

# THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

Volume XXIV  
Number 12

DECEMBER 2007 • THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BLOOMINGDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION SINCE 1980



## Let There Be Light!

Paper-bag candle lanterns lining sidewalks and driveways will once again bring a bit of holiday magic to Bloomingdale. And this year, four of the community's 40 neighborhood sections will receive a personal visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus on Dec. 22.

See story on  
page 4.



LAURA FRAZIER/Photo

Santa and Mrs. Claus will make their 19th annual visit to Bloomingdale 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 8 at the Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Rd., Valrico. Visits and photos with Santa are free with a donation of non-perishable food items for charity. See story, page 7.



# COMMUNITY HEALTH CALENDAR

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*Melissa & Dan  
Before*



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Refreshments Served • Spanish Available

### CLASSES

**GESTATIONAL DIABETES**

Meets Thursdays, 8:30 - 10:30 a.m.  
No class on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup>.  
Oakfield Medical Plaza,  
Classroom C, Suite 258

**OUTPATIENT DIABETES  
SELF-MANAGEMENT CLASS**

Wednesday, December 5, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Oakfield Medical Plaza,  
Classroom B, Suite 260  
Class is FREE!  
Please bring your own lunch.

**ADVANCED DIABETES  
SELF-MANAGEMENT CLASS**

Thursday, December 6, 1-4 p.m.  
Oakfield Medical Plaza,  
Classroom C, Suite 258  
Class offered at no charge.  
Preregistration is required.

### SUPPORT GROUPS

**NEW MOMS SUPPORT GROUP**

Meets Wednesdays, 12-1:30 p.m.  
Oakfield Medical Plaza,  
Suite 228, H2U Classroom  
Bring a bag lunch.  
Drinks and dessert will be provided.

**STROKE SUPPORT GROUP**

Thursday, December 13, 2007, 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.  
Brandon Community Center • 510 E. Sadie Street, Brandon, Florida  
Meetings are held the second Thursday of each month.  
For more information, please call the  
Brandon Community Center at 813-635-8179.



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0002313045-01 c1



# Yard of the Month

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JONI HICKLE/Photo

**The Munetz Family  
4529 Oak River Circle**

Send Yard of the Month nominations to [bloomingdale.homeowners@verizon.net](mailto:bloomingdale.homeowners@verizon.net) or call (813) 681-2051. Winners receive a \$25 gift card redeemable at Ace Hardware of Bloomingdale.

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4BR/4BA • 2,992 sq. ft.  
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Delores McMullen, 662-1610



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MLS# T2252228 • \$225,000  
Dawnett Plagge, 662-1610



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MLS# T2252078 • \$179,000  
Anita Vlass, 685-7755



3BR/2BA • 2,513 sq. ft.  
MLS# T2282122 • \$217,500  
Bob & Robin Davis, 685-7755



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MLS# T2265739 • \$245,000  
Irene Pieragowski, 685-7755



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Bonnie Albert/Sheila Dean, 685-7755



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MLS# T2255715 • \$374,900  
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# Luminaria Sale, Contest Underway

## Santa To Visit Winning Sections

A Gazette Report

Paper-bag candle lanterns lining sidewalks and driveways will once again bring a bit of holiday magic to Bloomingdale. And this year, four of the community's 40 neighborhood sections will receive a personal visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus on Saturday, Dec. 22.

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association board of directors and neighborhood volunteers gathered at the community office in November to assemble hundreds of luminaria kits for sale. The kits, available for \$10 each, contain enough candles, bags, matches and sand to make 20 paper-bag lanterns.

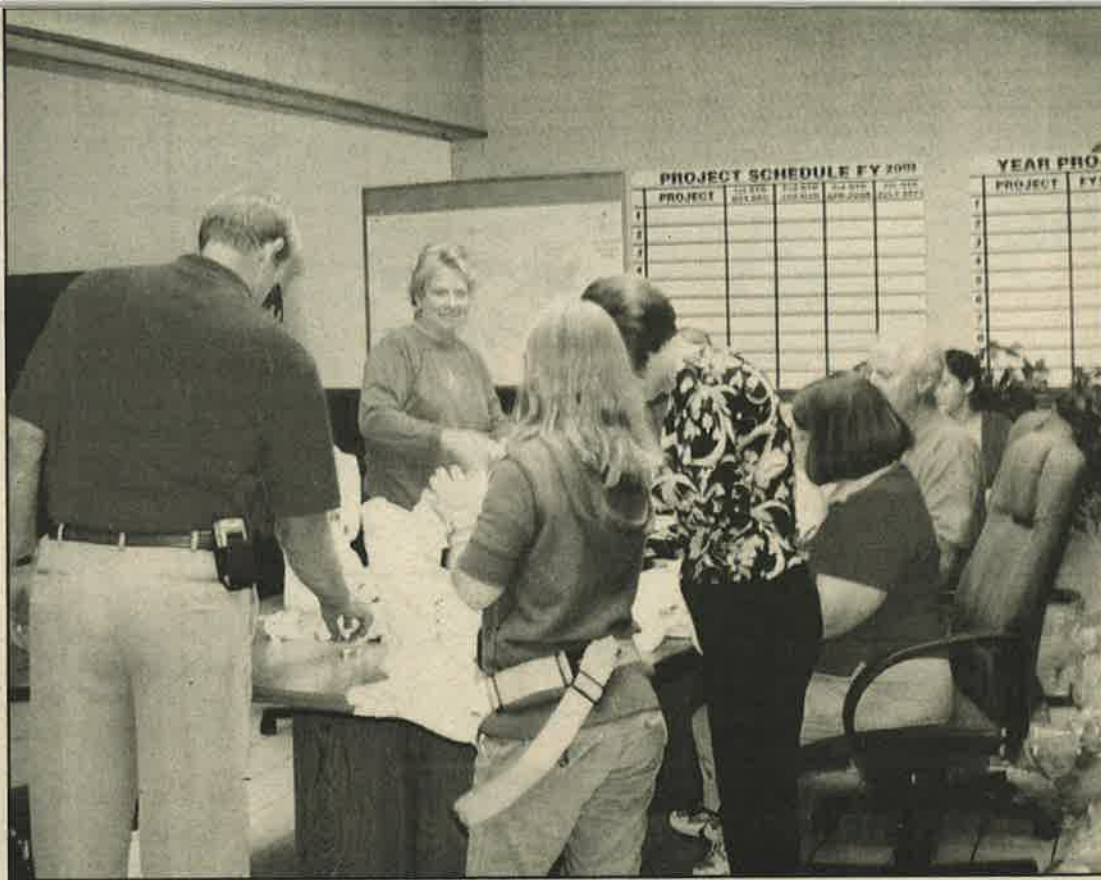
The two neighborhoods whose residents buy the most kits, and the two whose residents purchase the highest percentage of kits per number of residences,

will each be treated to a drive-through visit by Santa and Mrs. Claus on Saturday, Dec. 22.

Neighbors in the Chadd's Ford section won the contest last year.

Kits are now available for purchase at the community office from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. Monday to Thursday, and from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 27; Thursday, Nov. 29; Monday, Dec. 3; Tuesday, Dec. 4; Thursday, Dec. 6; Monday, Dec. 10; Tuesday, Dec. 11; Thursday, Dec. 13 and Tuesday, Dec. 18. Neighbors can also purchase kits by calling (813) 681-2051 or e-mail to bloomingdale.homeowners@verizon.net.

Proceeds from the sale will benefit the B. J. Stelter Bloomingdale Community Scholarship, established by the BHA to reward and encour-



JOLIE HARRIS/photos

BHA board members and neighborhood volunteers gathered at the community office Nov. 15 to assemble luminaria kits which will be for sale.

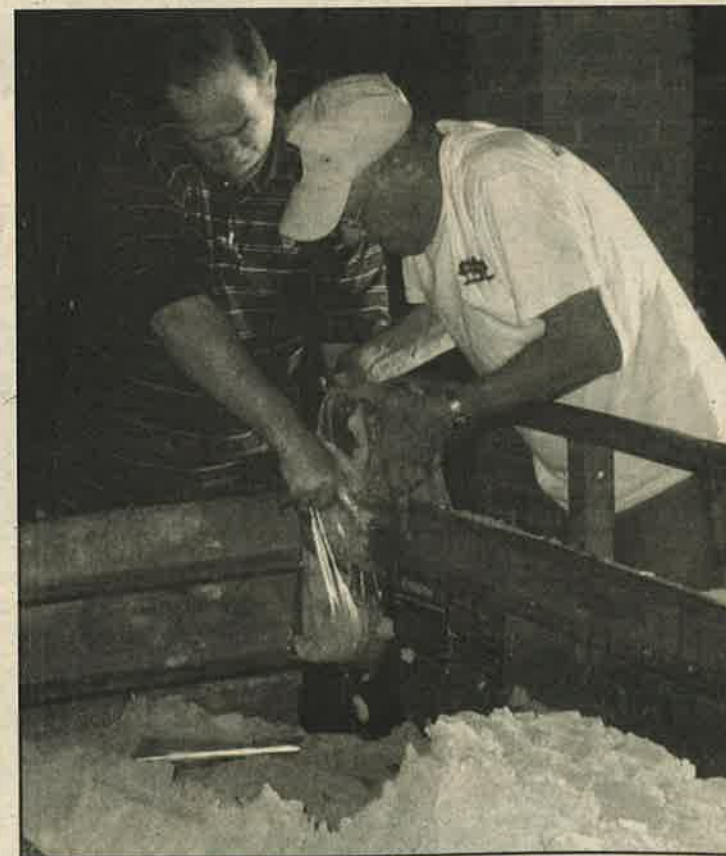
age high school seniors who live in Bloomingdale and attend Bloomingdale Senior High School to pursue a college career, and to honor B. J. Stelter, principal of Bloomingdale from 1991 - 2005.

The BHA would like to thank neighborhood volunteers who helped with the luminaria kit assembly: Chad Spina, Dana Higgins, Chloe Johansen, Jolie Harris, Olivia Harris, Debbie Coppi, Jan Coppi, Joni Hick-

Jane Lee and Dale Kahn. Board members who helped with the project are BHA president Joe Hickle, vice president Stan Lee, treasurer Pam Liguori and directors Lydia Harrod, Don Grevert and George May.



Volunteers assembled hundreds of the kits, which include supplies to make 20 paper-bag lanterns: candles, matches, sand and bags.



Gazette file photo

BHA board members George May and Myron Magedanz, in 2006, spent hours scooping a truckload of sand into plastic bags.





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**BLOOMINGDALE** • 3248 Lithia-Pinecrest..... **654-8113**

**BRANDON** • 913 W. Brandon Blvd ..... **684-4499**

**BRANDON** • 11393 Causeway Blvd ..... **643-6944**

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**PLANT CITY** • 2621 Thonotosassa Rd ..... **752-6631**

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# Your Inside Connections

## BLOOMINGDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION INC.

3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33594  
**Phone:** (813) 681-2051  
**Fax:** (813) 684-2358  
**E-mail:** bloomingdale.homeowners@verizon.net  
**Office hours:** Monday through Thursday, 7 a.m. to 11 a.m.  
**Meetings:** first Monday each month, 7 p.m.  
**Web site:** www.bloomingdalegazette.com  
**President:** Joe Hickle  
**Vice president:** Stanley Lee; **Treasurer:** Pam Liguori  
**Directors:** Ted Grable, Don Grevert, Jim Harris, Shelia Harris, Lydia Harrod; George May and Myron Magedanz.

## BLOOMINGDALE SPECIAL TAXING DISTRICT

3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33594  
**Phone:** (813) 684-6667  
**Fax:** (813) 684-2358  
**E-mail:** bloomingdale.district@verizon.net  
**Office hours:** Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to noon  
**Meetings:** second Monday each month, 7 p.m.  
**President:** Thom Snelling  
**Vice president:** Russell Jones  
**Treasurer:** David West  
**Corresponding Secretary:** David Steck  
**Property manager:** Al Devney  
**Trustees:** Joe Harless; Joe Liguori and James Laughlin



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The official publication of the BHA since 1980

3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33594  
**Office Hours:** Monday through Thursday 7 a.m. to 11 a.m.  
**Ph:** (813) 681-2051, **Fax:** (813) 684-2358  
**E-Mail:** bloomingdale.homeowners@verizon.com  
**Web site:** www.bloomingdalegazette.com

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**Editor:** Laura Frazier

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The Gazette is delivered free to Bloomingdale residents along with The Tampa Tribune on the first Saturday of each month.

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## Eat, Drink And Pitch Out The Window

*A Gazette Report*

In the course of supervising community maintenance and improvement projects, Bloomingdale Special Taxing District property manager Al Devney runs across some interesting roadside finds.

In October, Devney picked up 15 bags of trash, a wind screen for a Ford, a reclining chair and 46 cents. The beverages of choice were diet Coke for soft drinks, Bud Light for beer and McCormick Vodka for distilled spirits.

To report community maintenance needs, contact Devney at (813) 681-6667 or e-mail bloomingdale.district@verizon.net.





## Claus For A Cause

A year ago this month, Santa and Mrs. Claus visited more than 100 children and their families and collected a carload of food donations for local charities at the Bloomington Homeowners Association's annual visit with Santa. This year's 19th annual visit is set for 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 8. In exchange for the free visit, a photo with Santa, prizes for children and complimentary cookies and punch, residents are asked to bring a non-perishable food item for charities. Neighbors can also drop off food donations at the community office 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. Monday to Thursday. The office is at 3509 Bell Shoals Road, in the plaza behind SunTrust Bank and Citgo gas station. Information: (813) 681-2051 or [bloomington.homeowners@verizon.net](mailto:bloomington.homeowners@verizon.net).

## STROKE PREVENTION AND MORE

*Where:* **Prevention Health Screening Center**

205 E. Brandon Blvd. Suite E (between Parsons Ave. & Lithia Pinecrest Rd.)

*When:* **Monday, December 17th and Thursday, December 20th**

**PUBLIC WELCOME! CALL NOW FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT- 689-8909**

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**3. ARTERIAL DISEASE (PAD) TEST ..... \$35**

Ultrasound Doppler is used to detect poor circulation due to blockage in the extremities. An abnormal PAD test is a strong indicator of heart disease.

**4. OSTEOPOROSIS SCREENING ..... \$35**

Ultrasonometer is used to measure degree of bone loss.

**5. ABDOMINAL ULTRASOUND ..... \$85**

Helps identify cancers of the liver, pancreas, kidneys, spleen, gallstones, kidney stones and more.

**6. HEART SCAN - ECHOCARDIOGRAM..... \$95**

Screening to view wall motion, valves, enlargements, calcifications, stenosis, prolapse, blood clots, tumors and fluid around the heart.

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**Q. How accurate are these health screenings?**

A. Our adherence to stringent protocol, highly trained sonographers, state-of-the-art ultrasound machines, and board certified interpreting radiologists make the screenings exceedingly accurate. Physician written protocols ensure consistency and accuracy, while the quality of our screenings is kept at the highest standards.

**Q. Why should I have these tests if I have no symptoms?**

A. It is important to have a screening to identify problems before symptoms arise, potentially avoiding a serious health crisis. Unfortunately, our body's warning signs often come too late.

**Q. Does my doctor do these tests as part of my routine checkup?**

A. No. Most physicians can only prescribe ultrasound tests if you are already having symptoms. They are unable to order them for preventive reasons. Prevention Plus is here to identify individuals with disease before a problem occurs.

Dear Prevention Plus,  
I wanted to let you know how very thankful I am to have had your tests done. Back in January I was screened and your technician found that my aorta was quite enlarged. I had no idea because I was feeling just fine. As soon as I received the results from your doctor I took them to my doctor. He immediately ordered a CT test. Now aware of the aneurysm I am scheduled to have it repaired to avoid it rupturing. If I wouldn't have been screened I may have never known there was anything wrong. Thanks so much for the time and care your staff took with me that day!

Sincerely,

*Lucille Perkins*

*No Prescriptions necessary. These tests are not included in routine physicals.*

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**Celebrating Civic Pride**



LAURA FRAZIER/Photo

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association held its annual community appreciation dinner Feb. 8 at Buca Di Beppo restaurant in Brandon to celebrate a successful year of civic service. Pictured are George May, BHA board member and current honorary mayor of Brandon; B. J. Stelter, former Bloomingdale High School principal; Mary Grable, Bloomingdale High School guidance counselor; and Ted Grable, who stepped down as BHA president this year and will remain on the board in 2008.



At the community's appreciation dinner in February, Pat Boody, in 2006 president of the Bloomingdale Friends of the Library, left, and Julie Beamguard, branch manager of Bloomingdale Regional Library, received the BHA's Good Neighbor Award.



## Board Greet New Commissioner



LAURA FRAZIER/Photo

County Commissioner Al Higginbotham visited with BHA board members and took a bus tour of Bloomingdale Feb. 23. The District IV commissioner took note of civic concerns pointed out during the tour. Ted Grable, BHA president at the time, told the commissioner, "We're here because we don't want to see the needs of this community and others like it passed by just because developers have created the next Nirvana eight miles out." Pictured are Higginbotham, right of center, with BHA representatives, from the left, Pam Liguori, Stan Lee, Ted Grable, Lydia Harrod and George May.

## Residents Rally For Relay



LAURA FRAZIER/Photo

Hundreds of participants turned out for the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life in March at Bloomingdale High School. Groups collected pledges and camped out overnight at the school to celebrate cancer survivorship and raise money for research and patient support programs. A team from Cimino Elementary School dressed as Monopoly game pieces and created a jail cell to "put cancer behind bars."

# Winterfest

## To Support The Troops

*Saturday December 8th Starting @ 11am*

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  - Have Your Picture Taken With Santa
- From 11am-12pm

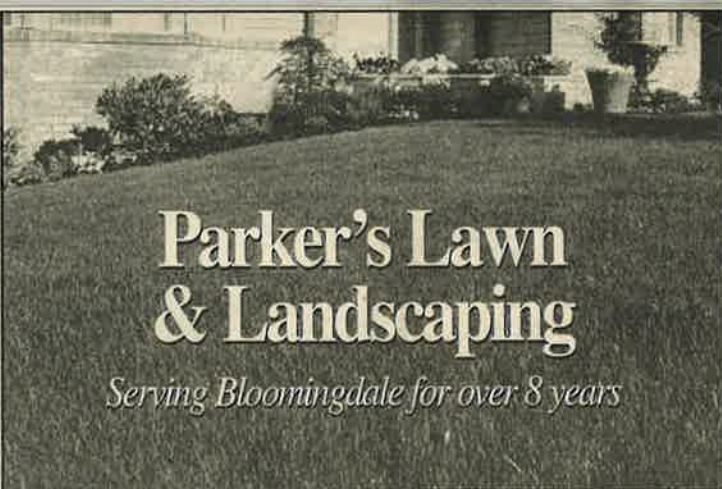
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Coffee, Soap, Deoderant, Shaving Cream, Shampoo, Socks, Etc.

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## A Colorful Contribution



LESLIE WHITE/photo

Cimino Elementary Principal Debbie Talley celebrated her school's fundraising efforts in March by coloring her hair purple live on the school's morning show. Cimino students and faculty in 2006 raised more than \$14,400 for the American Cancer Society, and by the end of last school year raised more than \$70,000 for the charity since Cimino opened in 2002.

## Pond Cleanup A Group Effort

Bloomingdale and South Oak neighbors got together in March to clean up a neighborhood pond overtaken by overgrowth, trash and duckweed. The neighbors rallied student volunteers from Bloomingdale High School and enlisted the help of the county's Adopt-A-Pond program to get the job done.

LAURA FRAZIER/Photo



## Perks Please Park Patrons



Bloomingdale East Park underwent a \$200,000 renovation in the spring with upgrades to the parking area, basketball courts, sidewalks, picnic shelter and restrooms. A new tot swing and a play unit for 5-to-12-year-olds were also added. In addition, parks maintenance supervisor Jeff Mauch worked with a group of Bloomingdale residents to install a permanent volleyball court at the park.

LAURA FRAZIER/Photo





LAURA FRAZIER/Photo

## Center Soon In Service

A little dirt didn't hurt a dozen shovel-wielding Hillsborough County officials and chamber of commerce reps at a Jan. 30 groundbreaking ceremony for the \$4.2 million, 18,000 square foot Brandon Regional Service Center. Contractors are wrapping up construction on the government service center this month, at 311 Pauls Drive. County water services and planning and growth management will have auxiliary offices in the building. A satellite office of the Citizen Action Center -- the county's clearinghouse for social, health and government services -- will also set up shop at the center, along with the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office and property appraiser.



## One Day For The Homeless

Bloomington High School students in March joined a group of their peers from Brandon-area schools to camp out overnight in the Best Buy parking lot off State Road 60 to bring attention to the plight of homeless children. The group, organized by 9-year-old Zach Bonner of Valrico, assembled hundreds of backpacks filled with personal care items for homeless children, to be delivered by the Tampa chapter of Stand Up For Kids. To learn more about Bonner's efforts to help the homeless, visit his web site at [www.littleredwagonfoundation.com](http://www.littleredwagonfoundation.com).

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LAURA FRAZIER/Photo

## No Need For Speed

Pete Maurer, Bloomingdale's community resource deputy, built two portable speed monitors for use throughout the greater Bloomingdale area and invited residents to call the neighborhood substation with suggested set-up spots. Maurer said the devices have proven effective in reducing speeding through residential areas and resulted in fewer accidents and speeding citations. For information or to request a set-up spot, call (813) 635-8040.

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LAURA FRAZIER/Photo

## Principal Inspired Scholarship

Ted Grable, 2006 BHA president and current board member, in January presents B. J. Stelter, former principal of Bloomingdale High School, with a plaque commemorating the B. J. Stelter Bloomingdale Community Scholarship. Committee chairman Dale Kahn said Stelter is an active member of the scholarship selection committee and takes great pride in the annual award named in her honor. This year's third annual awards will be determined by the outcome of the community's annual Luminaria Sale fundraiser and residents' donations. For information or to apply for the award, visit the high school guidance office or go to [www.bloomingtongazette.com](http://www.bloomingtongazette.com) and click on the "scholarship" button at the top left of the page. Applications are also available at the Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road. Office hours are 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday through Thursday, or call (813) 681-2051.

## Neighborhood Cleans Up Well

Bloomingdale residents filled 12 dumpsters to capacity at the BHA's Oct. 13 Neighborhood PRIDE Cleanup day. Pictured in front of Parks Dept. employee Clayton Weaver's front-end loader are from left, Jim and Jolie Harris, Stanley and Jane Lee, Joe Hickle, Bonnie Grevert, Jay Kittle and Don Grevert. Cleanup days are held periodically throughout the year and are announced in the Gazette and on [www.bloomingtongazette.com](http://www.bloomingtongazette.com).



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# Board Invites Neighbors To Monthly Meetings

A Gazette Report

The all-volunteer Bloomingdale Homeowners Association Inc. Board of Directors holds monthly meetings, open to the public, at 7 p.m. the first Monday each month (or on the following Thursday when holidays fall on Monday) at the Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico.

All residents are invited to observe the meetings or bring their neighborhood comments and concerns to the board.

Upcoming meeting dates are listed below and on [www.bloomingtondalegazette.com](http://www.bloomingtondalegazette.com). To register for BHA News Alerts concerning neighborhood news, law enforcement alerts and more, log on to the web site and enter your e-mail address in the "Join our mailing list" box at the top left of the page.

For more information or to contact any board member, call (813) 681-2051 or e-mail [bloomingtondale.homeowners@verizon.net](mailto:bloomingtondale.homeowners@verizon.net).

## BHA Board of Directors

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Don Grover



Jim Harris



Shelia Harris



Lydia Harrod



Myron Magodanz

November 2007



George May

## BHA Board Meeting Schedule

December 3, 2007

May 5, 2008

January 7, 2008

June 2, 2008

February 4, 2008

July 7, 2008

March 3, 2008

August 4, 2008

April 7, 2008

September 1, 2008

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# Report Deed Restriction, County Violations Online

A Gazette Report

A big boat permanently anchored in the driveway next door. A streetlight on the fritz, flickering on a cracked sidewalk below. Knee-high weeds and a wooden fence in splinters right across the street. Who's responsible for public maintenance needs and enforcing deed restrictions and county codes? What's a neighbor to do?

For problems that exist on privately owned property, the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association recommends that residents first determine if the issues are in violation of Hillsborough County codes or ordinances by calling the code enforcement office, (813) 641-6946, or by inquiring online at [www.hillsboroughcounty.org/hcce](http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/hcce). A complaint form to report violations is on the web site, and complainants may remain anonymous.

Residents may also wish to determine if private property eyesores or danger signs are in violation of neighbor-

hood deed restrictions. A few sections within Bloomingdale have their own, mandatory homeowners associations with the legal authority to impose fines or liens on homeowners who refuse to comply with the rules. Most of the community's 40 sections, however, fall only the umbrella of the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, which requires homeowners to get involved in the enforcement process.

Most of the community's covenants are posted on [www.bloomingdalegazette.com](http://www.bloomingdalegazette.com) under the "deed restrictions" tab at the top of the page. A complaint form is also available on the Web site under the same tab. Upon receiving a complaint, BHA volunteers will inspect the property in question, send a letter to the homeowner and follow up to help facilitate resolution of the complaint. A BHA committee stands ready to assist homeowners who wish to pursue mediation or legal action against violators if necessary.

**Review Your Restrictions Online**

Deed restrictions for most of Bloomingdale's 40 neighborhood sections are available to view on [www.bloomingdalegazette.com](http://www.bloomingdalegazette.com) under the "deed restrictions" tab at the top of the page. Copies are also available at the Bloomingdale Community Office. To request a copy by mail, call (813) 681-2051, e-mail [bloomingdale.homeowners@verizon.net](mailto:bloomingdale.homeowners@verizon.net), or stop by the office 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. Monday to Thursday, 3509 Bell Shoals Road, in the plaza behind SunTrust Bank and the Citgo gas station.

## HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY CODE STANDARDS SYNOPSIS

The following partial list of Hillsborough County Code Standards commonly addressed in Bloomingdale applies to all homes in Hillsborough County. Please note, however, that some neighborhood deed restrictions go above and beyond county requirements.

### Vehicles

Vehicles must be operational (able to move under own its own power) and intact; no

more than two unregistered, untagged, or expired tag vehicles are allowed on each property; commercial vehicles over one ton may not be parked overnight in residential areas; boats or RV's limited to 20 feet in length (in some but not all cases) may be parked in front of a house; boats or RV's over 20 feet may be parked in rear or side yards but must be kept five feet from the property line; boats or RV's must be operational and may not be connected to utilities, except for battery charging; boats or

RV's cannot be parked on the right-of-way (area between the sidewalk and the road); boats or RV's may be parked anywhere for loading or unloading for a maximum of 24 hours.

### Sheds

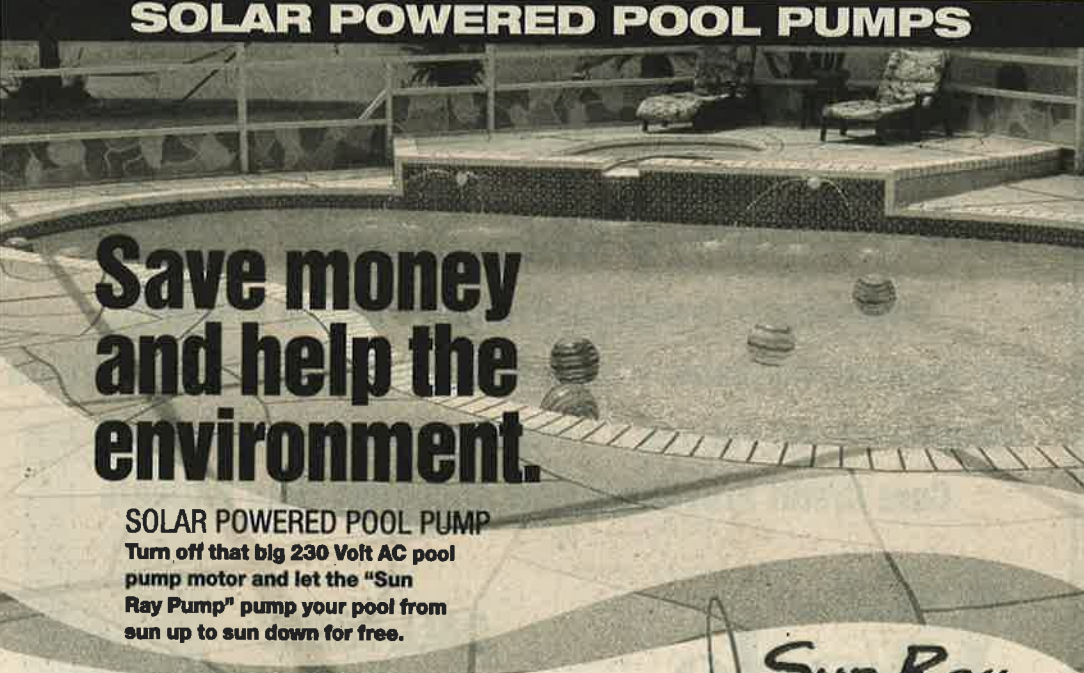
Sheds must be at least three feet from the property line.

### Garage Sales

Garage sales are limited to one every six months, for no more than three days in duration.

See REPORT, Page 17

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**REPORT**

From page 16

**Swimming Pools**

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

**Fences**

Fences must be maintained, sound and sturdy.

**Storage Pods**

The use of temporary storage pods is limited to seven days, no more than six times per year.

**Nuisance Conditions**

Weeds, grass, or underbrush shall not exceed 18 inches; junk, trash and debris -- abandoned motor vehicles, furniture, appliances, rotten lumber, paper, trash, etc. -- are all considered nuisance conditions and are not permitted.

**Structural Conditions**

Roofs shall be maintained and have no defects which will admit rain; windows shall be maintained without cracks or holes; residences must be adequately painted so as to prevent the entry of water or pests.

**Lawns and Landscaping**

Weeds, grass, or underbrush shall not exceed 18 inches; dead or dying trees which may present a hazard are not permitted.

**HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY ORDINANCE STANDARDS SYNOPSIS**

**Pets**

Report violations to Animal Control, (813) 744-5660.

Pets are not allowed to stray from owner's property or owner's control; owners are responsible for the pick up and disposal of animal feces. Fines are: First offense \$50, second offense \$100, third offense requires a court hearing; person reporting offense must be willing to testify in court.

**Vehicle Parking**

Report to HCSO, (813) 247-8555.

It is illegal to stop, stand, or park under any conditions which leave less than ten feet of available access to roadways and streets, and in the following areas (vehicles may be ticketed for these violations): On a sidewalk, crosswalk, bicycle path, in front of a public or private driveway, within 15 feet of a fire hydrant, within 15 feet of a stop sign, and on the right-of-way (grassy area between the street and sidewalk); Every vehicle stopped or parked on a two-way road must have wheels within 12-inches of the curb or roadway edge.

Conservation Areas — In

designated areas and wet lands, no maintenance or disturbing of the area is allowed, and the area may not be used for any other purpose.

**Mailboxes**

The U.S. Post Office requires boxes to be sturdy, operational, at least 42-inches in height, and free of obstructions, including branches.

**Trash Collection**

Report violations to (813) 276-2927.

In Bloomingdale, regular trash and recyclable materials are picked up on Tuesday; regular trash and yard waste are picked up on Friday; trash may

not be set at the curb before 6 p.m. the night before pick-up; trash and waste/recycling receptacles may not be left at the curb after 8 p.m. on pick up day; all regular trash must be contained in trash cans, bags, or boxes to prevent access by animals; yard waste is limited to 12 bags per pick-up, 50 pound weight limit per bag.

**County Maintenance Standards Synopsis**

Report problems to County Maintenance, (813) 671-7619.

Pot holes in streets; street signs damaged or missing; storm sewers full of trash or not draining; sidewalks, trip hazards, overgrown branches

or branches blocking passage; street lights inoperable -- report directly to TECO online at [www.tampaelectric.com](http://www.tampaelectric.com) or call (813) 223-0800.

**Special Taxing District Maintenance Standards Synopsis**

Report to Property Manager, 684-6667, or e-mail [bloomingdale.district@verizon.net](mailto:bloomingdale.district@verizon.net).

Trash on streets or right-of-way, signs on right-of-way, etc. ; sprinkler system problems (broken or inoperable sprinkler heads, sprinklers on at wrong times); graffiti on walls, damaged walls or entryway fixtures and landscaping; inoperable entryway lights.

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# Don't Be Driven To Distraction This Holiday Season

By PETE MAURER  
Bloomington Community Resource  
Deputy  
And  
SANDY CAPITANO  
Bloomington Community Service  
Officer

During the holidays, the volume of travel and the number of drivers on our roads increases dramatically. Many of us will be out traveling, either locally to do some shopping or attend parties, or heading out of town to visit family. Make sure everyone in your car is buckled up and that you direct 100 percent of your attention to driving. Don't be distracted. It's very dangerous out there.

Making our holiday season safe and secure can be as simple as following some very basic rules.

## Secure Your Vehicle

When you are away from home, enjoy the excitement of the season but stay focused and constantly aware of your surroundings. Lock up your valuables, and remember the 30-second rule: in less than 30 seconds, a thief can shatter your car window, reach inside and remove any valuables left out in the open. Thieves can also gain access to any personal information you leave in your car. So slow down, take the time to protect your car and your belongings, and then enjoy the holidays.

## Keep Your Eyes Open

According to the National Sleep Foundation, more than half of the nation's drivers admit

to driving while tired or drowsy, pushing themselves too far. Most of us have done it. In the group of drivers ages 18 to 29, nearly one-quarter reported they had actually fallen asleep at the wheel. These drivers are also impatient, drive faster and feel more stressed. Watch out for them. They usually speed up, then slow down or weave back and forth, just like a drunk driver.

## Put Down The Cell Phone

With cell phones and other portable electronic devices now the norm, more drivers are distracted. Motorists who use such devices while driving have become a very serious problem. There are fines for driving while distracted, and law enforcement officers may now note "driver distracted" on accident reports, opening the door for your insurance company to increase your rates for those types of charges.

The types of distractions noted could fill a book and many are just plain crazy. They cover everything from cell phones, eating, putting on makeup, changing clothes, talking to passengers, reading, shaving and now even watching videos or working on a laptop computer.

Concentrate on your driving like your life depends on it, because it does.

## Drunk Driving Kills

Drunk drivers are some of the most dangerous drivers out there. More than 40 percent



Deputy Pete Maurer

off all traffic fatalities are alcohol-related. Drunk drivers are very unpredictable, can be very aggressive and usually aren't the ones that get injured seriously.

Watch for the common signs displayed by this type of driver

– weaving back and forth, driving very slowly or following the emergency lane line.

Contact local law enforcement if you believe you see a drunk driver on the road. And please, don't be one of them.

## Avoid Aggression

The holidays can be very stressful and some drivers take that stress with them behind

the wheel. If you are driving near a motorist who becomes aggressive, do not confront or aggravate them. They can be very unpredictable. You don't know if they are armed or drunk or on drugs. Many drugs will make drivers aggressive and unpredictable. Back off from them, avoid eye contact, and don't flash your lights or show any aggression yourself.

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# Citizens Patrol Readies To Roll

By MACKAUSTIN

Keeping our community safe and secure is a never-ending challenge, increasingly so due to growth in our area and tight-ened county budgets.

Hillsborough County Sheriff David Gee and his dedicated team of deputies and volunteers, committed to fulfilling their responsibilities and duties, continually seek ways to improve their plans and increase their resources.

Towards that end, Bloomingdale is now the third Hillsborough County community to be included in the Volunteer Citizen Patrol Program, which aims to utilize the talents, skills and concerns of residents willing to become volunteer members of the sheriff's crime prevention program.

At a community meeting held in November at Bloomingdale West Park, Deputy Faith Madell said citizen volunteer programs have proven to be very effective.

"No one knows their neighborhood better than those that live in it," Madell said. "Knowing what is normal and what is not normal can make the difference."

Citizen Patrol volunteers must apply for the position and go through a special screening process to ensure their safety and the safety of all residents. Volunteers receive more than 50 hours of training in crime prevention, first aid, traffic control, community policing and radio communications. Training is offered in the evening over a period of three weeks and includes three evenings and two Saturdays.

Once training is completed, volunteers become the extra eyes and ears of the sheriff's office. They receive official uniforms and use marked vehicles to perform patrols. Patrols cover six hours shifts that cover seven days a week. There are two volunteers assigned to each vehicle.

Gee and his staff are very



MACKAUSTIN/Photo

Bloomingdale resident Paul Hooper, a member of the Bloomingdale Area Community Council, discusses his application for the Sheriff's Office's Volunteer Citizen Patrol Program with Deputy Faith Madell. Hooper was one of about 50 residents who turned out for a meeting in November about the program at Bloomingdale West Park.

excited about the success of this program, which deputies said has already proven to decrease crime in the communities involved and

has the potential to save taxpayers a lot of money. Bloomingdale residents interested in becoming part of

this special team can call the Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Bureau Volunteer Section, (813) 247-0944.

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GROUP**

# Available Inventory



**2BD/2.5BA Gated Waterfront  
Townhome ..... \$139,900**



**3bd/2.5ba + Den Gated  
Townhome..... \$169,900**



**4BD/2BA Immaculately  
Maintained ..... \$189,800**



**4bd/2ba Fantastic Location  
..... \$214,900**



**4BD/2BA With Community  
Pool..... \$239,900**



**4BD/3.5BA Plus Loft Pool  
Home ..... \$314,900**



**3BD/2.5BA + Loft Former Model  
..... \$335,000**



**4BD/3BA + Den + Bonus  
Room Pool Home \$439,000**



**5BD/3.5BA Scr. Pool & Spa  
Home ..... \$499,900**