

## An Annual Run With A New Cause

Bloomington Senior High Schools PTSA's run raises funds for library attack victim.

PAGE 7

## The Holiday Season Is Here

Santa will once again visit Bloomington.

PAGE 8

## Cimino Goes Green

The Green Team goes school-wide.

PAGE 12

## INDEX

Yard of the Month.....	2
Law Enforcement.....	14
Dinner@6.....	15

# Bug Lights Up Family Fest



Family Fest event organizers Jane Lee and Ray Chadderton with the Tampa Bay Lightning Girls and "Thunderbug." See more on page 4.

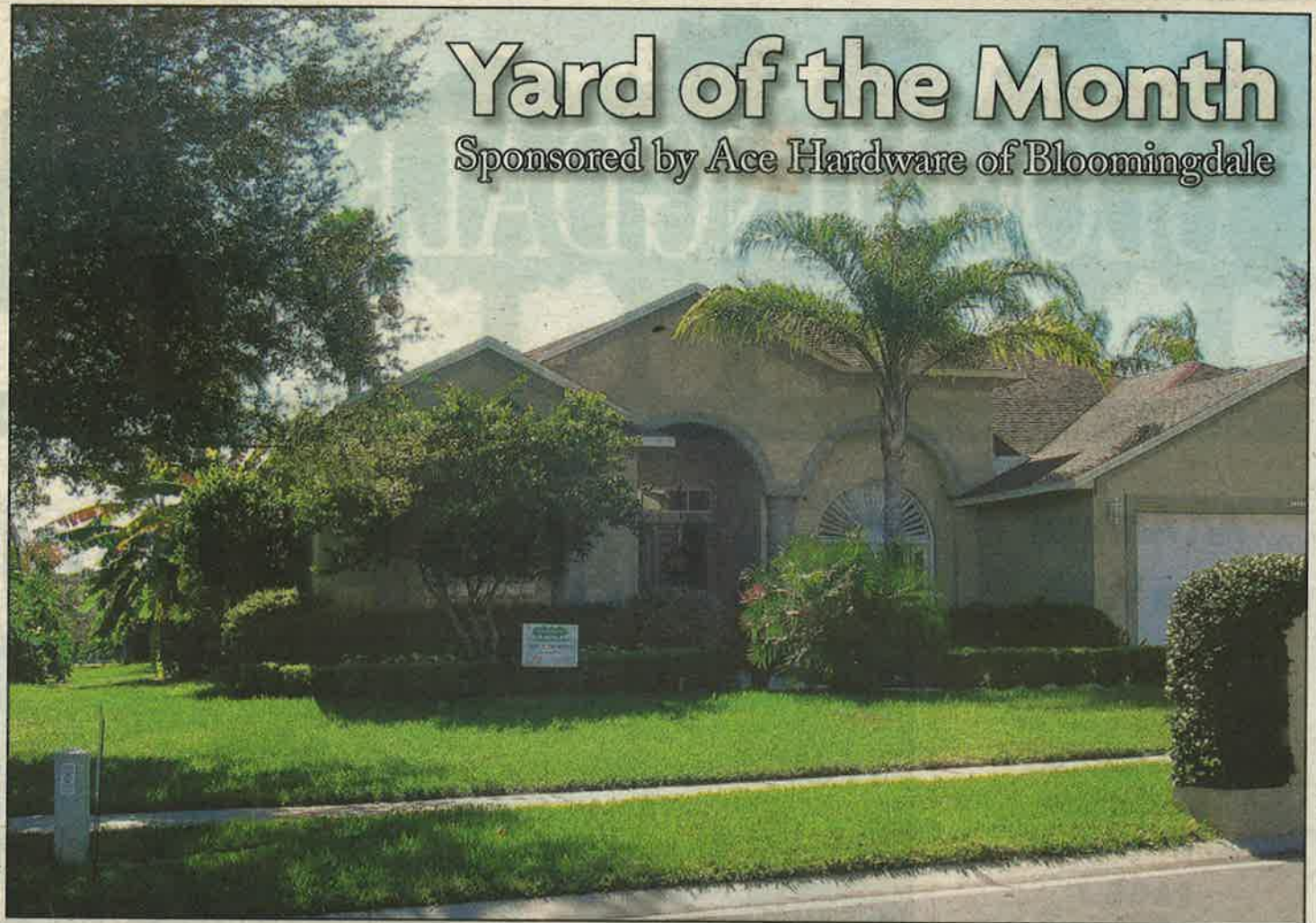
## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

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# Family Fest Brings Community Together

By JOY BOISSELLE

The first-annual Family Fest, a gift to residents from the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association (BHA), kicked off Saturday, Nov. 22, at the Bloomingdale Golfers Club with beautiful clear weather and attendance by nearly 500 residents. "Fun, fantastic, great, happy to see it, and fabulous" were just a few of the many positive comments heard from residents throughout the day.

"We wanted to do something for everybody, not just kids or adults," explained event organizer and BHA board member, Jane Lee. "This is the place where we live and we need to pull together as neighbors and friends."

Lee and co-organizer, Ray Chadderton of "The Chadderton Group," a Keller Williams realty company, did indeed have something for everyone. While children enjoyed a variety of activities, including a bouncy castle, face painting, and a hula contest, adult fest-goers listened to live music, provided by The Stilettoes, a local all-girl group. More than 35 businesses (see boxed insert) were on-hand offering free merchandise and information about their roles in the community. In addition, the Bloomingdale Fire Station and Citizens Patrol provided static displays, popular sites for both adults and children.

Roy and Virginia Crenshaw, 21-year Bloomingdale West residents, said of the fest. "We love it. We have been to other things in the community years ago, and we are happy to see this event take place. We looked forward to coming today to see what's new in Bloomingdale."

With the hope that Family Fest will become a Bloomingdale tradition and a holiday "must-do" event, Chadderton said, "We hope this event grows stronger and stronger every year. Bloomingdale is a great community, and the more we do as a community, the better it will be."



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 January meeting will be held the second Tuesday  
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# An Annual Run With A New Cause

By LESLIE WHITE

The Bloomingdale Senior High School PTSA held its first annual 5K family run and walk event, raising \$1,591.20 for the Bloomingdale library attack victim.

President Catrina Miller said, "We had an idea to have a run for our fundraiser this year, and what happened to her is just close to all our hearts. We felt we couldn't do this without benefiting her."

Between 150 and 200 participants registered for the event and Bloomingdale's cross country coach mapped out the 5K course along the perimeter of the school. Fifty percent of the registration fees went to the library victim, as did 100 percent of straight donations.

Chris Baker, PTSA memberships director, noticed the early voters at the library were parking in the high school parking lot for overflow, and approached them to let them know what the school was doing that day.

"All we had to do was say who the proceeds were for and people just donated. It was really amazing," said Baker. "We really want to say thank you to all those voters," she said.

Friend of the victim's family, Cheryl Zemina designed "Everyone's Daughter - Everyone's Friend" bracelets bearing the date of the attack, 4-24-08, and donated them to be sold at the event, with 100 percent of sales going back to help fund the victim's rehabilitation. Everyone walked away with a prize, thanks to business partners like Chick-fil-A on Causeway, owned by Tammy Holmberg, Mimi's Café and Wal-Mart.

Miller said, "This is our first run, but we hope to make it an annual event. We want to make it a true community affair and always donate to a community issue."

Bloomingdale cross country runner Peter Henry finished the 5K with a time of 23.47.



Photos by Leslie White

Above, Over 150 runners and walkers registered for the 1st Annual Bloomingdale High School PTSA 5K family run/walk to benefit the victim of April's brutal attack at the Bloomingdale Public Library.

At left, The Chick-fil-A cow even turned out to lead the participants in a 5K run around the perimeter of the high school.



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# The Holiday Season Has Arrived!

A Gazette Report

Once again, the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association is hosting its annual luminary kit sales contest.

The first kits of the year were sold on Nov. 22 at Family Fest, a new event sponsored by the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association.

Beginning Dec. 1, the kits, which contain supplies to make 20 paper-bag lanterns (candles, matches, sand and bags) are \$10 each and will be on sale for purchase by calling (813) 681-2051 and by e-mailing bloomingdale.homeowners@verizon.net.

The two neighborhoods whose residents buy the most luminary kits, and the two neighborhoods whose residents purchase the highest percentage of kits per household, will each be treated to a drive-through visit by Santa and Mrs. Claus on Friday, Dec. 19 at 6: p.m.

Proceeds from the sale will benefit the B.J. Stelter Bloomingdale Community Scholarship. The objective of the scholarship is to reward and encourage high school seniors who live in the Bloomingdale community and attend Bloomingdale Senior High School to pursue a college career, and to honor the exemplary efforts and outstanding dedication of B.J. Stelter, principal of Bloomingdale Senior High School from 1991 - 2005.



Santa and Mrs. Claus will appear again this year.

The most exciting holiday event, for the 21st year in a row, Santa will visit the children of Bloomingdale! This year's visit will be held at a new location. On Dec. 13th from 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Santa will be coming to the Bloomingdale Golfer's Club located off of Natures Way at

4113 Great Golfer's Way, Valrico. Visits and photos with Santa are free with a donation of non-perishable food items for charity. Last year, more than 100 children got to meet Santa and give him their holiday gift wishes. Luminary kits also may be purchased at that time.

# Christmas Tree Trivia

Compiled By JOY BOISSELLE

With 25 to 30 million real Christmas trees sold in the U.S. every year, you just may want to make yourself "smart" this season. If you missed last month's Thanksgiving trivia, you can still liven up your holiday conversations with a few facts regarding one of our more enduring symbols of the holiday season...the Christmas tree.

## Did you know that:

- Trees are grown in all 50 states, including Alaska and Hawaii.
- The average growing time is 7 years.
- Oregon is the leading producer of Christmas trees.
- The top selling Christmas trees are: balsam fir, Douglas fir, Fraser fir, noble fir, Scotch pine, Virginia pine, and white pine.
- The official White House Christmas tree this year is a Fraser fir from North Carolina.
- Christmas trees have been sold commercially in the United States since about 1850.
- In 1856, Franklin Pierce, the 14th President of the United States, was the first president to place a Christmas tree in the White House.
- President Calvin Coolidge started the National Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony on the White House lawn in 1923.
- Thomas Edison's assistant, Edward Johnson, came up with the idea of electric lights for Christmas trees in 1882.
- An acre of Christmas trees provides for the daily oxygen requirements of 18 people.
- In 1984, the National Christmas was lit on Dec. 13 with temperatures in the 70s, making it one of the warmest tree lightings in history.
- In 1978, a live 40-foot Colorado blue spruce was transplanted from York, PA, to its present site on the Ellipse, the grassy area south of the White House.



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# Artwork, Recreation Center A Winning Combination

By LESLIE WHITE

For 13 years, Bloomingdale West Recreation Center has served the families in this area, providing free after-school child care and low-cost year-round youth sports leagues on the 13 acre park. Director Donna Clouse has been a part of it from the beginning.

"I opened the center here in 1995," she said. Recently a vote on property taxes caused the county to require a fee for child-care effective January 2009.

The fee to attend the program will be \$20 per child per week, with discounts available based on income as well as multiple child enrollment. There will still be free middle school programs for sixth grade and higher. Clouse believes the program is still feasible for families, even in these trying economic times.

"I think it's a shame that after our program has been free for so many years to have to charge

now, but it's absolutely the lowest cost program compared to others," said Clouse.

She also said that most parents have reacted very positively to the changes being made, one of which is the center being licensed. Another change Clouse hopes to have in place by January is the hiring of two therapeutic workers to help meet the needs of the 12 special needs children enrolled.

"You just can't get daycare for what we offer," she said.

The program houses 135 children ranging in age from 6 to 15 and is very structured, giving the kids some play time immediately after school, then offering homework time, followed by game time, either indoors or outdoors, as well as art and music, depending on the day and the week.

"We're going to be expanding our music program," said Clouse.

Currently the center has gui-

tars, bongos and maracas.

"The kids just love music, and Dennis Chaney (recreation leader) is very musically inclined," said Clouse.

The teens often bring guitars and Chaney teaches them the basics and works to help them improve. The center has an art teacher that comes in two days a week every other week.

"Miss Pam is teaching them all sorts of different techniques," said Clouse. "The kids are getting a lot out of it."

Recently, the cluster of parks in Hillsborough County held a contest for the kids, allowing six entries per rec-center. Bloomingdale West had four of their six entries chosen to be displayed in Upper Tampa Bay Park's Christmas display. Richard Smith, Raeann Pitts, Julissa Medina and Ashley Parady each won a \$15 gift card for Wal-Mart, and each has the honor of having their works of art on



Photo by LESLIE WHITE

Bloomingdale West Recreation Center Director Donna Clouse is pictured in front of winning artwork created by students at the center for a display in Upper Tampa Bay Park.

display for the season.

"We'll take the kids who worked on them over to see the display so they can experience it for themselves," Clouse said.

Aside from the after-school program, the center also provides year-round youth sports leagues. Currently, kids are playing court

hockey. Beginning in December, registration will open up for basketball and cheerleading for ages 3-6 at a cost of \$30 per child. That season will run from January through February. The center also offers T-ball, soccer, football and cheerleading later in the

See CENTER, Page 22



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# Holiday Happenings At St. Andrew's

By KIMAGUILAR

On Friday, Dec. 5, the St. Andrew's UMC Drama Team will present, "Tis The Season." This funny and heart-warming show is about a local church group's attempt to put on a live Nativity on Christmas Eve, and the antics that ensue as the live animals get loose and the police have to step in.

"You'll laugh the whole way through till you get to the end, where you just start to cry," said parishioner Lynn Nankervis. The show will take place in the sanctuary at 7 p.m. For further information, contact Brenda Gibbs at brendagibbs@verizon.net.

On Sunday, Dec. 7, during the 9:50 a.m. Contemporary Service, there will be a Christmas Celebration. Experience a morning of glorious praise, and worship Christmas favorites with the Praise Team, choir and orchestra.

On Dec. 10, please join us



Photo by MARY KNOWLTON

Children performing in last year's musical.

for "A Celebration of Lessons & Carols." Dinner will begin at 5:30 p.m. followed by a special evening of Lessons & Carols in the sanctuary at 7 p.m. For dinner reservations, please call the church at (813) 689-6849 or visit standrewsbrandon.org by Dec. 9 at noon. Dinner price for adults is \$6, children \$4, 3 and under free. The carols at 7 p.m. are free.

Finally, on Dec. 24, St. Andrew's hosts its Christmas Eve celebration, "O' Holy Night." There is a family service at 4:30 p.m., contemporary service at 6:30 p.m., and traditional services at 8:30 and 11 p.m.

St. Andrew's UMC is located at 3315 Bryan Road. For more information please visit StAndrewsBrandon.org, or call (813) 689-6849.

# Your Tax Dollars And The BSTD

By DAVID P. WEST

What do you and the taxing district do for our community? As a Trustee for the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District for the past six years, I have heard that question many times. I take great pride in explaining how seven volunteers sit on the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District in the elected county position of Trustee. Trustees are officials who work together to allocate your tax dollars for the beautification and maintenance of Bloomingdale's common areas.

There is more to maintaining the common areas of Bloomingdale than most people think. One of the primary duties of the trustees is to work together to propose and set the yearly budget. The yearly budget must cover the expense of the contracts for the firms that are hired to keep Bloomingdale attractive.

The budget for fiscal year 2009 which runs from Oct. 1, 2008 to Sept. 30, 2009 is \$728,905. This money will be spent on day-to-

day needs to support and beautify Bloomingdale. Contracts that are necessary for our community's needs include contracts for property management, landscaping, irrigation repairs, office rent and painting. Money also is spent on capital improvements such as benches, wells, irrigation systems and community signage. The budget is proposed by the BSTD to the Hillsborough County Commissioner's office who has the final approval on our budget.

I have been asked to update Bloomingdale's residents in the coming months on what takes place during our monthly meetings. On behalf of the entire Board of Trustees, I want to encourage you to attend our monthly meetings. We meet at 7 p.m. on the second Monday of each month at 3509 Bell Shoals Road, which is in the CITGO Business Center across Bell Shoals Road from Wal-Mart. I hope to see you soon at one of our upcoming monthly meetings.

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## Cimino Elementary School Takes Green Team School-Wide

Last school year, five teachers started a "Green Team" to help reduce electricity costs at the school as well as promote caring for the environment. Mrs. Swindell, Mrs. Scallan, Dr. Hannett, Mrs. Platt, and Mrs. Buck set out to promote learning across different grade levels. These children worked together on several projects: reading the electric meter, setting up recycle

bins, and monitoring light usage through random light checks. They even took an after school field trip to the landfill to see where all their garbage went. At holiday time, they made crafts by reusing things like old puzzle pieces to make a reindeer magnet. The culminating activity by the Green Team was a Global Summit display for the entire school. Children

researched each continent and their environmental problems including endangered animals. Then, they created a live museum for the school to tour. After such an impressive display and an overwhelming interest from fellow teachers, the Green Team knew they had to take the next step.

This year each homeroom class chose one representative to attend meetings twice a month after school with the Green Teams' teachers. That student is responsible for reporting the information back to students in their class.

Nov. 16, the Green Team representatives prepared for record crowds at the festival. Knowing that drinks packaged in bottles and cans would be sold, students created recycling bins. Three large boxes were labeled to deposit their empty plastic water bottles. They also decorated labels for trash cans to hold empty cans for recycling.



At our first meeting, students learned about the importance of turning off lights when they are not being used. They made foam light bulbs for each classroom reminding them to turn the lights off. The team challenged each class to replace bulbs with the energy efficient bulbs. Students are bringing in empty packages of the CFL bulbs to prove they're becoming energy wise. The class that changes the most bulbs earns a prize.

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# Poinsettias Are Number One Holiday Plant

By JOY BOISSELLE

Christmas is just a few weeks away and many residents are hard at work stringing lights, hanging decorations, and "decking the halls" for the holidays. While the Christmas tree is arguably the most popular natural decoration of the season, the poinsettia, or the Christmas flower, is not far behind. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the many-hued poinsettia is the number one potted plant grown in the United States, and more than 50 million poinsettias are expected to be sold this holiday season.

Consumers can choose from red to pink to white, and an endless array of dyed varieties in blues, purples, greens, many featuring glitter, ribbons, and other marketing gimmicks. With over 100 varieties to choose from, red, however, is still the season's most selected color.

Legend has it that a poor

Mexican girl on her way to Christmas services had no gift to offer the Christ child. In desperation, she picked weeds by the side of the road, thinking any gift would be better than to go empty handed. As she laid the weeds on the nativity altar, they burst in to beautiful red blooms. The people named the flowers, Flores de Noche Buena, or Flowers of the Holy Night.

Joel Poinsett, the first United States Ambassador to Mexico, brought the native Mexican plant to the United States in 1825. Poinsettias were so named in his honor. After his death on December 12, Congress approved National Poinsettia Day, a day set aside to enjoy the beauty of the unique plant.

Poinsettias are available in many local stores with prices for small plants starting at an economical \$2.50 to \$3.00. Larger plants average \$10 and up.

No matter the cost, selecting a

fresh poinsettia is key to enjoying its beauty throughout the holiday season. You should look for dark and green foliage along the stem, completely colored bracts (the flower), and a good and balanced shape such that the diameter of the plant is two and a half times taller than its container. In addition, make sure the leaves are free from wilting and drooping, the soil is not waterlogged, and the plant is not covered with yellow pollen, a sure sign the plant is less fresh.

How you take care of the plant after purchase will determine the length of your enjoyment. Temperature, light, and water are the three most important care issues.

First, household temperatures should be at 70 degrees or lower. Do not place the plant where it may be exposed to temperature extremes, such as a window sill or fireplace. With our milder winters, poinsettias may also be placed outside as long as temper-



JOY BOISSELLE/Gazette Photo

Bloomington Wal-Mart People Greeter and uncanny Santa look-a-like, J.I. and "that's it," inspects the store's first crop of poinsettia offerings. J.I. will become Santa for two weekends before Christmas at Wal-Mart. For details, call the store at 681-8136.

atures are 55 degrees or higher. Second, look for a location that provides at least 6 hours of indirect natural light. And finally, keep the poinsettia's soil moist by watering when the top soil layer feels dry. Discard any excess water

from the container bottom.

Now, you know poinsettia basic survival requirements. National Poinsettia Day is just around the corner...surprise someone with the holiday season's most dramatic plant.

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# Tips For Staying Safe This Holiday Season

By PETE MAURER  
Bloomingdale Community  
Resource Deputy

and  
SANDY CAPITANO  
Bloomingdale Community  
Service Officer

Can you believe it, Thanksgiving is history and now Christmas and the New Year are just around the corner?

Continuing to make your holiday seasons safe and secure can be as simple as following some very basic steps. When you are away from home, whether you're traveling or just running errands locally, enjoy the excitement of the season but be constantly aware of your surroundings and lock up your valuables. Follow the "30 Second Rule." Remember that in less than 30 seconds, a thief can shatter your car window, reach inside and remove any valuables you left in the open.

These valuables can be as simple as some old CDs or pocket change. It doesn't always have to be holiday packages. Thieves also gain access to any personal information you leave in your car.

So, slow down, take time to protect yourself and really be able to enjoy the holidays.

## HOLIDAY TRAVEL

Most of us will be doing some traveling this holiday season, either shopping, going to holiday parties or visiting friends and family out of town. During the holidays the volume of travel and the number of drivers increases.

Follow the basic steps we all know that can help keep you and your family alive. Buckle up in your car and give 100 percent attention to your driving. Don't be distracted. It's dangerous out there. Our community has lost too many teens in driving accidents and, in most cases, the victims were not wearing their seatbelts.

Of the millions of drivers traveling our roads over the holidays, some need our special attention and also are the ones we must not copy. Watch out for the following:

## SLEEPY DRIVERS

According to the National Sleep Foundation, over "half", that's 50 percent, of the nation's drivers – the actual number is 51 percent – admit to driving tired or drowsy, and push themselves too far.

We've all done it. One special group is those drivers 18 – 29 years old. Nearly one-quarter, 24 percent, of this group reported that they have 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.

## DISTRACTED DRIVERS

With cell phones and texting and other new technological advances available, more drivers are allowing themselves to be more distracted. These drivers have become such a serious problem and not all new traffic laws cover their dangerous habits. Many law enforcement officers will now note "driver distracted" on accident reports. Your insurance companies can then increase your rates for these types of citations.

The types of distractions noted could fill a book, many are just 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. It does.

## DRUNK DRIVERS

These are some of the most dangerous drivers. Over 40 percent of 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 even driving in the emergency lane line.

If you notice someone driving like this, avoid them. Contact local law enforcement if you see them. And please, don't be one of them.

## AGGRESSIVE DRIVERS

The holidays can be very stressful and some drivers take that stress with them behind the wheel. If you are driving near a



Deputy Pete Maurer

driver that becomes aggressive, do not confront them or aggravate them. They can very unpredictable. You don't know if they are armed or drunk or on drugs. Many drugs will make drivers very aggressive and unpredictable. Back away, avoid eye contact, don't flash your lights or show any aggression yourself.

Avoid all of these types of drivers and definitely don't be one of them! Protect yourself and your family by wearing your seatbelts and insuring all young children are in properly installed car seats or booster seats.

From all of us at the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office have a safe holiday season!

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# Dinner @ 6

6 ingredients, 6 servings or 6 hours in the crock pot  
These recipes will help your family have dinner @ 6!

December is a month steeped in tradition and one of ours is the 12 Cookies of Christmas. Throughout the month I bake excessively, and we eat excessively. I do some of this at a friend's cookie exchange each year, where we gather with our cookie dough, bake, eat and talk! If you're attending a cookie exchange or even if you just bake at home, this column will give new ideas. The cookies I bake aren't always sweet, some are savory and I'm giving you one of each to satisfy all the taste buds. So this month, let's have "Dessert @ 6", with each of the treats having six or less ingredients, which will help us wedge in some baking between all that shopping and wrapping!

### Cheese Crisps

½ lb. extra sharp cheddar cheese  
2 sticks butter  
2 c. all purpose flour  
2 c. Rice Krispies  
¼ t. salt  
½ - 1 t. cayenne pepper (depending on tastes)

Grate cheese into large bowl. Place sticks of butter in bowl with cheese. Let stand at room temperature until both are soft. Cream together butter and cheese very well; add flour, salt and cayenne pepper. Mix will; stir in Rice Krispies. Roll about 1 tablespoon of mixture into a ball. Place on cookie sheet and press with the tines of a fork. Bake at 325 degrees for 15-20 minutes, watching carefully after 15 minutes to make sure they don't overcook. These will not brown, but should be crispy, not soft.

Now for the sweet! These remind me of the date nut roll my grandmother used to make and they are so deliciously different, yet extremely quick and easy to make. They will also help use up the rest of the box of Rice Krispies you bought to make the Cheese Crisps. The great thing about the next recipe is that it's all done on the stovetop - no baking!

### Date Crisps

1 stick butter  
2 c. Rice Krispies  
1 (8 oz.) pkg. chopped dates  
1 c. brown sugar  
1 c. chopped pecans  
Powdered sugar

In a medium saucepan, place butter, brown sugar and dates. Cook over medium heat until butter and sugar melt. Add Rice Krispies and chopped pecans, stirring to combine. Cool until mixture is warm enough to touch. Form mixture into 1" balls and roll in powdered sugar.

Stop by the Web site this month and discover some new treats and goodies to add to your holiday menu. And while you're there, share a few of your own traditions and the recipe for your favorite cookies. My wish is that you all will have a wonderful, memorable, not to mention, delicious Christmas season!



PHOTO BY Leslie White

The key to success with Cheese Crisps is to let the cheddar cheese and sticks of butter completely soften before attempting to shape them into balls.

Simple. Satisfying. Savory. That's this month's dessert @ 6! Until next month ...

Leslie White can be reached by emailing: [lwhite\\_bloomingdalegazette@yahoo.com](mailto:lwhite_bloomingdalegazette@yahoo.com).

For more recipes visit Dinner @ 6 online at [www.dinnerat6-lesliewhite.blogspot.com](http://www.dinnerat6-lesliewhite.blogspot.com). Readers are invited to share their quick & easy meal solutions, comments and ideas.

  
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Fri, Nov 7 from 5:30-7 pm

**Holiday Pie Baking**  
Fri, Nov 21 from 5:30-7 pm

**Cultures, Customs & Holiday Sweets**  
Sat, Nov 29 from 9 am - noon

**Gingerbread House Class**  
Sat, Dec 6 from 2-3:30 pm

**Cookie Workshop & Pizza Parties**  
Sat, Dec 13 from 10 am - 1 pm  
Mon, Dec 22 from 10 am - 1 pm



**Gingerbread & Pizza Party (Age 10+)**  
Sunday, Dec 7 from 5:30-8:30 pm

**Holiday Gingerbread House Family Night**  
Fri, Dec 12, call to reserve a family table time

**Spirit of the Season Family Night**  
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# Even in Bloomingdale, The Gangs All Here

By MACK AUSTIN

At the November Sheriff's Bloomingdale Area Community Council (BACC) meeting, members and several guests were privileged to have two special members of the Sheriff's Office who are very active in helping make our community safer and more secure. Detective Marc Wilder, from the Sheriff's Special Investigative Division, Gang Enforcement Section and Sgt Richie Shannon, from the Sheriff's District IV Patrol Section, briefed members on a very critical aspect of life in our world of today - gangs.

We all know that education is one of the most important steps in solving or improving any area of our lives. Having a safe and secure community is a goal we all want to achieve and maintain. As Detective

Wilder stated, "Having a safe and secure community takes the cooperative efforts of both law enforcement and active residents being informed and vigilant! It takes a continuous team effort to make the difference."

Yes, there are gangs active in Hillsborough County and in our community. As part of their briefing, Detective Wilder and Sgt Shannon shared the following facts:

- In just over a year the number of active gangs in Hillsborough County has risen from 87 to 156. This is why the Sheriff has established one of the nation's first special sections dedicated to enforcing gang activity.
- The age range of gang members is from 7 years old, yes that's 7 years old, to 80 years old. All gangs are constantly

recruiting new members.

- The largest age group is from 16 to 23 years old. This is why parents with children in middle and high school need to become aware and know the signs and actions to watch for in their children that relate to possible gang membership.
- There are over 3,200 active gang members that are certified members based on Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) criteria.
- Most of the activities of gangs are illegal. Being in a gang can increase the sentencing of a criminal.
- Effective Oct. 1, 2008, all gang members must register just like sex offenders, and those convicted of violent crimes will have their gang membership noted on their

drivers' license.

- The most dangerous members of gangs can be the new members or gang want-ables because they still have to prove themselves worthy of being in a gang.
- Areas like Bloomingdale and the surrounding communities are ideal for gang criminal activities such as robberies or burglaries because of the easy pickings and easy targets when residents leave their garage doors open and their vehicles unlocked.
- Florida is number two in the nation in drive-by shootings.

What can you as residents do to help reduce the affects of gang activity in our communities? Take the following actions:

- Become more aware of suspicious activities in your neighborhoods.
- Get to know your neighbors and look out for each other.
- Know who your kids are

hanging out with.

- Get to know the parents of the kids your kids hang out with.
- Parents, get educated on the signs to watch for in your kids as it relates to gang membership. Many gang members are from nice homes. Many gang members joined out of "being bored." The Web offers a wealth of information.
- Take the steps to properly secure your homes and vehicles.
- Report any incidents of graffiti - the territorial markings for gangs, take photos and then have it covered up.
- Do not try to openly confront gangs. They are dangerous.

To report gang activity or for information call 1-877-GANG OUT...1-877-426-4688

You all work hard to have nice neighborhoods in safe and secure communities. Do your part to keep them that way!



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## Magazine Drive a Huge Success



Photo by JOLIE HARRIS

Burns Middle School's Main Event Party was held on Friday Oct. 24, 2008. The event was held for students in grades sixth through eighth who sold more than five magazine subscriptions. The magazine drive was very successful as the total sales reached \$55,471. The profits from the fundraiser will support copy expenses, Spring Field Day and team needs.

## Bulls Baseball Team To Host 13th Annual Golf Tournament

The Bloomingdale Bulls Baseball Team is having their 13th Annual Golf Tournament. Bulls Baseball is looking for corporate sponsors, golfers, donations and door prizes for the event.

Your corporate sponsorship or donation to our baseball program is greatly appreciated and will be recognized at our tournament as well as throughout the upcoming 2009 baseball season.

The tournament will be held at River Hills Country Club on Monday, Dec. 22, 2008, with a 12:30 p.m. shotgun start. The cost is \$100 per player and sponsorship packages are available from \$200 to \$2500.

Join us at River Hills Country Club's award winning course for a great day and a great way to support the Bulls baseball program. There will be door prizes, dinner, awards, player gift bags, sports memorabilia and lots more.

For more information, contact Brenda Acquaviva at (813) 643-5833. Deadline for play registration is Dec. 15, 2008.

## And The Winner Is...

No trick, just a treat for one Brandon family on Oct. 31. Larry and GERALYN KEYS claimed the \$43-million Florida Lotto jackpot after presenting the winning ticket to lottery authorities. The winning ticket was drawn Sept. 20 at the Publix on Lithia-Pinecrest and kept shoppers and area residents wondering if the money would be claimed or not. The Keys opted for a lump sum payment of \$24,638,627.33, which was officially claimed by The Keys Family Revocable Trust, according to lottery officials.



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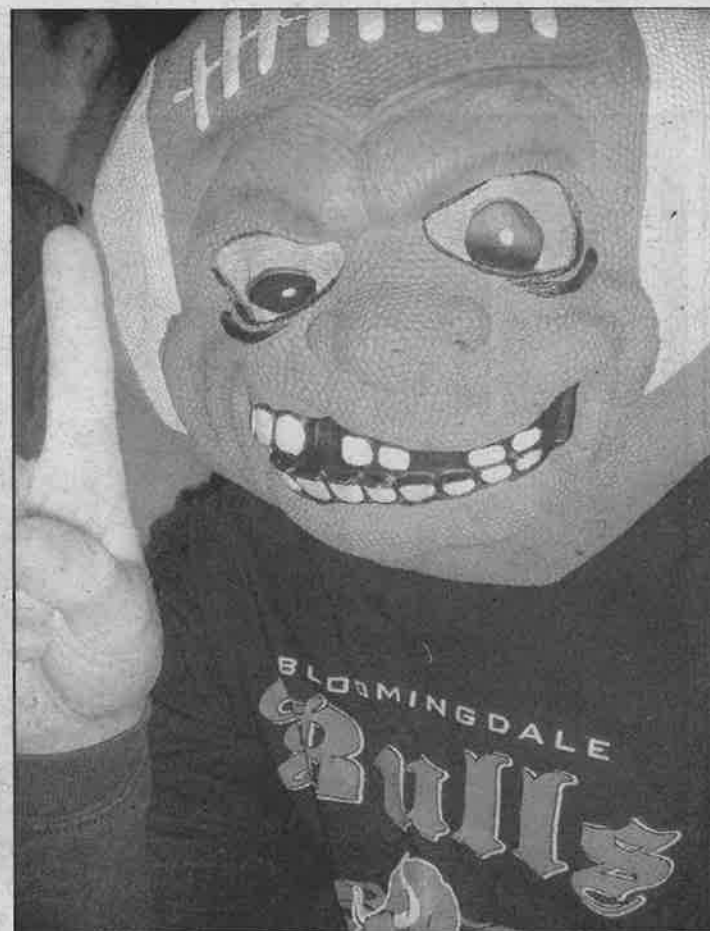
## Bulls Scare Up Some Football Fun

By LESLIE WHITE

Bulls fever spiked in Bloomingdale when the football team headed to the playoffs for the first time in the school's history. A Halloween night win against the Brandon Eagles secured the Bulls their first ever post-season appearance. The Bulls finished the season with a 6-4 record, another first for the high school that has waited since 1987 for its first winning season. Fans and players hailed Head Coach Jason Stokes as the man who inspired it all. His players surrounded him after the win against Brandon with hugs, praise and even tears. Senior linebacker C. J. Curran told his parents, Tim and Donna Curran, "I knew we could turn things around and make history!" Minutes after the 27-22 win over Brandon, C.J.'s mom, Donna said, "C.J. believed in himself and in his team and this is just awesome!" The Bulls lost to the Lakeland Dreadnaughts in the district playoffs.

The Bloomingdale Bulls and cheerleaders lift their signed horns as the band plays the alma mater, a tradition after each football game.

Fans turned out in droves at the Bloomingdale/Newsome game, decorating Wolves' territory with signs hailing Coach Stokes and his Bulls.



Photos by LESLIE WHITE

Halloween night brought a treat to Bulls fans with a 27-22 win over the Brandon Eagles, securing Bloomingdale a much anticipated spot in the playoffs.



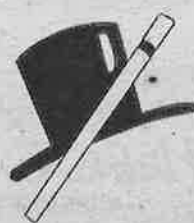




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TALK AROUND TOWN

By JOY BOISSELLE

"Talk around Town" is a section of your hometown newspaper that seeks to reach out to our community. Monthly, residents and those who work in our community will be asked a question (some lighthearted, some serious), and asked to respond. Do you have a question you would like to have asked? E-mail your suggestions to [InBloomingdaleNews@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:InBloomingdaleNews@tampabay.rr.com).

**This month:**  
*"If you could have anything for Christmas this year, what would be on the top of your 'wish list'?"*

**Josh (7), Chris, and Julia (9) Harbord**  
 Fox Run residents

Chris- "I wish for a Caribbean cruise, so we could spend family time together in a tropical setting."

Julia- "I would want my own ride in my backyard like a merry-go-round, or— a cell phone."

Josh- "I want to go to every place in the world; I want to explore. And. I want a Wii."



**Abby (6), Dani, and Mikayla (9) Akers**  
 Springlake residents

Dani- "If I could really get anything...even something impossible...it would be one more day with my Mom who passed away 10 years ago."

Abby- "I would like an iPod this year so I could listen to my music by myself."

Mikayla- "I would like a dog, but my sister is allergic."



**Steven Rodriguez,**  
 Assistant Golf Professional,  
 Bloomingdale Golfers Club

"My outlook on life is very positive. I wish for even more happiness in my marriage, many years of health, to improve my golf game, a new home soon, and a big Porsche in the driveway for my wife."



\* Visit Mon -Fri by appointment  
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# It Is Time To Check The Clocks On Your Sprinkler Systems

When you turned your clock back, did you remember to check the timer on your sprinkler system?

Homeowners and business owners who have automatic sprinkler systems should check the timers, so they won't risk a fine by watering at the wrong time. If your system has a back-up battery that you haven't changed in awhile, now would be a good time to do that, as well.

Watering of established lawns and landscaping in unincorporated Hillsborough County is allowed one day week, based on a property's address. All watering must be accomplished before 8 a.m. or after 6 p.m.

The Southwest Florida Water Management District recently tightened water restrictions for Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinel-

las counties, so it's worth the few minutes it takes to check and reset the timer. Violating the restrictions means a fine of \$100 for the first offense, \$200 for the second and so on, leading up to \$500 for the fifth and succeeding violations. Non-payment will result in a summons to appear before a code enforcement special magistrate.

Among some of the highlights of the tighter restrictions, in place through June 30, 2009:

- Watering plants and landscaping by hand or with a low-volume drip irrigation system must be accomplished before 8 a.m. or after 6 p.m.
- Decorative outdoor fountains and waterfalls may be operated only four hours a day. The hours of operation must be posted.
- SWFWMD also recom-

mends homeowners take what steps they can to avoid an increase in lawn and landscaping water use, such as postponing plans to replace sod and plants.

For complete information on what day you can water, call (813) 275-7094 for a recorded message, visit hillsborough-county.org/water and click on the "Restrictions & Conservation" button, or call the Water Conservation Team at (813) 274-6800 during regular business hours.

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## Tampa Oratorio Singers Celebrate Season

The Tampa Oratorio Singers kicks off the 2008 holiday season with "Carols of the Season," featuring the Florida Orchestra Brass Quintet. The program consists of favorite yuletide carols and revered Christmas classics. The concerts will be held at First Presbyterian Church in Plant City on Saturday, Dec. 6 at 3 p.m., followed by a performance at the University of Tampa, Plant Hall in the Fletcher Lounge on Sunday, Dec. 7 at 5 p.m.

The following weekend, the Tampa Oratorio Singers will

perform the Christmas portion of Handel's magnificent "Messiah," with orchestra and singers from other Bay Area churches.

Two performances will be presented at Palma Ceia Presbyterian Church in Tampa on Saturday, Dec. 13 at 5 p.m. and on Sunday, Dec. 14 at 5 p.m.

The Tampa Oratorio Singers is a 75-plus member choir comprised of local artists representing various backgrounds in classical music. Now in its 41<sup>st</sup> season, the TOS enjoys a unique history as the oldest

classical chorus in the area and is the choir in residence at the University of Tampa. Nancy Callahan, in her seventh season, is Director of Music and David Matthews is Accompanist.

TOS is a volunteer-driven 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization. All concerts are made possible thanks to the Arts Council of Hillsborough County, the Hillsborough Board of County Commissioners, and private donors. For ticket information and directions contact [tostampa.org](http://tostampa.org), e-mail at [oratorioinfo@aol.com](mailto:oratorioinfo@aol.com), or by phone at (813) 247-3866.

## CENTER

From page 10

year. Karate is offered year round for ages 5 and up on Tuesdays and Fridays from 5-6:30 p.m. at a cost of \$24/month. Parents are encouraged to sign up their kids as well as volunteer to coach the various teams. All registrants receive a T-shirt and trophy. Bloomingdale West also hosts a free teen nights for ages 11 and up are Mondays from 5:30-8:30 p.m. during the school year.

"It's important for kids to feel involved and have friendships," said Clouse, who also says that "parents use teen night as a motivation for kids to keep their

grades up."

The park also offers four hard tennis courts, eight three wall racquetball courts, two sand volleyball courts, a softball field and playground equipment. Building facilities are available during hours of operation for use by local homeowner's associations and civic groups in two-hour timeslots. The site is also a voting precinct.

For more information on park offerings visit [hillsboroughcounty.org](http://hillsboroughcounty.org). The Bloomingdale West Recreation Center is located at 3940 Canoga Park Drive, and can be reached by calling (813) 744-5907.

## Stroke Prevention

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\*Employee Pricing available at participating dealers. Not available on Escape Hybrid, Shelby GT-500, F-Series chassis/cutaway models, '09 F-150. Not all buyers will qualify. Cash back varies by model. Customer cash not available on Shelby GT, Bullitt and Harley-Davidson™ models. For all offers, take new retail delivery from dealer stock by 1/05/09. See dealer for qualifications and complete details.



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