

Rob Denk of Bloomingdale helped his sons Aiden, center, and Kellen search for treasures at the new library's used book sale held Sept. 18. LAURA FRAZIER/Photo



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**Residents
 Circulate
 Petition For
 Library Name**
see page 2

Friends Circulate Books, Ideas At Sale

**SALE RAISED
 CLOSE TO \$1,000**

By LAURA FRAZIER
 Editor

The new public library under construction on Bloomingdale Avenue won't be ready to open for few more months, but the

Friends of the Library are already busy circulating books throughout the community.

Brandon area residents donated thousands of gently used books offered for sale Sept. 18 at the Friends' used book and media sale. The fundraiser, held at Bloomingdale West Park, allowed local book worms

to stock their shelves with hundreds of bargains. The sale netted close to \$1,000 in profits earmarked to support the new library.

The Friends group, a new chapter of the nationwide non-profit Friends of the Library organization, was formed earlier this

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Residents Circulating Petition To Name New Library

BOCC COULD VOTE NEXT WEEK

By LAURA FRAZIER
Editor

The new library under construction on Bloomingdale Avenue will soon be referred to by something other than its building status and street location – an official name.

The Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners is expected to formally name the new branch this month.

Marcee Challener, Hillsborough's interim director of libraries, said it's not too late for residents to submit name suggestions to the library board and county commissioners.

Two organizations – The new branch's Friends of the Library chapter and The



Photo of artist's rendering provided by Friends of the Library

The Hillsborough County Commission is expected to formally name the new library on Bloomingdale Avenue later this month.

See NAME, Page 22

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BHA To Raffle 27-Inch Flat Screen TV

**DRAWING FREE
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ADDRESS**

By LAURA FRAZIER
Editor

One click on the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association web site is all it takes to enter a free drawing for a 27-inch flat screen television.

The homeowners association board announced plans for the TV raffle at its September meeting.

Bloomington residents may enter the drawing by registering their e-mail address on the community's web site, www.BloomingtonGazette.com. There are no forms to fill out.

To enter, log on to www.BloomingtonGazette.com and enter your e-mail

"Broadcasted e-mails allow us to contact our residents immediately when timely issues arise."

TED GRABLE
President, Bloomington Homeowners Association

address in the text box at the upper left hand corner of the page.

Click "Enter my e-mail address" and you will automatically be added to the database and entered in the drawing.

The association sends free neighborhood news updates to those who register on the web site.

Broadcast e-mail is an effective tool for spreading news and advisories throughout the community, said BHA president, Ted Grable.

Grable said all home owners and renters residing in the Bloomington Special Taxing

District area would be eligible for the drawing, to be held at the board's Nov. 1 meeting.

Residents over 18 years of age may enter up to two e-mail addresses per household prior to midnight on Oct. 31.

Those who previously registered their e-mail address on the web site will automatically be entered in the drawing.

Grable stressed the homeowners association and web site's privacy policy.

"It is important to note that all e-mail addresses registered on the web site are used solely by the BHA to keep residents informed about local con-

cerns," Grable said.

Addresses registered on the BHA web site will not be shared or sold. The list of recipients does not appear on the e-mails received by residents.

"Broadcast e-mails allow us to contact our residents immediately when timely issues arise," Grable said.

Recent e-mail updates broadcast by the BHA included news about road improvement projects, developers' rezoning requests, law enforcement alerts, county government issues, schools and community events such as the PRIDE clean-up day and used book sale to benefit the new library held in September.

A complete list of drawing rules is available to view on the web site. Winners will be announced in the November issue of The Bloomington Gazette.

Erin Arbor House Destroyed In Post-Hurricane Fire

**NEIGHBORS SET
UP TRUST FUND**

A Gazette Report

A kitchen fire that ignited when power was restored to a Bloomington home last week completely destroyed the house and its contents.

Gina and Tim Hughes and their daughter, Gabriella, nar-

rowly escaped the blaze without injuries.

The family's dog, Sammy, died in the fire.

The Hughes' Erin Arbor neighbors have established a trust fund at Bank of America for the family.

Bank of America is in Bloomington Square, at the corner of Bloomington Avenue and Bell Shoals Road. Info: 643-3986.

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E-mail: Bloomingtondale.Homeowners@Verizon.net

Web Site: www.BloomingtondaleGazette.com

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

- President — Ted Grable
- Vice President — Joe Hickle
- Treasurer — Pam Liguori
- Director — Tony Diolosa
- Director — Steve Heckel
- Director — Jane Lee
- Director — Stanley Lee
- Director — Lydia Harrod

Dale Kohler
Myron Magedanz
Ken Payne

Bloomingtondale Special Taxing District

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

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

- President — Thom Snelling
- Vice President — Russell Jones
- ~~Correspondence Secretary~~ — David West. *Treasurer*
- Michael Buday - Recording Secretary*

- ~~Trustee~~ — Paul Sims *Corresp Sect.*
- Trustee — David Steck
- Trustee — Joe Harless
- Property Manager — Al Devney

Bloomingtondale Mobile Watch

Coordinator/Equipment Manager —

Tony Diolosa, 681-1146

Treasurer — Paul

Kelmer, 681-9701

Patrol Member —

Steven Heckel,
654-4266

Patrol Member —

Brad Scharp, 643-5000

Patrol Member — Paul Warr, 685-7883



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Bloomingtondale 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
(813) 681-2051
Fax: (813) 684-2358

E-Mail: Info@BloomingtondaleGazette.com or LauraFrazier@tampabay.rr.com

- Executive Director — Joe Liguori
- Editor — Laura Frazier
- Correspondent — Mack Austin
- Correspondent — Leslie White
- Restaurant Critic — Elton Dumont

Published by Sunbelt Newspapers — 505 W. Robertson,
Brandon, FL 33511. (813) 657-4500

The Gazette is delivered free to Bloomingtondale residents along
with The Tampa Tribune on the first Saturday of each month.

Publisher — Carla Floyd

Advertising Manager — Tami Donaldson; phone: 627-1322; e-mail: tdonaldson@tampatrib.com

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2004 General Election Candidates, Referendums

Here's a run down of county and state races and proposed amendments Bloomingdale area residents can vote on Tuesday, November 2. For more information, visit www.votehillsborough.org.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Three seats on the Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners are up for election. District 4 serves southeastern Hillsborough County, including all of Bloomingdale. Districts 6 and 7 are at-large districts, which all county residents may vote for.

District 4

Ronda Storms, Incumbent (REP)
Jean Batronie (NPA)

District 6

Brain Blair (REP)
Bob Buckhorn (DEM)

District 7

Mark Sharpe (REP)
Denise Layne (DEM)
Joe Redner (NPA)

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY SHERIFF

David Gee (REP)
William Godwin (WRI)

SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS

Buddy Johnson, Incumbent (REP)
Rob MacKenna (DEM)

CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT

Chris Hart (REP)
Pat Frank (DEM)

PUBLIC DEFENDER

Will Knight (REP)
Julianne Holt, Incumbent (DEM)

U. S. REPRESENTATIVE

Bloomingdale Residents may vote for one of two U. S. Representative seats up for election. Bloomingdale is split into two congressional districts. Most residents east of Bell Shoals Road are in District 9. Most residents west of Bell Shoals Rd. are in District 12.

Congressional District 9

Michael Bilirakis, Incumbent (REP)
Andrew Pasayan (WRI)

Congressional District 12

Adam Putnam, Incumbent (REP)
Bob Hagenmaier (DEM)

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Rich Glorioso (REP)
Ashley Smith (DEM)

REFERENDUMS

Parental Notification of a

Minor's Termination of Pregnancy

Sponsor: The Florida Legislature
Proposes an amendment to the State Constitution to authorize the Legislature to require by general law for notification to a parent or guardian of a minor before the termination of the minor's pregnancy.

Constitutional Amendments Proposed By Initiative

Sponsor: The Florida Legislature
Proposes amendments to the State Constitution to require the sponsor of a constitutional amendment proposed by citizen initiative to file the initiative petition with the Secretary of State by February 1 of the year of a general election in order to have the measure submitted to the electors for approval or rejection at the following November's general election, and to require the Florida Supreme Court to render an advisory opinion addressing the validity of an initiative petition by April 1 of the year in which the amendment is to be submitted to the electors.

The Medical Liability Claimant's Compensation Amendment

Sponsor: Citizens for a Fair Share, Inc.
Proposes to amend the State Constitution to provide that an injured claimant who enters into a contingency fee agreement with an attorney in a claim for medical liability is entitled to no less than 70% of the first \$250,000.00 in all damages received by the claimant, and 90% of damages in excess of \$250,000.00, exclusive of reasonable and customary costs and regardless of the number of defendants. This amendment is intended to be self-executing.

Florida Minimum Wage Amendment

Sponsor: Floridians for All PAC
This amendment creates a Florida minimum wage covering all employees in the state covered by the federal minimum wage. The state minimum wage will start at \$6.15 per hour six months after enactment, and thereafter be indexed to inflation each year. It provides for enforcement, including double

damages for unpaid wages, attorney's fees, and fines by the state. It forbids retaliation against employees for exercising this right.

Repeal of High Speed Rail Amendment

Sponsor: Derail the Bullet Train

This amendment repeals an amendment in the Florida Constitution that requires the Legislature, the Cabinet and the Governor to proceed with the development and operation of a high speed ground transportation system by the state and/or by a private entity.

Patients' Right to Know About Adverse Medical Incidents

Sponsor: Floridians for Patient Protection

Current Florida law restricts information available to patients related to investigations of adverse medical incidents, such as medical malpractice. This amendment would give patients the right to review, upon request, records of health care facilities' or providers' adverse medical incidents, including those which could cause injury or death. Provides that patients' identities should not be disclosed.

Public Protection from Repeated Medical Malpractice
Sponsor: Floridians for Patient Protection

Current law allows medical doctors who have committed repeated malpractice to be licensed to practice medicine in Florida. This amendment prohibits medical doctors who have been found to have committed three or more incidents of medical malpractice from being licensed to practice medicine in Florida.

Proposed Amendment to Hillsborough County Charter

Purpose: Amends charter Article VI changing selection and supervision of County Attorney from Administrator to Commission.

"Shall Article VI of the Hillsborough County Charter be amended to change the selection and supervision of the County Attorney from the County Administrator to the selection and direction of the Hillsborough County Commission and that selection of special attorneys for specific matters, including bond and disclosure counsel, be upon the recommendation of the County Attorney?" Vote yes or no.

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Bloomingtondale Substation Notes

By DEPUTY PETE MAURER

After The Storm

The Bloomingtondale community has been very fortunate over these past few months with the record number of hurricanes that have hit our state. Many of our residents have learned the importance of preparing for these storms.

Hopefully, we've all taken the time to learn to better prepare because, yes, there will be more storms.

Several residents have mentioned that having to leave their homes is one of the hardest parts. Everything you leave behind is at the mercy not only of the storm but also those who would seek to profit from the storms.

For those of you who do have to evacuate, take the time to prepare your home and personal belongings before you leave. Take all valuables with you or secure them as best as you can. Insure all doors and windows are locked. Secure any vehicles you leave behind. Not only for safety, but also for security, take inside any items such as bicycles or tools.

There are those who will loot and burglarize in these times of disaster so precautions must be taken. Let friends who live nearby that do not have to evacuate know you will be leaving. They can check on your property after the storm. Unfortunately,



MACK AUSTIN/Photos

After Hurricane Charley, officers from the Broward County Sheriff's Office brought truckloads of donations for the storm victims to the Regional Recovery Center.

homes that are damaged are also subject to being vandalized or looted.

Suitcases For Kids

We are sad to say this outstanding project that has been worked in conjunction with the Tampa Police Department (TPD) has been discontinued. It provided suitcases, gym bags, or small luggage to hundreds of troubled youths with a way of keeping their personal belongings when they have to move during difficult family situations. To the many Bloomingtondale residents who actively supported this out-

standing program, "Thank you," from the many kids who benefited.

High School Reading Program

Bloomingtondale Senior High School's outstanding reading program has proven to be very effective in helping students improve their reading skills and their FCAT reading

scores. Residents can become involved by bringing magazines that teens would be interested in reading (sports, fashion, entertainment, history, travel, short stories, etc.) to the Bloomingtondale Substation for delivery to the school.

Volunteers are also needed to help deliver the magazines to the school.



The donations pictured were offered in honor of one of their officers who was killed in the line of duty.




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Duty Calls Through Storm

PUBLIC SAFETY COMES FIRST

By MITCH TRAPHAGEN
Correspondent

They can't go home.

At a time when most people would be with their families watching the news or listening to the radio, they will be on duty. Even if a storm comes, they can't go home. Someone needs to be there, someone needs to be able to answer the call for help.

In the days prior to hurricanes Charley and Frances, many Tampa Bay area companies allowed their employees to go home to prepare. The deputies of the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, however, reported for duty.

When the storms approached, they had to leave their homes and families to be ready to protect others.

But is there ever a time when deputies are permitted to place their personal needs ahead of the public?

"We don't have that luxury," said Ruskin Community Resource Deputy Jeff Service. "We don't have the luxury to say that I can't come to work today. When we raised our right hands, took the oath and put on this badge, we can't say that. We are going to work."

Service described a problem faced not only by members of the sheriff's office but also by virtually all emergency responders. When most people tuck in to ride out the storm, the people residents count on during the worst of times are still on duty. The nature of their duty requires they leave their families behind.

"Cops have families," said Service. "I sent mine to Georgia when it looked like Ivan was coming in. I had to come in to work. I couldn't stay

home. But it's hard on me.

"If she got a flat tire or something, I couldn't help her," he continued. "They (his family) could get in a fender bender and there is nothing I could do for her."

Deputy Scott Radtke is a 14-year veteran with the sheriff's office. His experience the past few weeks reflects what many Floridians are just now coming to grips with — Florida is not hurricane-proof.

"I've been extremely lucky," said Radtke. "This is the first time I've been on call for a hurricane. Now it's twice in three weeks. But we knew that it was coming someday."

Service is a South Shore native. Despite being a life-long Floridian, the 2004 hurricane season has given him a new perspective.

"Everyone thought Charley was going to wipe us out," he said. "Both Scott and I were here for Frances. We've never been through anything like that before. We know how to handle violence and burglaries and robberies-in-progress but this was a new area for us."

During a large-scale natural disaster, the rules change. The job of a sheriff's deputy changes as well. As the threat increases, the stress level of the public rises. Recently, deputies were stationed at home supply stores and gas stations throughout the county to maintain order.

According to Service, some people followed gasoline tanker trucks from the port of Tampa to gas stations.

"There was absolutely no reason for that," he said.

Additionally, a few people panicked to the point that they became a danger to themselves and others. Those individuals were Baker acted.

"Some people get out of the realm of reasonability," said



MITCH TRAPHAGEN/Photo

Bloomingtondale Community Resource Deputy Pete Maurer was on-call during hurricanes Charley and Frances. In the aftermath of Charley, Maurer was assigned to lend a hand in storm-stricken Wauchula.



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See DUTY, Page 21



D'ANN WHITE/Photos

BHA board member and PRIDE coordinator Steve Heckel helps Bloomingdale Oaks resident unload an old stereo from his car.

BHA Helps Residents Clean Up After The Storms

By D'ANN WHITE
Correspondent

With Hurricane Frances lurking in the Caribbean, Bloomingdale Homeowners Association board member Steve Heckel wondered if it'd keep residents away from the September PRIDE cleanup.

His doubts, however, were short-lived. Residents eager to rid their yards of broken fences, fallen shingles and other vestiges of the round of storms lined up in the parking lot of the Hillsborough County Parks, Recreation and Conservation maintenance unit on Natures Way with trunks and pickup beds filled with assorted debris.

"It was our biggest cleanup yet," said Heckel who soon discovered his biggest worry wasn't if people would show up but if the waste company would deliver the requested

Dumpsters in time.

The promised Dumpsters hadn't been delivered when the BHA volunteers showed up at the maintenance unit and Heckel held his breath until they arrived.

The BHA also invited the Salvation Army to the cleanup to claim whatever items it could salvage for resale. During the spring cleanup, residents dropped off a number of usable bicycles, prompting the BHA to partner with a charitable organization that could use the discarded items. Though they salvaged few bikes this time, the Salvation Army was able to load three-fourths of its trailer with usable furniture and household goods.

"They were pleased and definitely want to be at the next cleanup," said Heckel.

See PRIDE, Page 22



Parks employee Clayton Weaver has operated the backhoe for all five cleanups.

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Fire Station To Hold Open House Oct. 10

STATION 27 BIDS FAREWELL TO CHIEF HAZZARD

By MACK AUSTIN

The community of Bloomingtondale is very fortunate to have several groups of dedicated professionals who stand ready to respond to vehicle accidents, home fires and other emergencies. One such group is the Bloomingtondale - Valrico Volunteer Fire Department, Hillsborough County Fire Rescue Station No. 27.

Firemen, Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT's) and paramedics go through very intensive, demanding training in order to offer the services they are committed to providing. Saving lives is their business. They combine teamwork and professional skills with dedication to duty and a personal concern for others.

This month, members of our community will have the opportunity to meet and see first hand how our local firemen, EMTs and paramedics train and prepare for emergencies. Station 27 will hold its annual open house on October 10. As always, it will be a great time of education, motivation and information for all, with food and fun to boot.

The open house will also mark the day Station 27 bids farewell to Fire Chief Jeffrey Hazzard.

Hazzard said he is very grateful to have had the opportunity to serve with such a dedicated group of professionals. "It has been a very rewarding time for me and I will truly miss responding with the crews," he said.

Hazzard said the Bloomingtondale community's unbelievable growth has the increased demands placed on Station 27 to respond quickly and efficiently.

But these men and women have stood tall to the task, and performed in an



Members of Station 27 respond to a vehicle accident on Bloomingdale Avenue.

MACK AUSTIN/Photo

HELP WANTED

The Bloomingdale Valrico Volunteer Fire Department needs your help

We are looking for people who would like to volunteer a few hours of their time each week to their community. We are an organization dedicated to the highest professional standards for the preservation and protection of life and property.

If you would like more information, please inquire with a member of our staff. Call: 744-5906

outstanding manner. I am proud to have been one of them."

The Bloomingdale community is grateful to Chief Hazzard for his outstanding dedication and service to our community. We wish him the best in the coming years.

Station 27 is at 4705 Bloomingdale Avenue, east of Lithia Pinecrest Road. Information: 744-5906.



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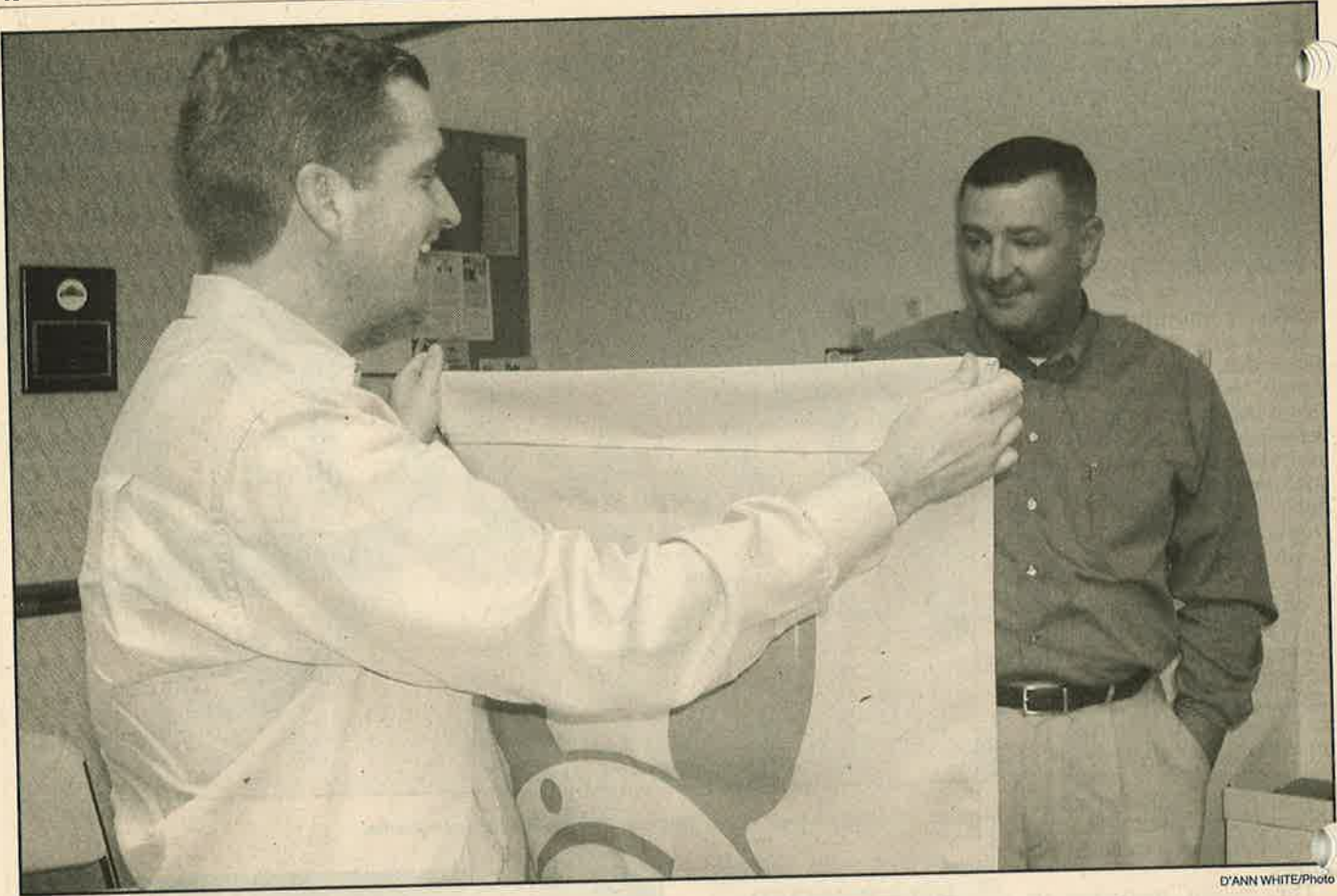
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D'ANN WHITE/Photo

Joe Brandano of Brandano Displays Inc. displays one of the company's banners for Bloomingdale Special Taxing District trustee Rusty Jones' inspection.

Banners To Replace Holiday Bows On Light Poles

By D'ANN WHITE
Correspondent

It could be a banner year for Bloomingdale — literally.

The Bloomingdale Special Taxing District has given Brandano Displays Inc. of Pompano Beach the go-ahead

to obtain sponsors for holiday pole banners to adorn light poles at the community's entranceways.

The trustees decided to look into holiday banners financed by business and community sponsorships after grappling with the cost of

holiday decorations in July while finalizing the 2004-05 budget.

The taxing district, charged with the maintenance of all Bloomingdale's common areas, spends about \$2,000 on holiday lighting and wreaths at each entryway and red bows on the lampposts. The bows alone cost \$45 a dozen and generally have to be replaced each year due to damage from the elements. Many of the strings of lights are also replaced each year.

As an alternative, office manager Joni Hickle suggested the board look into putting seasonal banners on the utility poles, an idea she got after seeing banners in Temple Terrace during the Fourth of July.

The trustees invited Joe Brandano of Brandano Displays Inc., a national banner company based in Pompano

Beach, to give a presentation at last month's taxing district meeting.

Brandano, whose father founded the company in Syracuse, N.Y., noted that Bloomingdale East and West has more than 60 light poles that could display banners.

He said marketing representatives from his company would solicit local businesses, groups and individuals to sponsor the banners. Sponsors will then have their names placed on an addition, or "slice," at the bottom of each banner to cover the cost of the banner and the bracket. Brandano Displays, he said, would be responsible for installing the banners and maintaining them. Each banner lasts about three years.

Brandano believes it's win-win for both the district

See BANNER, Page 20

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Rabbi Establishes Brandon Chabad Center

By D'ANN WHITE
Correspondent

With four hurricanes threatening the area since Rabbi Mendel Rubashkin and his family moved to Bloomingdale last month, the weather hasn't proven very hospitable.

But Rubashkin said the warm reception he's received from the community has more than made up for the inclement weather.

"The community's been very welcoming," said Rubashkin, who moved from Brooklyn, N.Y., with his wife, Tzippy and 16-month-old daughter, Mirel, to establish a Chabad center in Brandon.

Chabad of Brandon doesn't yet have a permanent home but celebrated Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur in space donated by Shirley's Dance Studio in the Village Center on Bell Shoals Road.

It was the start of what Rubashkin hopes will become a local point for Jewish residents in Brandon, Lithia, Riverview, Sun City Center and Plant City.

Mendel and Tzippy Rubashkin were born and raised in New York, where both had relatives who were rabbis. As students, they became interested in the Chabad-Lubavitch movement, a Hasidic, or Orthodox Jewish, movement founded in Russia 250 years and guided by the teachings of seven leaders, known as "the Rebbes." The Chabad movement was concerned with entire spiritual and physical life of Jews and today it focuses on bringing services, programs and teachings to Jewish people around the world in a loving and accepting environment.

As a student rabbi in the movement, Rubashkin studied at the Rabbinical College of America in Morristown, N.J., and then lived in Paris for four years and Israel for two years.

Tzippy, who holds the title of rebbetzin, is a graduate of the Chaya Mushka teacher's

seminary in Safed, Israel. The couple married two years ago and have been involved in Chabad community outreach programs in Israel, Russia and Sweden before deciding to found their own Chabad center.

Rubashkin said they researched various areas of the country before deciding to come to Brandon after advisers from the Chabad of Tampa told the couple they felt there was a need for a center in the growing east and south Hillsborough County area.

"It's a growing area with a lot of young families who are looking for a community to belong to," said Rubashkin.

He estimates that there are 2,500 Jews living in south and east Hillsborough County and hopes to reach out to all of them through Chabad of Brandon's programs.

"We want to provide a warm, inviting environment for Jewish residents of all backgrounds and philosophies, no matter what their level of involvement or commitment is," he said. "Chabad serves individuals and families looking for a non-judgmental, accepting, personalized and warm Jewish experience."

The couple plans to host classes on the Torah and Jewish traditions, offer organizations for women, holiday workshops for children and preschool.

"The Chabad is much more than a synagogue," said Rubashkin. "We're here to get to know the needs of the community and then offer the programs and services they need."

Rubashkin will begin by focusing on weekly classes and one-on-one sessions for Jews who want to increase their knowledge about the Torah and the meaning of Jewish holidays and traditions.

He hopes to host services and classes in Sun City Center and Plant City as well as Brandon.

In the meantime, Tzippy



Photo courtesy the Rubashkins

Rabbi Mendel Rubashkin, wife, Tzippy, and daughter, Mirel.

To further educate Jewish residents, Rubashkin has developed a Web site, www.chabadbrandon.org, that will include articles and links to information ranging from practical how-to guides to Talmudic insights. The site also includes a schedule of classes and programs.

"The content is culled from more than 720 sources, both ancient and contemporary, and features prayer excerpts, Bible readings, and a thorough and exciting look at the layers upon layers of meaning associated with the holidays," Rubashkin said. For instance, he's found 35 different explanations for the sounding of the shofar, or ram's horn, on Rosh Hashanah.

In addition, the site reviews the entire history of the Jewish people, citing sources and practices ranging from the biblical patriarch Abraham to

plans to concentrate on establishing clubs for children, women's groups and a "mommy and me" group. Ultimately, she said, she hopes to start a preschool for young Jewish families in the area.

"We want to provide programs for age 0 and up," she said.

See RABBI, Page 23

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Lithia Family Uses TLC To Rescue Farm Animals

**FESTIVAL SET
FOR OCT. 28-31**

By LAURA FRAZIER
Editor

Tammi Catrett is no stranger to crisis management.

The Lithia resident has dedicated the past three years of her life to adopting abandoned, abused and neglected farm animals. When Hurricane Ivan left her family's 14-acre farm and home without water and electricity for a week, Catrett clicked smoothly into rescue mode.

The family settled into a Tampa hotel while they waited for their power to be restored, making daily trips home to tend to the animals they were forced to leave behind — 12 horses, one male and eight pregnant female goats, 35 chickens, six rabbits, one donkey, one cow, two turkeys, eight cats and seven dogs.

Getting water to the horses was the biggest challenge.

"My friend, Donna (Clouse), God love her, went out and bought eight new 30-gallon garbage cans. Donna put the cans in her pickup truck, stood there filling them with her garden hose, and drove them from her house in Bloomingdale out to the farm," she said.

Clouse backed the truck up

See FARM, Page 19



LAURA FRAZIER/Photos

Above, surrounded by students and a teacher from The Think Children Learning Center in Brandon, Tammi Catrett, center, tells the story of how she found Happy, a severely neglected 19-year-old thoroughbred, in Ocala. Catrett is nursing the horse back to health. At right, visitors to the farm can feed and pet dozens of farm animals, including a goat Catrett rescued and whose vision she helped restore.



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Taxing District To Welcome New Trustees

By D'ANN WHITE
Correspondent

Three new trustees will join the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District as a result of the community's vote during the Aug. 31 primary.

Joe Harless, Paul N. Sims and David Steck will join the board next month. Trustees Rusty Jones and David West were re-elected to another term as well. They will join trustees Thom Snelling and Michael Buday, whose terms have not expired.

An unprecedented seven residents were vying for the five positions on the taxing district. According to long-time resident and office manager Joni Hickle, this is the first time in the district's 20-year history that an election was held. In previous years, an election wasn't necessary because there were no opponents in the race.

The seven-member taxing district oversees how Bloomingdale's \$475,200 budget is spent on the community's common areas. Every household pays a \$100 assessment each year. The trustees make decisions on items ranging from maintenance of the entryways and walls to landscaping and lighting.

West, who was originally appointed to the board after a vacancy arose, said he was pleased to see so many residents taking an interest in the district and decisions on how the community's tax dollars are spent.

At the same time, he said he's disappointed that more residents don't get involved in the taxing district, noting that few residents never attend the monthly meetings.

As for the results of the primary, which voted two current trustees off the board but retained two, West said he

was at a loss to explain it.

"I don't think it had anything to do with the job anyone did," he said. "I think it just has to do with how many people you know."

West joked that he has a lot of friends, and it showed in the election results. West received 1,486 votes from the seven Bloomingdale precincts, or 17.82 percent of the vote. Newcomer Paul Sims received 1,471 votes or 17.64 percent, Jones got 1,280 votes, Harless garnered 1,244 votes, Steck received 1,204 votes, and current board members Myron Magedanz and Kennard Pyse got 868 and 787 votes, respectively.

Snelling said he was pleased to see so many residents take an interest in serving on the taxing district since it consumes so much time and is strictly a volunteer position.

"This isn't just two or three hours a month," he said. "It's a major investment of time."

Once the new trustees are on board, Snelling said the district will vote on new officers and assign members to committees.

Snelling, who has two years left on his term, said he's willing to serve as president again if the board wishes. But he said the critical appointment will be assigning a trustee to oversee the development of the yearly budget, a duty last held by Dale Kahn, who is leaving the board.

New board members include Col. Paul Sims, who moved to Bloomingdale Village with his wife, Diana, four years ago after retiring from 30 years in the military, most recently serving as deputy chief of staff for Special Operations Command at MacDill Air Force Base.

David Steck, his wife, Nancy, and their three sons,

age 4, 5 and 7, moved to Monte Lake Drive in Bloomingdale East from St. Louis 2 1/2 years ago. Steck is a home health care marketer.

Joe Harless has lived on Callista Avenue in Bloomingdale East for 17 years. He and his wife, Mary, raised their two sons, now both in college, in Bloomingdale.

In other BSTD business, the board discussed putting together a program to have the community's 100 entranceway signs painted on a rotating basis and beginning the process to have a contract to paint the community's walls in place by March.

The board also gave its approval for the Erin Arbor Homeowners Association to make landscape improvements at Warm Spring Way and Springville Drive at the association's expense.

And, finally, the board adopted a new policy for

using the Bloomingdale Community Office off Bell Shoals Road. Currently, the district shares the office with the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association. However, a number of other groups, including the Friends of the Bloomingdale Library and various homeowners associations, use the office as well.

"This functions as a community meeting place, and I don't want to discourage that," said Snelling. At the same time, West said he's concerned about security, noting he's found the door left unlocked.

To better keep track of which groups are using the office and to aid Joni Hickle, office manager, in scheduling meeting times, the trustees are asking any group that wants to use the office to come to a board meeting with a request or make a written request on letterhead.

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Bloomingtondale Area Community Council Report

By MACK AUSTIN

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 directly with local law enforcement and government officials to promote the best interests of the Bloomingtondale community.

The BACC addresses issues that have been brought to its attention through a council member or the Bloomingtondale Substation.

The group meets at 7 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month at the Bloomingtondale Substation, in the Beef O'Brady's plaza at the corner of Bell Shoals Road and Glenhaven.

More residents and homeowners association representatives are needed to join the efforts of the BACC.

This is our community. We are the ones that must be involved in making it an even greater place to live. To become active in improving

our quality of life, contact Deputy Pete Maurer at the Bloomingtondale Substation, 635-8040.

The following items were discussed at the September council meeting:

Storm Damage

Deputy Pete Maurer began the meeting by opening discussion on how the Bloomingtondale community was affected by the recent hurricanes. All members agreed that our community was very fortunate that damage was minimal and that power outages were slim. Some tree damage and minor roof damage was mentioned in addition to some flooding. Deputy Mike Sessa noted an increase in calls for assistance during the storms. Maurer noted there were no incidents of looting during the storms like those experienced in other areas.

Motorized Scooters

Maurer again mentioned

his personal concerns for the safety of kids in our community and appealed to all parents to carefully consider the serious facts before buying their children a motorized skateboard.

He said, "These boards are very dangerous, totally illegal and any accidents involving them will probably result in very serious injuries to the kids."

No 3-Way Stop Near Cimino

Maurer noted the results of the request for a three-way stop at Natures Way and Culbreath Rd. near Cimino Elementary School.

He said, "Unfortunately, the news is not good. Our request to improve safety and traffic congestion in this critical area has been disappointed. The mixing of numerous vehicles and pedestrians, including children walking to school will continue." Maurer asked that all parents and drivers use extreme caution in this area, and to please assist the crossing guards in provid-

ing safe crossings for the students walking to and from school.

Disaster Recovery Assistance

After the many storms that have hit our state and local communities, members of the BACC have been actively involved in working at the Hillsborough County Regional Recovery Center at the Florida State Fairgrounds. This center is continuing to provide recovery assistance to residents throughout the state.

Any Bloomingtondale residents interested in helping can check the United Way website at www.uwtb.org for information. This is truly an outstanding part of helping others recover from these terrible disasters.

Little League/YMCA Crosswalk

There are flashing lights at the crossing but the installation of sidewalks and a bridge has not been completed.

Family Holds 6th Annual Haunted House

EVENT IS FREE, SCARY

By LAURA FRAZIER
Editor

They're creepy and they're kooky, mysterious and spooky.

As the calendar draws near to October 31, the Fisher Family of Bloomingtondale becomes altogether ooky.

This Halloween will mark the sixth consecutive year Kellie and Greg Fisher have turned their perfectly ordinary home in Bloomingtondale's Bristol Green subdivision into something quite extraordinary.

The haunted house the Fishers and friends set up annually at 4404 Castlebar Way is not intended to enter-

tain the very young, or the faint of heart.

This time of year, the Fisher's own children, ages 9 and 11, won't even go in the garage - where the main action takes place.

"I think we've totally ruined Halloween for them," Fisher said of her children.

But if the screams and laughter emanating from their home on Halloween nights past are any indication, plenty of teens and adults appreciate the couple's eerie efforts.

Kellie Fisher said the family's haunted house features hard core Halloween frights along the lines of grotesque displays, screaming lunatics and buzzing chainsaws.

It's not for everyone, but

See HAUNTED, Page 20

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The Bloomingtondale Gazette

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Brandon Bears Take To The Field For 16th Season

BEARS, BUCS CALLED TRUCE TO HELP STORM VICTIMS

By LESLIE WHITE
Correspondent

In the opening game of West Coast Youth Football Conference's season, the Brandon Bears and the East Bay Buccaneers checked their rivalry at the door to collaborate on a greater effort - aiding victims of Hurricane Charley.

During half-time, cheerleaders from both teams weaved their way through the bleachers at Bloomingdale High School, where the Bears play their home games, collecting money to be donated to the Red Cross' Hurricane Charley Relief Fund. Over \$600 was collected that day from Bears and Bucs patrons, parents and coaches.

Bears' Treasurer Marlene Willis is very proud of this joint effort, saying, "Every little bit helps in this time of need."

The Brandon Bears are in their 16th year of youth sports, offering full contact and flag football, as well as cheerleading for ages 5-15. Run by a staff of volunteers, the Bears approach football and cheerleading with the attitude that, "it's all about the kids - the parents just help it go," according to Dave Marshall, Bloomingdale resident and Bears' board of directors president.

Marshall's son has played football for five years and his daughter, a cheerleader for four years, now helps coach the midget squad.

"First and foremost, we're here for all the kids, not just the ones with natural talent. From the Board members to the parents, we want to encourage self-discipline, positive attitude, respect for coaches, competitors and teammates."

"Winning is a good thing, here's nothing wrong with winning. But if it becomes the only thing, that becomes a



Photo provided by The Brandon Bears

Bears players and cheerleaders raised \$610.93 to benefit the victims of Hurricane Charley. Pictured in back row: Andy Repass, Colton Bridges, Brandon Gosdoski, Ryan Gordon, Adam Zaki, Dante Pascucci, Travis Zahar; In second row: Destin Laquerre, Donald Gillis, Nick Bosco, Ryan Marshall, Tyler Danish, Justin Ambrosino, Nick Insley, David Willis; In front: Dana Dittfeld, Samantha Ortiz, Analisa Bosco, Kelly Swain, Sara Brown, Marie Martin, Emily Bridges, Bethany Wallace, Lauren Schrenker, Brooke Coggins, Christine Gillis.

problem."

With a full roster, and a waiting list just to play for the Bears, the organization must be doing something right. Each coach's goal is that every kid plays.

"If the kids aren't having fun, then the organization isn't achieving what it wants to achieve," Marshall said.

Parents, coaches and board members are focused on every child and keeping the integrity of the structure of the organization. This year brought about several changes in Bears' policy with the installation of a new board of directors, many of whom reside in Bloomingdale.

"We're really regrouping this year," explained Marshall. "We're building historical records for the first time. We're ensuring the safety of each child by having two safety coordinators who are also nurses on site during games and practices to deal with any injuries, which is added insurance to ensure the safety of the kids."



LESLIE WHITE/Photo

The Brandon Bears Cheerleaders practice their moves at Providence Park in Brandon. There are still some slots open on several cheerleading squads.

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See BEARS, Page 20

New Sports League Promises More Fun, Less Pressure

TEAMS MEET AT BELL SHOALS BAPTIST CHURCH

By LESLIE WHITE
Correspondent

With more kids playing sports and starting at an earlier age than ever before, a negative trend has infiltrated America's pastimes.

At least 84% of kids involved in a sporting activity have witnessed violent parental behavior toward children, coaches or officials, according to an article in January's Sporting Kid magazine. Even more disturbing is that 80% of those same kids admit to being a victim of that behavior.

It's no wonder that the dropout rate in kids' sports is 70%, according to a recent U.S. News & World Report article. Why? Because they're discouraged. They no longer love the sport they begged their parents to sign them up to play. That's what led Lollis Dyar to start a program he's named "Encouraging Sports," in order to offset these negative trends, rejuvenate the love of the sport and nurture the joy of playing for kids.

A sports enthusiast himself, Dyar says "I've played sports most of my life. I've been on some winning teams - undefeated, and I've been on some losing teams. I learned more from the losing teams sometimes."



LESLIE WHITE/Photo

A new sports league designed to promote sportsmanship over winning meets at Bell Shoals Baptist Church.

"Don't keep score," was the advice to Dyar as he set up the league. The program is designed to help kids learn the game without applying unnecessary pressure.

"We're not highly competi-

tive," he explained, "but you will learn skills, and you will learn teamwork and you'll be allowed to just play the game. We don't keep score in the regular sense, but teams and players do earn points for things like sportsmanship, encouraging teammates, and team spirit."

Dyar explains the difference between this league and other organized leagues.

"We have a lot of great leagues in our area. Our focus in Encouraging Sports is on the kid, not on the sport. Kids are afraid to fail, and sometimes they're not very good at sports, and don't want to try for fear of failing. We try to remove that element by not being focused on just winning, but on learning and

enjoying the game."

"Let the kids play the game."

Dyar knows if the coaches aren't worried about the score, they're more focused on the kids. The same holds true with parents. When the goal isn't winning, it allows parents to focus on watching all the kids in the league enjoy the game, not just their own. That's why the scoring system is set up to reward certain traits exhibited by both players and coaches, focusing on how they played the game rather than the outcome.

The bench is as involved as the players on the floor, encouraging teammates and showing team spirit. Every kid gets equal playing time. Even if a team wins a game, points could be deducted for a poor attitude.

Encourage Sports currently offers a basketball camp. Dyar's plans include offering soccer in the future, and possibly other outdoor activities like golf and fishing. Location will vary according to the sport. The league uses Bell Shoals Baptist Church facilities, but hopes to expand throughout the community as the program grows.

Basketball camp director Jamie Warneise saw the 67 kids that came to the summer basketball camp not only learn the skills, but have a blast doing it.

"They're learning the fundamentals," said Warneise.

"We set up games and drills to build skills. They love it! If you're not having fun, what's the point in playing?"

Registration for coed basketball leagues for ages 5-17 is underway. Teams practice weekly and games are Saturdays starting at 8 a.m. at The Point, located on the church campus. Forms are available by calling 689-4229, ext. 508 or by e-mailing Dyar at LDyar@tampabay.rr.com. Registration costs \$45/child with a maximum of \$105 per family, which includes a team jersey, a trophy and an awards dinner.



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This 1,874 square foot, 3 bedroom, 2.5 bathroom home in Bloomingtondale East listed for \$154,000 and sold for \$153,900 in 5 days. The home has a large, shady lot close to the community park.

Info and photo provided by Luana Russell, Keller Williams Realty of Brandon. Realtors are invited to send recent sales info and photos to the editor at LauraFrazier@tampabay.rr.com. Featured properties will appear on a space-available basis.

Music Showcase Holds 'Idol' Contest

A Gazette Report

Music Showcase of Brandon will hold a "Music Showcase Idol" competition on

November 20. The singing talent contest, open to all ages, will begin at 1 p.m. at the store, 402 Oakfield Drive in Brandon.

Prizes will be awarded in three age groups; 1 - 12 years old, 13 - 21 years old and over 21. Music showcase gift certificates will be awarded to

first, second and third place winners in denominations of \$100, \$75 and \$50.

Registration is free. Register at the store or call 685-5998.

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Alafia, Cimino Make 20th Day Adjustments

SOME CLASSES CUT, OTHERS ADDED

By **LESLIE WHITE**
Correspondent

As a result of the student re-count held on the 20th day of school each year, Alafia and Cimino Elementary schools each had some adjustments to make to accommodate their student bodies.

Alafia was the least affected, dropping one first grade unit and gaining a new fifth grade class. Whenever a unit is cut or added, students are split up and reassigned to new classrooms.

Alafia principal, Pam Locke, said, "Enrollment for Alafia stands at 788 students, up only about 30 students from the previous year."

Cimino Elementary gained a second grade, third grade and special autism unit as a result of the count, and expanded the school's art and music programs. Assistant principal, Debbie Talley, recently hired a third grade teacher, and is in the process of hiring an additional second grade teacher.

"I'm looking for quality," Talley said of her search.

Cimino also gained another portable, since the school's classroom space is full. Enrollment at Cimino is 980 students, up 30 from the beginning of the school year.

School Notes

Cimino Festival Is Today 740-4450.

Cimino Elementary will hold its first Fall Festival Saturday, Oct. 2, from 10 a.m.- 2 p.m. Students are invited to bring their family and friends for hours of fun, games and prizes. The festival features a bouncy castle, a petting zoo, obstacle course, face painting, hair wrapping, a dunk tank, cake walk, and games of skill with prizes for everyone. Tickets are four for \$1, available on campus. Proceeds benefit Cimino's classrooms. Info:

Bloomington High Homecoming Game

The Bloomington Senior High School homecoming game will be held Friday, Oct. 8. A barbeque dinner catered by Sonny's Real Pit Barbeque(\$6/plate) will be on the patio from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m. before the Bloomington - East Bay football game and crowning of the 2004 Homecoming Queen. Information: 744-8018.

Restaurant Review

Bernini's of Ybor
1702 E. Seventh Avenue
248-0099

By **ELTON DUMONT**
Exclusive to the Gazette

Well dear readers, I did it again. I apologize for venturing so far from the Bloomingdale homestead, but it was certainly worth another trip to Ybor City. The restaurant we had the pleasure of dining at, Bernini's, is actually named Bernini Innovative Italian Cuisine, and innovative it is.

The faceplate on the restaurant's building identifies it as the original Bank of Ybor City. We were seated next to the bank's original floor safe, across from the full bar. The wood burning hearth is quite different. You can call it a pizza oven if you like, but it really looks like an original hearth.

The single narrow dining room has a unique, very narrow staircase in the rear. It reminded us of a stationary escalator. The second floor has another dining room, also with a full bar, used during peak periods.

The original bank vault is on the second floor. The vault door has been replaced with a glass door that gives you a peek at the fully stocked winery. And just like in a movie set, our waitress and tour director pressed or jiggled something and a solid wall panel turned into a door that led to another staircase. The third floor dining room, with a bar, leather sofas and a big screen TV, is available for private parties.

Ok, so much for the tour. How was the food? The quick answer: wonderful.

The lunch appetizers run the gamut from soup to bruschetta to foccacia. Choose from calamari, mussels or baked oysters, ranging from \$3.95 to \$7.95. Salads include the Chef Otis made with julienne mortadella, provolone, salami, capicola, tomatoes, pepperoncinis, stuffed green olives with a

gorgonzola dressing, or Caprese, Bernini and Colossal Caesar.

There are 12 different types of wood fired pizzas coming out of the hearth including the Gilroy with roasted garlic, grilled chicken, grilled onions, artichokes, tomatoes, mozzarella and goat cheese. Others include the Florentine, the Apple Bacon and the Athenian.

Since it was lunch time, we zeroed in on the sandwich board. I had an oyster po-boy; lightly breaded and flash fried oysters with lettuce, tomato and spicy (really spicy) mayonnaise. It was New Orleans style and brought me back in spirit to Bourbon Street.

My wife had the chicken parmesan sandwich, with parmesan, mozzarella and marinara sauce. With your sandwich, you get your choice of their special ingredients pasta salad, french fries or Bernini's special garlic fries. If you're a garlic aficionado like me, choose the garlic fries. They are served dripping olive oil with Italian seasoning and minced garlic; a true culinary treat.

They also feature pasta dishes such as pescatore with four different types of fish, entrees like risotto with grilled chicken breast, garlic asparagus, olives, artichokes and cheese in a creamy risotto sauce. Chef's specials include kalamata olive and feta ravioli, shrimp arrabiatta and tortellini Bolognese, which is veal with sun dried tomato tortellinis.

Our price with tax and gratuity was about \$27. It was all good, and that was only lunch. The dinner menu is even more extensive, with a great wine list. Stay tuned for a review on dinner at Bernini of Ybor.

Rating based on 5 stars
Food ★★★★★
Service ★★★★★
Ambience ★★★ 1/2
Overall ★★★★★ 1/2

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Store, Children Send Bear Hugs To Storm Victims

By LESLIE WHITE
Correspondent

With a hug, a wish and a kiss, hundreds of children helped Westfield Shopping-Town's Build-A-Bear store send off 200 cuddly friends to comfort children affected by merciless Hurricane Charley.

In a program called "Give Hugs to Your Neighbors," three area Build-A-Bear stores joined forces last month to

help bring a little light into what had otherwise been a stormy few weeks.

The Brandon Build-A-Bear, along with stores at Florida Mall in Orlando and Tampa's International Plaza, cooperated in the effort with ABC Action News to deliver the child-focused aid.

Brandon store manager, Jodi Jordan, said, "We just

See HUG, Page 21



LESLIE WHITE/Photo

Cimino fifth grade student Logan White gets help from Build-A-Bear's Nicole Seabury to stuff a special bear on his way to the arms of a Hurricane Charley victim.

FARM

From page 12

to the horse trough and Catrett, with the help of her 13-year-old son, Darrell, painstakingly dumped all 240 gallons of water over the tailgate. The trio repeated the process three more days in a row until the power to their well was restored.

"It's times like these you really find out who your friends are," Catrett said of Clouse, who works as the recreation director at Bloomingdale West Park.

Catrett frequents farm auctions in Dade City, Fort Lonesome and Zephyrhills, watching the bidding and scouring the stock for undesirables likely to be left behind.

One of the horses she rescued at an auction, an 18-year-old Belgian mare named Maybelle, surely has a friend in Catrett.

When she found Maybelle two years ago, the horse weighed a pitiful 650 pounds, less than half of what is considered normal. Today, the animal is a healthy 1,500 pounds.

"She worked for the Amish people pulling a cart all her life. It's time she didn't have to work anymore."

Catrett recently rescued a blind goat offered for sale to a butcher. She took the animal back to her farm and, with a daily regimen of ointment and antibiotics, restored partially restored its eyesight. The goat is now a beloved pet, as are all her animals.

"Your animal is unconditional love. They will never let you down. If you're fat, skinny, purple, green, it doesn't matter. They love you."

The animal rescuer is also blessed with unconditional love of the human kind.

Soon after the couple married 15 years ago, Catrett's husband, Darrell, promised he'd buy Tammi a horse some day. Twelve years later, he made good on his promise, and then some.

In addition to his full-time job as a custom trim carpenter, Darrell is Catrett's chief farm hand, taking care of tree trimming, land clearing, and building and maintaining fences and pens.

"He works all day and then comes home to haul hay around," a grateful Catrett said.

The family's three children are just as enthusiastic as their mother about rescuing and caring for the animals.

Darrell, a seventh-grade student at Randall Middle School, takes the morning shift, feeding the animals at 7:30. His sisters, 11-year-old Seira and 15-year-old Kalina, help out in the evenings.

"It's a lot of work but we have to take care of the animals," Darrell said, smiling and adding, "I don't think my mom can stop rescuing."

The family opened its rescue farm to the public this month to educate people about the plight of abused

and neglected animals, and to help offset some of their expenses.

Catrett's initials - TLC - lend a nifty double meaning to the "tender loving care" acronym. "TLC's Huggin' Farm, Where the TLC comes first," is her slogan.

The Catretts give personal tours of the farm to families and groups all week long, by appointment. Visitors are welcome to bring a picnic basket. Birthday parties are also offered.

A preschool class from The Think Children Learning Center in Brandon was the first group to visit the farm two weeks ago. After the initial visit, the school booked another slot for the farm's upcoming Halloween festival.

"Hey, do you think I could call my mom and have her pick me up here (instead of the school)?" asked one little

boy of Catrett.

"That's why I opened the hugging farm," Catrett said. "It made those children love animals. If kids don't grow up with a love for their environment and animals, we're in trouble. That's why so many of these horses get thrown to the wind and are either sold to butchers or left to die out in pastures."

TLC Huggin' Farm will hold a "fun, not scary" Halloween festival Oct. 28-31. Appointments are available mornings, afternoons and evenings. Candy will be given out at eight trick or treat stations. Games, contests, activities and face painting will be offered. The all-inclusive admission is \$10 per child; parents are free. Proceeds will be used to offset the rescue farm's expenses.

For information, call Catrett at 689-7040.

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BEARS

From page 15

The Bears' board strives to give each player a sense of belonging. With all home games played at Bloomingdale High's field, the kids are treated to amenities normally given to college and pro athletes.

"We keep the atmosphere at our games pumped up," Marshall said.

"We announce each kid and play music to get the crowd going. It's our own version of a Bucs game!"

Last year, all five teams made it to the playoffs for the first time in the Bears' 16 year history, two of which made it to the WCYFL Superbowl, and

four teams ending the season as Division Champs.

Players and parents alike are loyal to the Bears organization, remaining on the team for years at a time. Players playing for at least five years receive a team jacket to commemorate the occasion, and even after they've stopped playing, many come back to help teach the younger players.

"Kids that have played five or more years in our program have now moved on to play high school ball. Some have come back to be trainers. The kids really look up to them," said Marshall.

Mike Laquerre, Bears vice president, said, "You watch these kids grow up. Nothing gives me a better feeling than watching them give back to the younger kids."

Laquerre believes kids involved in youth sports are more productive and stay out of trouble. With 250 enrolled collectively in football and cheerleading, the responsibilities are endless, but the parents, coaches and Board of the Bears are focused on offering a positive youth sports experience to the community.

The community has been very supportive of the organization. Bloomingdale High

allows them to play home games at the school, and Hillsborough County Parks and Recreation keeping Providence Park practice field in top shape.

"We have terrific local businesses that support us," a grateful Marshall said. The organization was recently awarded 501C3 status, which means all Bears sponsors can now write off donations and support on their taxes.

Team registration takes place in the spring, but slots are still available on the cheerleading squads. For more information visit www.brandonbears.com.

BANNER

From page 10

and the sponsors. The banners will create a sense of pride and give the community a festive appearance. And the sponsors will receive recognition for as long as the banner is on display.

He said the cost of three 84-inch banners for spring, summer and Christmas would be \$600 per sponsor.

However, he said his company is willing to establish payment plans for sponsors of \$50 a month. He hopes to obtain 40 sponsors willing to fund three banners each, or 120 total. The total cost would be \$3,600 for the hardware sets, \$11,280 for the seasonal banners, \$2,400 for the initial installation and \$4,800 to change out the banners each

season. That cost will be reduced to \$7,200 the second year because the hardware and banners won't need to be purchased.

District President Thom Snelling liked the idea, especially since Brandano Displays will do all the soliciting and maintenance work.

"This will be a nice holiday statement," he said.

Although Bloomingdale may be the first community in the Brandon area to adopt the holiday banner program, Brandano said more communities throughout the country are using banners.

"They make an attractive display," he said. "So the industry is trying to create avenues to accommodate

public budgets, such as finding sponsors."

This will be the first time Brandano Signs has solicited sponsors for the banners, making Bloomingdale a sort of testing ground for the idea, he said.

Brandano is hoping Bloomingdale businesses will embrace the idea. "At \$50 a month, it's an inexpensive way to advertise as well as show your support for the community," he said.

Snelling suggested that organizations in the community as well as individuals and families may want to sponsor banners to show their support.

"It's great advertising," he said. "Every time someone

turns into the entryway, they'll see the banner with your name below it."

The taxing district will help choose the banner decorations. Trustees said they would prefer non-religious banners, perhaps a winter banner that reads "Season's Greetings" and a spring banner featuring spring flowers and the word "Welcome." They'd like the summer banner to reflect a patriotic theme.

Anyone interested in sponsoring a banner or learning more about the program can contact Brandano at (800) 777-6903. For more information and to see samples of the banners and sponsorship slices, visit www.brandano.com.

HAUNTED

From page 14

the Fisher's neighbors can attest the event draws a huge crowd every year.

"Last year we had hundreds of people lined up all the way to the end of the street. It was non-stop screaming until 11 p.m.," Fisher said.

The couple and their ghoulish friends were preparing last week for a trip to Universal Studio's Halloween Horror Nights to get ideas for

this year's spectacle.

The group hadn't decided on a theme yet, but it surely won't be a pumpkin patch.

"We're thinking maybe an insane asylum," Fisher said.

The haunted house, open Halloween night from 6 to 10 p.m. is free.

Anyone who appreciates good, gory scare is welcome. For more information or to help, call Fisher at 684-0516.

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DUTY

From page 7

Radtke. "There is a small percentage of people that are just going to wig out to the point that something has to be done."

But when a storm arrives, the rules change again. If the winds get high enough, emergency vehicles are called off the road.

Service said after a certain point, deputies can't respond unless the situation is life-threatening.

"And even then, it is going to be looked at by a supervisor," he said. "After the evacuations, if you get stuck in your house and you're afraid to leave, they are not going to send us out. If a person is getting killed, yes, we're going to try to respond."

Deputies take their oath seriously. Their mission is to protect and serve the public. They have learned now that circumstances beyond anyone's control may interfere.

"That was weird," Service continued. "I've never been told that you won't go out. We always go out as a law enforcement officer. It was weird being told that it might be too dangerous."

"We always go out when it's

too dangerous," he continued. "That's part of the job. It was stressful knowing that we may not be able to get to someone."

No one just sits around, however. Both before and after a storm, the sheriff's office goes into high gear and the hours on duty are long.

"When we're on hurricane duty, we become everything," said Radtke. "We chop down trees — you name it — we'll help people do it. We'll try to help people with anything we possibly can."

The department is also cognizant of special needs in the area.

"In Sun City Center, some people can't drive a car so we had a deputy out to shuttle them," said Service.

He said his commanding officer assigned someone specifically to helping people in Sun City Center. He assigned others to help cut out roadways, since deputies could respond a bit faster than county maintenance workers.

"It's serving the public. It's what we do," he said. "We do whatever we can."

In the case of Hurricane

Charley, that meant leaving to lend a hand in Hardee County.

"It was like Hurricane Andrew all over again," said Bloomingdale Community Resource Deputy Pete Maurer. "It was worse than I thought."

"If something hit us, we would get a tremendous amount of help from other law enforcement agencies," said Service.

In the wake of Charley, Service was assigned to help in Hardee County. Because there were officers from seven or eight different agencies from all over the state, he was assigned to patrol just a few streets.

"Normally, I am in charge of all of Ruskin," he said. "But we wanted people (in Hardee) to feel safe. The same thing would happen here."

The principle of doing whatever they can also means leaving family behind. It means living up to their oath to protect and serve.

"If the house is shaking back and forth, I can't be with my wife," Service said. "I don't have the option of taking off work to board up the house."

Cops can't do that. We have to be here. But this is my profession — I chose this career."

Radtke expressed the same commitment.

"My wife got a little frustrated," said Radtke. "She doesn't like the fact that I have to go. I understand, but we have to go. We have to be here."

Preparing for the worst is the best most deputies can do.

"Leaving my family is tough," said Maurer. "You want your family to be safe so you have to prepare ahead of time as best as you can."

"When the season ends in the coming months, that is the time to prepare for next year," Radtke said.

"By the grace of God, we've been spared, but something could be coming. If it does, we're all going to be in the same boat."

Deputies will do what they can to prepare their homes and families but in the end, it is the safety of the public that must come first.

"We'll have to treat a hurricane like anything else," said Service.

"Someone has to be calm. That's why the badges are out there."

HUG

From page 19

found out about this the first of the week. The three stores will donate a total of 600 bears. We e-mailed local guests in our database and invited all birthday party guests and mall traffic to come in and stuff a bear."

There was no cost to guests, outside of the investment of a little time and love. Kids

poured in to receive a bear, which they then took to one of Build-A-Bear's stuffing machines.

Nicole Seabury, who's only worked at the store for five weeks, helped eager kids fill the bears with stuffing until they were just right. Seabury told the kids to choose a fabric heart, encouraging them to

rub the heart on their arm to give the people strength for all they've gone through; to then rub it on their heads to give good thoughts to those who lost so much; and lastly, to rub it on their hearts so it's filled

with love. "Make a wish and give the heart a kiss," directed Seabury, as smiling children pitched in to do their part in healing the hearts of the thousands affected by Hurricane Charley's wrath.

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PRIDE

From page 8

Among the items was an old stereo system delivered by 18-year Bloomingdale Oaks resident Delaney Wren.

"I think what the homeowners association is doing here is a great idea," he said. "It's a convenient way for residents to get rid of accumulated stuff."

In all, 88 residents took advantage of the opportunity to rid their homes of "stuff," some making as many as five trips.

"We had one resident from Bloomingdale West who went around his neighborhood and, when he spotted some trash, he asked them if they wanted it taken away," said Heckel.

"He loaded it in his vehicle and brought it to the dump site. He made six trips."

For the first time since the BHA PRIDE program launched its cleanups in the spring of 2003, the BHA volunteers were forced to halt the cleanup early because all five Dumpsters were full. More than 110 cubic yards of trash was hauled away, a substantial increase when compared to the first cleanup, which netted 70 cubic yards.

Residents who were turned away at the end of the day said they were disappointed but planned to return for the spring cleanup.

Originally held four times a year, the BHA now hosts cleanups twice a year due to the amount of work and volunteers needed to conduct the cleanups.



D'ANN WHITE/Photo

The September cleanup netted 110 cubic yards of trash, filling all five Dumpsters to capacity. The volunteers were forced to end the cleanup early and turn several residents away.

Bloomingdale's PRIDE program was recognized last year with the county's 2003 Neighborhood Recognition Award for Best Beautification Program. Shelley Blood of the county's Office of Neighbor-

hood Relations said the Bloomingdale program is now used as a model for other communities in the county. The program was even featured in a national homeowners association magazine.

The BHA is seeking volunteers to serve on the PRIDE committee and to help with future cleanups.

For information on volunteering, contact the BHA office at 681-2051.

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NAME

From page 2

Bloomingdale Homeowners Association - have submitted formal recommendations to name the branch, "The Bloomingdale Public Library."

Both groups also propose the main meeting room at the library be named "The McLean Family Meeting Room," in honor of the property's original homesteading family. Descendants of the McLeans donated an acre of

the library building parcel sold to the county.

Residents are circulating a petition to name the new library for the Bloomingdale community.

Those who wish to add their name to the petition can do so on the homeowners association web site, www.BloomingtonGazette.com, or call the branch Friends of The Library president, Pat Boody, at 785-3373.

SALE

From page 1

year. Each chapter operates with a self-elected board of directors whose mission is to preserve and strengthen libraries.

Friends chapter president Pat Boody said the group's first fundraiser was a great success.

"I think we probably made about \$900 plus added 14 new members to the Friends of the Library. We had around 200 shoppers based on the number of receipts that we wrote, so I'd say it was quite successful for our first event," Boody said.

A steady stream of bargain hunters perused the stacks of books for sale.

Cindy Laperche of Valrico made several trips to her car to unload shopping bags full of books and videotapes she purchased for her children.

"I was really impressed with the quality of the books," she said.

Laperche found dozens of tomes for her home schooling family of six, from picture books and educational non-fiction to piano music textbooks.

Toting another sack full of books and three of her chil-

dren back to her car, she said, "This new library is greatly appreciated."

Friends vice president Charles Polstra said books left over from the event would be held in storage for future sales. The paperbacks could be shared with the public at the new library on a "take one, leave one" basis.

"What makes the Bloomingdale library so special for us all is that the Friends group will have its own room for community purposes such as rotating seasonal and topical displays and events," Polstra said.

Volunteers at the sale discussed the possibility of loaning special items such as art prints, oil paintings and talking books.

Polstra, who once worked with a Friends chapter in Illinois, said, "It's amazing what we would be able to funnel through the library."

Julie Beamguard, the Hillsborough County librarian appointed to supervise the new branch, said the money raised at the sale gave the Friends group a good head start on their to-do list.

"We have a long list of ideas

for items the proceeds could be spent on, but there are a few things that should be in place for opening day of the new library, or sooner," Beamguard said.

Supplies, equipment and furniture to supplement those provided by the county are high priorities on the wish list. The group would like to provide appliances and kitchen equipment for the staff lounge, items not included in the library's construction budget.

Fundraiser proceeds could also be put towards performer's fees for special children's plans already in the works.

The sale provided a perfect opportunity for the Friends group members, who meet monthly to plan activities, to socialize informally and toss around some great ideas, Beamguard said.

"We talked about having some way to display the names of the community members who donate to the library. Also, some Friends groups have "Dinner in the Stacks" or a special party to celebrate the library, something else the group wants to

consider."

Organizers and shoppers at the sale praised the hard work put in by a group of Girl Scout volunteers. The group of 15 girls ranging in age from 9 to 13 worked for weeks in advance of the sale to collect books and distribute sale flyers. The night before the fundraiser, the scouts helped unload the books from storage, transport them to the park, unload them again, and set up the sale tables.

Beamguard was impressed with the volunteer efforts put forth by the Girl Scouts and the Friends group.

"Seeing this level of enthusiasm makes me realize that the library staff will have great support, and that means a lot to us."

However, Beamguard said, library volunteer service should not just be about hard work and raising money.

"It should also be a way for people with similar interests to get to know each other and have fun."

For more information about the Friends group, contact Boody at 275-3642 or e-mail pwboody@tecoenergy.com.

RABBI

From page 11

Turkish Izmir in 1729 to 1950s Iraq to Jerusalem today. There's also an "Ask the Rabbi" link and activities for children including crafts, games and stories.

The Rubashkins believe that today's families are seek-

ing a sense of belonging and are interested in learning more about their Judaism.

"I think people are becoming more interested in their roots and family traditions," Rubashkin said. "Because people today move around so

much, they feel isolated and disconnected from their roots. We want to show them that Judaism is exciting."

Membership is not required to participate in Chabad programs.

"All are welcome free of charge, regardless of background or affiliation," Rubashkin said.

For information, call 856 3243 or e-mail rabbi@chabad-brandon.org.

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