

THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

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APRIL 2008 ♦ THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BLOOMINGDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION SINCE 1980

Good Dinner Conversation

Volunteers lauded at annual dinner.

PAGE 4

Vandals Torch Tot Playground

The cost of vandalism is steep for the county and homeowners.

PAGE 8

INDEX

Yard of the Month3

Property Manager's Report...14

Law Enforcement17

Ready To Roll



JOY BOISELLE/Gazette photo

Dave Watkins, at the wheel, in March instructs Bloomingdale Citizens On Patrol volunteer Evan Blicker during a field training session. Twenty volunteers recently completed classroom training for the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office crime prevention initiative and will soon begin monitoring Bloomingdale area neighborhoods in marked patrol cars. See story, page 16.

5 Taxing District Trustee Seats Open

DEADLINE TO APPLY IS MAY 19, see page 14



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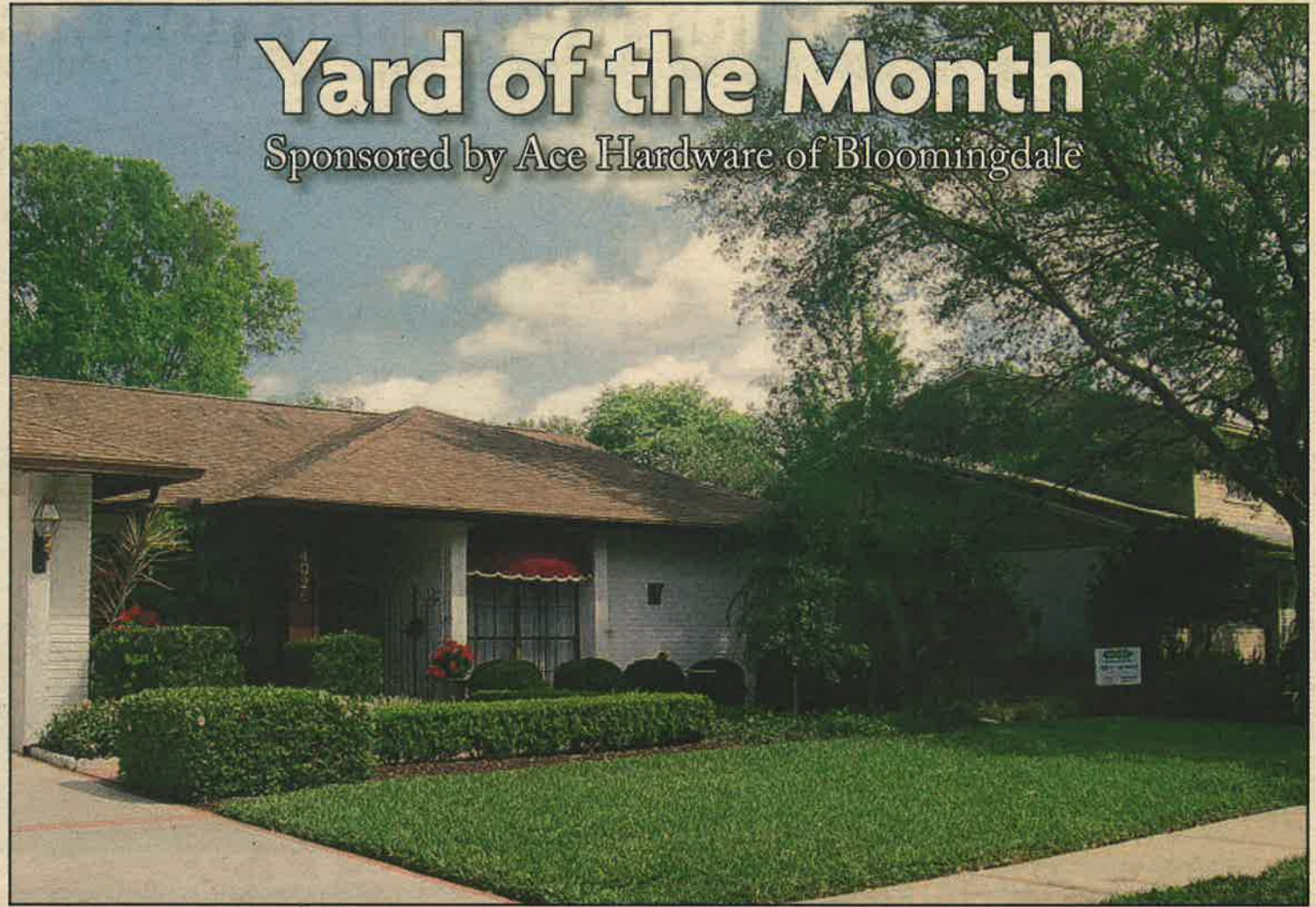
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Kudos Dished Out At Annual Dinner

By JOY BOISSELLE

The Bloomingdale Homeowner Association board of directors held its Community Appreciation Dinner Feb. 21 at Buca di Beppo Italian Restaurant on Causeway Boulevard in Brandon. The annual event honors resident volunteers, businesses, public officials and others who work hand-in-hand with the association for the benefit of the community.

Volunteer members of the homeowners association and the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District attended, along with several past honorees and other invitees.

Bruce Korte, owner of Ace Hardware of Bloomingdale, and Jane Lee, homeowners association board member and manager of the organization's Web site, www.bloomingdalegazette.com, each received the association's Good Neighbor award.

Korte was lauded for his support of the community's Yard of the Month program. Lee received a plaque in appreciation of her efforts to update and manage the community's Web site.

Joni Hickle, volunteer dinner committee chairperson, said, "This dinner is held to recognize people who have stepped up, above and beyond, and supported the community without asking for anything in return."

Good Neighbor award recipients, Hickle said, can be anybody who has helped out the community including residents, businesses, and even teenagers. Past recipients included Hillsborough County Parks, Recreation and Conservation Dept. employees Jeff Mauch and Clayton Weaver for their work during the association's Neighborhood PRIDE Community Cleanup Day program, and Bloomingdale Golfers Club, which regularly provides golf carts in support of the community's annual Fourth of July parade.

Volunteers are always needed and welcomed in Bloomingdale. If you are looking for ways to make your community better and perhaps even earn your own Good Neighbor award, call the BHA at (813) 681-2051 or e-mail bloomingdale.homeowners@verizon.net.



Photos from Joni Hickle

Homeowners association president Joe Hickle, at left, presents the community's Good Neighbor award to Chris Korte, manager of Ace Hardware of Bloomingdale. Korte accepted the honor on behalf of his father, Bruce Korte, who was lauded for his support of the BHA-sponsored Yard of the Month program.



Bloomingdale Homeowners Association secretary and treasurer, Pam Liguori, seated in front at left, and board member Lydia Harrod, seated second from the front on right, dine and chat with fellow volunteers and other invitees.



Bloomingdale Special Taxing District treasurer David West, left, and homeowners association president Joe Hickle, right, flank fellow volunteers and other guests at the appreciation dinner.

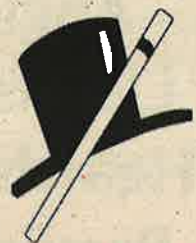


Bloomingdale Special Taxing District president Thom Snelling addresses attendees at the community dinner, held Feb. 21 at Buca di Beppo Italian Restaurant on Causeway Boulevard in Brandon.



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Angie's List Rates Healthcare Providers

A Gazette Report

Angie's List, at www.angieslist.com - where consumers share ratings and reviews of local contractors and service companies - has expanded to include physicians, dentists, facilities, pharmacies and health insurance providers.

"Consumers want and deserve to have a trustworthy source to find the health care service providers that best fit their specific priorities," said Angie Hicks, founder of the list.

"We already offer the nation's most reliable ratings for 280 categories of local services, bringing in health care providers is a natural step."

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See ANGE, Page 12



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Vandals Torch Tot Playground

By JOY BOISELLE

More than 25,000 of Hillsborough County taxpayers' dollars were hard at work in March – all to replace playground equipment destroyed by vandals.

Jeff Mauch, Hillsborough County Parks, Recreation and Conservation maintenance unit supervisor, said sometime during the evening of Jan. 3, vandals set fire to one of two play structures at Bloomingdale East Neighborhood Park on Natures Way.

“A resident reported one of the tot play structures was on fire and firefighters and police responded,” Mauch said. Funds to repair the damage – which Mauch said exceeded \$25,000 – were allocated from county coffers.

Vandalism is an ongoing problem in many communities, and Bloomingdale is no exception. Repairs for the county-owned playground were accomplished through county monies, but funds to repair vandalism damage to Bloomingdale community property



Photo from Hillsborough County Parks, Recreation and Conservation Dept. Yellow tape surrounds fire damage caused by vandals Jan. 3 at Bloomingdale East Neighborhood Park on Natures Way.

come directly from a special tax residents pay annually to the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District.

All property owners in Bloomingdale pay a special tax included on their annual property tax bill for community maintenance and improvements. The tax, currently \$100 per residence or property, will

rise to \$130 a year for fiscal year 2008. Obviously, money would best be spent on community improvement projects and not vandalism repairs.

Mauch asked residents be vigilant and to supervise their children. To report vandalism or suspicious activities (non-emergency only) call the sheriff's office, (813) 247-8200.



JOY BOISELLE/Gazette photo

Christine Riley and her daughter Ashleigh, 3, enjoy a recently repaired play structure at Bloomingdale East Neighborhood Park. Vandals in January caused more than \$25,000 in damages to the structure.

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Correction

It is the policy of The Bloomingdale Gazette to correct all errors of fact. To report an error, e-mail lfrazier@tampatrib.com or call (813) 657-4523.

Patty Fuller, Bloomingdale High School band booster member, and Joe Karpenski, a 17-year-old band student, were incorrectly identified in a photo published in the March issue of the Gazette.

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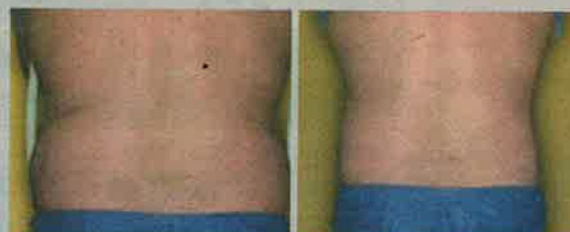
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Resident Proposes Neighborhood Skate Park



Photo from Joe Bledsoe

Skateboarders Zachary Bledsoe, Jared Austin, Tristian Shepard and Seth Shepard, from the left, are among many youngsters in Bloomingdale who would enjoy a neighborhood skate park.

By JANE LEE

A grass-roots effort is underway to gauge community support for the construction of a skate park in Bloomingdale. Although a proposed site has not yet been identified, proponent Joe Bledsoe, a Bloomingdale resident, wants to determine if there is sufficient community need, desire and support to create such a park.

Bledsoe said more than 12 million people in the United States currently enjoy skateboarding and the sport encourages more people of all ages to go outside and develop healthy, active lifestyles.

In addition, Bledsoe said, building a public skate park and including skaters in all aspects of the process - organization, fundraising, and design - would draw skaters into the civic process and cement their ties to the community. They would also learn that some things take time, and that patience and persistence often pay off.

Bledsoe is inviting residents to weigh in on the proposed skate park by sending an e-mail to him at bloomingsdaleskatepark@verizon.net. Comments for or against the park are welcome, and writers may include contact information or choose to remain anonymous. Writers may also simply respond with "AGREE" or "DISAGREE" in the subject line.

Bledsoe said he will tally all the responses he receives and decide where to go from there.

Although the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association board has not formally been approached regarding a skate park and takes no position at this time, the board encourages residents to respond to Bledsoe's request with any opinions or comments they may have regarding the construction of a neighborhood skate park.

Jane Lee is a Bloomingdale resident and a member of the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association Board of Directors.

Report Broken Sidewalks

By JANE LEE

At a recent meeting of the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, the board of directors was asked to address the deteriorating condition of sidewalks in our community. The main areas of concern are safety issues that could arise from broken and misaligned sidewalks, as well as the esthetics of "temporary fix" asphalt repairs.

The board agreed that asphalt

repairs to concrete sidewalks can suffice as a temporary fix, but the unsightly repairs are becoming all too common and seemingly permanent throughout Bloomingdale.

The homeowners association board in March contacted Hillsborough County regarding the condition of and repair process for sidewalks. The great news is that the county has agreed to take a different approach to

See **SIDEWALKS**, Page 12



LAURA FRAZIER/Gazette photo

Run For The Money

More than 300 men, women and children queued up on Culbreath Road March 1 to participate in "Run For Your Life... Or Someone Else's," a 5-kilometer run/walk fundraiser sponsored by the MOMS Club of Bloomingdale/Valrico to benefit the American Cancer Society. Event chairwoman Sarah Woodyer said the run netted more than \$6,000 for the cancer society. The club plans to make the race an annual event.

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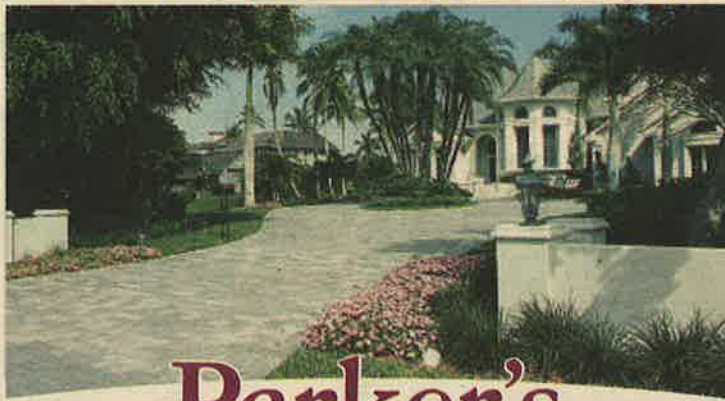
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SIDEWALKS

From page 11

repairing our sidewalks. Beginning immediately, county representatives said, sidewalks with joints that are less than 1.5 inches high will be ground down, and joints more than 1.5 inches high - as well as broken sections - will be replaced.

The board of directors asks neighbors to help identify sections of sidewalk that may require repairs or replacement. Residents are asked to e-

mail details about the sidewalk condition and location, including the number of the TECO power pole closest to the site, to BHA board member George May at gtiv@aol.com. Information provided will be forwarded to the county and will help to maintain and improve the beautiful community of Bloomingdale.

Jane Lee is a Bloomingdale resident and a member of the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association Board of Directors.

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ANGIE

From page 6

retailers and health insurance companies.

Hicks said, "We've already heard stories ranging from poor customer care to exceptional service."

Before reports are published, Hicks said, posting members must affirm

that they are reporting their honest experiences and a team of members reads each report.

"Service companies across the country use Angie's List as to gauge customer satisfaction and to adjust their practices, if necessary," she said. "It's time the health care industry had a similar tool."

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LAURA FRAZIER/Gazette photo

'50s Flashback

Ann and Alberto Velazquez designed A Flavor In Time Soda Shoppe, at 4344 Bell Shoals Road, Bloomingdale, to be reminiscent of an old-fashioned soda shop and ice-cream parlor. The store recently opened near Beef O'Brady's in the Village Center Plaza, and offers 23 flavors of hand-dipped ice cream "home made" in Seffner, old-fashioned sodas, malts, shakes and sundaes. The quaint, vintage décor and a 1950s soundtrack help to round out the retro experience. Hours are noon to 10 p.m. seven days a week. Info: (813) 685-5300.

0002421646-01



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0002420691-01

Vandalism Damage Repairs Sap District Funds

By AL DEVNEY
Property Manager

Bloomingtondale Special Taxing District Property Manager Al Devney oversees maintenance and improvements to community common areas such as entryways, landscaping and irrigation. Devney submits a report each month to the taxing district board of trustees. The following is a synopsis of the property manager's report for February 2008. To report a community maintenance need, contact Devney at (813) 684-6667 or bloomingtondale.district@verizon.net.

Vandalism increased in February. Two trash can inserts were stolen on Canoga Park Drive (\$26); 12 light bulbs, two light receptacles, three rotors and three holly bushes were broken or damaged at the Treeline Drive entrance (\$126); and nine aluminum pickets and a 9-foot section of aluminum fence were stolen on Erindale Drive (\$600). In addition, two lights, six irrigation risers and five sprinkler heads were destroyed at the Clariside Drive entrance (\$315). Total damage repair costs due to vandalism for the month were \$1,067.

There were three accidents involving community property damage in February, including

two car versus median incidents on Erindale Drive and Garnet Drive and one car versus brick wall crash on Groveway Drive. The first two accidents were repaired and billed. At the time of this writing, the TECO power pole and damaged wall has been fenced off. Proposals to repair extensive damage to the electrical and irrigation systems have been received. Proposals to replace damaged landscaping, reinstall the sign and rebuild the wall are in progress.

According to the plans to widen Bell Shoals Road from Glenhaven Drive to Rosemead Drive (which engineers said are about 60 percent complete), work should begin in 2009 and sleeves will be installed in the medians in case there is a future need to irrigate them.

Flags Unlimited installed a new flag and pole in the Erindale Drive median. Morningstar Electric replaced the outlet boxes destroyed in accidents in the Erindale and Garnet Drive medians. The landscaping was set to be replaced in late February or early March after the last chance for cold-kill.

To correct a line-of-sight problem at the Tyndale Drive entrance, Davidson Landscaping moved a palm tree and bush grouping from the Windell

Drive entrance on the south side of Erindale Drive to a location across the street.

The Tampa Tribune was called to request removal of their abandoned newspaper box at Bloomingtondale Avenue and Culbreath Road, and the box was removed the next day.

A line-of-sight problem at the corner of Culbreath Road and Bloomingtondale Avenue was researched at the request of a concerned resident. A sign at the intersection was determined to be a potential safety hazard for motorists trying to make a right-hand turn to go east on Bloomingtondale Avenue. Deputy Pete Maurer was notified and concurred; he will address the problem with the appropriate agencies.

In the land of eat, drink and pitch out the window, there were 21 bags of trash, a blue and badly dented mountain bike, a 35MM camera in pieces, half of a plastic chair, a changing table, two traffic cones, two pairs of hedge clippers, two gloves and 18 cents. Illegal signs removed totaled 17, and 23 light bulbs were replaced. The beverages of choice were

Diet Coke with Lime for soft drinks, Miller High Life for beer and Smirnoff Vodka for distilled spirits.

Five Taxing District Trustee Seats Set To Open

A Gazette Report

Bloomingtondale residents who want to help determine how the community's special tax is spent to accomplish neighborhood common area maintenance and improvements may wish to consider applying for one of five Bloomingtondale Special Taxing District trustee seats set to open Sept. 30. The deadline to submit an application for the non-paid, volunteer positions is noon on May 19. Prospective applicants should contact Tim Bridge at the Supervisor of Elections Office, (813) 276-8269 or bridget@hillsboroughcounty.org. Residents will elect new members by special referendum on the Aug. 26 primary election ballot.

Residents who wish to learn more about the taxing district are invited to attend the organization's next regular board meeting, 7 p.m. April 14 at the Bloomingtondale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico. For more information go to www.bloomingtondalegazette.com, call (813) 684-6667 or e-mail bloomingtondale.district@verizon.net.

Contest Promotes Buff, Healthy Bodies

By JOY BOISSELLE

Fantastic abs and bulging biceps took center stage March 20 at Bloomingdale High School where more than 500 spectators cheered on 15 boys and 5 girls who competed in the second annual Mister and Miss Bloomingdale bodybuilding competition.

Seniors Keith Mooney and Katelyn Molkenthin earned top honors and bragging rights as the competition's overall winners.

Contestants and organizers said the competition, more than just a "best body" contest, represented their commitment to physical fitness, nutrition and overall health.

Contestant Ariel Rodriguez, a senior, said, "I am here to have fun, but obesity is an epidemic in the U.S. and it's important to be physically fit."

The contest was modeled after professional bodybuilding competitions and included group and individual posing and routines set to music. Just like their professional counterparts, contestants underwent weigh-ins to determine competition class and were tanned and oiled up for the challenge.

Event sponsors Jarrod Gelling and Anneliese Perez, representatives of Southern Muscle Sports Nutrition in Brandon, helped judge the contest. They also provided step-by-step advice



JOY BOISSELLE/Gazette photo

Victors of the Mister and Miss Bloomingdale bodybuilding competition, seniors Keith Mooney and Katelyn Molkenthin, share the stage at Bloomingdale High March 20 with Jarrod Gelling and Anneliese Perez, representatives of event sponsor, Southern Muscle Sports Nutrition of Brandon.

to ensure the event closely followed professional bodybuilding standards.

"If any of these kids are serious about bodybuilding, this experience will help prepare them for how professional competitions are run," Gelling said.

Competitors were judged under three criteria, Gelling said - muscularity, or how well the muscles can be seen; symmetry, so that both sides of the body

match; and proportion, wherein no one body area is more developed than others.

The senior class fundraising event netted \$3,000 for this year's prom, and all contestants received gift certificates for their efforts.

Katherine Proly, senior class advisor and Bloomingdale alum, said, "Last year's event was a huge hit and this year's Mister and Miss Bloomingdale showed us that this is now a tradition that

students look forward to."

Proly said she learned a lot from the event and hopes the competition focuses the attention of students on the benefits of taking care of themselves.

"They taught me a lot about what to eat health-wise and what not to eat. By spotlighting their bodies, it shows the crowd what taking care of yourself by diet and exercise can do in just a matter of months," she said.

And The Winners Are...

GIRLS

Middleweight

Katelyn Molkenthin

Lightweight

Shawna Johnson

BOYS

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Citizen Cops Converge On Community

By JOY BOISSELLE

Brandon Knight was among 20 Bloomingdale area residents who graduated from a classroom training course that aims to put citizen volunteers on neighborhood streets to act as extra eyes and ears for sheriff's deputies.

Knight, who has lived in Bloomingdale for about three years, said the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Citizens On Patrol program is a great way to help deter neighborhood crime.

After completing field training this month, volunteers will monitor Bloomingdale area neighborhoods in marked patrol cars. Knight was among the numerous volunteers who graduated from classroom training in February.

"The patrol vehicle alone is enough to get people to slow down in our neighborhoods," he said.

Three weeks of classroom

training began in January and included basic law enforcement guidelines, radio procedures, first aid, traffic control, and scenario-based role play.

"The training was extensive and we had a wide array of people of all ages in class," Knight said.

"Every step of the way there was a dedicated deputy whose job was to ensure your success," said graduate Evan Blicker.

The recent graduates are currently undergoing field training under the supervision of seasoned volunteers from the Apollo Beach Citizens On Patrol program. Training consists of patrolling with instructors during three six-hour shifts in specially marked and outfitted vehicles. During patrols, new volunteers receive hands-on direction and advice concerning patrolling techniques and procedures, routes, and standards. From there, the new "cops" are required to complete a minimum

of one six-hour shift per month.

Deputy Lorraine Jordan, program coordinator, said, "I saw a tremendous amount of heart and dedication from this group. For all of them, it was about taking back their community and getting out there to be a crime deterrent."

One field training officer, Bloomingdale resident Kathy Samuelson, said she joined the Apollo Beach group about a year ago is excited the program has begun in her neighborhood.

"This is a fantastic program that helps bring neighbors together," Samuelson said. "The more volunteers we get, the more residents will see us out there patrolling the streets in their neighborhoods."

Deputy Jordan said there is no limit to the number of volunteers who may apply for the program. Interested applicants can contact Jordan at (813) 247-8223.



JOY BOISSELLE/Gazette photo

Citizens On Patrol field training volunteer, Kathy Samuelson and new COPS graduate Brandon Knight speak to Bloomingdale residents, Cathy Bosek and her son, Christopher at Bloomingdale West Park on Canoga Park Drive.

Parents: Monitor Kids Outdoors

By PETE MAURER
Bloomingtondale
Community Resource Deputy

Spring is here again. In our beautiful state, the season signals lots of outdoor activities, especially for kids. That means more open doors, parks and playgrounds filled with fun, sidewalks teeming with bikers and crowded malls for all to enjoy.

In a couple of short months, summer will follow and school will be out. So now is the time to be sure both you and your children are ready to enjoy a safe and secure spring and summer.

Unfortunately, the "fine weather" seasons seem to be the prime time for the vultures we commonly call sexual predators to come out of their nests.

Those of us who work in law enforcement will continue to do all we can to keep these sick individuals away from your children. Even with our many years of experience, we still can't answer the inevitable question of why these criminals do what they do to others, especially to those so young.

It is a plain fact that we simply can not protect all children by ourselves. We can and must face this serious problem together. Thus, we need the help of every law-abiding member of our community.

To you who are parents, it comes down to a very basic question – have you taken the time to sit down and carefully explain to your children, boys and girls, how important it is to be aware of their surroundings, to be cautious of strangers and most importantly what to do if someone tries to harm or abduct them? Your answer must be, "Yes." Until it is, your children do not have the knowledge and understanding they need to be safe.

And while "yes" is very important, please also remember how kids can get distracted. You must continue to know where your children are and who they are with. Build a relationship of trust and concern with them so that they will let you know what they are doing, where they will be able to take care of themselves.

Remember, it only took a few minutes for young children like Jessica Lunsford to be abducted. But you don't have to become paranoid and terrorized by these criminals. Most of the people around you are good, but we must all face the fact that some are not. All parents and children must learn more about how protect themselves. Most of those who are abducted don't get second chances.



Deputy Pete Mauser

There are many groups in our community involved in helping to prepare parents and children for the unseen dangers in our world. Local YMCAs offer special classes in self-defense. Many Web sites contain excellent information on these critical topics, such as childsafetyexperts.com, safekids.com and theparentreport.com. Also check out the list of sexual offenders and predators that live in our communities at hcsotampa.fl.us.

One additional step that can be very important should such an event occur is having your children fingerprinted. This service is offered through the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office and other groups. For information call the Sheriff's Bloomingtondale Community Substation, (813) 635-8040.

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JOY BOISSELLE/Gazette photos

Beef O'Brady's family restaurant and pub in the Village Center Plaza on Bell Shoals Road held a St. Patrick's Day celebration March 17. The annual event featured Irish music, children's entertainment, free game room play, corned beef and cabbage, and green beer to wash it all down. Enjoying the festivities, pictured at left and center are balloon artist, Taylor Collore, and Kim Gilley with daughter Sarah, 5, and P. J. O'Brien, 8. Also on hand, at right are Bloomingdale residents Susan and Hyll Kulla and Sue and Stuart Campbell.



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5BD/3.5BA SCREENED POOL & SPA
HOME IN FOX RUN! \$459,900



4BD/3BA + BONUS ROOM + DEN POOL HOME IN
GATED BLOOMINGDALE VILLAGE! \$399,900



3BD/2.5BA + PLUS LOFT NEVER LIVED
IN FORMER MODEL! \$255,000



3BD/2BA + BONUS ROOM ON LUSH 1/3 ACRE
WITH STUNNING UPGRADES! \$299,000



3BD/2.5BA GARDEN DISTRICT HOME ON
LUSH CORNER FENCED LOT! \$275,000



3BD/2.5BA PLUS LOFT WATERFRONT
POOL BEAUTY! \$259,900



3BD/2BA IMMACULATE CUL-DE-SAC
LOT HOME! \$237,000



4BD/2BA MOVE-IN READY BEAUTY IN GATED
GOLF COURSE COMMUNITY! \$229,900



3BD/2BA W/ALL APPLIANCES, SUPER CONVENIENT
LOCATION & COMMUNITY POOL! \$199,900



3BD/2.5BA + DEN GATED TOWNHOME WITH
1,665 SQ. FT. & POOL VIEWS! \$159,000



2BD/2BA MOVE-IN READY 2ND FLOOR CONDO
IN BLOOMINGDALE WOODS! \$119,900

