

the Bloomingdale gazette

Official Publication of the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association

Volume XXVII, Number 9

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BLOOMINGDALE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL NEWS

(See story on page 4)

Bloomingdale Online!

www.CyberRails.com/BHA/

A message from Bloomingdale Homeowners Association President Ted Grable

The BHA Board of Directors is pleased to announce an exciting new communications vehicle created to serve the residents of Bloomingdale. This new effort will join the Bloomingdale Gazette, the official publication of the BHA since 1980, with an Internet web site, broadcast e-mail service and improved voice mail services. Our web site is a cooperative effort between local community information service CyberRails.com and the BHA. Bloomingdale residents are now able to access information about deed restrictions and county codes, the Bloomingdale Mobile Watch, BHA membership and other useful Internet sites. One of the most exciting features of our new web site is the ability to register your e-mail address with the BHA to receive free e-mail updates about important

issues affecting our community just as soon as we find out about them.

Over the next several months, the BHA will also be converting to a new automated voice mail system to manage our phone calls. This new system will support automated fax-on-demand service for those who are not able to access our web site. We will have more about this service in future issues of the Gazette.

Look for the Gazette in your mailbox the first week of each month. If you are a Bloomingdale resident and do not receive the Gazette by mail, please contact us for your free subscription at BHA@CyberRails.com or write to 3509 Bell Shoals Rd., Valrico, FL 33594, phone 681-2051. Please include your name, address and phone number. In the meantime, we hope you will visit our web site at www.CyberRails.com/BHA/ and register to receive free Internet e-mail updates from the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association. As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions. ©

State House Representative Johnnie Byrd visits Deputy Pete Maurer and Community Service Officer Sandy Capitano at the Bloomingdale Community Substation. See story on page 5. Photo by Mack Austin.



Your Inside Connections

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, Inc.

3509 Bell Shoals Rd. • Valrico, FL 33594
(813) 681-2051 • E-mail: BHA@CyberRails.com

Web site: www.CyberRails.com/BHA/

- President Ted Grable
- Treasurer Pam Liguori
- Directors Patricia Radel
- LaWayne Wyatt
- Ann Underwood
- Rodney Biddle



Bloomingdale Mobile Watch Core Committee

- Coordinator/Scheduler
LaWayne Wyatt, 685-2072
- Treasurer, Paul Kelmer 681-9701
- Equipment Manager, Tony Diolosa 681-1146
- Membership Chairman, Steven Heckel .. 654-4266
- David Guy 681-5943
- Paul Warr 685-7883



Bloomingdale Oaks Special Taxing District

- P.O. Box 3132, Brandon, FL 33509-3132
- President Bill Grace, 685-2817
- Treasurer Fred Englehart
- Meetings .. Second Tuesday each month at 7:30 pm,
3419 Cade Lane, Bloomingdale Oaks



Share your news with the community!

Write to Editor, 3509 Bell Shoals Rd., Valrico, FL 33594
Phone (813) 681-2051
E-mail LauraFrazier@Prodigy.net
Fax (813) 651-1129

Bloomingdale Special Taxing District

- 684-6667
- President, Thom Snelling 681-9186
- Vice President, Tom Mackiewicz 653-4145
- Treasurer, Don Cassels 681-8855
- Corresponding Secretary, R. Dickey 689-2177
- Recording Secretary, Alice Bursleson ... 685-1076
- Trustee, Tim Golden 653-1337
- Trustee, Paul Almeida 661-2018
- Property Manager, DPMI 684-6617



Meetings

All meetings take place at the Community Office at 3509 Bell Shoals Rd. These are monthly public meetings and all Bloomingdale residents are invited.

BHA Board of Directors Meetings
Second Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m.

Special Taxing District Meetings
Second Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m.



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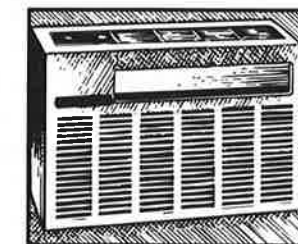
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REAL ESTATE UPDATE

By Luana Russell

Don't Be Your Own Realtor

QUESTION: Wouldn't it make sense to sell my house on my own and avoid paying a Realtor's commission?

ANSWER: Although this method may appear to be a cost-cutting measure on the surface – it is not. Those who attempt to sell their own home and don't have training and knowledge of a real estate professional may be opening themselves up to more frustration, disappointment and possible legal entanglements than they ever dreamed about.

Because of today's complex real estate laws, conducting a home-selling transaction can be a legal and financial maze if things are not handled 100% properly. Don't be your own realtor.

Who Sets the Price?

QUESTION: Is it true that Realtors set home prices?

ANSWER: Nothing could be further from the truth. In realty, buyers and sellers set the price.

Home prices, just like most commodities, are a function of supply and demand. If there is a high demand and a short supply, prices will be driven up. It's only natural. If, on the other hand, there is an overabundance of homes on the market or demand wanes, sellers may have to adjust their price downward in order to make a sale.

Factors in the marketplace set the pace of supply and demand. These factors are much more powerful than real estate agents.

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Bloomingdale Senior High School news

By Diane Moseley, PTSA President and Karen Aponte, SAC Council

New Year, New Wing

The enthusiastic staff of Bloomingdale High School kicked off the 1999-2000 school year, welcoming over 2600 students, with the opening of a new wing featuring 20 additional classrooms to provide much needed space for students.

PTSA Starts Second Year

Although only in its second year, the Bloomingdale High PTSA prepares to continue as an important part of the school. Because of the size of our school and number of students, volunteers provide a variety of important services to help students and teachers. Remember the "S" in PTSA; it stands for student. BSHS students can make a positive difference at their school. A Student Membership Drive is ongoing. You can be a part of this exciting organization by visiting our school or calling 744-8018, EXT. 563.

Tutor Volunteers needed

Volunteers are needed to assist with math and reading tutorial programs at BSHS. If you are interested, please contact Reading Specialist Linda Weronik at 744-8018, EXT 538 or PTSA Volunteer Coordinator Kathy Steed at 744-5018, EXT 563. Magazines are needed for the new school year's Reading Program and can be dropped off at the Bloomingdale Community Substation in the Village Center (corner of Bell Shoals and Glenhaven).

School Advisory Council

In the 1980's the Florida State Legislature passed a law that formed School Advisory Councils (SACs) at all public schools. An action plan is implemented each year aimed at school improvement, with funds provided by the state. The membership consists of staff, business and community volunteers and parents. BSHS's Advisory Council is getting ready to begin a new year and is seeking new members. The Council meets once each month, alternating between afternoon and evening meetings. This organization provides an important opportunity for parents, students, business and community members and teachers to have a voice in planning and executing activities designed to improve the overall school program. To become part of the solution, to become part of the drive towards academic excellence for all students, join Bloomingdale High School's School Advisory Council. Please contact Karen Aponte for more information at 744-8018, EXT. 235. ©

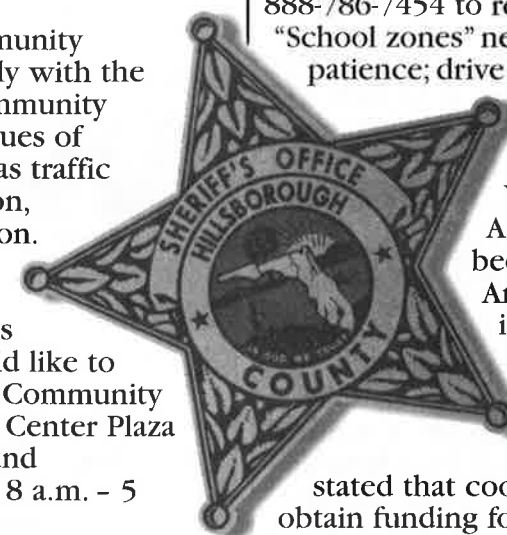
Bloomingdale Community Substation Notes

By Deputy Pete Maurer

The Bloomingdale Community Substation works closely with the Bloomingdale Area Community Council to identify and address issues of importance to our residents such as traffic problems, environmental protection, home security and crime prevention. Residents are encouraged to contact Deputy Maurer at the Substation to express any concerns they may have or issues they would like to see addressed in this column. Our Community Substation is located in the Village Center Plaza at the corner of Bell Shoals Road and Glenhaven, hours of operation are 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. weekdays, phone 635-8040.

Representative Byrd Visits Bloomingdale Station

Florida House Representative Johnnie Byrd recently visited the Bloomingdale Station. He met with Deputy Maurer and Community Resource Officer Sandy Capitano, received a tour of the Sheriff's Station, and discussed current community projects. He was encouraged to learn about the active participation of residents on the Bloomingdale Area Community Council and offered his support on projects requiring legislative assistance.



Slow Down, School Bus Ahead!

School is in full swing, and traffic is more congested than ever. Commute times are longer. Plan ahead for the delays. Prepare to stop when school buses are ahead. Anyone observing drivers illegally passing or not stopping for school buses can call 1-888-786-7454 to report these dangerous drivers.

"School zones" need your special attention and patience; drive with care and concern in these zones. The speed limits are being strictly enforced.

YMCA Crossover Update

A response to correspondence has been received by the Bloomingdale Area Community Council regarding the serious need for a "crossover" from the new YMCA facilities to the Bloomingdale Little League complex.

County Public Works officials stated that coordination would continue to obtain funding for a crossover and that plans are underway to insure "the maximum available crosswalk protection" will be constructed in this area. The Gazette will publish more specific details of construction plans as they become available.



Drivers must obey the laws that protect our kids on their way to and from school. Call 1-888-786-7454 to report violators. Photo by Mack Austin.

Alafia Elementary "No Parking" Areas

Parents please take note; this is exactly what the signs say and mean regarding parking on the grass near Alafia Elementary. Parking on the right-of-ways presents a very serious safety hazard to students and parents crossing Natures Way and Culbreath Road. No more warnings are being given. Parking fines are currently \$30. ©

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Speed Monitor Project Fund Drive

Progress continues with the fund drive to purchase a speed monitor to be used by Deputies patrolling the Bloomingdale community. A total of \$3,000 is needed to purchase the equipment; contributions currently total \$1,700. Anyone interested in contributing to this project can send donations to:

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Pool and Deck Resurfacing

By Laura Frazier, Editor

*S*tained. Cracked. Pitted. Dated. If, when asked to describe your swimming pool interior or pool deck surface these are the first adjectives that come to mind, it may be time to consider pool and/or deck resurfacing. Area companies offer a wide variety of resurfacing options ranging from basic and economical to custom, state of the art applications.

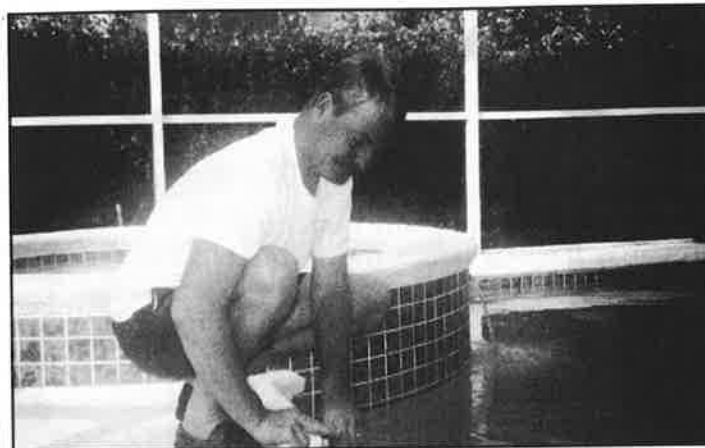
River Rock decks, a popular look in the 70's and 80's, are commonly being replaced with today's more modern, functional and easier to care for mediums. Most River Rock decks still around today were installed over 10 years ago and are very likely showing their age. Unless a persistent schedule of annual pressure cleaning and re-sealing has been followed, the decks lose their sheen and uniform coloring and the rocks tends to loosen and detach in fragments. River Rock can be patched and resealed, or the product can be removed entirely and resurfaced with one of several mediums available. Removal of River Rock is a costly (average \$3.00 per square foot) and messy procedure, but the results can be well worth it. Virtually any type of existing deck can be restored to a like-new appearance.

A very popular deck material in the past decade has been Kool-Deck, a sand and cement mixture that is hand troweled over the deck surface, producing a cool to the touch matte-look surface with varying degrees of texture, depending on the applicator's hand. This material is most commonly available in a "yellow buff" color, but some companies offer a choice of a few other neutral shades. Kool-Deck can easily be hosed clean with a soapy water and bleach solution, and can be acid washed if necessary. Although this type of deck does tend to develop hairline cracks and mildew can form in the characteristic "nooks and crannies", the product can be sealed with a penetrating water based clear sealer to prevent potential problems. Kool-Deck application costs typically range from \$1.75 to \$2.50 per square foot.

Acrylic decks, both true (acrylic mixed with granular quartz aggregate) and modified (acrylic mixed with concrete) have gained in popularity in the 90's. Area pool companies agree that acrylic is less likely than Kool-Deck to de-laminate from the concrete subsurface and break up due to penetration of moisture. A typical rolled-down resurfacing job (with modified acrylic) averages about \$1.50 per square

foot. This method produces a random stipple or "sandy" surface, can be done in a number of pre-mixed colors and usually offers a 10-year warranty. Although acrylic decking of any type is less likely than unsealed Kool-Deck to develop stains, cracks and harbor mildew it must be periodically resealed, ideally on an annual basis.

One area deck resurfacing company we spoke



Integrity Pools Rick Glover recommends regular water balancing by a professional to avoid stains and discolorations.

with, Bosmeny and Associates, Inc., offers custom, one of a kind true acrylic application. The product offered by Bosmeny is presented as mildew, algae, chip and flake resistant and is said to stay flexible. Owner Steve Bosmeny explains the "custom" aspect of his product applications, "We use stencil patterns to produce various looks such as natural stone, traditional brick and herringbone designs in virtually any color desired. After prepping the surface we hand trowel the base coat. Following a 24-hour curing period we spray a pattern onto our special stencils or we can hand mask a custom design and trowel the topcoat on. The pattern spray or top coat is raised 1/16 to 1/18 of an inch above the base coat line, which in a "brick" finish appears to be the grout." Custom acrylic applications costs range from \$2.00 to \$5.00 per square foot.

While a visual inspection can usually indicate whether or not a deck needs to be resurfaced, swimming pool interiors can be trickier. Before we take the plunge into completely resurfacing our pools, there are some preliminary things we can try to save a little time... and a lot of money. Integrity Pools Service Manager Rick Glover explains, "First, call a professional. We may be able to chemically treat the staining or discoloration problems in the pool. There is no magic cure in a bottle," says Glover, "but there are several stain lifting and metal removing products that we can try first." A light acid washing, done by a

professional, can greatly improve the appearance of the pool. However, Glover cautions, "Homeowners should never attempt to drain and acid wash their pools themselves." Aside from the obvious chemical dangers, there is this to consider, "Your in-ground pool is like a big concrete boat," he says. "If you drain it, depending on the level of ground water below it, it will float!" In other words, unless a professional pumping system is used and the pool is constantly monitored during the draining and washing process, the concrete will actually lift up from the ground (probably in huge chunks) and destroy the entire pool. Yikes.

Several products can be used to resurface pool interiors. The most commonly used material is plaster, also referred to as marcite or whitecoat. Marcite is composed of marble sand and white cement. It is a hand troweled product and should last from 10 - 15 years with proper maintenance. Dye can be added to the mixture to produce different colors. Marcite usually carries a 1-year warranty. The average cost for resurfacing a 15' x 30' pool with marcite is about \$2,200.

Quartz finishes are growing in popularity with new pool buyers in the past 5 years and homeowners have begun requesting the cement and quartz rock mixture for resurfacing jobs. Quartz comes in many colors and produces a speckled finish. The material typically carries a 5-year warranty, with an average cost of approximately \$3,000 for a 15' x 30' pool.

Exposed aggregate is a mixture of cement and tumbled (sharp edges smoothed) rocks, slightly larger than quartz. After application, the pool interior is

New BHA e-mail address and web site

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association welcomes your comments, questions and suggestions. Residents are invited to contact the BHA via e-mail at BHA@CyberRails.com.

The mailing address for the BHA is 3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33594, phone (813) 681-2051.

Please visit the new BHA web site at www.CyberRails.com/BHA/ to access important community information and to register for free e-mail updates from the BHA. Our community volunteers will make every effort to respond to all mail and messages promptly. ☺

acid washed to expose the rock surface, resulting in a pebbly finish. Exposed aggregate applications typically carry a 5-year warranty and are the most expensive of finishes available, typically averaging \$3,800 for a 15' x 30' pool.

There are many choices of materials and even more choices of contractors to do the job. It is recommended that homeowners call the local Chamber of Commerce, Pool and Spa Institute and Better Business Bureau to insure the good standing of prospective contractors, get at least 3 estimates and ask friends and neighbors for referrals. As Integrity's Rick

Glover says, "We all have quality materials available to us, so it's really a matter of who the person doing the work



Bosmeny and Associates, Inc., offers custom, one of a kind true acrylic application with custom stencils to produce a stone, brick or herringbone look.

is," he says. "Whether it's your car mechanic, a roofer or a pool contractor, my advice is to try to determine if the person doing the work is experienced, cares about the outcome and has a sense of personal pride in his work. The finished product will only be as good as the workmanship." ☺

Committee of 99 update

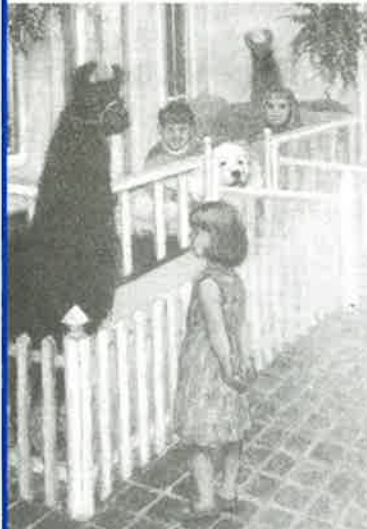
By Mack Austin

Everyone in the Bloomingdale Community knows what traffic congestion is like to drive in and no doubt would like to see improvements in the county's transportation system. The Committee of 99 is a special task force that has been challenged to study in detail the transportation problems facing our County and to determine the best sources for funding the solutions. For residents interested in following the progress of the committee, two main sources are available.

Taped recordings of all meetings are televised several times during the week on county television (check your local listings for times). Also, committee results can be found on a special website. The address for the new site is: www.hillsboroughcounty.org/comm/committee99/home.html. ☺

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How to Teach Your Kids About Finances

T(NUI) - Remember the adage, "A penny saved is a penny earned?" Well, these days with the stock market booming and the economy surging, it's more like, "One dollar saved is a \$1.50 earned."

At least that's the message a Washington, D.C.-based company called Kids Own America is striving to get across to the nation's youth.

"Feeling confident that you are in control of your money is a lesson that lasts a lifetime," says Cliff Brody, founder and chairman of Kids Own America. "It's never too early to start." Brody formed the company after approaching an investment firm five years ago with his 8-year-old son's \$162 in savings. He walked away from the brokerage in dismay when told the two \$75 stocks he wanted to buy would cost \$39 in commission fees — more than a quarter of his son's entire savings.

Having a solid background in banking, Brody set out on his own to get children better deals for their savings and investments.

"With the future of Social Security in doubt and Americans barely saving 2 percent of their annual income on average, it is vital for children to learn the importance of building a nest egg for tomorrow," he said.

Research indicates that families in all income groups want better savings opportunities for their children.

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Teresa (Terry) Curry - Administrator

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Restaurant Review

By Elton Dumont

Exclusively for The Bloomingdale Gazette

Since I highlighted a Mexican restaurant in August (even though the buffet was decidedly non-Mexican), I had some reservations about returning to another Mexican restaurant. But at the urging of Fred Uphoff, a long-time Bloomingdale resident and friend, I went to Estela's Mexican Restaurant on a recent Saturday afternoon. This was another one of Fred's excellent suggestions that I've listened to over the years. There is no doubt that this is an authentic South of the Border cantina. You get that feeling from all the Cervaza banners on the outside and the continuous Mexican music inside.

This is Estela's second restaurant. The original is on Davis Blvd. on Davis Island. It really is one heck of a fun dining experience and will be even better after the staff has a chance to settle in and iron out the inevitable initial kinks. We were seated quickly and waited patiently for our busy server to take our beverage order. The iced teas were fresh brewed, a real plus these days. The complimentary tostida chips were served promptly along with a dish of salsa and a cruet of additional salsa. The chips were different; thick in texture and very mild in taste. The salsa was excellent; I'd say a definite 2 alarm, so be careful when you first try it. For comparison, we'd say the majority of Mexican chains serve 1 alarm salsa.

The menu caused my wife and I to do a double take. It is the most extensive Mexican menu we've seen in years. There are no less than 14 appetizers to choose from! How about Mexican Chicken Egg Rolls (seasoned chicken breast, frijoles, corn and cheese wrapped in a flour tortilla, deep fried and served on a bed of lettuce and chopped tomatoes) served with Estela's special guacamole dip for only \$4.50, or the Fresh Cerviche (marinated shrimp, tomato, onions and cilantro) for \$6.00. Remember, it will take you some time to read the entire menu and you may still be bewildered! While we studied the menu we ordered a cheese dip appetizer, a combination of melted mozzarella, Monterey Jack and Mexican cheese. It had jalapenos and probably reached a one on the alarm scale.

The combinations are numbered 1 to 25, with a tremendous array of tacos, enchiladas, chile rellenos, tostados, burritos, chalu-pas or chile con queso. I chose the number 1, one taco (I selected beef), 2 enchiladas and Spanish rice, for \$6.50 (the most expensive combination plate is only \$7.00). My meal, with the white jalapeno cheese enchiladas, was good.

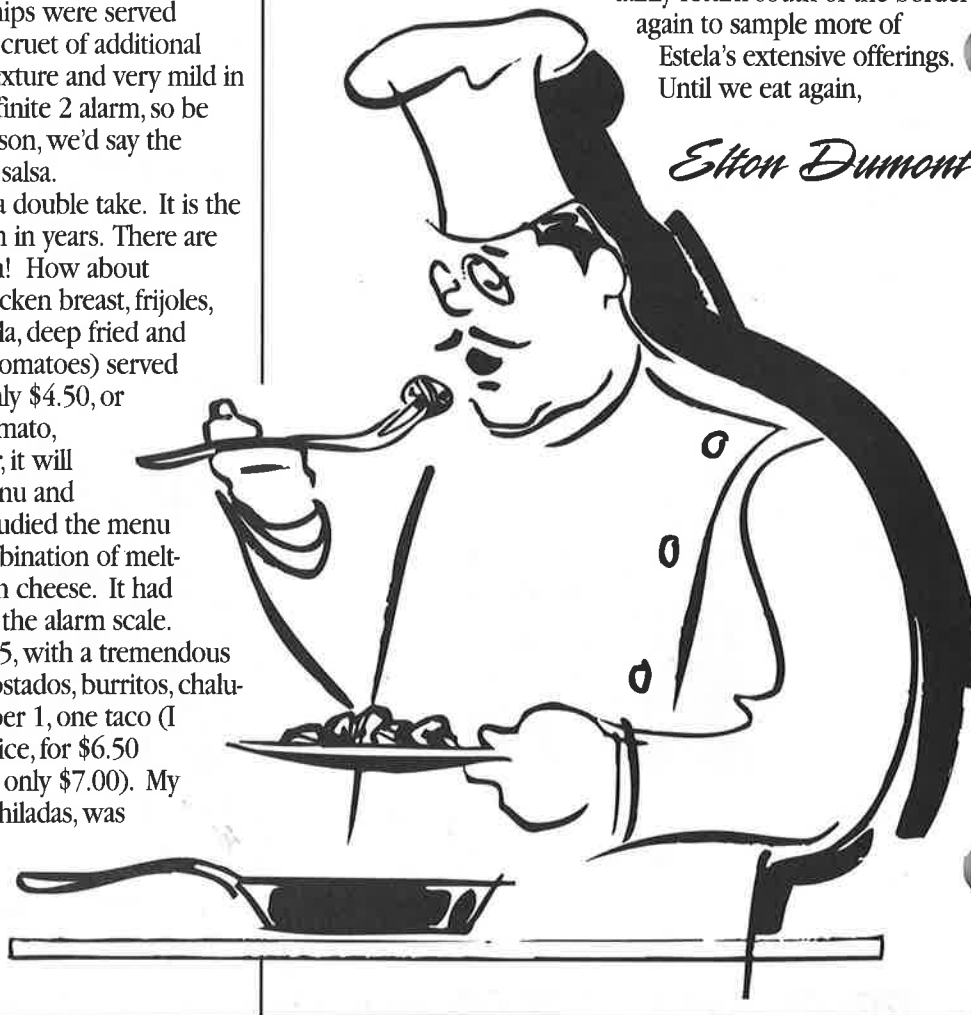
My wife ordered from the flip side of the menu, where you will find 19 special-ty items that include Estela's Especial Dinner (chalupa with guacamole salad,

one chile relleno, one beef taco, one enchilada and one tamale with Spanish rice and refried beans) for \$9.00 and the Chili Colorado (rib eye steak chunks with a red chili sauce, served with rice, beans and flour tortillas) for \$8.50. My wife selected the Steak Burrito (chopped rib eye or chicken chunks wrapped in a large flour tortilla), served with spicy white cheese, rice and guacamole salad for only \$6.95. The rib eye was spiced just right and was quite tender. Onions and green peppers made a surprise appearance in the burrito (onions and my wife don't get along), so I would suggest asking your server to list all the ingredients in your order to avoid such a surprise.

They have an extensive children's menu and the staff was very attentive to the youngest diners. The desserts include homemade flan, Grande Sopapillo and "Choco Taco." Although we didn't try that one, it sure sounded interesting; bananas and cream wrapped in a flour tortilla, deep-fried, covered with chocolate and served with vanilla ice cream. If you try a Choco Taco, drop me a line and let me know how you liked it. Our bill was \$23 for beverages, appetizer, entrees, tax and tip, but you can eat well for less. The most expensive item on the menu is the Combo Grande Fajitas for only \$11.95. We will certainly return south of the border again to sample more of Estela's extensive offerings. Until we eat again,

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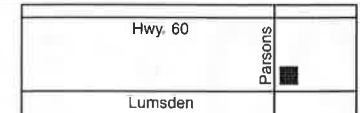
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Go For It!

By Mack Austin

Trying a new sport can be a tough decision for many athletes, but Chelo Canino is very glad she decided to "go for it". As a Bloomingdale Senior High School freshman she was already running the 1-mile, 2-mile and 800-meter events. As a sophomore she decided to try pole-vaulting.

Initially, she didn't get a lot of encouragement and she knew she had a long way to go; her first jump was 6'6" with a 12' pole. Chelo quickly learned just how involved being a pole-vaulter was. Many new training requirements had to be met in order to improve her performance including a good diet, aerobics, sprinting, strength training, finding the right pole and shoes, getting her timing down to a split second and building her confidence.

One of the hardest parts of competing was working to support her sport. The equipment can be



Chelo Canino

expensive and the trips aren't all free. "The equipment at school is pretty good, but we could sure use some new standards and mats. Support from family, friends and coaches has been great and it's a good motivator when you just don't feel like training. It's also great to have team mates like senior Katie Morgan and sophomore Allison Ryan to train with!"

Chelo has competed at many track meets and has significantly improved her skills. Some of her accomplishments including winning the Reno National Pole-Vault Summit Division One, Nike National Indoor Classic, Florida Relays, and Florida State Finals. She went undefeated during the 1999 school track season. She recently returned from the Junior Elite Olympic Development Camp in Chula Vista, California and the AAU Nationals in Cleveland, Ohio. While on her travels she got to know America Female Outdoor/Indoor pole vault champion Stacy Dragila, who recently jumped 15'3/4", just 1/4" off the world record.

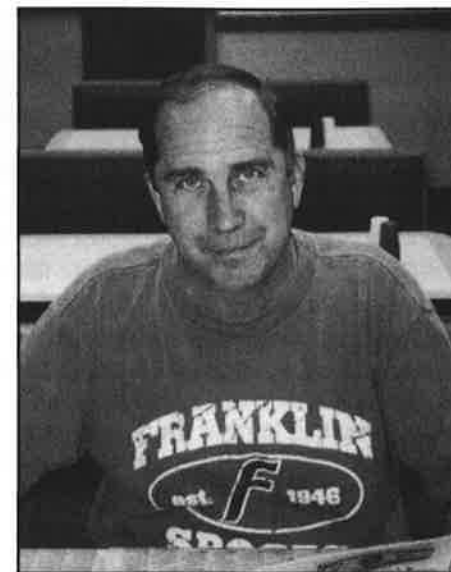
Now a senior at Bloomingdale High, Chelo has gained a lot of self-discipline and self-confidence and learned the importance of being persistent. Having jumped 12'7" she has now set her goals on higher heights and helping the BSHS track team bring home some victories. She encourages any young girl thinking about trying a new sport, "Go for it! You'll never know until you try". After all, every player on the World Champion Women's Soccer team had to make that first kick! ☺

Tim the Toolman's Household Tips

By Tim Lovejoy

Bi-fold door maintenance

You can extend the life of your bi-fold door hardware. Instead of replacing the hardware, try rubbing an old candle or a bar of soap back and forth on the door track (most closet door tracks are overhead, not on the floor). Performed monthly, this bit of maintenance should allow your door to continue sliding with ease.



Tim Lovejoy, owner of "Tim the Toolman Home Repairs, Inc." has lived in Bloomingdale for over 15 years. He can be reached at 689-1856.

County does NOT endorse curbside house number painting

By Mack Austin

Many Bloomingdale residents have been approached by solicitors offering to paint house numbers on the curb in front of their homes. These solicitors often advertise by illegally placing flyers on mailboxes, and have been known to claim that the painted numbers "meet code requirements" and "are needed to help emergency personnel locate street addresses."

According to Hillsborough County Roads and Streets officials and a representative from the County 911 Department, these numbers do NOT meet Hillsborough County's 911 ordinance for identifying house numbers and are NOT endorsed by the county. Officials also point out that the paint wears out over a short period of time, rendering this method of address identification useless.

The county ordinance requires placing "clearly visible numbers and/or letters on the dwelling in a location clearly visible from the street." Placing numbers on both sides of a mailbox, if it is located in front of the dwelling, is acceptable. Officials suggest that both the home and the mailbox numbering methods be used in order to provide maximum assistance to emergency personnel searching for a particular home. ☺



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Bloomingdale Yard of the Month

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By Rose E. Trellis

Paul Almeida is on vacation. Our guest writer submits the September Yard of the Month feature.

On a random tour of prospective yards, we felt as if we had discovered hidden treasure when we pulled up to the home of Donna and John Cook at 3901 Butternut Court. A Tampa native, Donna shares her love of gardening with her Mother and Aunt. "I come from a gardening family," she says. But husband John and children Jennifer and John Jr.'s gardening involvement is limited. The Cook's yard has been planned and cared for by Donna, with help from a few friends, for the past 10 years. The children have been busy with school, work and friends. As for John Sr., "Well, he's been golfing!" Donna laughs.

The gracious and gentle nature of the lady and gardener of the house is reflected in many unique landscaping accents throughout the property. An elegant trellis dripping with lilacs and greenery greets visitors at the sidewalk. With so much to appreciate, callers surely take the walk to the front door at an easy pace. A 3-tiered fountain flows into a lovely little pond surrounded by slate stone edging. Koi and goldfish swim through swaying water lilies while lifelike stone ducks and turtles keep watch. Pentas and azaleas relax in the shade of many oak trees handsomely bordered with brick pavers. Pink and blue hydrangeas mingle with tiny Florida roses.

Several oversized ornamental metal butterflies perch realistically in the trees.

In the back yard, elegant angel statues and a charming yellow cottage style storage shed, incredibly featuring stained glass windows, keep the fairytale flowing. A collection of birdhouses set atop a row of fence posts draw the eye to where more magic awaits. Another trellis welcomes visitors to sit on a garden bench beneath its perfumed crown of jasmine, and two gazing balls hold the reflections of delicate bleeding hearts and black-eyed susans.

We are pleased to present Donna Cook and her family with the September Yard of the Month sign to display in their yard, along with a home and garden gift certificate and our sincere thanks for their part in keeping Bloomingdale looking good. ☺

Editor's Note: Residents are invited to contact Paul Almeida at 661-2018 or e-mail our Editor at LauraFrazier@prodigy.net with nominations for the Yard of the Month feature.



Bell Shoals Road canoe launch reopening proposed

By Mack Austin

Many residents of Bloomingdale have read about a request to reopen the canoe launch located on Bell Shoals Rd., just south of Glenhaven. The Alafia River is a popular canoeing spot, and many canoeing enthusiasts are hoping to see it reopen. It would offer more access to the Alafia and opportunities to enjoy the natural beauty along the river.

But a group of homeowners who have property along the river has some important concerns that merit serious consideration. At a recent meeting of the Bloomingdale Area Community Council (BACC), County Parks Department Section Manager Phil Evans met with some of the homeowners to hear their concerns.

One critical issue is security. At present, it has not been determined who would be responsible for security at the launch site. Several canoeists have said they

would assist but as one homeowner and former Boy Scout Ranger who has used the river extensively pointed out, "They would have no enforcement authority to handle security situations. Also, who would be liable for damage or other issues that may develop?"



The site of the Bell Shoals Rd. canoe launch proposed for reopening. Photo by Mack Austin.

One homeowner from the River Crossing subdivision expressed concern over the direct access to property along the river and indicated "problems have already been encountered with canoeists camping and partying along the river banks."

As an alternative to reopening the Bell Shoals launch site, Section Manager Phil Evans stated that funds are available for improve-

ments that could potentially be used to upgrade other launch sites. Public hearings are being planned to work out a solution and details will be announced as they become available. For further information, the Hillsborough County Parks and Recreation Department can be reached at 975-2160. ☺

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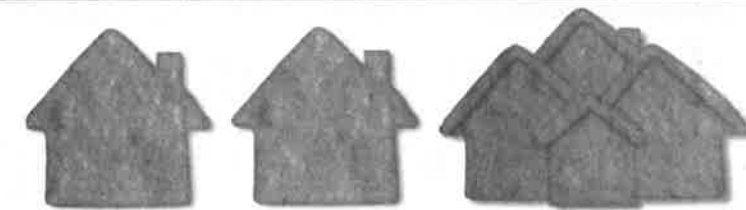
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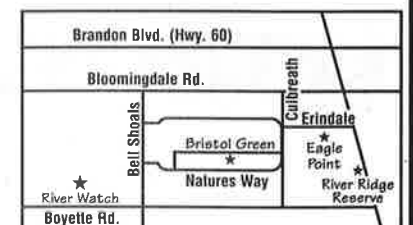
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Millions Don't Know Why Their Feet Hurt

(NUI) - If you have numbness or pain in your hands and feet and don't know why, you may have peripheral neuropathy. But if you're like most Americans, you've probably never heard of this often debilitating disease. A new national survey reveals that, when asked, only 7 percent of adults said they knew about peripheral neuropathy. This severe lack of awareness about an illness that affects some 20 million Americans was the most significant finding of the survey conducted by Roper Starch for The Neuropathy Association, which was formed three years ago to provide support and education to people suffering from the disease.

Sometimes called the secret disease, peripheral neuropathy is not easily detectable. Even those who have the disease may not be aware of its presence, and their doctors may not recognize it either.

Diabetes is one of the most common causes of this disease. But the causes are diverse and in many cases unknown. peripheral neuropathy has been associated with toxins; autoimmunity, a side effect of medication; vitamin deficiency; and some types of cancer, among other causes.

Among diabetics surveyed, only 22 percent said they were familiar with it, even though neuropathy is one of the most common complications of diabetes. Many of the respondents said they thought peripheral neuropathy was

some kind of visual problem, and only a few actually knew what it was.

Nearly 8 percent of the respondents without diabetes said they experienced symptoms suggestive of neuropathy, such as numbness, weakness or pain in the hands or feet, lasting more than six months. Among diabetics, 33 percent said they experienced such symptoms. "Since there are some 200 million adults in the United States, 10 percent of whom have diabetes, this translates to about 22 million people with neuropathy," association officials said. "This is a much higher number than previously suspected."

Those who reported symptoms of neuropathy frequently did not recognize them as such; 34 percent said they did not know what caused the symptoms, and others mentioned a wide variety of reasons such as "the way I slept on my arm or foot," "exposure to cold or frostbite," "injury or accident" or "an illness." In contrast to this glaring lack of understanding of the disease, 78 percent of those with peripheral neuropathy said it had a substantial impact on their ability to enjoy a normal life, and 61 percent said it affected their ability to do their job.

For more information on the disease, contact the Neuropathy Association at 1-800-247-6968, or visit their web site at www.neuropathy.org.

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Growing up with Bloomingdale

By Laura Frazier, Editor

Lindsay Reid has called the community of Bloomingdale home for as long as she can remember, literally! The Reid family moved here from Indianapolis in 1985 just after Lindsay turned 3 and she has grown up in (and along with) our community over the past 14 years. The 17-year-old Brandon High School Senior has come a long way from learning her A-B-C's at Bell Shoals Baptist Academy preschool.

With the support of her parents Carol and Ray Reid, Lindsay has participated in many of the academic, athletic and just plain fun amenities the Bloomingdale area has to offer our children. "My parents have always encouraged me to get things done and then do a little bit extra," she says, "and now I am seeing that it (working hard) really does pay off. I am very grateful to my Mom and Dad for teaching me that and for supporting all my activities and interests over the years."

Lindsay has invested a lot of time and hard work to one of her favorite activities, softball, a passion and talent that first blossomed on Bloomingdale's Little League fields. At a July 4th weekend awards ceremony held at Disney's Wide World of Sports Complex in Orlando, Lindsay was honored with the Independent Softball Association's B-National Girl's

Fast Pitch MVP award in the 16 and under division.

Lindsay's Polk County Twilight Twisters traveling team coach Paul Moore was on hand to present the award.

Lindsay credits Coach Moore and her first traveling team coach Jeff Carter with

introducing her to good work ethics, and friend and fellow pitcher Monica Triner of the Tampa Bay Firestix for her encouragement and camaraderie.

This latest achievement has opened doors for the young Bloomingdale resident, and college plans and scholarship opportunities are on the drawing board.

While enthusiastic about her academic and athletic future, Lindsay reflects on her happy

childhood in Bloomingdale. From marching in Brandon's parades to delivering the Bloomingdale Gazette door to door, Lindsay seems to have sampled a little bit of everything our community has to offer. She is a proud member of the first graduating class of Alafia Elementary School. "We had a big banquet for all the graduating 5th graders that year. I really loved Alafia, especially my first grade teacher Mrs. Maggio." The Reid family attended St. Stephen's Catholic Church in those days, meeting in a leased storefront unit that now houses Beef-O-Brady's restaurant. She recalls visiting the "little" library on Vonderburg in Brandon and later enjoying the children's plays at Center Place. Her childhood memories will always include scenes from the Brandon Balloon Race, camping with her Brownie Troop at Camp Dorothy Thomas and winning quilting ribbons at the State Fair.

Lindsay fondly recalls tennis lessons, swings and the sand pile at Bloomingdale East Park and dance instruction with Miss Leslie and Miss Katrina. Neighbor and family friend Dawn Gundlach introduced her to sewing and quilting, encouraging her to submit her numerous award-winning creations to State Fair competitions. She learned to swim at



Lindsay's preschool class photo, age 3.



Lindsay's junior class photo, age 17.

Cease Fire 99

By Mack Austin

Brandon Swim and Tennis Club, learned to play the piano under the instruction of neighbor Mrs. Deckert and won her first trophy at age 8 at Bloomingdale Golfers Club in a Pitch, Putt and Drive competition sponsored by the Parks and Recreation Department.

Lindsay obviously has a soft spot in her heart for Bloomingdale. On our streets she learned to ride a bike without training wheels and years later, learned to drive a car. Babysitting for family friends has given way to a "real" job at Winn Dixie, and college plans are a big topic of discussion at home these days. Currently narrowing her school search down to a few small campuses, Lindsay plans to major in communications or business and looks forward to continuing her softball career in college. She indicates she has visited at least five schools, all of which have their own unique advantages to offer. But there is one imperative factor in choosing a school. "I really would like to find a school nearby, close to home," she says. It appears certain that no matter how far her life's journey may take her, Lindsay's childhood memories of growing up with Bloomingdale will always remain close to her heart. ☺

With the alarming number of unexplainable acts of gun violence involving both adults and children occurring across the country, there are times many of us wish there would be a "cease fire." Too many children have also been wounded with guns they found at home.

The residents of the Bloomingdale Community and the surrounding area have an opportunity this month to take a positive step towards reducing the danger and the potential for harm from guns. Our second annual "gun buy back" program designated "Cease Fire 99" will take place Saturday, September 18, 1999 from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. at the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Community Stations in Bloomingdale and Ruskin. Residents with firearms they would like to remove from harm's way can exchange them for gift certificates. Every firearm turned in is one less to worry about.

Residents are reminded to bring their firearms to the station unloaded, with ammunition in separate containers. Our Community Substation is located in the Village Center Shopping Center at the corner of Bell Shoals Road and Glenhaven Drive. For more information please call the station at 635-8040. ☺

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They've got mail!

Mailboxes, Etc.

By Laura Frazier, Editor

It's nice to know that you're needed. That's how Jim and Sue Harbridge felt during a complete remodeling of their Bloomingdale Square "Mailboxes, Etc." store four years ago. "The entire store was gutted," recalls Jim. "Boxes and plaster were stacked all the way to the front door and everything was covered in plastic sheeting, it was just a mess." But even an obstacle course of ladders, paint buckets and construction workers couldn't keep the customers away. "We had quite a few folks shimmy past the plastic and around the ladders, packages in hand, inquiring hopefully, "Are you open?"

The complete mail, packaging, shipping and business services facility was one of the first operations to open in Bloomingdale Square along with anchor stores Publix, Walmart, Eckerds and Beall's. Since they became

the owners and operators of Mailboxes, Etc. 12 years ago, the Harbridges have developed an upstanding business reputation and a loyal, growing customer base. Their business has expanded along with the services they provide. The Indiana natives opened their second Mailboxes, Etc. location at 235 West Brandon Boulevard in December of 1998.

The Harbridge's stores are 2 of 3,600 Mailboxes, Etc. franchises nationwide offering 24 hour access mailboxes and a wide array of shipping, mailing and packaging services. But the emphasis on the store's name is in the "Etc." part. "We have added

many features to the services we provide in order to accommodate the changing business needs of our clients," explains Sue. The Harbridges currently offer fax services, copies, keys, stamps, notary services and packing and office supplies. Box holders can take advantage of the store's incoming fax retrieval, mail receipt notification and package receipt and holding service. "So many of our clients are working out of their homes and are on the road during the day," says Sue, "that a need has been created for a 'home base' where packages mail and faxes can be received personally and held securely." Plans are in the works to install a high tech satellite system to speed online processing and, "We are exploring the possibility of providing our customers with personal access to online computers

with faxing capabilities," says Jim. Packaging services have been expanded to include pick-up, packing and shipping, via services including common carrier van lines and air freight, for items of any shape or size. Like their

motto says, "Big or small, we ship it all!"

As their own business has evolved to reflect the growing and changing population of the Bloomingdale area, The Harbridge's have noted similar changes to the demographics of their neighboring Bloomingdale Square businesses. "There have been many retail businesses that have given it a go here over the years," says Jim, "but the service related operations seem to do best in this location." The couple set out to purchase the Bloomingdale franchise location, which at the time had a lukewarm business prognosis, because they



Jim and Sue Harbridge

liked the area and saw a lot of potential. "We knew this location offered good visibility and a lot of foot traffic," says Jim. "We felt that we could successfully build this business by being hands-on owners who live in the community, offering convenient hours and making every effort to provide excellent service," says Jim. "And," adds Sue, "we truly care about our customers and can guarantee that when a client has a question or a problem, we will make it right."

Like their business, the Harbridge family has undergone its own evolution over the past twelve years. When Sue and Jim began their Bloomingdale business venture their two children, Jim Jr. and Terri worked alongside their parents helping out in the family store. Sue fondly recalls, "This is such an ideal business for a family. Jim and Terri would come to the store after school or whatever activities they were involved in and it gave them an opportunity to pitch in and earn a little spending money. They were able to see first hand what hard work it is to run a business and we think some of our work ethics rubbed off of both of them. \ And," Sue adds with satisfaction, "by having the kids work with us, we were able to keep an eye on them and be involved in their lives, two factors we found to be important in raising teenagers."

Jim Jr. and Terri are both grown and on their own these days. When the family originally relocated here and enrolled daughter Terri in Bloomingdale Senior High School, they were naturally concerned about their young daughter's apprehension about attending a new high school. Jim and Sue acknowledged their daughter's fears and encouraged her on that first day of school to keep her chin up and to simply "make a friend." Their fears were assuaged later when Terri announced, "Bloomingdale is everything I ever dreamed a high school could be!" Terri went on to graduate from BSHS and lives and works in Orlando as a Pharmaceutical Representative.

Jim Jr. was less stressed than his sister about the big move and seemed to slide easily into Burns Junior High School. Much to his parents' relief, it was life as usual for their son. Then one day Jim came home from school with a peculiarly studied look on his face, placed a U.S. Army pamphlet on

the kitchen table and sounded an announcement of his own, "This is what I want to do with my life." The Army's Colonel Michele (retiring from service at Mac Dill this year) had apparently made quite a presentation that day at Jim's school. "We were to say the least a little surprised since we are a non-military family," says Jim's dad. "We feel that the inspiration provided by Colonel Michele, who has been a mentor to our son and many others, along with the friendships our children had with the many military families in our area spurred the interest." Bloomingdale High did not offer an ROTC program in those days and the Harbridges resisted Jim Jr.'s demands to attend Brandon High School on special assignment. This was no passing fancy however. Jim and Sue relented and, after graduating from Brandon High with a ROTC scholarship, Jim was accepted to the prestigious Citadel. He is now a proud member of the Citadel's last all male graduating class. Jim has recently completed basic training and airborne school and is at this writing completing the mountain phase of Ranger school.

As for Jim Sr. and Sue, they are enjoying immersing themselves in their business and expanding their facilities and services. Jim serves on the Board of Directors of the Brandon Chamber of Commerce, and both Jim and Sue are graduates and Steering Committee members of Leadership Brandon. The Harbridges have given generously of their time and resources to a number of local groups including Bloomingdale baseball, soccer and football leagues and various local school projects and causes. A first-time European vacation was pre-empted last year by business demands but neither one of the couple seems too devastated by having to put travel plans on hold. "We really love our jobs," says Sue, "we have a good partnership, great customers and are happily busy growing our business." Jim agrees, "It would be nice to have a little free time at some point, but for right now we seem to be headed in a good direction and are enjoying the challenge of keeping that course."

Mailboxes, Etc.'s Bloomingdale Square location business hours are Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 7 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Sunday 12 p.m. - 4 p.m. For more information, please call 689-4998. ☎

Bloomingdale Special Taxing District

Property Manager's Report July 1999

Submitted by Devney Property Management, Inc.

1. Irrigation: Brandon Irrigation replaced a broken 2" valve and repaired a broken 3" main line in the Rosemead system, located all 7 valves in the Cambridge Cove system, repaired valve 6, replaced the timer and repaired a valve in zone 1 in the Greenhollow system. DPMI inspected the 8.5 miles of irrigation, repaired 34 spray heads, replaced 9 rotors and 2 solenoids and adjusted or repaired 19 risers.

2. Landscaping: The STD assumed maintenance responsibility as of July 1 for the Heritage Park area which includes a well, 9 zones and 313 spray heads of irrigation, 39,462 square feet of St. Augustine grass, an entrance way and 2,520 feet of wall with Creeping Fig. DPMI conducted the pre-bid meeting for the fertilization contract for next year; four contractors were present for the meeting. DPMI measured the remaining areas on Canoga Park,

Garnet and Glenhaven to be plugged with St. Augustine grass.

3. Other: ZK construction repaired the damaged wall on Erindale and Warm Springs and will repair another damaged wall down the road in the near future. DPMI painted all the school bus benches and some walls on Erindale, Culbreath and Shady Nook. DPMI measured the walls on Natures Way and Culbreath and identified the brick entranceways that need to be cleaned. Phoenix painting completed the wall painting on Bell shoals and Natures Way. There were 57 individual sections of wall to be painted on the inside; 23 homeowners either refused or did not respond to our request for a free wall painting. DPMI replaced 8 lights and 1 light receptacle.

4. In the land of eat, drink and pitch out the window, DPMI picked up 30 bags of litter, 2 hubcaps, a hair curler, a bike kickstand, a motor mount, a stadium blanket, 2 plastic squirt guns, a tire, 3 towels, a wash cloth, a shoe, 3 socks, a scissors, a red wine glass and \$.26 cents. The beverages of choice were Budweiser for beer, Coke for soft drinks and, yo-ho-ho, Captain Morgan spiced Rum for alcohol. ☺

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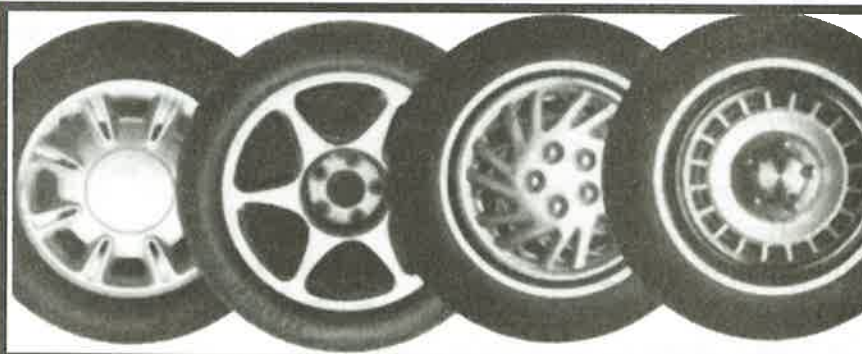
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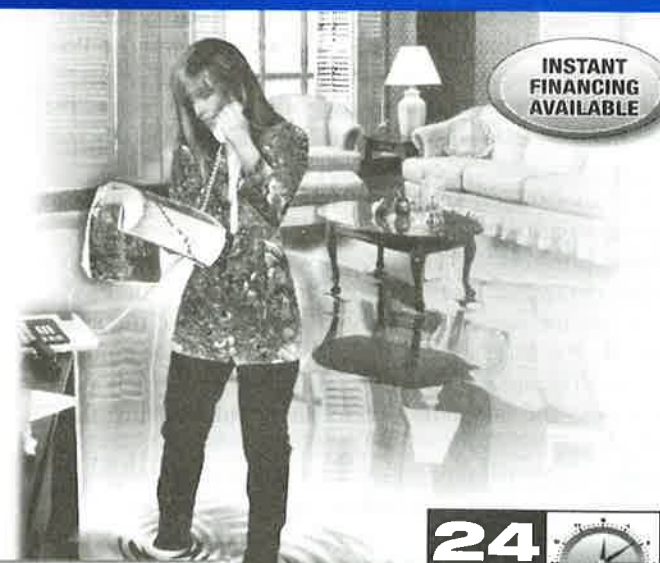


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Letters to the Gazette

Bloomingtondale residents, the Gazette welcomes your questions, comments and suggestions on community issues and concerns. Letters should be signed and original, should not exceed 150 words and should include the writer's name, address, phone number and e-mail address. Letters will be published anonymously if so requested. Please write to:

The Bloomingtondale Gazette
Attn: Editor
3509 Bell Shoals Road
Valrico, FL 33594
E-Mail: LauraFrazier@prodigy.net
Fax: (813) 651-1129

All letters are subject to editing for clarity and length. Due to space and time limitations not all letters can be printed or acknowledged, but our staff will make every effort to respond to all letters received.

A Bloomingtondale West resident writes (via E-mail): "I recently had outgoing mail stolen from my mailbox. I put it out on my way to work and fortunately my wife discovered it was missing several hours before our normal mail pick up. After contacting both the Post Office and the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Department, I stopped payment on the checks that were destined for utilities companies. Several days later, the bank reported one of the checks was forged and cashed for an amount twice as much as it was originally written. The second check was shortly thereafter also presented for payment. I offer this information as a warning to other residents; I suspect that I am not the only victim of this type of mail theft. Now I will use public mailboxes when I have outgoing bills with checks."

Editor's reply: We forwarded your letter to Deputy Pete Maurer of the Bloomingtondale Community Sheriff's Substation, who informs us that both the Sheriff's Office and the Post Office are investigating recent area mail theft incidents. Deputy Maurer supports your suggestion about using Post Office mailboxes for outgoing mail containing checks and has circulated this advice through the Substation and Community Council members. Thank you for bringing this matter to our attention.

A Bloomingtondale West resident writes (via E-mail): "As a recreational cyclist I enjoy using Bloomingtondale's bike lanes. They make for safe riding without having to use the sidewalks and roadside shoulders. I have noticed that a number of families (especially along Bloomingtonfield) routinely park their cars in the bike lanes. Aren't there rules against this? Just curious."

Editor's reply: Deputy Pete Maurer of our Community Substation refers us to the following Florida Statute 316.1945 titled "Stopping, standing or parking prohibited in specific places" which lists "on a bicycle path" among the prohibited areas. Deputy Maurer indicates that our County Ordinance 98-48 is worded the same, and could result in a Deputy or Parking Enforcement Specialist issuing a County parking citation in the amount of \$30.00. Deputy Maurer says, "We will begin to advise homeowners in the area and post warning tags on the vehicles." ☺

Welcome to Bloomingtondale

The Bloomingtondale Gazette and Brandon Regional Hospital are pleased to announce the following new arrivals to our community.

Hannab Grace Kimble
born July 12 to Holly and Greg Kimble



Jayme Brooke Raulerson
born July 14 to Wendy Borkowski and Mark Raulerson

Jessica Lynn Kelley
born August 4 to Heidi and Dean Kelley

Erynn Eloise Reaves
born July 21 to Edie and Eric Reaves

Sloan Kenna Hammons
born August 4 to Shelley and Eric Hammons

Rachel Sarah Anthony
born July 29 to Marisa and Thomas Anthony

Christian Allen Biesecker
born August 6 to Alice and Teddy Biesecker

Congratulations to all from the staff and friends of The Bloomingtondale Gazette!

Do you know of a "new addition" to our community? Please call us at 681-2051, e-mail at LauraFrazier@prodigy.net or write to The Bloomingtondale Gazette, 3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33594. We would be pleased to publish your birth announcement!

Hazardous Waste Collection Drive

By Mack Austin

Bloomingtondale residents with old paint cans, household chemicals or other hazardous waste can dispose of them at a special Collection Drive on Saturday, September 18, 1999 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Apollo Beach Collection Site, 626 Golf and Sea Boulevard. Call the Hillsborough County Solid Waste Management Department's Household Chemical Collection Program at 272-5680 for special instructions on delivering the items to the collection site or to get answers to questions about properly disposing of hazardous chemicals. Representatives can also provide information on disposing of commercial waste. Residents who wish to report the improper disposal of hazardous chemicals, including building supplies, can report incidents to the Environmental Protection Commission at 272-5960. ☺

Memorabilia and More

By Mack Austin

A unique military memorabilia store recently opened in Brandon, offering the typical military surplus store clothing, survival gear, and weapons along with other great military items and something for the whole family.

"Military Memorabilia" is owned and operated by Bob and Eva Ingraham and their son Bill. The Ingrahams have been in the military memorabilia business for over twelve years. Bob was in the Marines and Bill was in the Navy. They began by traveling the military base circuit but, "We found the travel to be just too much." They do still have contracts with VA hospitals as vendors in the hospital canteens.

So what makes this military business unique? First of all, they carry one of the largest locally available selections of military rank, shirts, caps, shadow boxes, medals and insignia. But the store is also filled with custom tee shirts and sport shirts for the whole family. There are special designs available from a catalogue or they will custom design shirts to meet the customer's desires. The Ingrahams wel-

come orders from school clubs, civic groups, church groups or small businesses. The

brands of shirts available are high quality, and the prices are very good. They offer a very unique "Grandma and Grandpa" shirt complete with the grandkids names on it, and "Class of 2000" shirts for all the high schools in the area.

"Military Memorabilia" is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., and is located on Beverly Street, just down from Brandon Swim and Tennis Club or 1/4 mile East of Nativity Church. Drop by and be sure to congratulate Bob and Eva on recently celebrating fifty years of marriage. ☺



Bob and Bill Ingraham, father and son owners and operators of "Military Memorabilia", stand ready to print a large selection of custom shirts for clubs, groups and businesses. Photo by Mack Austin.

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The Bloomingdale Buzz

By Mason Meehan

Special feature to The Bloomingdale Gazette

We took a random survey of five Bloomingdale residents, asking the following question: "What product, service or business would you most like to see instituted in Bloomingdale?"

Tom Babiarz, Oak Crest – "Another American style, full service family restaurant that serves 3 meals daily and is moderately priced. This would include full breakfasts and 4 or 5 courses for dinner. We dine out quite a bit and would like to see some variety in the basic 'meat and potatoes' type restaurants."



Mary Bosler, Fox Run – "I would like to see a traffic light at Springvale and Bloomingdale Ave. to relieve some of the congestion at Greenhollow. It is difficult to leave Bloomingdale via Greenhollow in the morning and, with a light at Springvale, I would use that street as an alternative."



Beverly Snelling, Bloomingdale West – "I would like to see an ethnic deli, offering a wide array of deli meats, cheeses and prepared foods. It could be operated like a specialty Jewish-Italian deli. On the other hand, my kids would like to see a Wendy's and a Checkers."



Judie Tiso, The Greens – "Being a military family, I'd like to see the MacDill Outreach Center that is planned for Erindale become a reality. If the Paul's Drive center closes, it would be over an hour and a half round trip for medical services for our family."



Terry Rogers, Bloomingdale West Estates – "I'm really waiting for the new YMCA on Culbreath to open. I play racquetball 2 or 3 times a week, and this will be very convenient. I've also coached soccer for 8 years and have been a Boy Scout leader, so I know this new "Y" will bring families together and the kids will have another positive outlet."



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