



On Top of the World NEWS

Where the News is Always Good

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David and Paula Shira go green with new solar panels on their home in Candler Hills.

Solar Energy Arrives In Candler Hills

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David and Paula Shira moved to Candler Hills East in June 2006, in tow with their commitment to a lifestyle of saving energy. When relocating from South Florida to Ocala, the Shiras chose On Top of the World Communities because of its partnership with Building America and ENERGY STAR™ certification for every new home. On Top of the World Communities, Inc. has a well-established reputation for quality construction.

The Shiras knew before their home was even built that they wanted to later install a Solar Electric System (SES) on the roof. This system would enable them to produce electrical energy for their home, reducing their need for power from the local grid. They even chose their home site based on this consideration. They wanted the roofline to have maximum exposure to the southern sky. In addition, the Shiras worked with the construction department at On Top of the World to minimize the ventilation outlets located on the side of the roof where they planned to install the SES.

According to Mr. Shira, installing solar panels is not a do-it-yourself project. There are many factors to consider. A professional in-

stallation with an experienced contractor is the best way to go. The Shiras used Energy Conservation Services of North Florida, Inc. (ECS), which sells and installs SES equipment. They have been in the solar contracting business for 30 years, and Mr. Shira found that they were the most experienced company in the state.

Before beginning this project, the Shiras submitted an Application for Approval of Request for Modification to the Candler Hills HOA. The Shiras found the Board to be very supportive of the project.

The Shiras had 22 panels installed on two sections of their roof. While they wanted to use 200-watt panels, they compromised with 175-watt panels to ensure the panels could withstand a wind load of 110 to 120 mph. The Shiras intend to install more panels in the future. At completion, they estimate they will be producing 100 percent of the energy they need to power their home.

On July 26 at 1:30 p.m., the Shiras' SES began producing power for their home. The system generated 10 kw the first day. In addition to decreasing their need for power from the local grid, the system has also reduced their home's CO₂ gas emissions by 427 pounds as

of Aug. 13. The amount increases as each day passes.

How does the system work? Sunlight hits the panels, which convert the solar energy into electrical energy. This electrical energy then travels to an inverter which converts the electricity from Direct Current (DC) to Alternating Current (AC), the type of power used by appliances in the home. If the panels generate more power than the Shiras use in a day, the extra energy is output to the local power grid. If the panels produce less power than the Shiras need, the home pulls energy from the local power grid. Currently, the Shiras estimate they need 35 to 40 kw per day to operate everything in the home. They are able to pull half of what they need from the SES; the other half comes from Progress Energy. During the winter months, when the sun is lower in the sky, the SES will produce more power for their home.

With the cost of electricity sure to increase in the future, the Shiras believe their decision to begin producing their own energy was a wise investment and a great lifestyle choice.

They highly encourage others to make this investment as well. The Shiras recommend lowering your energy need first by installing

better windows (if not already in place), adding insulation, energy saving appliances and compact fluorescent light bulbs. Once you have the energy requirement as low as you can make it, then install the SES. As far as the expense of installing such a system, there are rebates and other financial incentives from the state and federal governments to offset the cost.

For more information about how you can reduce your energy costs, visit the Progress Energy Web site, www.progress-energy.com and the Florida Solar Energy Association Web site, www.flaseia.org. To speak to the Shiras about their experience with this project, you may contact them at 236-1928.



David and Paula Shira



Anthony and Rita Cacciutto

Lions Helping Shut-Ins

Do you need a ride to the doctor's office, grocery store, beauty shop or barber? Lions Anthony and Rita Cacciutto have instituted a new program with their committee to help those people who cannot drive and have no one to take them to their appointments.

If you also would like to have someone just stop by occasionally to read to you or just talk for a little while they will also be happy to assist.

Anthony is a retired minister and he and Rita enjoy helping those in need. This is their way of giving back to the community.

For more information you can contact Anthony and Rita at 854-1364. The Lions' mission statement is to "create and foster a spirit of understanding among all people for humanitarian need by providing voluntary services through community involvement and international cooperation."

Master the Possibilities Goes 'Online'

The popular Master the Possibilities education program continues to grow by leaps and bounds. We expect 12,000 enrollments this year. In order to make class registration easier and more convenient, we will be adding ONLINE registrations beginning Sept. 27 for fall (October through November) classes. We will continue to take phone registrations and walk-ins. This is simply another way to allow students to register at their convenience! (This will replace e-mail currently used.)

To register on-line follow these step-by-step instructions:

- Go to www.MasterthePossibilities.com.
- To view classes without registering as a member or student simply click Class Schedule on the menu. Select the month you wish to view. Classes are listed chronologically.
- To enroll for classes online you must be a member. To register as a new member, click Log In on the main menu and then click Register at the bottom of the page. Fill in all blanks on registration form and click Sign Up. As a returning member you will simply click Log In and enter your User Name and Password.
- To register for a class click Class Schedule in the main menu. Select the month you wish to view. Classes are listed chronologically. Click on the class name. Click Register for this Class. You will notice that on the right hand side of the screen you can see the number of seats available for the class. If there are no seats available you can click Notify Me and you will receive an e-mail notifying you if a seat opens. If you wish to cancel this class, click Cancel This Class to remove it from your schedule.
- To view any classes you are registered for or to make changes to your account, Log In and click My Account. Here you can view or print any classes that you are currently enrolled in. You can also cancel a class at any time.
- Classes registered for online will continue to be paid for at the Education Office before or at the be-



ginning of the class. If you are an On Top of the World resident, please remember to bring your ID when paying for your class.

If you are registered online and a change occurs to your class, we will notify you via e-mail or by phone (if you do not have e-mail). The message will come from the address MTPUupdates@otowfl.com (this is a non-reply e-mail). Please add this to your contacts to avoid notifications going into your junk mail.

Register early — our classes fill quickly!

If you'd like to learn more about this new, more convenient way to register, stop by the Education Office located in the Circle Square Commons Town Center, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or call 854-9751 — we'll be happy to answer your questions. We'll also have informal "classes" on this every Wednesday in September from 2 to 2:30 p.m. in Classroom 3.

Thanks for your continued support. See you in class!