



D'ANN WHITE/Photos

Bloomingdale Homeowners Association board members Joë Hickle, foreground, and Ted Grable load the parks department's backhoe with unwanted household items.



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Bloomingdale Shows PRIDE

By D'ANN WHITE

For Cheryl Kehrmeier, an award from the county is just icing on the cake.

The real satisfaction comes from knowing she's helping to beautify her community.

A member of the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association board of directors, Kehrmeier spearheaded the Bloomingdale Neighborhood PRIDE Program this year that has resulted in two major cleanups in the 4,900-



BHA board member Lydia Harrod helps clear brush from a home on Sandy Creek Drive.

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Featured Story:

Learn more
about PRIDE
program

see page 21

Friends of the Library forming *see page 2*

Friends Of Library Chapter Now Forming

By D'ANN WHITE
Everybody could use a friend. And the new south Brandon library is no exception.

County library staff is now in the process of forming a Friends of the Library chapter for the new branch to be constructed on Bloomingdale Avenue by December 2004.

The Hillsborough County Friends of the Library is part of a national nonprofit organization that promotes and raises funds for the library.

"They hold book sales and sometimes purchase artwork or furniture for the library," said Suzy George, chief librarian for the east region that includes the new Bloomingdale library.

The Hillsborough County chapters also sponsor the annual children's storytelling festival, summer reading programs and sponsor lectures and guest author appearances. Membership fees are



South Brandon library project manager Israel Grajales shows residents plans for the new library to be constructed on Bloomingdale Avenue.

\$10 for individuals and \$25 for a family.

At a public meeting to give residents a preview of plans for the new library, several people expressed an interest in joining the friends including Bloomingdale resident Julie Owens.

"I'm really looking forward to having a library here," she said. "It will be so convenient. And I'd like to support it any way I can."

Residents attending the meeting were especially pleased to see that the design calls for several meeting

rooms and two rooms for tutoring.

Guy Castagliola, a volunteer tutor with the Hillsborough Literacy Council, noted that the Brandon Regional Library only has one meeting room and it's difficult to reserve it for tutoring. Oftentimes, he has to tutor adults in an open area where there are constant distractions.

"Fifty years ago, when I was growing up, libraries were quiet," he said. "Now some parents treat the library like it's a playground for their kids."

Dorothy Smelt of the Brandon Genealogical Society was also happy to see the meeting rooms. Her group of 40 active members, which currently meets at the Old Seffner Schoolhouse, has already talked to library staff about holding their monthly meetings in one of the meeting

See FRIENDS, Page 20

A Refresher On County Codes

By STEVE HECKEL
BHA director

In order to establish minimum "living" standards within Hillsborough County, the county commissioners have enacted numerous county building codes.

The county enforces these standards with code enforcement officers, based upon complaints filed by residents, and can carry stiff penalties and fines for failure to comply. Any resident may (and should) report a possible county code violation to county code enforcement for investigation and appropriate action. This can be done by calling County Code Enforcement at 744-5568.

Bloomingdale residents should be aware that deed restrictions within their neighborhood may be more stringent than the code standards listed.

The following is a synopsis of common residential area county code standards:

1. Vehicles: Must be operational (able to move under own power) and intact.
2. No more than two unregistered/untagged/expired tagged vehicles on property.
3. Commercial vehicles (over 1 ton) may not be parked overnight in residential areas.
4. Boats or RVs:
 - a. May be parked in front of house but limited to 20 feet in length.
 - b. Over 20 feet may be parked in rear or side but must be 5 feet from property line.
 - c. Must be operational and not connected to utilities (except for battery charging).
 - d. Cannot be parked on right of way (sidewalk to road)
 - e. May be parked "anywhere" for loading/unloading but maximum of 24 hours.
5. Sheds must be at least 3 feet from property line.

6. Garage sales are limited to one every six months and not more than three days in duration.

7. Swimming pools must be screened or fenced, to prevent access by small children. Also, they must be maintained sanitary and mosquito free.

8. Fences must be maintained sound and sturdy.

9. Signs in residential areas are prohibited with a few exceptions; Realtor signs, small home occupation signs, street signs, etc. Signs affixed to utility equipment are prohibited.

10. Temporary storage pods are limited to seven days and no more than six times per year.

11. Nuisance conditions: Weeds, grass or underbrush shall not exceed 18 inches. Junk, trash and debris (for example, abandoned motor vehicles, furniture, appliances, rotten lumber, paper, trash) are all considered nuisance conditions and are not permitted.

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 E-mail: Bloomingdale.Homeowners@Verizon.net
 Web Site: www.BloomingdaleGazette.com
 BHA meetings are at the community office on the 1st Monday of each month at 7 p.m.

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

Bloomingdale Special Taxing District

3509 Bell Shoals Rd., Valrico, FL 33594
 (813) 684-6667
 BSTD meetings are held at the community office on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7 p.m.

President — Thom Snelling

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

Bloomingdale Mobile Watch Coordinator/Equipment Manager —

Tony Diolosa, 681-1146
Treasurer — Paul



- Kelmer, 681-9701
- Patrol Member** — Steven Heckel, 654-4266
- Patrol Member** — Brad Scharp, 643-5000
- Patrol Member** — Paul Warr, 685-7883

Bloomingdale Oaks Special Taxing District

P.O. Box 3132, Brandon, FL 33509-3132. (813) 685-2817
 BOSTD meetings are held at 3419 Cade Lane on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m.

- President** — Bill Grace
- Treasurer** — Fred Englehart

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Meet Your Neighbors

Jane and Stanley Lee

By D'ANN WHITE

While a lot of people choose a home based on its appearance, location, price or size, Jane and Stanley Lee had another motivation for purchasing their house in Chadd's Ford in Bloomingdale East.

"We were looking for a community to belong to," said Jane.

So, after Stanley accepted a job transfer from Ocala to Tampa, Jane made house hunting a full-time job.

"I probably spent three days a week looking at real estate," she said "Then, when I narrowed it down to Bloomingdale, we rode the neighborhood again and again — at different times, day and night, to see what it was like. The more we saw it, the more we liked it."

Jane said she was attracted to Bloomingdale's conven-

ience to shopping areas as well as its convenience to her work as a legal secretary in Tampa.

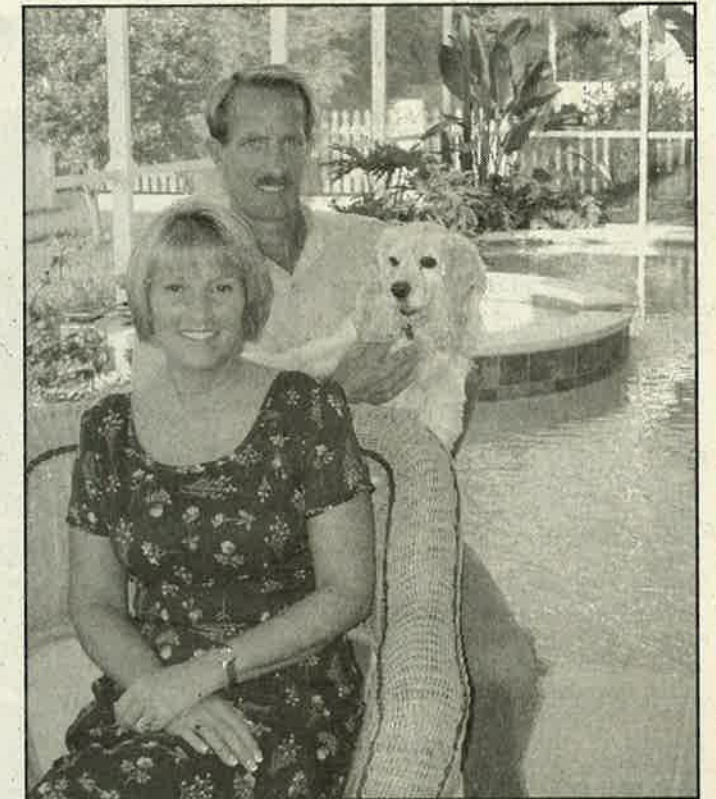
But Bloomingdale wasn't simply a place to hang their hats. The Lees wanted to get involved in their community. So, after moving into their home last September, they attended a monthly meeting of the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association. And they haven't missed a meeting since.

"One of the reasons we started going was, we were new to the community and wanted to meet people," said Jane. The Lees' son is grown and living in Gainesville.

They were also fascinated by the very fact that Bloomingdale has an active homeowners association.

"Before, we lived in a neighborhood that had no homeowners associations," said Stanley. "People would

See NEIGHBORS, Page 21



D'ANN WHITE/Photo
 Jane and Stanley Lee, along with their dog Brittany, are looking forward to getting to know their neighbors.

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Yard Of The Month

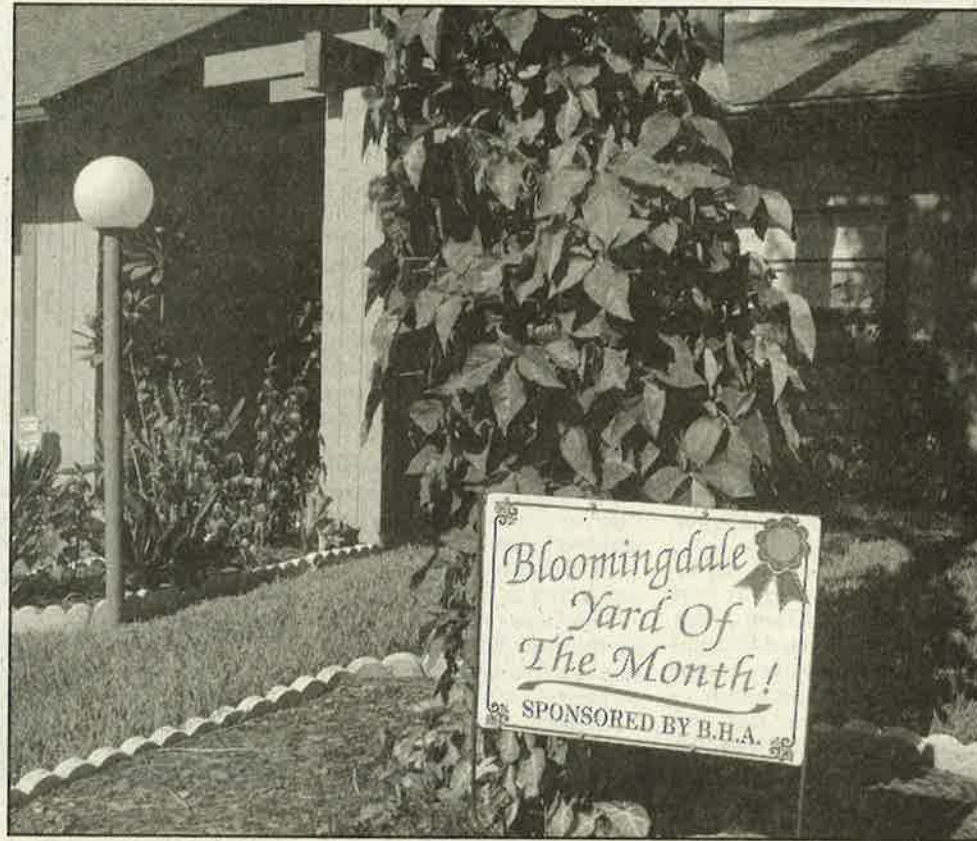
Willie and Barbara Benniefield, 4124 Canoga Park Drive, have the perfect yard-working arrangement.

She chooses the plants and he digs the holes.

The Benniefields have lived in their Bloomingdale West home for seven years. Choosing a color scheme featuring her favorite colors, green and purple, Barbara Benniefield has selected a variety of hardy tropical plants native to south Florida where both are from. "A lot of these plants came from my father and grandfather," said Willie Benniefield, who retired from the military.

Included are crotons, an unusual purple-leafed ground cover that neither knows the name of, palms and philodendron. A green and well-manicured lawn sets off the gardens.

As the September Yard of the Month, the Benniefields received a \$25 gift certificate from Wal-Mart. If you would like to nominate someone for Yard of the Month, e-mail D'Ann White at dwhite2@mediageneral.com.



Willie and Barbara Benniefield use tropical foliage to set off their lush green lawn.

Property Manager's Report

By AL DEVNEY
Devney Property
Management Inc.

Irrigation

Brandon irrigation repaired a broken zone line in the Erindale system and replaced the pump control box for the Greenhollow system and the master relay switch for the Callista system.

During the monthly maintenance inspection, 28 spray heads were replaced and eight risers were adjusted or repaired. Additionally, there were 39 light bulbs and seven light receptacles replaced.

Landscaping

Cardinal Landscaping replaced a dead oak tree on Natures Way.

Lee's Lawn Service trimmed the bushes and trees back from the sidewalk near Alafia Elementary School on Natures Way and

Culbreath Road.

Springvale is almost de-weeded and additional jasmine has been purchased to replace the dead and damaged plants.

The creeping fig, crape myrtle trees and oak trees and the landscaping areas have been inventoried.

Other

ZK Construction repaired the broken wall on Natures Way and Elton.

Handy Hands replaced 25 wooden slats in the fence on Natures Way.

Russell Electric repaired the lights at Pine Grove and Golf Manor entrances.

There was a car versus tree on Natures Way and River Crossing. The tree won.

I met with a TECO representative to discuss electrical costs for lights at Lithia-Pinecrest and Erindale and John Moore and Bloomingdale. At Lithia-Pinecrest, it was determined

that the lights were not needed and a \$65 refund check has been received from TECO and the \$8.50 monthly charge has been deleted. The charges for the lights at John Moore included a light on the east side of Bell Shoals and Garnet. This light has been turned off because there are sufficient lights on the west side of the road and a refund will be forwarded to the BSTD. The cost for the remaining three lights at the John Moore entrance is being researched by TECO to determine if they should be included in the lighting district cost.

I met with a Dallas 1 Construction representative to discuss the force main project on Erindale and Culbreath. The project will begin at Lithia-Pinecrest and go down Erindale and then turn left and continue down Culbreath. Their goal is to complete 250 feet per day. The completion date is estimated to be mid-December.

I met with representatives of Affordable Fencing, JBD Construction and ZK Construction to discuss replacing

the wooden fence on Natures Way and Callista. Their proposals will be available in about a week.

I prepared the input for the changes to the lawn maintenance contract and met with the BSTD attorney along with Mr. Liguori and Mrs. Hinkle to discuss the contract and our options.

In the land of eat, drink and pitch out the window, there were 22 bags of litter picked up along with eight towels, a tire and rim, five shirts, eight socks, nine empty cases of beer, a glove, a muffler, a wire stripper, a sport coat size 42, a cell phone and 31 cents. The beverages of choice were Diet Coke for soft drinks, Natural Light for beer and Seagrams Extra Smooth Vodka for distilled spirits. Additionally, there were two empty bottles of Crown Royal Reserve found.

Parents, please be advised that vandalism in the local area is on the increase. The BSTD has a standing reward of \$500 for information.

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BHA Membership Drive Begins

A Gazette Report
The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association will launch its annual membership drive this month.

The \$20 membership fee helps finance the numerous projects the BHA is involved in.

Among them is the publication of the Bloomingdale Gazette, delivered monthly to all residents and highlighting issues that directly impact Bloomingdale; operating and maintaining the Bloomingdale Web site, www.BloomingdaleGazette.com; spearheading the PRIDE cleanup program; supporting deed restriction education and enforcement in Bloomingdale's 40 neighborhoods; and reviewing proposed developments in the area.

The BHA is the only homeowners association repre-

senting all of Bloomingdale's 40 neighborhoods and nearly 5,000 residences.

The homeowners association is a nonprofit organization run by volunteers who live in Bloomingdale.

All money collected through the 2003 membership drive will go back into the community. Residents will be mailed dues envelopes starting in September and all residents are encouraged to return their envelopes with a check for \$20.

"For \$20 (that's just 38 cents per week), you can help us ensure that Bloomingdale continues to be a great community to raise a family in and a great place to call home," said BHA President Ted Grable.

For more information, call 681-2051.

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Bloomingtondale Substation Notes

By DEPUTY PETE MAURER

Some reminders for the new school year:

So far the new school year is going well from the safety and security standpoint. Here are a few reminders to help things go smoothly:

1. Parents of Alafia Elementary School students are reminded to obey the "No Parking" signs. These "No Parking" areas are set up to provide protection for parents and school kids. They may cause an inconvenience, but it's better than having to call for an ambulance.

2. Come to a complete stop at the three-way stop by Alafia Elementary. Rolling through can get you a ticket, get you hit by another car or cause you to hit a child.

3. Parents of Cimino Elementary School students are reminded to use extra caution when driving near the school's entrance. Kids are



MACK AUSTIN/Photo

With school back in session, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office reminds residents to watch for school buses and slow down when they see them.

crossing Culbreath Road, traffic is very dense and community traffic can slow down traffic. Allow plenty of time for dropping off your kids.

4. Stop for school buses west of the Bloomingtondale Avenue/Bell Shoals Road intersection.

5. Do not speed in school zones. Fines are doubled. The

average fine is \$300.

Special projects

Over the past years, the Bloomingtondale community has responded to "special projects" we in the sheriff's office have supported. We extend to all of you who have participated our thanks. The following is a list of current projects we are supporting and would appreciate your continued support for:

Suitcases for Kids

This project is worked in conjunction with the Tampa Police Department. It is very simple. Anyone with unwanted suitcases, gym bags or small luggage is asked to drop them off at the Bloomingtondale Sheriff's Community Station on Bell Shoals Road. These donations will be used to provide troubled youths with a way of keeping their personal belongings when they have to move during difficult family situations.

Bloomingtondale High reading program

This outstanding reading program has proven to be very effective at helping students improve their reading skills. The FCAT reading scores are the proof. Residents are asked to bring magazines that teens would be interested in reading (sports, fashion, entertainment, history, travel, short stories, etc) to

the Community Station for delivery to the school. These magazines will be used in the reading program. Volunteers are also needed to assist in getting the magazines delivered to the school.

Cops and Computers

This fairly new not-for-profit charitable program is sponsored by the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office.

It is comprised of public safety professionals and members of the computer industry. The main purpose is to place computers into the homes of kids with special needs. To do well in school and learn the required skills to be competitive in this day and time, a student must have a computer. The program's philosophy, "Changing lives, one computer at a time," says it all. This program has several needs. First are more public safety professionals, computer professionals and volunteers to become part of this great caring team.

Anyone in the Bloomingtondale community who would like to get involved in this program can contact Deputy Pete Maurer at 635-8040 or visit with him at the Community Station on Bell Shoals Road. He has information on the program and on how to donate computers. Interested residents can also visit the program's Web site at www.ccfc.org

County Surveys Residents On Parks

By D'ANN WHITE

If Bloomingtondale residents could start from scratch and build new community parks, what would they be like?

That's the question the Hillsborough County Parks and Recreation Department is asking as it looks for ways to make the parks in Bloomingtondale East and West more user-friendly and inviting.

"We're basically asking folks to tell us what they want," said parks spokesman John Brill. "It's an open-ended question. What we want to know is what do the residents want to see in their neighborhood parks? How can we improve them? We want to give residents a

chance to voice their ideas."

The county operates two parks in Bloomingtondale. The Bloomingtondale East park on Natures Way features racquetball and tennis courts as well as a play area and basketball courts. The Bloomingtondale West park on Canoga Park Drive has tennis, basketball and racquetball courts, fields for recreational football, soccer and baseball, a playground and the Stephanie Ann Culbertson Recreation Center, which hosts classes and other activities sponsored by the parks department.

Of special interest to the parks department, said Brill, is the appearance of Bloomingtondale's two neighborhood

parks. Comments should be sent to David Fountain, general manager I for the parks department, at 903-2265 or e-mail FountainD@hillsboroughcounty.org.

In the meantime, the Bloomingtondale Homeowners Association continues to work with the county on the establishment of a dog park for residents off Springvale Drive.

Resident Katy Grable, a veterinary assistant at Care Animal Hospital in Bloomingtondale, has agreed to lead the effort. She's seeking residents interested in serving on a planning committee.

The Bloomingtondale Homeowners Association is looking at the possibility of turning a

1.5-acre tract off Springvale Drive next to 33 acres of conservation area in Bloomingtondale East into a dog park featuring fenced areas, running water, picnic shelters and other features found in dog parks throughout the county. The county currently had two dog parks, one in Mango and one near Leto High School.

County parks spokesman John Brill said his staff is still looking into financing the dog park. "It's in the early stages," he said. "We have nothing concrete yet."

Anyone wanting to serve on the committee can contact Grable at Care Animal Hospital on Bloomingtondale Avenue, 684-7387.

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Calendar

Honoring the services

Wal-Mart at 949 E. Bloomingdale Ave., will host "Remembrance" United We stand, on Sept. 11, at 8 a.m. to honor active and retired military, fire department, police, sheriff, and EMS personnel.

The Brandon High School R.O.T.C. will present the colors and rifle salute. The Bloomingdale High School band will provide music. Representatives from various sectors will speak. Checks will be presented by Wal-Mart to area community groups.

Call: Pam Garren at 681-8136.

Open house

The Bloomingdale-Valrico Volunteer Fire Department Station 27 will host an open house Oct. 4 at the station house at 4705 E. Bloomingdale Ave.

There will be food, chil-

dren's activities and educational opportunities. Call 744-5906.

Fall sports

The Bloomingdale West Recreation Center, 3940 Canoga Park Drive, is gearing up for its hockey league. Registration will take place in October. Volunteer coaches and team parents are needed. Call: 744-5907.

Fall tea

Ladies and little ladies are invited to the second annual St. Stephen Catholic Church Ladies Tea Oct. 25 from 10 a.m. to noon. The cost is \$15 and includes an array of sandwiches, scones, muffins and desserts plus teas. Hostesses of a table of eight can use their own dishes and table decorations. Seating is limited. All proceeds will go to St. Vincent de Paul.

Call: Mary Devney, 684-

6617.

Bingo fundraiser

The St. Stephen Parent-Teacher-Community Organization will host its Bingo Night Sept. 10 from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. at St. Stephen Catholic Church on Bell Shoals Road. The cost is \$15 for 20 games with a possible jackpot of \$225 plus door prizes and refreshments, including grilled hot dogs and pizza.

The evening features an experienced caller and professional bingo equipment. Proceeds from this month's games will go to the Angels Among Us Dinner-Auction to benefit St. Stephen Catholic School.

Call: 689-4900.

Genealogists to meet

The Brandon Area Genealogical and Historical Society will meet Sept. 9 at 7 p.m. at the Old Seffner Schoolhouse on Kingsway Road, north of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. In lieu of a speaker this month, the society will have a panel of four available to discuss

genealogy and suggest ways to solve difficult research problems. Panel members are: Scott Peeler, Bob Rooke, Linda Soloski and Noreta Wells. The newly elected officers will be introduced. Programs are free and the public invited.

Call: Dot Smelt, 684-8215, or Noreta Wells, 684-0843.

Mother to meet

The Brandon Morning La Leche group will meet Sept. 17 from 10 a.m. to noon in the Family Life Center, Room 309, of St. Andrew's United Methodist Church, 3315 Bryan Road in Brandon. Babies and dads are welcome at the nonsectarian mothers' group to discuss parenting and breastfeeding with accredited leaders on hand.

Call: Susan Blake, 932-3664.

Women's fall luncheon

St. Andrew's United Methodist Women will host its annual fall luncheon Sept. 14 at 12:30 p.m. in the Family Life Center, 3315 S. Bryan Road in Brandon. New members will be honored.

Taxing District Notes

A Gazette Report

The Bloomingdale Special Taxing District held its annual budget approval meeting Aug. 11.

The trustees voted 5-0 to approve the fiscal year 2004 budget. The STD non-ad valorem tax will increase from \$80 to \$100.

Some of the highlights of the approved budget include a total assessment of \$475,200. The biggest expenditures include lawn maintenance, \$137,000; wall painting, \$24,000; fertilization, \$21,000; landscape maintenance, \$24,000; and irrigation repairs, \$17,000.

The Board of Trustees has also set aside funding for holiday decorations for the Christmas season and possi-

bly a new bench and trash receptacle to be installed along Culbreath Road.

The Capital Improvement Projects for FY '04 include \$17,000 for upgrading the irrigation systems on Natures Way and \$46,000 for upgrading the entryway at Greenhollow and Bell Shoals Road.

For additional information, you can call the BSTD at 684-6667. Office hours are 7 to 11 a.m. Monday through Thursday. You can also reach the BSTD via email at: bloomingdale.homeowners@verizon.net.

The next taxing district meeting will be Sept. 8 at 7 p.m. at the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road, behind the Citgo station.

Bloomingdale Teams Show Meaning Of Teamwork

By MACK AUSTIN

Two of Bloomingdale Little League's teams recently brought home honors. Both teams demonstrated determination and outstanding teamwork in reaching their accomplishments.

The Bloomingdale girls softball (9- to 10-year-olds) team, the Bombers, won the Section IV and District IV championships and went on to win the state championship. With the guidance of manager Jerry Schinella and coaches Dane White and Jack Holsonback and the support of their families and friends, the Bombers faced tough teams, bad weather — which actually helped — and challenging schedules. But they kept their eyes on their goal — the state championships.

"This team had a very long See TEAMS, Page 19



Bloomingdale Little League's Girls Softball state champions, the Bombers, include, from left, Kayla Jurrens, Haley Holsonback, Laura Swartz, Emma Hinson, Alexa Lopez, McKenzie Carter, Devyn White, Kelly Nader, Sophie Tarte, Nicci Hopps, Jennifer Owens, Bailey Schinella and Kaelyn Castellanos. Coach, from left, are Jack Holsonback, Dane White and manager Jerry Schinella.



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Student Is Tuned Into Busy Schedule

By LESLIE WHITE

She's been playing piano for 12 years, played the harp for two, has taught piano lessons for two years, has a job in the commissary at MacDill Air Force Base and volunteers weekly at St. Joseph's Hospital in labor and delivery.

And somehow she still manages to practice an hour a day on her own music, oh, and let's not forget her homework. Yes, homework. Bloomingdale resident Christina Martinez is a master of time management, and she's only 16 years old.

Attending Blake High School in Tampa, a magnet school for the performing arts, Martinez focuses much of her time on her music. Beginning lessons in Korea at the age of 5, Martinez was the recipient of very focused lessons four to five days a week, practicing for 30 min-



LESLEIE WHITE/Photo
Christina Martinez fits in a piano practice in her busy schedule.

utes a day.

"In Korea, the lessons are much more intense, and you don't start out as slowly as you do here," said Martinez.

To attend Blake High, students must write an essay as well as audition. Initially choosing piano as her major, Martinez switched to orchestra and enjoys performing with the group. She still takes piano from Olga Glick, whom she loves studying under.

"Right now I practice an hour a day, but my teacher would like me to practice for three. But, I get some practice time in at school. I really like to play for my own enjoyment," said Martinez.

When asked about her full schedule, Martinez laughed.

"I have free time. But I really am busy pretty much every day of the week except Friday nights and Sundays," although a portion of her Sunday is spent playing for the Korean Presbyterian Church.

Teaching piano is something her dad encouraged her to get into, and she slowly started taking on students,

beginning with two and easing her way into the 15 students she currently teaches.

"It's fun to see when they get so happy. When they accomplish a song, it's great. They love the duets. Watching them reminds me of how I was. I even teach the same books I took out of, and remember the music."

Martinez doesn't get the chance to perform much as an individual, but frequently accompanies the symphony at Blake High. She also participates in monthly recitals, with encouragement from her music teacher, and competes in various music organization competitions. "I perform in lots of concerts with the orchestra at school. I get more nervous alone, but not with groups."

Martinez is a senior this year at Blake High, and is continuing full-force in all her endeavors.

School Notes

A lesson in leadership

Alex Boody, a rising senior at Riverview High School, has just completed the Duke Leadership Institute.

Boody is a lifelong resident of Bloomingdale East. He served as a page in the Florida Senate under Sen. Tom Lee, R-Brandon, in March. He has a black belt in tae kwon do and trains with Brandon Sidekicks School of Martial Arts.

In addition, Boody is serving as treasurer of the Riverview High Student Government Administration as well as participating in the Riverview Mu Alpha Theta National Honor Society, French National Honor Society, and the Riverview chapter of the National Honor Society.

His parents are Oliver and Patricia Boody.

Duke University's Talent Identification Program (Duke TIP) offers an educational opportunity designed to introduce gifted students

to the field of leadership.

TIP's mission for leadership encourages students to deepen their commitments to service, philanthropy and civic engagement, no matter where their academic or career paths may lead them.

Using the latest methodologies in leadership education, students gained an understanding of leadership through accelerated classroom instruction and service-learning experiences in the community. At the conclusion of the two-week course, students identified their own personal philosophy of service leadership.

Resident received degree

Bloomingdale East resident Kelly Michelle Bemis has received her master's of art degree from Baylor University in Waco, Texas. She was among more than 500 graduates to receive degrees during commencement exercises Aug. 9.

Restaurant Review

China-Fuji
2519 E. State Road 60
Kash n' Karry center
at Miller Road
Valrico FL 33594
Phone: 662-2997

By ELTON DUMONT

We tried this restaurant for two reasons: the first is the recommendation of our friends, Harlan and Vesta. The second is the unusual name.

So let me clear up the name first. It is both a Chinese and Japanese restaurant under one roof. Kind of a unique concept. It is clean, attractive and inviting. We were seated immediately. There are really two distinct dining areas — the large dining room to the left and an authentic sushi bar on the right.

The sushi bar and the tables serve sushi and sashimi. For the uninitiated, sushi is easily described as a Japanese dish of rice and raw fish wrapped in seaweed or maybe lettuce. Sashimi is a very thinly sliced raw fish. It's no problem ordering. The Chinese items are clearly defined from the Japanese. The Fuji appetizers include Naruto Mak (crab, masago,

avocado and thin-rolled cucumber) \$6.50, Sunomono (cucumber and seafood cocktail) \$3.95, Baby Octopus \$4.25, Gyoza (steamed or fried pot stickers) \$3.95, plus other more eclectic starters.

Chef Rolls include Pink Lady (fish powder, avocado, red and white tuna) \$8.95, Dancing Eel (cucumber, avocado, cream cheese and eel on top) \$8.95, Mother and Daughter (salmon, egg, avocado and salmon egg) \$6.50, to name a few.

There is also a wide selection of sashimi dinners from \$10.95 to \$19.95 including Miso Soup or salad.

A la carte items include a variety of Makimono Sushi Rolls from \$3 to \$5.75 or Nigiri items in the same range as the Makimono. The sushi items include red snapper, abalone, Spanish mackerel, salmon, sea urchin and spicy tuna.

They didn't have Tsing Tao beer, but they did have Sapporo. I ordered a Sapporo, which was ice cold and delicious. But they also have Sake and Plum Wine as well as domestic beer.

Mrs. Dumont and I stuck with the Chinese selection side. It was very good. The appetizers seemed tame compared to the sushi side, but

the selection was large including a traditional Pu Pu Platter, steamed or fried dumplings, soup, Crab Rangoon or Beef Teriyaki Stick. Other categories included hot soups, fried rice, Chow Mein, Lo Mein, Chop Suey, seafood, beef, pork, chicken, Egg Foo Young, chef specials and Chinese combinations.

I chose the Egg Drop Soup over the Seafood Soup while my wife and I each had an egg roll. It's worth mentioning that the egg rolls were light, not heavy dough, and the soup was thick, not watery at all.

For an entrée, my wife chose Pork Lo Mein (\$6.95). She maintains it's among the best in the Brandon area.

I selected the Shrimp with Garlic Sauce, Szechwan style (spicy hot) \$7.45. Also very good and very fresh. I asked for the special Chinese hot oil paste that virtually all Oriental restaurants have, but you

have to ask for it. Being from Texas, it is a legitimate contender for a five-alarm rating, so use it with great care. I used it in my soup, in the garlic sauce and a little over the egg roll (yes, I can withstand five-alarm).

There is a long list of entrees on the menu, but if they are all as fresh as ours, you just can't go wrong. All the combination dinners are in the \$7 range and include white or fried rice and choice of soup or egg roll.

So, if you are looking for a solid Chinese restaurant or a New Age sushi restaurant, the China-Fuji should be your first choice.

Our total bill, including tip, was under \$25. A wonderful value besides. As the old TV ad said, "Try it, you'll like it."

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

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Commentary

One Of Our Own

By MACK AUSTIN

To many people, the "War in Iraq" is technically over. But not to the soldiers that are dodging bullets daily as they see their friends and comrades killed or wounded. And not to the family and friends waiting anxiously for them to come home safely.

The cover of a recent major magazine that stated, "Peace Is Hell," says it all. Our military must have our constant and continuous

prayers and support. Fortunately, we currently have no new soldiers listed as POW (Prisoner of War) or MIA (Missing in Action).

With Bloomingdale most definitely a military community, news of this war is very personal and close to home. Many of the military men and women still fighting the war in Iraq are from our community.

But, there is still a very important and unfortunate situation left over from Desert Storm. Unknown to many people is the fact that one of our own is listed as

See COMMENTARY, Page 18

Bloomingtondale Resident Earns Honors In Middle East

By D'ANN WHITE

As hundreds of service men and women return home from the Middle East to the waiting arms of their families, Judie Tiso and her daughters, Catherine, 15, and Alexandra, 11, wait and wonder.

The girls have seen little of their father, Army Col. Roland Tiso Jr., in the past three years. And they still have no word on when he'll be coming home.

First, there was his assignment to Task Force Sinai in Egypt, where he commanded a multi-national force from 2000-01.

He arrived home Aug. 28, 2001, and the family was looking forward to having him home for a while.

"He was assigned to the Joint Security Detachment at Central Command," said Judie Tiso "We thought he was finally going to have a 9 to 5 job."



The Tiso family poses for a photo in front of their home in The Greens March 1, the day Col. Roland Tiso was deployed to Iraq.

But two weeks later, the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks occurred. In charge of securing MacDill Air Force Base, which was a possible target for terrorist attack, Col. Tiso

spent endless days and weekends at U.S. Central Command, coming home for a couple of hours on Dec. 25 to celebrate Christmas with his family. He had planned to retire in May 2003, but decided to extend his duties until May 31, 2004.

Soon after 9/11, the Joint Security Detachment Tiso was associated was called on to help President Bush fight the war on terror.

The focus was initially on the terrorists in Afghanistan, and Tiso spent about a month in Afghanistan in 2002 dealing with security issues.

Having worked in Iraq in 1997-98 as a United Nations observer, when war with Iraq appeared imminent, he was called on to help evacuate U.N. personnel.

Since August, he's been living in a tent in the Iraqi desert helping to train the Polish troops.

It's a scenario Judie Tiso has become accustomed to since marrying her husband in 1983. Judie Tiso was working for the Department of Defense school system in Fort Campbell, Ky., in 1982 when she met her future husband, then an Army captain about to be promoted to major, at a friend's housewarming party.

In the years since, the cou-

ple, and later their two daughters, have lived in Hawaii, Panama and numerous military bases in between. They moved to Bloomingtondale in 1994 when Col. Tiso was assigned to MacDill. Judie Tiso, who stayed at home when the girls were young, now teaches music part time at St. Stephen Catholic School. She has a bachelor's and master's degree in music education. Her daughters are both involved in dance at Turning Point Dance Academy in Brandon. Alexandra attends Progress Village Magnet School for the Performing Arts and Catherine goes to Blake High Magnet High School for the Performing Arts.

Judie Tiso said she's become accustomed to months away from her husband.

"We're veterans at this. I'm pretty self-sufficient," said Tiso, adding that she has many good friends she can rely on in a pinch. "The girls have gotten used to it. And, as they get older, they seem to handle it better."

Although she's basically become a single parent, having to contend with household bills and car repairs while chauffeuring her daughters to and from dance rehearsals, Judie Tiso said the advent of e-mail has made life much more tolerable.

Nearly everywhere he's gone, Col. Tiso has had access to e-mail and has been able to communicate with his family.

"We hear from him every day or two," she said. "Even in a tent in the middle of the desert, he had a laptop and a Yahoo account. It really reassures the girls, even if it's just a line or two. On occasion, we get a phone call. And I monitor the news, though I try to buffer the girls as much as possible."

Judie Tiso said waiting has become a way of life for them. "I try not to obsess about it"

New Lawn Maintenance Contract Chosen

By D'ANN WHITE

It's the single biggest contract they award.

So Bloomingtondale Special Taxing District trustees didn't take their duties lightly in choosing a new lawn maintenance contractor last month.

After reviewing all 14 bid proposals, trustees unanimously voted to hire Ray Mow lawn maintenance service. Ray Mow submitted a bid of \$123,296 per year without a performance bond and \$126,276 with a bond.

Trustees decided that the performance bond wasn't necessary and opted for Ray Mow's lower bid.

Other bids ranged from

\$108,193 to \$236,000. The contract for the previous lawn maintenance company, Greenturf Services, runs out Oct. 1, said district President Thom Snelling, and the board opted to put the contract out for bid this year.

"By state requirements, we have a chance to review the contract every three years to adjust for a cost-of-living increase," Snelling said. "This year, we decided to rebid the project."

The taxing district trustees have budgeted 137,000 for lawn maintenance during the coming year. That's the biggest line item in the district's \$367,280 yearly budget for operating expenses.

It's a big contract, but it's also a big job, said Bloomingtondale property manager Al Devney. Although the board decided to downsize the contract a bit by cutting out one tree trimming, one mulching and one fluffing, the contractor is still required to mow the common grounds 42 times a year, trim the trees once, mulch once and fluff once.

Fluffing, or refreshing the mulch, takes four employees three days to complete, he said. A fresh mulching, using 330 cubic yards of mulch, takes longer because there is 122,848 square feet of beds in Bloomingtondale. Trimming the palms takes six employees

three days to complete. And it takes a seven-person crew three days to mow 43 acres of common area.

The contract, said Devney, encompasses 7,100 hours of labor.

In other district business, the trustees are getting bids to have the walls along the east side of Bell Shoals Road cleaned.

The district's accountant, Michael Hayes, reported that the district has been on budget during the past year. August expenditures were \$30,881 and \$27,833 was budgeted.

The next taxing district meeting will be Oct. 13 at 7 p.m.

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See EAST, Page 19

Computer Corner

By JIM JEUP

Question: What are the facts about this Blaster virus? -

Blaster worm facts

Between August and September, North America reported more than 46,000 infected computers.

Only NT/2000/XP and Server 2003 are affected due to a "hole" in Windows "Remote Procedure Call."

In July (a month before the attack), Microsoft released the security patch, which was available via Windows Update, or download from Microsoft's Web site.

Go to Windows Update (<http://v4.windowsupdate.microsoft.com/en/default.asp>) and complete "Critical Updates" to protect your system from this virus. Do it regularly.

Norton (<http://www.norton.com>), McAfee

(<http://www.mcafee.com>) and Trend Micro (<http://www.trendmicro.com>) virus software makers distribute a free removal tool for Blaster on their Web sites.

Companies were "Blasted" because most run patches through a lab environment to ensure specialty software works with each patch. Most company labs did not complete testing in time to protect company computers from this virus attack.

Virus protection and maintenance for everyone

Everyone should have a virus protection and system maintenance schedule. Whether you complete the updates yourself, or have a professional do it for you, it needs to be done. Virus software alone is not enough to keep your computer safe. All protection plans should include the following areas (minimum):

Regular virus scans
Regular virus pattern updates

Critical patch updates
System settings checks
Delete temporary files and PC tune-up

If you have a professional who provides your virus protection and maintenance, be certain they include emergency service to remove a virus if you contract one under their protection and maintenance plan.

Question: Since I purchased my Windows XP computer, I have been getting many pop-up messages saying my computer is open to attack. I use Norton and update for viruses regularly. Why am I getting all these messages, and how can I make them stop?

By default, Microsoft ships Windows XP with Windows Messenger turned on (A bad idea). Messenger is used by system administrators to post messages on networked systems quickly. Most home users do not use a "Sys Admin" so this is not needed. The Blaster worm exploited the vulnerability of this process to shut down computers.

Messenger can be turned off easily with a free program from Gibson Research Corp. (<http://grc.com>). The program is called "Shoot The Messenger" and will take care of the vulnerability, even if you have not updated Windows "Critical Updates." Find the program at <http://grc.com/stm/shoot-themessenger.htm>

Pop-up ads and spyware come from Internet sites you visit during your normal Internet usage. Lavasoft (<http://www.lavasoftusa.com>) offers a free program called Ad-aware. Ad-aware searches for spyware and data min-

ing programs on your computer, and allows you to delete them. You will notice a drastic reduction in the number of pop-up ads you see after running this application (<http://www.lavasoftusa.com/support/download>)

Question: I received a lot of forwarded e-mails. How can I forward an e-mail without all the previous addresses showing? I use CompuServe.

AOL and CompuServe do not allow editing of email to be forwarded. The original message will not be available for editing.

E-mail etiquette - Do not forward e-mail more than two times. It becomes difficult for others to read all the "forwarding information." Here's a work-around for all e-mail users

Copy the important information into a "new email." Place your subject line Send it to the new recipient(s)

Question: I misplaced July's Computer Corner column about upgrading to Windows XP. Is there some way to get a copy of that article?

Computer Corner Archives can be found on the Web at: www.advancedmobiletech.com/computercorner.shtml

Jim Jeup of Bloomington is a certified master technician for Advanced Mobile Tech Computer Service. Reach him at 508-4378. Computer Corner Archives can be found at <http://www.advancedmobiletech.com/computercorner.shtml>. E-mail your computer questions to: cornerquestions@advancedmobiletech.com, or on the Web at www.advancedmobiletech.com.

Community Calendar

Yard sale fundraiser

The Crewe of Alafia Norsemen, founded in September 2001, will host a family yard sale fundraiser Oct. 11 from 7 to 11 a.m. at 4327 Swift Circle in The Links in Bloomington East. Karen Savoy, Chris Kerler and Mary Hill are organizing the event to raise funds to support the crewe's charities including the Moffitt Cancer & Research Center and the Salvation Army. The 29-member crewe meets monthly to coordinate fundraisers and prepare for parade participation. Donations are being accepted for the yard sale. Contact Roxanne Salabarría at 654-6609 to arrange pickup. For information on the crewe, e-mail info@alafianorsemen.com or visit www.alafianorsemen.com.

Associations form alliance

In the hopes of banning together on issues of concern, Buckhorn Estates Homeowners Association President Kevin Dorsey will host a Valrico homeowners association alliance meeting Oct. 9 at 7 p.m. at the Campo Family YMCA on Culbreath Road. Dorsey has invited representatives from all 22 homeowners associations in the 33594 ZIP code.

Call: Dorsey: 684-8676.

Relay for Life recruitment

Lornewood Drive resident Anthony Pursino, chairman for the American Cancer Society's annual fundraiser, Relay for Life, will host a team recruitment kickoff meeting Oct. 28 at 7 p.m. at the Campo Family YMCA.

"Although the event is six months away, we are in the planning stages," said Pursino.

In past years, more than 1,000 people have participated.

Halloween house

The Fisher family will host their fifth annual Fisher Haunted House in Bristol Green Oct. 31 from 6:30 to 11

p.m.

Follow the signs on Natures Way. This year's themes are the Exorcist, Halloween, Texas Chainsaw Massacre, Nightmare on Elm Street and Friday the 13th. Donations are welcome.

Bazaar and raffle

The St. Stephen Craft Group's Annual Bazaar and Raffle will be Oct. 18, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Oct. 19 before and after all Masses in the St. Stephen Catholic Church multi-purpose room, 5049 Bell Shoals Road in Valrico.

The raffle will also be held on Oct. 4 and 5, and on Oct. 11 before and after all Masses, also during the Craft Show. They will have Raggedy Ann & Andy, also Mama and Papa Rabbit, plus Christmas afghan and Christmas Angel among other prizes.

Call: 685-9312.

Crimson Dolls fundraiser

Burdines' annual shopping event Nov. 1 from 8 a.m. to noon will help benefit the Bloomington High School Crimson Dolls. Tickets are \$5 per person, and entitles residents to a private shopping spree with 20 percent off purchases (certain exclusions, listed on the ticket, apply).

The Crimson Dolls also will hold their annual holiday greenery sale beginning in October and running through early November. Orders for fragrant balsam greenery can be placed with any Crimson Doll or contact Sue Haines at 689-7097.

Golf tournament

The Hillsborough County Foster Parent Association is holding its first golf tournament to raise funds to support its work with the foster parents and foster children of the area Oct. 23 at the Bloomington Golfers Club.

The cost is \$60 per person and includes green fees, cart rental, unlimited range balls

See CALENDAR, Page 20



MACK AUSTIN/Photo

A little boy poses on the fire engine at Bloomington-Valrico's Volunteer Fire Station 27. The station at 4705 E. Bloomington Ave. will host an open house Oct. 4. Call 744-5906 for more information.

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National Miniature Golf Tournament Comes To Area

By D'ANN WHITE

A hush settles over the crowd as the golfer takes the shot. The tension is relieved with a cheer as the ball effortlessly traverses the fiberglass giraffe's legs and plops into the mouth of the giant whale.

OK, so it's not the Master's.

But these miniature golfers take their sport very seriously. At stake is a wad of cash and the chance to earn fame as the best putter on a pint-sized golf course.

Residents will have a chance to participate in this emerging competitive sport when Ace Golf and LeaderBoard of Tampa bring the Harris Cup National Miniature Golf Championship to Ace's golf range in Riverview in November.

More than 40 golfers from throughout the United States will compete for a purse set at \$10,000 during the championship finals Nov. 23 at the Boyette Road facility. Before the big day residents of all ages will have a chance to demonstrate their miniature golfing skills during local qualifying rounds Nov. 3-6 from 6 to 10 p.m. at both the Riverview and Brandon Ace Golf facilities. Both courses have 18 holes.

According to Bloomingdale East resident Bob Gaudreau, president of LeaderBoard of Tampa, which manages professional golf tournaments, this is the first time the 10-year-old national champi-



LeaderBoard of Tampa directors Cindy Leon, left, and Joni Hickie stand with Riverview Ace Golf manager Steve Hughes at the site of Florida's first national miniature golf tournament.

onship will be held in Florida.

To generate interest in the event, Gaudreau is offering local schools a chance to benefit. Five dollars from every player's entry fees will go into a pot to be split among schools that enter teams in the qualifying rounds.

"If we have 500 players, that's a \$2,500 pot to be split," explained LeaderBoard director Cindy Leon. In addition, the net sales from business sponsorships will go into the pot and the school that signs up the most teams will get an additional \$500.

"That's better than wash-

ing cars to raise money," said Leon, who as a local PTA president said she's been involved in just about every fundraiser imaginable.

So, far, Boyette, Ippolito, Lithia Springs, Alafia, Cimino, Bevis elementary schools as well as Mary Help of Christians Schools in Tampa have expressed an interest in participating. "I think it sounds like a fun way to raise money," said Gloria Santososso of Mary Help.

"We have a huge amount of parent involvement at our school, and I think this is something the parents would enjoy. I hope the community will come out and support it," said Cyndi Acosta, a PTA board member at Lithia Springs. An avid miniature golfer, her 5-year-old son, Joshua, plans to enter the tournament.

That's one of the advantages of miniature golf, said Leon. People of all ages can enter and win.

"If they can hold a club, they can play," she said. "If a 5-year-old gets the lowest score, he gets to go on. And that could happen. After all, the residents here have the home-field advantage."

To participate the schools are required to enter five teams — or 20 people — in the qualifying rounds at a cost of \$15 per person.

Winners from each of the five flights (team, individual men and women, individual male and female student) will receive a \$100 cash prize — \$250 for the team — and go on to play in the finals Nov. 9 at 6 p.m. at the Riverview facility. The four lowest scores will then qualify to play in the championship Nov. 23. The first-place winner of the championship will get \$5,000, with \$3,000 going to second place, \$1,250 to third place and \$750 to fourth place.

"The finals should be a fun event," said Leon. "We're calling it Mini-Golf Festival 2003. There will be free food, business vendors, giveaways and entertainment."

In addition, a 6-by-8-foot outdoor theater screen will show digital pictures and videos of the qualifying golfers. Joni Hickie, also a LeaderBoard director as well as office manager for the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, said the miniature golf tournament is expected to attract golfers from a 100-mile radius with an estimated 500 enthusiasts hitting the range.

"It's a win-win situation," said Hickie, noting that the schools will be encouraged to put up spirit banners and bring out friends and family to cheer the teams on. "It should be a really nice family and community event."

Applications to participate are available at both the Brandon Ace range on Kings Avenue and the Riverview range on Boyette Road. Schools participating in the fundraiser must drop off their completed application and fees by Oct. 27.

For more information, contact Riverview Ace Golf manager Steve Hughes, 672-7750, www.ace-golf.com or www.globalleaderboard.com. For more information about the Harris Cup, visit www.harris-cup.com/2003.htm.

Bloomington Resident Offers Organizational Tips

By LESLIE WHITE

How would you like to have a second set of hands? How would you like to have another hour added to your day? How would you like the stress and clutter to be all but alleviated from your life?

The solution is an introduction to Tina Danielson, professional organizer and founder and president of 2nd Set Inc.

She's a small business' fairy godmother, but her methods last well past midnight. As a former marketing consultant, Bloomingdale resident Tina Danielson frequently met requests from clients to help them find background information that would enable them to move forward in a more timely manner.

Misplaced brochures, ads, etc., would be a stumbling block to a business trying to market itself more effectively. Danielson found that she was spending a great amount of time helping them get more organized before she could start helping them with their actual marketing plan. "After helping them, I really enjoyed seeing their satisfaction at being able to find what they were looking for in a matter of moments," she said.

Soon, Danielson realized there was a great need for her organizational skills. "I mainly work with small and home-based businesses. They don't have the administrative help to do things like filing and organizing. I help them learn to do it themselves and become more efficient."

When someone calls her for help, she sets up a visit to either the business or the home office.

"I want to be able to see their system, and where the bottleneck happens," said Danielson. "I'm really not organized by nature, so if I can do it, you can do it!"

She helps clients build a very basic filing system and suggests hanging files with broad category labels such as "Home," "Finances" and "Marketing." Other subcate-

gories can be created if necessary, but such broad-based files can be a quick starting point when on a search for specific information.

She also instills in clients the necessity of a calendar system — a single system, that is. It should be in a centralized location for appointments and tasks, cross-referenced to a "pending" file that is the catchall folder for what's in process "now."

"You'll be amazed at how relieved clients feel when I'm done," said Danielson. She alleviates the stress that keeps business people up at night and teaches them a workable system that will keep everything running smoothly, with everything only fingertips away in the proper hanging file.

"It's discipline. Creating a habit takes at least 30 days. I've had clients who relapsed, but after about three times, they develop a habit," she said. "It's up to the people to want to change."

She sees herself more as a business accountability partner, and suggests to her clients they keep a daily routine of spending time organizing their day, prioritizing, then later assessing how they did and ending their business day planning for tomorrow.

With a 7-month-old at home and a successful home-based business out of her Somerset residence, Danielson makes organization look easy. But for those who find getting organized intimidating, or even downright frightening, Danielson is available.

She offers a free assessment. She spends from an hour to an hour and a half studying the current system and making suggestions for changes that will improve efficiency and limit the never-ending piles that accumulate on desks. "After a month, I'll come back if it's not working. It has to be easy, or it's not going to happen," she said.

To reach 2nd Set and Danielson, e-mail Tina@2ndset.com with your name, business and phone number.



LESLIE WHITE/Photo

Bloomington resident Tina Danielson provides a second set of hands for people who need help with organization.



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New Consignment Store Opens On Bloomingdale Avenue

By JOYCE MCKENZIE

It's just what Cindy Lord has been searching for — a consignment shop that doesn't remind her of her grandparents' attic.

"When you walk in the store, it smells great and the nice thing is everything is very clean and very nice," said the Brandon resident.

She's referring to From Our Closet To Yours at 873 W. Bloomingdale Ave., Brandon, in the Kings Row shopping center, where customers can find both gently worn as well as new men's, women's and children's clothing and accessories. Ladies petite and plus sizes are also available.

According to owners and Bloomingdale residents Debby Duncan and Lori Hearne, the new pieces are closeout items from major department stores and brand-name designers. Included in the mix are labels such as Nine West, Liz Claiborne and Lane Bryant, Delta Burke and Maggie Sweet. In addition, the store, located at the west end of the plaza, features a collection of handmade beaded jewelry featuring colorful bracelets for Buccaneers, Florida State University and University of Florida fans.

"There are some fun pieces and we also have some sterling silver and Swarovski crystal things," said Hearne.

Handmade and designer handbags are also displayed on racks and divider ledges throughout the 1,600-square-



From Our Closet To Yours owners Lori Hearne, left, and Debby Duncan arrange some of their inventory in their new consignment shop in Kings Row shopping center.

foot facility.

Customers are welcome to enjoy a hot cup of coffee as they browse through the store. "We think of ourselves as more of a boutique, because we're more than your typical consignment shop," Duncan said.

Another perk to the clients, she said, is that they are not required to wash, iron and put their items on hangers prior to bringing them to the store.

"We do all of that ourselves and put everything on our

own hangers," Duncan said. "However, we are very picky about the clothes. They should be almost like new."

Items may be dropped off during normal business hours, Tuesday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. and Saturday from 9:30 to 5:30 p.m. No appointments are needed.

Articles generally stay on the floor for about 60 days and unsold items are then donated to area nonprofit organizations such as Joshua House in Tampa and Good Samaritan and Beth El missions in Wimauma.

"We try to donate to places where it will benefit people right away," Duncan said.

Payout is every Tuesday to those whose items are sold, however, customers are asked to call ahead so their checks will be ready when they come.

The duo, both stay-at-home mothers for many years, say they did a lot of searching for just the right spot to open their first business venture. "We wanted to have a Bloomingdale address

and personally I feel this where God wanted us to be, Duncan said. "We're near the post office and it's been a very supportive strip mall."

Lord believes the two women's personalities are the perfect fit for the business. "They really care about what they are doing and they have that personal touch," she said. "They are great with kids."

Valrico resident Rose Devalle got to know Duncan because their children attend Cimino Elementary School together. "I couldn't wait for the store to open and, when it did, I found it to be very nice, very clean, very well-organized and easy to sort through the clothing," Devalle said. "It's someplace you want to shop."

From Our Closet To Yours will celebrate its grand opening today, Oct. 4, when customers will receive 10 percent off coupons along with free coffee and doughnuts in the morning and cheese and crackers in the afternoon.

Call 662-3726 for more information.

Bloomingdale Park To Get Improvements

By D'ANN WHITE

Here's a chance to tell the county what you like and don't like about the parks in Bloomingdale.

The Hillsborough County Parks, Recreation and Conservation Department is coming up with a plan to improve and unify all the non-programmed parks in the county, and has chosen Bloomingdale East Park at 3902 Natures Way to be one of four county parks for a one-year trial.

The goal, said parks spokesman John Brill, is to survey residents and find out what they like and don't like about their passive community parks and then make improvements accordingly.

"We want to devise some minimum standards of what a non-programmed park should look like in terms of signage, facilities, frequency of mowing, etc.," he said. "We're starting out by taking four parks, including the

Bloomingdale East Park, and bringing them up to those standards."

What those standards will be, said Brill, depends on the community.

"We're looking for input from the community. We want residents to tell us what they want," he said. "We can't give them everything they ask for but we need their input to formulate this plan."

He said the goal is to give all the passive community parks a uniform appearance.

David Fountain, general manager I for the parks department, also welcomes input about the Bloomingdale West Park, which is a programmed park, meaning it has a recreation center and on-site staff.

He said an appeal for comments in last month's Bloomingdale Gazette yielded no responses. Comments can be sent to Fountain at 903-2265 or e-mail FountainD@hillsboroughcounty.org.

EAST

From page 19

though it's always there in the back of your mind that he's in this dangerous place," she said. "It's been hard on a lot of families. A lot of families are making sacrifices."

But she said she's reassured by the knowledge that her husband is playing a role in keeping the country safe.

It's a role that hasn't gone unnoticed.

Last year the 52-year-old colonel was awarded the Bronze Star for the role he played in evacuating U.N. personnel from Iraq during the days before Operation Iraqi Freedom. More than 2,000 personnel were evacuated in a day less than 24 hours before war broke out.

In addition, he's just

learned he's been nominated for a second Bronze Star for laying the groundwork for the formation and training of the new Iraqi army.

Col. Tiso, who holds a master's degree in public administration and has earned a plethora of other military awards during his 30-year career, is the second generation in his family to be awarded the Bronze Star. His father, Roland Sr. of Rye Brook, N.Y., received the Bronze Star for heroic acts during World War II.

"I'm really proud of him," said Judie Tiso of her husband. "It's heartening to see that the work he's done is being recognized. I think it's well-deserved."

SAY YOU SAW IT IN THE
THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

Steakhouse To Join Mix At Albertsons

By LINDA CHION KENNEY

A new steakhouse and a number of other businesses adjoining the Albertsons at Bloomingdale Avenue and Lithia-Pinecrest Road are expected to be completed this month.

The Albertsons strip is slated to get a barber, a greeting card store, a cleaners, a sandwich shop, a tutoring center, a dance studio and a nail salon. In addition, the center will host a 2,500-square-foot steakhouse "with affordable prices," according to developer Bernie Weiner.

Weiner is the owner of CanAm Development LLC, based in Phoenix. He has partnered with Bill Buckner, a veteran major base-

ball league player, in the strip's development.

The new steakhouse also has a sports tie. "Jordan's Steak House" bears the name of golfer Pete Jordan, who is on the PGA tour. Jordan will own the restaurant, which will have a sports theme.

"The restaurant is taking 2,500 square feet and there's another 1,600 square feet for catering and offices," Weiner said. "There's been some confusion that Outback Steakhouse was opening, but he (Jordan) is doing it himself with other people. Where the confusion comes to play is he is sponsored on the (PGA) tour by Outback."

Joining Jordan's restau-

See STEAK, Page 20

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CALENDAR

From page 20

and dinner after the tournament.

There will be raffles, contests and prizes afterward, including closest to the pin, long drive and putting contests, as well as team prizes for the top three finishing teams.

Donations can be sent to Harold Perez, president, HCFPA, 524 Sandy Creek Drive Brandon FL 33511.

Call: Charles Hyppa, 247-3861 or 657-1429.

Haunted house

Coldwell Banker Residential Real Estate in Brandon will host its first Spooktacular Halloween Haunted House, a community-based fundraising event to benefit children's charities.

According to Elana Baker, a real estate agent and member of the committee coordinating the event, the fundraiser will take place Oct. 30 from 5 to 8:30 p.m. at 889 E. Bloomingdale Ave. in Bloomingdale Square. With more than 7,500 square feet of office space, sales associates and staff will have a maze of offices themed for the Halloween holiday. The event will include food and

refreshments, and a separate area geared for toddlers and parents who want to enjoy the evening without touring the haunted house.

Contributions will be accepted and proceeds from this event will go toward the nationally supported campaign, the Coldwell Banker CARES Community Foundation that will disperse the proceeds to Take Stock in Children, a group involved in providing low-income Florida students with college or vocational school scholarships, plus other nonprofit organizations that assist children and adults, including the Brandon Boys and Girls Club.

To raise additional funds, Coldwell Banker CARES coordinators are seeking donations for items such as T-shirts, pumpkins, sodas, hot dogs, baked goods and door prizes for raffles. Anyone interested in donating for this event should contact Baker or Julie Write at 662-1610.

Open house

The Bloomingdale-Valrico Volunteer Fire Department Station 27 will host an open

house Oct. 4 at the station house at 4705 E. Bloomingdale Ave.

There will be food, children's activities and educational opportunities.

Call 744-5906.

Fall tea

Ladies and little ladies are invited to the second annual St. Stephen Catholic Church Ladies Tea Oct. 25 from 10 a.m. to noon. The cost is \$15 and includes an array of sandwiches, scones, muffins and desserts plus teas. Hostesses of a table of eight can use their own dishes and table decorations. Seating is limited. All proceeds will go to St. Vincent de Paul.

Call: Mary Devney, 684-6617.

Cheerleading clinic

The Bloomingdale High School Bulls Cheerleading Squad will host a cheerleading clinic Oct. 25 from 1 to 4 p.m. on the school grounds. Participants will learn cheers, chants and dances while helping the Bloomingdale cheerleaders raise money to buy music, megaphones, mats and uniforms. The clinic is for boys and

girls, ages 6 to 12.

The cost is \$30 per child and includes a snack, shirt, pom pom, Bulls picture frame and admission to a varsity game to cheer.

Contact any Bloomingdale cheerleader or sign up at any home game.

Trade in, trade up

The Bloomingdale Stein Mart is collecting gently used clothing for The Spring of Tampa Bay, a domestic violence shelter. Residents are asked to bring in their donations Oct. 10-11. In exchange for each garment donated, they will receive up to four coupons worth 20 percent off any one item at Stein Mart as well as a tax receipt for the donation.

Call: Ellen Gesell, 689-0025.

In concert

Bloomingdale High School's concert, symphony and chamber orchestras will perform a fall orchestra showcase Oct. 13 at 7 p.m. in the school's auditorium. Admission is free, but donations are welcome.

Call: Tracy Allen, 654-4948.

STEAK

From page 19

rant in the new development, Weiner said, will be a Quizno's sandwich shop, a Valet Cleaners and All-Pro Barbers, each at 1,200 square feet. A Card Smart greeting cards and party shop and a nail salon will fill another 2,600 and 1,400 square feet, respectively. Katrina's Dance Studio will relocate to the center along with The Learning Center, which provides tutoring for school-age children.

Weiner placed the value of the property at \$2.8 million.

"The demand has been tremendous," he added. "We try to build in upscale areas that have dramatic growth going on, and the Brandon/Valrico area is one of the best locations in the

country we've ever built on because of the quality of housing and the quality of the lifestyle."

This is the third project CanAm Development LLC has developed in Florida in the past 18 months.

"I've done over 37 shopping centers adjoining Albertsons grocery stores throughout the country and this one is different," Weiner said, "because this is probably one of the few shopping centers we 100 percent pre-leased before construction."

That was the draw for Jordan, who lives in Valrico.

"He likes the corner and he feels there's a need for a quality steakhouse with affordable prices in Brandon," said Weiner.

COUNCIL

From page 3

enter to Boyette Road, to be replaced by a Walgreens.

The BACC is working on acquisition of property off Springvale Drive for an access road for a neighborhood dog park.

The BACC also is monitoring traffic and safety problems related to the sewer line project down Lithia-Pinecrest Road to Erindale Drive to Culbreath Road. The southbound lane of Culbreath Road from Bloomingdale Avenue to Timbergrove Drive will experience intermittent closures through Dec. 12.

Security

The BACC hopes to reduce home burglaries by urging residents to close garage doors and secure homes. Residents also need to lock up autos and valuables to prevent burglary and vandalism.

Mobile Watch coordinator

Tony Diolosa is in the process of revitalizing Bloomingdale's mobile watch program under the new title "Homeland Security Watch." Anyone interested in becoming a part of the crime prevention program can contact him at 681-1146.

The BACC is also extending its support for the new school resource officer at Bloomingdale High School, Officer Grant Smith, and is advocating street lights for River Crossings.

Safety

The BACC is awaiting word from the county's Public Works Traffic Engineering Division on construction of sidewalks in front of Cimino Elementary School.

The BACC also is monitoring plans for additional fire stations to serve the area.

In addition, the BACC is keeping an eye on new safety precautions in conjunction

with underground ammonia pipelines that run through Bloomingdale. Criminal tampering of one of those lines last May caused the evacuation of FishHawk Ranch residents.

Legislation

The BACC is continuing to work directly with State Rep. Johnnie Byrd, R-Plant City, and his staff on legislative issues such as school budgets, growth, transportation, homeland security and health care.

Library

Construction of the new South Brandon Library is scheduled to begin in December on Bloomingdale Avenue east of Bloomingdale High School.

Names for the new library have been submitted and the Hillsborough County Library Board is due to make a recommendation to the Hillsbor-

ough County Commission in the near future.

In addition, a Friends of the Library chapter is being organized. Anyone interested in participating can contact the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association.

Congratulations

The BACC would like to congratulate and welcome Major Larry York as he assumes his duties as the new commander for the Hillsborough County District IV Sheriff's Office.

The BACC also extends congratulations to Community Resource Deputy Pete Maurer, Community Service Officer Sandy Capitano and all of the Hillsborough County sheriff's deputies assigned to the Bloomingdale Community Substation for the special award they received from District IV headquarters for reducing crime rates in the area.

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Author Shares Secrets To Writing With Students

By LESLIE WHITE

"What did you see on the way to school today that you'd never noticed before?"

That's the question author Kimberly Willis Holt asked Cimino Elementary students to ponder during her presentation Sept. 26, after which she promised she'd explain the importance of her question.

Writing for nine years, Holt has penned several young adult fiction books, as well as two picture books for younger children, which will be published in 2005. Two of her award-winning books, "My Louisiana Sky" and "When Zachary Beaver Came to Town," have been made into movies.

Hailing from Amarillo, Texas, Holt told of her adventures as a military kid, and how that life exposed her to various cultures and memories that have since become fodder for her stories. She shares with the students her difficulty in making friends, and tells them that it was in the seventh grade she first thought of being a writer.



Author Kimberly Willis Holt was on hand at Cimino Elementary Sept. 26 to encourage the students to read and write.

"I fell in love with the characters in a book I was reading, and I realized I wanted to write like that."

She has achieved critical acclaim for the richness of the characters her words portray.

"I write for myself," Holt said. "It's so fun to visit the schools and realize I have a readership who loves my sto-

ries as much as I do."

Holt told colorful stories of how her characters evolved out of her memories, and explained to the students the reason for her first question.

"You never know how what's going on in your life will affect you later on," Holt said.

She encouraged the kids to be attentive to what's going

on around them, and to tuck away the details so they can pull them up again and possibly weave them into a story.

Holt entertained questions from the students about her books.

"Which is your favorite?" asked one. "I can't pick a favorite - I love them all," she answered.

When asked by another how long it takes her to write a book, Holt delves deeper into her process, sharing that it takes her anywhere from six months to 3 1/2 years to write a book.

She also admits that she writes her first draft, which she considers to be the most creative, long hand on a legal pad.

"My first book was rejected not once, but 17 times. I kept rewriting, reworking. By the time it was over, I'd written a new middle and a new ending."

The kids laughed, able to relate to having to rewrite.

Holt leaves them with piece of advice: "You don't have to have a computer to be a writer. All you have to have is a paper, a pen and heart."

NEIGHBOR

From page 5

Raised in Miami, Harrod remembers the first time she saw Bloomingdale. Surrounded by woods and fields, she thought she was in the middle of nowhere.

But she said she fell in love with her home and the neighborhood.

"I've loved it ever since I first stepped foot here. It reminded me of the type of neighborhood I grew up in during the '50s," she said. "It's a place where kids can play outside and neighbors look out for one another. I wanted Layne to have that experience."

Although Bloomingdale has grown to encompass some 5,000 homes, Harrod believes it's still close-knit. She likes the fact that she can still walk into the Bloomingdale Wal-Mart and run into half a dozen people she

knows. She likes knowing that, if she's in a bind, she can call on a neighbor for help.

"And she loves how they do all the decorations on the lamp posts at Christmas and maintain the plants by the Bloomingdale signs," said Layne, who attends Burns Middle School.

It wasn't just her desire to retain that sense of community that led Harrod to join the BHA board in July. She said she feels a duty to give back to her community after being given a second chance at life.

Nine years ago, Harrod was a passenger in a car that was broad sided by a dump truck at State Road 60 and Turkey Creek Road.

Critically injured, she almost didn't survive the trip to Tampa General Hospital's

trauma center.

She had a severe head injury, broken pelvis and trisected aorta, the same injury that recently killed actor John Ritter.

The outlook for Harrod was bleak. Her pastor came to the hospital to administer the Sacrament of the Sick (formerly known as the Last Rites).

But a noted heart surgeon happened to be on hand at TGH and was able to repair the damage to Harrod's heart. Prayers took care of the rest.

"It just changes your life," she said. "When you have a second chance, you appreciate things more. You don't look at things the same way. I always try to give back because I was given a second chance."

And, in the process, she

said, she hopes to set an example for Layne, who has already been recruited for civic duties such as putting stamps on the BHA membership drive envelopes and helping with the Bloomingdale PRIDE community cleanup program.

At the same time, Harrod said she's never too busy to find time for her daughter and Layne's two grown half sisters, Jessica and Jodie, who live nearby.

"We go shopping, to the movies, horseback riding," said Layne. "We try to do something together every weekend. Last weekend we all went to the Pottery Patch to paint ceramics and this weekend we're going to Busch Gardens."

"I thank God every day for my life," said Harrod. "I don't take anything for granted."

AWARDS

From page 1

ard including Grable, the program's author, Cheryl Kehrmeier, Lydia Harrod, BHA Vice President Joe Hickle and Stan and Jane Lee along with Bloomingdale Gazette Executive Director Joe Liguori, office manager Joni Hickle and Bloomingdale Taxing District trustee Michael Buday were on hand at the County Center Sept. 24 to accept the award from county commissioners on behalf of the community.

The award was presented to Bloomingdale for its PRIDE program, which stands for "People of Bloomingdale Revitalizing, Improving, Development and Enjoying our great community."

Initiated last spring, the program encourages residents to clean up their yards, homes and garages by offering free disposal of household and yard items that cannot be thrown out during regular garbage disposal days.

On the two cleanup days this year so far, residents were disposed of more than 100 cubic yards of trash, including old lawn furniture and grills, construction debris, mattresses, couches and lawn equipment.

In presenting awards to the seven winners of the county's Neighborhood Recognition Award ceremony, County Commissioner Ken Hagan said Bloomingdale and the other winners have a right to be proud.

"We all use the term 'neighborhood' or 'our neighborhood,' but these neighborhoods here are really the best of the best," he said. "When you go through these neighborhoods, as I've had the privilege of doing, you feel a true sense of community, and you know why they're here

today and achieve these awards."

Grable noted that, with 5,000 homes, Bloomingdale would be the hundredth largest municipality in the state if incorporated. He said the impetus of the award was a growing concern in the 25-year-old community that it age gracefully.

After accepting the award, the BHA board took the opportunity to turn the tables and present its first Good Neighbor Awards to two county departments that were instrumental in the success of the PRIDE program.

The recipients were Shelley Blood of the county's Office of Neighborhood Relations that supported the program by having the county provide Dumpsters and a shelter for volunteers at no cost. An award also was presented to Jeff Mauch and Clayton Weaver of the county's Park Maintenance Unit II, which opened its facility on Natures Way for residents to drop off trash. Weaver operated the backhoe, transferring the debris from cars, vans and pickup trucks into the Dumpsters.

Their names have been placed on a central plaque in the homeowners association office. Other Good Neighbor award recipients will be added in coming months and years, said Grable.

Kehrmeier also took the opportunity to thank County Commissioner Ronda Storms who supported the program from the beginning, even participating in Bloomingdale's first cleanup.

"When we kicked this thing off back in April ... she picked up the biggest bag of garbage of any of our volunteers that day," said

Kehrmeier. "We talked about our program last fall, but it took some support from the county and the community to breathe the life into it and get it launched. We're thrilled with this recognition, and it really, really makes us feel very satisfied that we're heading in the right direction."

Storms had kudos for the BHA as well.

"The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association is a stellar example of what other homeowners associations can become with a little bit of encouragement," she said. "I am very grateful for the great work that they do and continue to do in a variety of areas."

In addition to receiving the award for best beautification program, the BHA was the runner-up in the category of best newsletter for the Bloomingdale Gazette.

Other neighborhood recognition award winners included the Young Islanders of

Davis Island for most successful youth program, the Northdale Civic Association for most successful special event for its Family Fun Festival, Twelve Oaks Neighborhood Watch for best crime watch program, Southeast Seminole Heights News for best newsletter, the Wilson Lake Neighborhood Association for best environmental program and the Carrollwood Meadows Homeowners Association for best Web site.

Bloomingdale's next communitywide PRIDE cleanup day is scheduled for Nov. 15 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The monthly meeting of Bloomingdale Neighborhood PRIDE is set for Oct. 20 from 7 to 8 p.m. Anyone interested in becoming involved in the PRIDE program is encouraged to attend.

Hillsborough County's government access television filmed the Aug. 16 cleanup and the show is expected to be aired Oct. 13 at 8 a.m.

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