

## **Bluffton Today**

Wed, 17-Feb. 2010

**Column by Mayor Sulka**

### **She says...**

In December 1989, I witnessed my first snow in this county. Our oldest daughter was just two weeks old and we were preparing our Christmas visits to both sides of the family when we walked outside our home and saw the small flakes of snow begin to fall. It snowed throughout the night and we woke up to six to eight inches of snow. This past Friday night, the snow returned — 20 years later. I am glad this is a very infrequent occurrence, but it was exciting to call my friends and tell them that it was snowing in Bluffton.

#### **Rain barrel/rain garden program**

This week, I want to highlight an important program, supportive of the town, relating to our environment — the rain barrel/rain garden program. This is an initiative aimed at reducing non-point source pollution as part of the May River Watershed Action Plan and is a major component of the 3-year Section 319 grant won by the town in 2009.

Currently the target area for this retrofit project is in the Historic District. The town chose this area because it is a highly visible setting for this type of small-scale environmental retrofit that will directly affect the stormwater runoff to the May River. By installing these rain barrels and/or rain gardens, these businesses and residents can reduce the amount of stormwater and the pollutants it carries that leaves their property, and will create a more vibrant, sustainable community that will retain its character while increasing the quality of life for all of us and celebrating the May River.

Residents and businesses within the Historic District can receive all necessary rain barrel equipment as well as materials to plant a rain garden. A number of the Historic District's businesses have signed on, including Preston Studios, Reclamation by Design and Maye River Gallery. You can contact Kim Jones in the Office of Planning and Environmental Sustainability at 706-4593 or e-mail her [kjones@townofbluffton.com](mailto:kjones@townofbluffton.com) for more information.

For more on the Section 319 grant and rain barrels and rain gardens that can be installed in your neighborhood, visit our Web site at [www.TownOfBluffton.com](http://www.TownOfBluffton.com)

#### **Census**

I said last week that I would continue to remind you about the upcoming census. Listen to the recent ads on both television and radio, as they make a lot of sense — especially in our town. The last census for 2005 calculated our population in the low-4,000 range. We currently expect the numbers to be close to 15,000. Towns like ours that are growing in population need the additional revenue to provide the services that our residents expect, so we need our fair share from the federal government in order to do so within our budget. **FILL OUT THE CENSUS** and spread the word.