

In the know

SCHOOLS ARE PACKED; WHAT IS PLANNED?

Two elementary schools in Ruskin and Riverview's Sesuma Elementary are bursting at the seams, though relief for all three schools is on the horizon. 10

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS » 2

Neighborhood dysfunction: Accusations of nepotism, mismanagement and ethics violations involving the Rivercrest Community Development District board are causing turmoil in the sprawling Riverview community. 3

Colleagues in mourning: Jennie Kaye Howell, who worked for the Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce, has died. She was 59. Ms. Howell was known for her charm, bright disposition and bubbly personality, co-workers said. 3

Music man: Off stage, Alfred Sheppard Jr. is a mild-mannered high school student. But at the keyboard, Alfred and his band can stir a crowd with their jazz tunes. 4

SPORTS » 9

Backyard brawl: Newsome and Riverview high schools square off on the football field tonight. The winner gets a year's bragging rights.

Surprising spots: After five games, the first-year Spoto High School football team is 3-2 and contending for a playoff spot — something that's usually unthinkable for a new program.

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South Shore &
Brandon Times

tampabay.com

Friday, October 12, 2007 | BRN



Architect Mike Calvino doesn't do ordinary houses. That's why he took seven years to design and build this one.

What's with that house?

RUSKIN — Can a house have a soul? ¶ Can a building breathe? ¶ This one does. ¶ The house at the end of Canal Street in Ruskin is a different species from the modest bungalow-style homes on either side. ¶ It towers up three stories, facing the water, but there's no clear division between inside and outside. A wall becomes a massive door. A living room becomes a balcony. ¶ Kitchen walls hang from the ceiling. On the top floor, bridges, parapets. In some places the floor is stamped concrete, in others wood. Sometimes it is made of glass, looking down onto the floor below. ¶ Architect Michael Calvino built this house with his own hands. ¶ He dug the foundation. He soldered the metal struts. He cut down a tree and planed the wood to make the hardwood floor. ¶ See CALVINO, 7



It has taken architect Michael Calvino seven years to design and build this Ruskin house to his exacting specifications. His client says he has had to be patient, but he's pleased with the outcome. The house has open and airy rooms, above, and bridges like the one out front, top.

SKIP O'ROURKE | Times



ERNEST HOOPER
Lunch with Ernest

Growing champions, teaching about life

Most people who drive by the Brandon Sports & Aquatic Center see a 12-acre complex that has served the community for 44 years.

Peter Banks sees his passion. Banks, the center's longtime swimming coach, has coached thousands of kids over the years and guided area athletes Brooke Bennett and Maritza Correia to Olympic success.

He now serves as executive director and head swim coach and strives to upgrade the center so it can serve Brandon's next generation of swimmers, gymnasts and tennis players.

Over lunch at La Septima, Banks talked about his goals and why he continues to coach after 40 years.

Pull up a chair and join us.



Photos by SKIP O'ROURKE | Times

A pool reflects the back of the house. Michael Calvino built the house himself to maintain total control over its construction.

>> CALVINO continued from 1

Inside feels like outside

The owner, a former prosecutor named Stanley Woodruff, originally just wanted to build a regular house: a nice one-story house with an open floor plan.

Then a friend referred him to Calvino. Calvino had never built a house before. But when Woodruff saw the models in his studio, he was thunderstruck.

"Holy cow," he remembers thinking. "It was so different ... I just looked at it like, 'Wow, this is so far out!'"

Woodruff was not a risk taker. "I've always been a very conservative person," he said. "I don't drink to excess. I don't smoke. ... I don't do crazy things. I don't bungee jump or parachute or ride a motorcycle."

But he decided to take a gamble on the young architect whose models looked more like space stations or sailing ships than houses.

"Let's try something different," he told his wife, a dentist. "Let's have a last-hurrah

FAST FACTS

Open house

Calvino will open the house to the public from 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday. The house is at 1012 Canal St. in Ruskin. For more information, call 229-3411.

house."

He paid Calvino about \$400,000. He figured at the most, it would take two years to build the two-bedroom, 2,050-square-foot house.

It took nearly seven years. "I had to have a lot of patience," Woodruff said. "Mike is probably the most brilliant guy I've ever met, but he's also a total perfectionist."

Calvino won't dispute that. He built the house himself, he says, so that he could have total control. He didn't want to

trust the construction to contractors. He won't say how much more it cost him, in labor and materials, than what Woodruff paid. And he won't hazard a guess as to what it's worth.

"It's like a custom car — it's worth what someone is willing to pay for it," he said. "What are you going to compare it to?"

That's a good question. Neighbors call the house "Fort Ruskin." Woodruff wonders if he'll be living in the next Fallingwater, if the unknown architect he hired will become the next Frank Lloyd Wright.

But that depends on what Calvino does next.

He's already making sketches for new houses. Houses that collect rainwater. Houses that sway with the wind. Houses that move by themselves.

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For less reliance on air conditioning, Calvino's design uses large screens that allow air to flow freely throughout the entire house. Above is a crank he designed and built to open and close the higher windows in the dining room, left. The crank is located against the wall of windows, behind the table.

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