually explicit material. Even cable TV programs provide warnings about mature content, language, etc."

Brandon

"Either we give money for everybody or nobody. I personally find most of the preachers on public access offensive, so I just don't watch them. I also don't watch the offensive show in question, but I like to hear the opinions of callers in my area. Public access is a good forum, mostly because if I don't like their opinion I can turn them off."

Bloomington Oaks

WAKE-UP

From page 8

course of action; they packed Josh's bags and put him out of the house.

"The day that we put Josh out of the house, we were both at a place where we could do that. We had done everything treatment-wise and every other-wise, and that was all we could do."

Josh's wake-up call came, Cosby said, when he sought refuge at his sister Katy's house. Concerned for the well being of her two young children, Katy turned Josh away. Soon after, Josh returned to his parents, ready for their help.

Cosby said Josh is doing well now, working full time and with a home of his own. But every day, she said, is a new challenge.

"He's got demons to fight for the rest of his life."

As their own family has recovered and gotten back on track, the Cosby's continue the fight to educate other parents about drug and alcohol abuse.

"We are doing this (counseling) because we want to help other families avoid unnecessary hurts and disappointments. When we were in the midst of our troubles, we didn't know where to turn for help. We were embarrassed because we were a 'good' family, but our children were misbehaving horribly."

"Part of what Wake-Up Call is about is to educate and inform parents about substance abuse and alcoholism and other addictive

behaviors. We can do them to help, whether it is on an outpatient or residential basis. We want to be the listening ear we didn't have."

Cosby said if she could turn back the calendar, she would hold her children accountable for their own actions and get to know their friends and their friends' families better.

"One of the biggest mistakes I made is that I would go along behind my children attempting to fix all their mistakes. I know now that we need to parent as a parent, and not a friend."

Cosby said firm discipline in the teenage years does not preclude a loving friendship with children as they grow into adults.

"Now that they are adults, it's appropriate for us to be friends. After all we've been through, we have a relationship that I could never have imagined. They are truly wonderful people."

In addition to their counseling program, the Cosby's are active members of CommUNITY Works, the greater Brandon area anti-drug and alcohol abuse coalition that meets monthly at the Campo Family YMCA in Bloomingdale. The coalition seeks to unite troubled teens and their families with awareness, prevention and treatment resources to combat drug abuse. For information about Wake-Up Call, Inc. or CommUNITY Works, call Cosby at 626-5394.

COSBY

From page 8

So even though you as an adult, can drink and perhaps suffer no adverse brain consequences, your child cannot. Research has also shown that the earlier someone starts drinking the greater the likelihood of abuse.

Dan Cosby, a substance

abuse counselor at Overcomers Counseling Center, and his wife, Sharron are founders of Wake Up Call Inc. and can help you learn more about teen and family substance abuse problems. Call 626-5394 for more information.

BAND

From page 19

After the long awaited bell rings, 411 band, chorus, orchestra and dance team students with their luggage, pillows and garment bags boarded nine charter busses bound for New Orleans. Approximately 70 very brave chaperones also accompanied the students.

Seven movies, three rest stops and a one-hour mall dinner break later, our bus pulled into the parking lot of the Quality Hotel, which our music department inhabited for three days and four nights. During those three days, we would participate in the Performing Arts Consultants' National Music Organization Competition under the direction of Ted Hope, Scott Rudes and Bev Sutherland.

Our first day in New Orleans included a steamboat ride down the Mississippi River aboard the Natchez. On the boat we had the opportunity to eat the famous New Orleans sandwiches called "Po' Boys," and to hear (and dance to!) a

Dixieland Jazz combo. We also went to an aquarium and saw the IMAX movie "CAVES." That night at the hotel, each one of the ensembles held a short practice session to prepare for the next day's competition.

The second day everyone put on their concert attire, and we drove in busses to the beautiful Orpheum Theatre where we had the pleasure of performing! Each of our ensembles, which included our Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Band, Concert Band, Symphony Orchestra, Concert Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, Jazz Bands I and II, Ambassadors Show Choir, Chamber Choir, Ladies Choir, Concert Choir and the Bloomingdale Auxiliary B Guard, performed extremely well. That evening we were treated to a fajita dinner and dance at the hotel. Even one of our directors joined us with her flair for dance!

The third day the jazz bands performed at the Hard Rock Café. We were then released to the streets of The



Photo courtesy of Marisa Cooley

Seniors Matt Williams, David Wang, Nick Wiese, Lisa Bryington, John Ogorek, Dana Phillips and Amanda Cooley display some of the 16 trophies Bloomingdale students won last month.

French Quarter to experience the sights and sounds of downtown New Orleans. We created quite a scene, as we were stopped by people wanting to know who we were with our 411 matching tee shirts. All of us miraculously returned on time to the pavilion for the Awards Ceremony at the Natchez steamboat dock. I noticed kids carrying everything from feather boas to painted masks and Café

Du Monde Beignets. We won 14 gold and silver awards, including Grand Champion for Band and Jazz Band. Junior Kenny Bartolomei won a Jazz Soloist award for saxophone, and senior vocalist Jessica Washer won for a show choir solo. It was an awesome experience, full of unforgettable memories and the fulfilling conclusion of the trip at the awards ceremony.

CLASSIFIED

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