

THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

Volume XXVIII
Number 6

JUNE 2008 • THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BLOOMINGDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION SINCE 1980

BHA Awards \$2K Scholarship

Exceptional student off to the University of Florida

PAGE 17

Expo Is In Good Taste

Taste of Brandon a hit with new and old alike.

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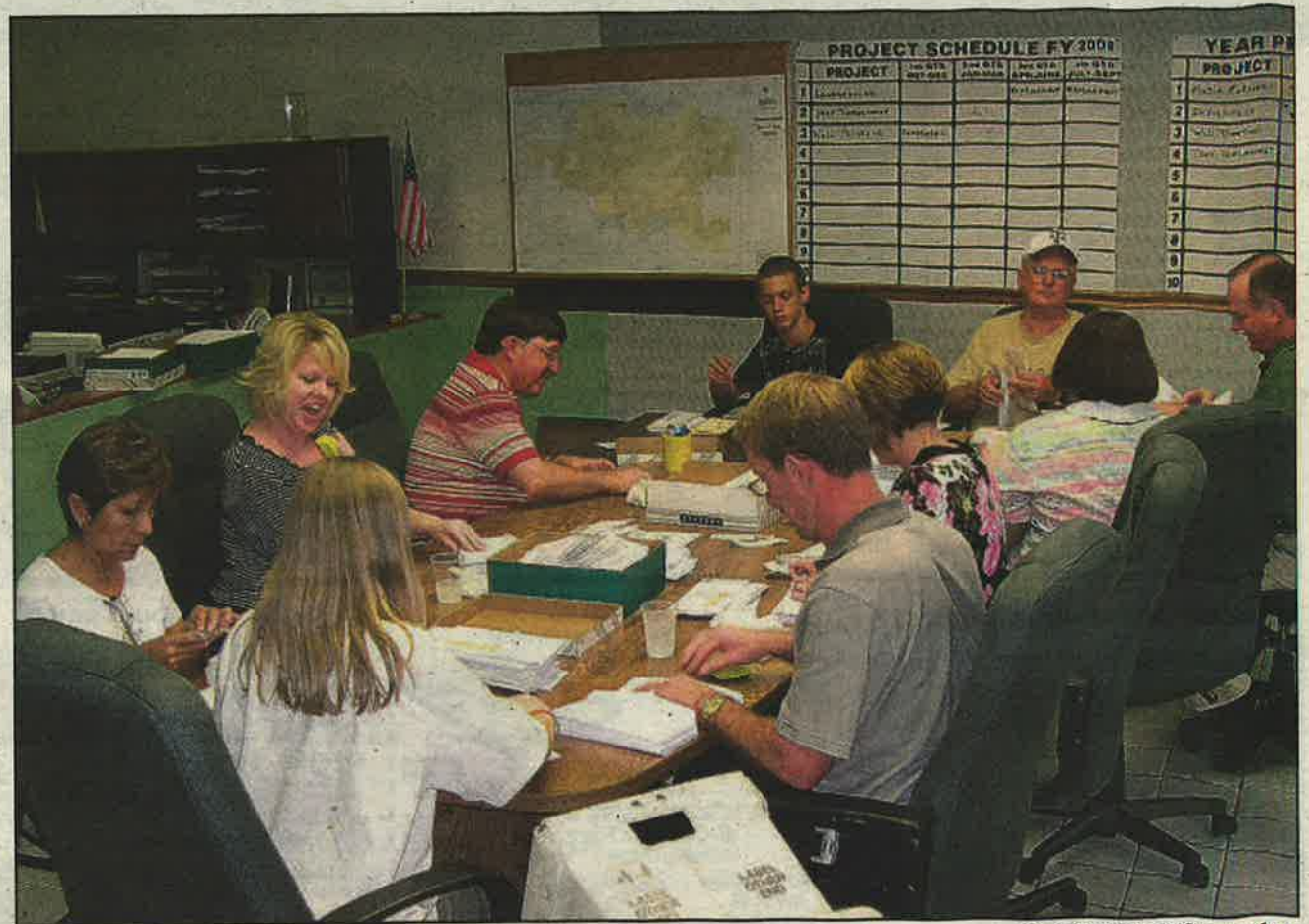
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The Right Stuff




JOY BOISSELLE/Gazette photo

Bloomington Homeowners Association board members and neighborhood volunteers gathered in May at the Bloomington Community Office to assemble and stuff membership dues notices mailed June 1 to more than 5,000 residents. Pictured around the table from the left are Margarita Rainyn, Jolie Harris, Joe Hickle, Zack Wiles, Don Grevert, George May, Joni Hickle, Jane Lee, Stan Lee and Olivia Harris. See story, page 4.

Bloomington High Teens Win National Contest

EFFORT TO PROMOTE TEEN DRIVER SAFETY NETS \$10K PRIZE, see page 17

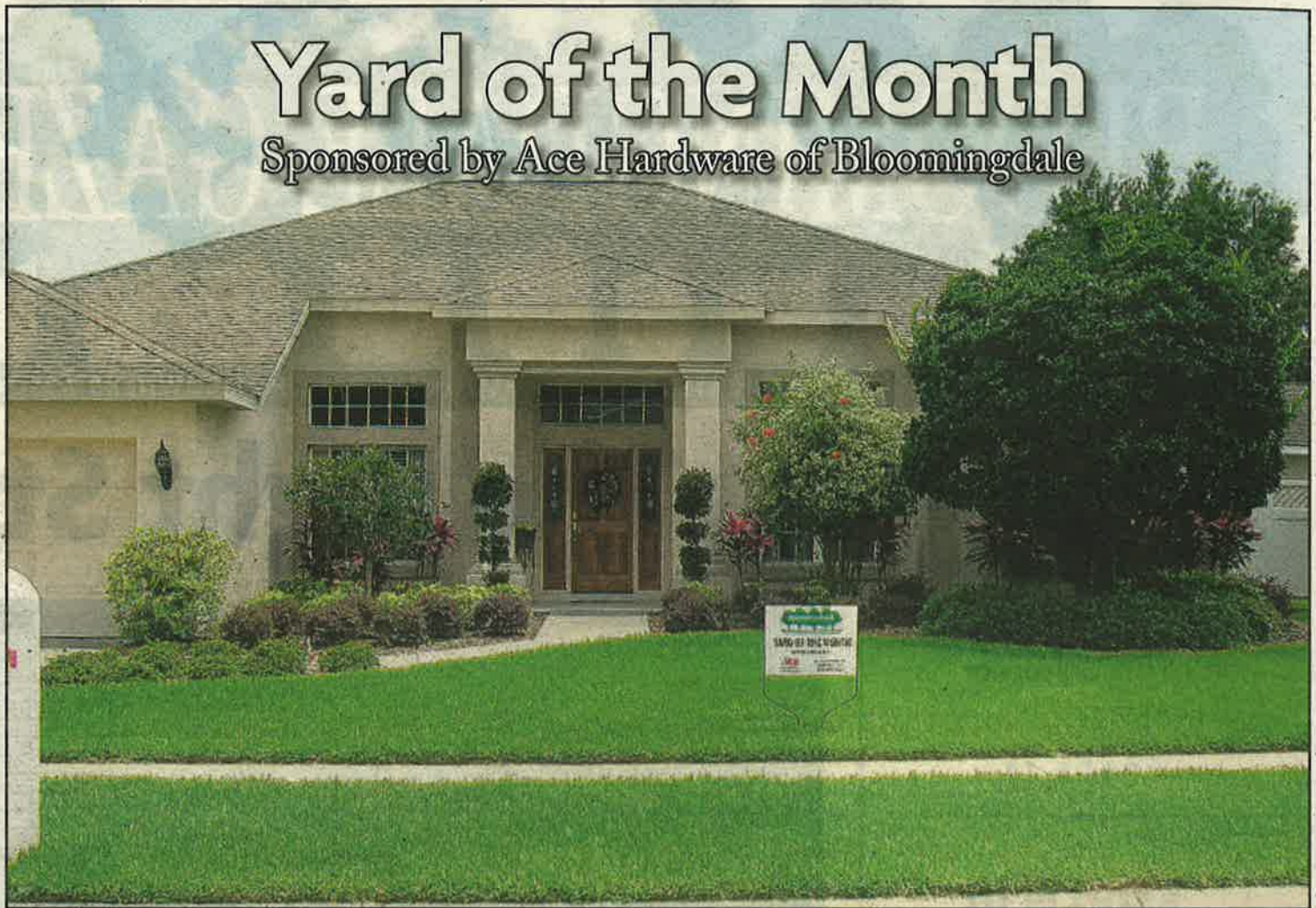
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The Links

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

Yard of the Month

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<p>Medium Round</p> <p>Mozzarella Cheese & 1 Topping, 8 Slices</p> <p>\$6.99</p> <p>Participating locations only. Extra cheese, toppings, tax and delivery additional. Must present coupon. Expires 6-30-08. Prices subject to change without notice. Plus dep.</p>	<p>8 Corner Pizza™</p> <p>Mozzarella Cheese & 1 Topping</p> <p>Additional Toppings only \$1.99 Deep Dish Only</p> <p>\$10.99</p> <p>Participating locations only. Extra cheese, toppings, tax and delivery additional. Must present coupon. Expires 6-30-08. Prices subject to change without notice.</p>	<p>Deluxe Specialty Pizza</p> <p>BBQ Chicken, Hawaiian, Chicken Parmesan, BLT</p> <p>Available in Deep Dish, Hand Tossed Round or Crispy Crust.</p> <p>\$8.99 Small \$10.99 Medium \$12.99 Large</p> <p>Participating locations only. Extra cheese, toppings, tax and delivery additional. Must present coupon. Expires 6-30-08. Prices subject to change without notice.</p>	<p>Pizza & a Soda</p> <p>2 Slices & a 20 oz. Soda</p> <p>\$3.99</p> <p>Participating locations only. Extra cheese, toppings, tax and delivery additional. Must present coupon. Expires 6-30-08. Prices subject to change without notice.</p>

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TOGETHER, PERFORMING AT A HIGHER STANDARD

Annual Membership Drive Underway

By JOYBOISSELLE

Mercedes has it, Nike has it, and Bloomingdale, has it - name recognition synonymous with high quality, standards and value. The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association Inc. exists to help maintain that positive image.

This week more than 5,000 homeowners who live or own property in Bloomingdale will receive an annual membership drive letter from the BHA asking for their support and annual dues payment of \$25 - a great value at less than 50 cents per week.

The organization's mission is simple - keep Bloomingdale a first-class place to live by maintaining and improving the quality of life, property values and standards of living its residents enjoy today.

The association's principal objectives, as defined by its by-laws, are to promote a spirit of neighborly relations and cooperation; promote, coordinate and obtain improved utilities, governmental services and other beneficial improvements; maintain high standards while opposing any encroachment or conduct which may lower community standards; to promote physical improvements for the common good; and to oppose any act which may depreciate property values.

Ted Grable, membership drive coordinator and past BHA president, said funds, in the form of residents' membership dues, are required to help maintain those objectives.

"The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association is different from the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District and the mandatory homeowner associations within some of our neighborhoods," Grable said. "The only income we receive to support our many community programs is income from our annual membership drive."

In addition to the many programs and activities supported by the BHA and residents' dues, board members - all volunteers who live in the community - attend myriad city, county and state meetings. Their goal is to promote and protect Bloomingdale by presenting a unified voice for issues affecting the community such as safety, development and traffic issues.

"There is something to be said about being in a community that has a [unified] voice and vision," Grable said.

The association in recent years successfully fought a Hillsborough County School District plan to rezone attendance areas that would have sent high school students in Bloomingdale West to Riverview High School on Boyette Road.

The organization also successfully petitioned the county to move the proposed location of the Bloomingdale Regional Public Library from land near the River Hills subdivision in Valrico to its current location on Bloomingdale Avenue.

The board also influenced the school district to locate Cimino Elementary School within the Bloomingdale community to better serve neighborhood families.

The association, with the help of the Bloomingdale Area Community Council, successfully lobbied to have stop lights and turning lanes installed on Bell Shoals Road at Glenhaven Drive; a northbound left turn lane on Bell Shoals at Garnet Drive; and a traffic light on Lithia-Pinecrest Road at Erindale Drive.

The BHA board is currently involved in a number of projects, including an ongoing effort to facilitate sidewalk repairs, an issue that affects hundreds of residents who use the sidewalks daily for exercise and recreation and to walk to and from school.

Through the hard work of the association's board members, neighborhood volunteers and residents' membership dues, Grable said Bloomingdale has maintained a high standard of living and community values and pride.

"When you say you live in Bloomingdale, everyone knows where that is and that it is a desirable place to live, instead of just another faceless neighborhood," Grable said. "Maybe you can't contribute your time to help keep Bloomingdale the kind of community we want to live in, but by contributing your membership money, you help those who have the time help you."

The BHA, a nonprofit, all-volunteer organization, is the only homeowners association representing the entire Bloomingdale community, including Bloomingdale East, Bloomingdale West and Bloomingdale Oaks. Neighboring areas whose residents routinely support and participate in BHA activities are also included in the association's membership area, including Hickory Creek, Dogwood Hills, Hickory Ridge and Butler Road.

BHA board meetings, held at 7 p.m. on the first Monday each month at the community office, are open to the public. All Bloomingdale residents are invited to observe the proceedings or address the board with their questions and concerns. Community volunteer opportunities are always available for residents in the BHA area, from scouts and high school students to singles, families and senior citizens.

Following is a list of programs and activities sponsored by the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association. For more information call (813) 681-2051, e-mail bloomingdale.homeowners@verizon.net or go to bloomingdalegazette.com.

BHA PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

The Bloomingdale Gazette:

Bloomingdale's official newspaper since 1980,

See BHA, Page 6



JOYBOISSELLE/Gazette photo

The BHA lobbies county officials for neighborhood traffic and safety improvements such as the stoplight and turning lane recently installed on Bell Shoals Road at Glenhaven Drive.



Gazette file photo (2006)

The BHA sponsors an annual visit by Santa and Mrs. Claus to bring joy to neighborhood children and collect food for needy families.



JOYBOISSELLE/Gazette photo

The Bloomingdale Community Office, at 3509 Bell Shoals Road, is a valuable resource for residents. The office is open 7 a.m. - 11 a.m. Monday - Thursday and serves as a meeting place and headquarters for the BHA and the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District.



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BHA

From page 4

the Gazette provides hyperlocal information to residents. It is delivered free to all homes in the BHA membership area on the first Saturday each month along with a complimentary copy of The Tampa Tribune. The Gazette welcomes news, announcements, letters and photos from Bloomingdale area residents and businesses for publication; send to editor Laura Frazier, lfrazier@tampatrib.com.

Bloomingdale Web Site:

Since January 2000, bloomingdalegazette.com provides timely news, information and event listings. Residents can join the community's free, confidential e-mail list to receive BHA news alerts concerning late-breaking or urgent information. Residents are welcome to submit news, announcements, letters and photos for publication on the Web site; send to site manager Jane Lee, info@bloomingdalegazette.com.

Wrong Info On Your Dues Notice?

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association receives resident and mailing address information from the Hillsborough County Property Appraiser's Office. If you received a dues notice with incorrect information, please contact the county property appraiser, (813) 272-6100.

Bloomingdale Community Office:

The BHA shares the Bloomingdale Community Office and staff with the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District. The office, at 3509 Bell Shoals Road behind SunTrust Bank and the Citgo service station, is open 7 a.m. - 11 a.m. Monday to Thursday.

The community office staff maintains information about the community, helps residents resolve deed restriction complaints and neighborhood issues, and offers a notary service for a nominal fee.

Neighborhood Improvement Program:

BHA volunteers continually strive to promote and enforce deed restrictions and works with Hillsborough County Code Enforcement to promote county code and ordinance compliance. Residents can report potential violations on the community Web site or by calling the community office to request a complaint form.

B. J. Stelter Bloomingdale Community Scholarship:

Established in 2006, the scholarship is awarded annually to one or more Bloomingdale High School seniors. Scholarship applications are available year-round at the school and on the community Web site.

Neighborhood Pride Program:

Introduced in 2002 to promote a sense of pride in ownership and community by encouraging neighbors to clean up and improve their homes,

Neighborhood Name and Sign Program:

Ten of Bloomingdale's 40 neighborhood sections were not officially named by the original developer. The BHA introduced this program to allow homeowners in those sections to choose a name and have entryway signs installed. Currently, all 10 sections are officially named and most have received new entryway signs.

Community Cleanup Days:

The BHA, with a grant from Hillsborough County and the assistance of the Parks, Recreation and Conservation Dept. and neighborhood volunteers, conducts annual Community Cleanup Days that enable residents to dispose of household junk for free at a convenient neighborhood location. The next Cleanup Day will be held in fall 2008 at a date to be announced in the Gazette and on bloomingdalegazette.com.

Bloomingdale Area Community Council:

The BHA supports the efforts of the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office and the all-volunteer BACC council to help keep Bloomingdale safe. The council meets 7 p.m. on the third Thursday each month at the Bloomingdale substation at 4342 Bell Shoals Road, next to Beef O'Brady's restaurant. Residents with questions or concerns about law enforcement issues are encouraged to attend. For infor-



Gazette file photo (2007)

The BHA holds semi-annual Community Cleanup Days with funding help from neighborhood grants provided by the Hillsborough County Office of Neighborhood Relations. Manpower for the cleanups is provided by BHA board members and other neighborhood volunteers, pictured.

mation, call Bloomingdale Community Resource Deputy Pete Maurer, (813) 635-8040.

Bloomingdale Regional Public Library:

The BHA actively petitioned for a new library to be located on Bloomingdale Avenue and became the first corporate-level sponsor of the Friends of the Bloomingdale Regional Public Library.

Traffic/Roadway Improvements:

The BHA works with Hillsborough County officials and staff to implement traffic and roadway improvements in and around the Bloomingdale community.

Santa And Mrs. Claus:

The BHA sponsors an annual visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus and a canned food drive to benefit charitable organizations, held at the community office each December.

Fourth Of July Parade:

The BHA invites all Bloomingdale residents to participate in Brandon's Fourth of July parade in the association's golf cart caravan.

Chamber Of Commerce, Roundtable Charities:

The BHA is a supporting member of the Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce and Brandon Roundtable Charities.

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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, Sheila Harris, Lydia Harrod, Jane Lee; 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

THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

The official publication of the BHA since 1980

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Web site: www.bloomingdalegazette.com

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



Call County For Public Works Service

A Gazette Report

Residents of unincorporated Hillsborough County may call the Public Works customer service phone line, (813) 635-5400, from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. weekdays to request service or information. After business hours or on weekends and holidays call the Citizen Action Center, (813) 272-5900.

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Seniors' Prom

LAURA FRAZIER/Gazette photo

Marlene Raphael, center, a nurse for Hillsborough County's Department of Aging Services, dances with Patty Paternico and Rufus Boyd at the Seniors' Prom at the Brandon Community Center. The county holds the dance each year in May in honor of Older Americans Month. More than 200 senior citizens who participate in programs offered at eight senior centers throughout the county attended the prom.

Christian Group Hosts Prayer Breakfast

A Gazette Report

Christian Business Connections of Brandon will host a Brandon Prayer Breakfast 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. June 9 at Center Place Fine Arts & Civic Association, 609 Vonderberg Drive, Brandon. Reservations are required and tickets are \$10.

Organizers said the purpose of the breakfast is to provide an opportunity for Christian business people to come together and listen to an inspirational message, pray for the community and network with other Christian business people.

Guest speaker Manuel Diaz, general manager and CFO McCullagh & Scott Construction and Development will speak on the topic "Leading In An Uncertain Market."

Diaz serves as a business leader and mentor for various community businesses including two chapters of the Christian Businessmen of Brandon. An ordained minister, Diaz is the founder and director of Barnabas Outreach mission, which provides people, financial assistance and educational resources to ministries in India, South Africa and other nations. He has also served as a pastor and church planter in several communities and is a Marine Corps veteran.

Christian Business Connections meets at 8 a.m. weekly on Mondays at Mimi's Café, 804 Providence Road, Brandon. Information: (813) 654-0748 or e-mail info@christianbusinessconnections.com.



Moms' Day of Beauty

LAURA FRAZIER/Gazette photo

Mikki Bragg, left, one of seven winners in All About Beauty salon's Moms' Day of Beauty write-in contest, enjoys a manicure by nail tech Traci Lovato. Bragg's co-worker Ingrid Baronville, center, nominated her for the afternoon of free salon services, lunch and family dinners-to-go. Salon owner Octavia Stoppa sponsored the contest in honor of Mother's Day and to reward deserving mothers with a free day of pampering. To read more and see photos from the makeovers, go to tbo.com, keyword: Brandon Moms.



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Free Yard Sale Ads

Residents who are dues-paying members of the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association may now advertise yard sales for free in The Bloomingdale Gazette. Send announcements about yard sales and contact information to bloomingtonale.homeowners@verizon.net by the 19th of each month for publication in the following month's Gazette. The Gazette is delivered to more than 5,000 Bloomingdale residences on the first Saturday each month along with a complimentary copy of The Tampa Tribune.

**THE
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Students To Represent Future Leaders



Photo from St. Stephen Catholic School

St. Stephen Catholic School students Richard Carr, Luis Gonzalez, Tyler Meany and Katie Huetteman were nominated to represent their school and community in June at the Junior National Youth Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C. The conference brings together exceptional middle school students from around the country to interact with mentors and to develop their leadership skills and support their academic growth.

The students must raise \$10,000 to pay for conference costs and travel expenses. They are working to raise money by selling concessions at school sporting events, holding car washes and collecting donations from business and community leaders. For information or to donate, call (813) 785-9768 or e-mail fl.huetteman@verizon.net.

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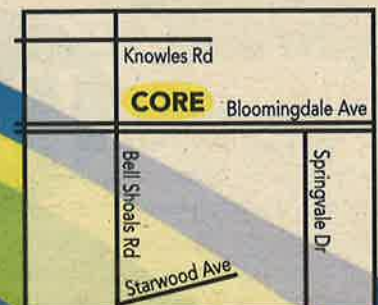
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Dr. Donna Saatman, Neurosurgeon

**Thursday, June 26
6:30pm**

**Conference Room
The Palmetto Club at Fishhawk Ranch
17004 Dorman Road
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According to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, if you have low back pain, you are not alone. Nearly everyone at some point has back pain that interferes with work, routine daily activities or recreation. Americans spend at least \$50 billion each year on low back pain, the most common cause of job-related disability and a leading contributor to missed work.

Back pain is the second most common neurological ailment in the United States — only headache is more common. Fortunately, most occurrences of low back pain go away within a few days. Others take much longer to resolve or lead to more serious conditions.

Join neurosurgeon Donna Saatman, M.D., to find out about new techniques in diagnosing and treating back pain. Dr. Saatman will provide valuable information about back pain including:

- Symptoms
- Screening guidelines
- Diagnosis and treatment

There will be a question and answer session following the lecture. Light refreshments will be served. **Seating is limited so call (813) 754-4444 today to register.**

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Bank Offers Perks To New Clients, Bloomingtondale Residents

A Gazette Report

The Bloomingtondale Homeowners Association's banking partner, Fifth Third Bank at 3402 Lithia-Pinecrest Road, Valrico, is offering special incentives to Bloomingtondale residents who open a new checking account and sign up for a debit card in the month of June.

Branch managers said in addition to the bank's general offer to all customers – open a checking account with a minimum deposit of \$50 and sign up for a debit card and the bank will deposit \$100 in your account – additional benefits will be extended to dues-paying members of the Bloomingtondale Homeowners Association.

Additional benefits extended to BHA members include the first order of checks free, free notary service and traveler's checks and one free cashier's check per month.

The offer runs through June 30, 2008. For information, visit the branch or call (813) 654-4464.

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BLOOMINGDALE NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

Summer Programs Are Cool For Kids, Adults

Campo Family YMCA
3414 Culbreath Road., Valrico
(813) 684-1371
tampaymca.org

Offers full-day summer programs, sports clinics and half-day programs for ages 5 -12, including basketball, soccer, football, volleyball, cooking, arts, drama, swimming, snorkeling and teen leadership training. There are themed weekly activities, field trips and activities such as rock climbing, swimming, sports and more. Full-day programs and sports clinics: \$185 (\$130 for YMCA members). Half-day programs: \$130 (\$90 for members).

YMCA Camp Cristina
9840 Balm-Riverview Road.,
Riverview
(813) 677-8400
tampaymca.org/ccr
Full-day adventure programs for

ages 6-15 at a 65-acre outdoor facility. Participants choose their schedule of activities including high and low ropes courses, horseback riding, archery, canoeing, arts and crafts, environmental education, sports, swimming, and more. Transportation is available from South Tampa, New Tampa, and Valrico at no additional charge. Weekly: \$224 (\$160 YMCA Facility Members).

Seffner-Brandon Family YMCA
3097 S. Kingsway Road., Seffner
(813) 685-5402
tampaymca.org

Full and half-day summer programs for ages 3-15 including gymnastics, preschool, teen leaders in training, and special needs programs. Activities include swimming, games, arts and crafts, sports, field trips and

See **PROGRAMS**, Page 15

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PROGRAMS

From page 14

more. Full-day regular program: \$185 per week (\$130 YMCA members). Full day gymnastics: \$200 per week (\$140 members); Half-day preschool or Tiny Tots: \$78 per week (\$54 YMCA Facility Members).

FishHawk Ranch YMCA Express

16144 Churchview Drive, Lithia (813) 651-4200
tampaymca.org

Specialty mid-day summer programs are available for preschoolers; a variety of themed weeks are available throughout the summer for ages 2 to 4. Programs are also offered for youth sports, swim club, personal training and more. For information call the facility.

Brandon Sports and Aquatic Center

405 Beverly Blvd., Brandon (813) 685-0771
mybsac.org.

Water aerobics classes for adults of all ages and fitness levels meet 9 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Other programs offered include aerobics, kick-boxing, lifeguard training, gymnastics and more.

TechPlayzone

13208 Boyette Road, Riverview (813) 453-8612

techplayzone.com

Science-Sational Camp runs June 9 - Aug. 15. Campers may register for one or more weeks. Activities include video game creation, Lego robotics, digital movie making, web page design, 3-D modeling and animation and much more. Campers in grades K-7 will have a great time expressing their ideas at this science and technology camp. Full-day sessions, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.: \$225 per week. Half-day sessions, 9 a.m. to noon or 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.: \$150 per week.

Submit summer program information for publication in the July issue of *The Bloomingdale Gazette* to lfrazier@tampatrib.com.

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Voluntary Pre-K Starts June 23

A Gazette Report
Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten classes start June 23 at 21 public schools and numerous private schools in Hillsborough County. Hillsborough County Schools Superintendent MaryEllen Elia in May urged parents of 4- and

5-year-old students to enroll them in the free summer program. Children who turn 5 years old by Sept. 1, 2008, who are Florida residents, and who have never participated in voluntary pre-k or kindergarten are eligible. The

program is free, and will be offered from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday from June 23 to Aug. 4. The hours are flexible and parents may drop off children later than 7:30 a.m. or pick them up earlier than 6 p.m. if desired.

The program, which provides an opportunity for children to enter kindergarten prepared, is offered at the following public elementary schools: Buckhorn, Bryan, Chiles, Clark, Clair Mel, Dover, Essrig, Gibsonton, Gorrie, McDonald, Mango, Mintz, Potter, Seffner,

Seminole, Sessums, Shaw, Sheehy, Tinker, Wimauma and Woodbridge. Transportation is not provided. Breakfast, lunch and a snack are provided. Information: (813) 272-4840 or sdhc.k12.fl.us.



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- **WHAT:** How to Train for XC & High School sports over the Summer
- **WHO:** Middle School students moving on to High School or new runners
- **WHERE:** Hit the Trails! FishHawk Park Square

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Summer Training June 9th - July 25th, 7:00am - 9:00am

- Monday, Wednesday, Friday run meets will be offered from HTT.
- Running Program supplied by Hit the Trails • Newsome XC/Track Runner will lead the runs.
- Complete program cost \$200. or \$35./wk. \$50. deposit before June 5th. Standard parental waiver required.

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FishHawk Park Square
16144 Churchview Drive, Suite 105

Hit the Trails
RUNNING AND OUTDOOR GEAR

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Award Committee Culls Exceptional Winner

By JOYBOISSELLE

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association awarded its 2008 B. J. Stelter Bloomingdale Community Scholarship in May to Whitney Cull, a Bloomingdale High School senior. Cull is the daughter of retired Col. Kenneth Cull and his wife, Audrey.

The association founded the scholarship in 2006 to honor Stelter, a former Bloomingdale principal, and to encourage and reward the academic achievements of the community's youth.

Stelter, one of four judges who selected Cull to receive this year's \$2,000 award, said sifting through the highly qualified candidates was a difficult task.

"Each year the competition

is stronger," Stelter said. "We should be extremely proud of kids like this."

The scholarship committee evaluated applicants using selection criteria that included community service, an essay, academic transcript, extra-curricular activities, and a letter of reference.

Cull will attend the University of Florida in the fall and plans to major in pre-veterinary medicine. While at Bloomingdale, she maintained a 5.83 grade average, lettered in soccer and cross country, and was a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. She was also a member of the National Honor Society, Spanish Honor Society, and received many



JOY BOISSELLE/Gazette photo

At right, Bloomingdale Homeowners Association president Joe Hickle, right, and former Bloomingdale High School principal B. J. Stelter, left, in May present Bloomingdale senior Whitney Cull with the \$2,000 2008 B. J. Stelter Bloomingdale Community Scholarship.

department and class awards at the school.

Cull accrued more than 250 community service hours during the past two years volunteering

at the Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa.

"It means a lot to have the support of my community as I go on to pursue my goal of being

a zoo vet," she said. "This has been such a great community to grow up in with great schools, everything close by, and it is just a place that feels safe."

Bloomingdale High Teens Win National Contest

A Gazette Report

In May, a group of teens from Bloomingdale High School were named grand prize winners of the 2008 Act Out Loud: Raising Voices for Safe Teen Driving contest. The online teen safe-driving contest, sponsored by National Organizations for Youth Safety and funded by The Allstate Foundation, featured 10 teams of teen driving activists from across the country who competed to raise awareness for safe driving in support of National Youth Traffic Safety Month in May.

The Bloomingdale team received a \$10,000 grand prize for their project, "Buckle Up," and will designate a \$5,000 grant to the Katie Marchetti Memorial Foundation. The foundation was created to honor the memory of Marchetti, a Bloomingdale-area teen who lost her life in 2006 in a car crash.

In April, Bloomingdale High School encouraged safe teen driving by promoting its "Buckle Up" program through the student government and by docu-

menting their project through blogs, photos and a video posting at actoutloud.org. The team also filmed a daily segment for their school's television station, which promoted seat-belt use and defensive driving and incorporated teen driving statistics and interviews from students about the importance of wearing seatbelts.

The winners were determined by the number of online votes they received on the contest Web site. The Bloomingdale teens worked tirelessly to encourage people to check out and vote for their project on actoutloud.org. As a result, they received thousands of votes.

"We're excited we won because everyone on the team has worked so hard to spread the word to our peers about being safe and responsible drivers," said Claire Chipman, captain of Bloomingdale's team. "There are so many ways to use this money to save lives. We're really happy to have the opportunity to keep our efforts moving forward."

"This is all about saving teen lives," said Lucas Grabeel, spokesperson for Act Out Loud and star of the movie High School Musical. "It's cool to see people who are so creative and dedicated use their talents to have a positive impact on the world around them. We have the power to help reverse these stats and help prevent our friends from becoming one of the statistics."

The top 10 Act Out Loud teams across the country educated their peers right before summer, the deadliest season for teens on the road. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, seven of the top 10 deadliest days for teen drivers fall between Memorial Day and Labor Day. National Youth Traffic Safety Month activities encourage teens to conduct safe driving projects in May - during prom, graduation and the launch of the summer driving season - in hopes that teens and communities will be positively impacted by safe driving messages.

To view Bloomingdale's

winning video and team page, and for additional informa-

tion on Act Out Loud, go to actoutloud.org.

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Mall Adds More Retailers, Restaurants

A Gazette Report

With a year under its belt, the new \$60 million, 150,000 square-foot wing at Westfield Brandon mall continues to bring new retailers to the Brandon area.

"Brandon is growing and we're seeing more higher-end housing developments expand to our east and south," said Dawn Richter, mall marketing director. "As a result, we want to provide a broad spectrum of retailers...to serve all of our shoppers."

In the last year, Westfield Brandon has added nearly 40 new retailers to the shopping

center: sporting goods store Dick's Sporting Goods; Books-A-Million; apparel companies abercrombie (kids), Anchor Blue, Coldwater Creek, Cache, Gym-boree, Lucky Brand Jeans, Quiksilver, Swim 'N Sport, Tilly's and White House|Black Market; cosmetics and accessories retailers Sephora, Swarovski, Fossil and Solstice Sunglass Boutique; shoe stores Aldo, Clarks, Vans and The Walking Company; specialty tea seller Teavana; and Tessani Hair Studio.

In addition, many of the center's long-time specialty stores caught "makeover fever" and

relocated or remodeled including Victoria's Secret, Express Men & Women, Bath & Body Works, G by Guess, Journey's and Spencer's.

"We hope that our new retail mix and interior design improvements will not only draw customers from our own backyard, but will attract the South Tampa shopper who can be at Westfield Brandon in 10-15 minutes on the new Lee Roy Selmon elevated expressway," Richter said.

Located on State Road 60, just off I-75 and originally opened in 1995, Westfield Brandon is home to four major

department stores - Dillard's, Macy's, JCPenney and Sears - and more than 160 specialty stores and eateries. For information go to westfield.com/brandon.

Mall Expansion Mirrors Local Growth

By STEPHANIE PHILLIPS
Special to The Bloomingdale Gazette

As a Bloomingdale resident since 1984 and an agent with RFB Communications Group, a public relations firm that represents Westfield Brandon mall, I find it fascinating that the greater Brandon area has long been considered a cow town, or a mecca for big box and chain stores, because high-end retailers are now choosing Westfield Brandon as their first or second store location in the entire Tampa/St. Petersburg metropolitan area.

It is interesting how the growth and changes at Westfield Brandon have reflected the growth of the greater Brandon community, including Bloomingdale. In fact, many residents

The change in mix of retailers at Westfield Brandon parallels the population change and housing growth in the area.

who recently participated in a survey sponsored by the Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce said the mall comes to mind when asked when they think about the perks of living in Brandon.

The change in mix of retailers at Westfield Brandon parallels the population change and housing growth in the area.

The 1995 opening of the mall, originally named Brandon Town Center, was a catalyst for area growth. The chamber reported requests for businesses interested in expanding in

Brandon tripled with the mall's opening, and one million shoppers visited the mall during its first 17 days.

Brandon's growth potential helped the developer sign 70 percent of the mall's tenants before the \$200 million project was even financed.

At the time, The Greens, Fox Run and Windsor Woods areas were new and still being developed in Bloomingdale, and the mall's mix was comprised of mainstream, traditional family

See MALL, Page 21

New To Westfield Brandon Mall

Apple (opened May 24)

The second Apple retail store to open in the greater Tampa Bay area specializes in computers and consumer electronics like iPod and MacBook.

DSW (opening fall)

Designer Shoe Warehouse offers shoe selections like Steve Madden, BCBG and Clarks that are competitive with the typical sale price found at department stores.

Torrid (opening summer)

Owned by Hot Topic, Torrid offers apparel and accessories for plus-size women and teenage girls sizes 12 - 26.

Sinigual Contemporary Mexican Cuisine (opening summer)

The new Mexican restaurant concept from the owners of El Torito Grill offers entrees priced from \$11.99 - \$21.99.

Yoasis (recently opened)

Offers fresh and refreshing chilled yogurt served with premium fruits.

Coach (recently opened)

Coach specializes in fine purses, wallets, handbags and accessories in leather, suede and signature fabrics.

aerie by American Eagle (recently opened)

New to market, aerie by American Eagle specializes in intimate apparel and dorm wear for the 15- to 25-year-old female demographic.

Mark Ecko Cut & Sew (recently opened)

Offers semi-tailored separates, sweaters, active wear, blazers, woven shirts, premium denim and T-shirts for today's fashion-forward young man.

Source: RFB Communications Group

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BUSINESS



Expo Is In Good Taste

LAURA FRAZIER/Gazette photos

More than 2,100 people attended the 20th annual Great Brandon Chamber of Commerce Brandon Business Expo and Taste of Brandon held May 15 at the Florida State Fairgrounds. For \$10, patrons could taste and vote on all-you-can-eat samples from 28 area restaurants and caterers. Cheddar's Casual Café, 11135 Causeway Blvd., Brandon, was voted Best Taste of Brandon.

More photos
page 20



More than 220 vendors offered exhibits, samples and free promotional items at the expo. Socializing at the Keller Williams Realty of South Shore booth are, from the left, realtors Terry Chandler and Marsha Doane, Harold Gaskill of Riverview Title and Escrow, realtor Tina Scopano and investor Jerry Shoop.

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LAURA FRAZIER/Gazette photos

Above, miniature frosted cupcakes from Sweetie's Delights Bakery, 1050 Bloomingdale Ave., Valrico, were voted Best Dessert in the May 15 taste-off. Bakery owners Karen Walker, right, and her daughters Jessica Walker, left, and Krystal Shiver, opened the store in Plaza Bella in February.

At left, Sandy Murman, immediate past chairwoman of the Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce, and George T. May IV, Brandon's honorary mayor and Bloomingdale Homeowners Association board member, sampled food and helped officiate May 9 at the chamber's 20th annual Brandon Business Expo and Taste of Brandon.



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TAXING DISTRICT

Areas Measured For New Plantings

Al Devney, property manager for the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District, oversees maintenance and improvements to community common areas such as entryways, landscaping and irrigation. To report maintenance needs or concerns, contact Devney at (813) 684-6667 or bloomingdale.district@verizon.net.

Property Manager's Report April 2008

Signs by Mineo repainted and installed entry signs at the Warm Springs entrance.

Valley Crest removed three dead oak trees on Natures Way Boulevard and took dirt samples for DNA testing to determine if there are any soil problems. The preliminary diagnosis was that the roots were growing in a circle and choking the trees to death.

The circuit breaker for lights at the Kiowa entrance was reset three times. There has been a history of electrical shorts with those lights. The lights have been working fine for the last three weeks. The spotlight for the American flag in the median at Greenhollow Lane was vandalized. The repair cost was \$76.

ZK construction repaired five large cracks in the walls, one

on Garnet Drive and four on Natures Way.

Planscape Inc., Valley Crest, and Davidson Landscaping were asked to provide designs, bills of material and estimate cost to upgrade landscaping at the Rosemead entrance on Bell Shoals Road.

The common area on Greenhollow was measured to determine the square footage for possible planting of golden peanut or dwarf confederate jasmine. There are approximately 17,600 square feet to be covered. Seven other areas were also measured for installation of St Augustine grass, totaling about 35,000 square feet including the John Moore Road entrance, in front of the Villas, in front of the entrance to Culbreath Cove, on Springvale Drive and on Natures Way in front of Moon-dale Drive.

Eat, Drink and Pitch Out The Window

In the land of eat, drink and pitch out the window in April, property manager Al Devney collected 25 bags of trash, 34 signs, four large garbage cans, a queen-size mattress, a Wal-Mart shopping cart, a large rubber ball, a garrote and three cents. Devney also replaced 23 lights and installed one light receptacle. He reports the beverages of choice for April were Pepsi for soft drinks, Natural Light for beer and Martell Noblige Cognac for distilled spirits.

MALL

From page 18

retailers.

By 2000, the population of the greater Brandon area had swelled to 241,170. This was a 141 percent increase from the 100,000 residents in 1988. The median price of a home in 2000 was \$95,700.

Housing developments popped up all around Nature's Way with the addition

of Bristol Green, the Links, etc.

In 2002, Westfield purchased the shopping center and Cimino Elementary School opened in response to rapid residential development in Bloomingdale.

By 2007, Westfield Brandon opened a new wing with higher-end retailers to keep up with the changing demographics of the community. The population had grown by nearly 20 percent to 287,750 (compared with the national average of

5.8 percent), and the median price of a home had jumped 2.5 times to \$249,900.

More high-end housing developments, like Culbreath Estates and the Wrencrest Circle development on Erindale Drive, took up every bit of available land in Bloomingdale.

Some areas like FishHawk Ranch in Lithia experienced population growth as high as 57 percent since 2000, with a median home price of \$379,900.

Today, the greater Brandon area is outgrowing itself and expanding even more to the east, south and west with high-end development and extensive road-widening on Bell Shoals, FishHawk Boulevard, and Lithia-Pinecrest Road.

Stefanie Phillips, a Bloomingdale resident since 1984, is an agent with RFB Communications Group, a public relations firm that represents Brandon Westfield Mall.

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Hurricane Season Is Here

By DEPUTY PETE MAURER
Bloomingdale Community
Resource Deputy

Hurricane season is here again, part of the price we pay to live in such a beautiful state. Hey, we've never had to shovel sunshine or scrape it off our windshields, right?

Nature can bring on some exciting challenges for us. But we can get through potential disasters like hurricanes, tornadoes and wildfires if we take the time to prepare in advance.

When people don't prepare for potential disasters, they turn to

law enforcement officials for help. We're more than glad to give it, but there are only so many of us. We need you to help yourselves and to help your neighbors and families get prepared. Together we can get through the tough times.

Pick up a hurricane guide and go through it carefully. When the storms come through, you're either ready or you're not.

If you remember the images from Hurricane Katrina, you'll know it's true when the pros who work in emergency management say, "It only takes one [storm.] to change your life forever."

Local emergency management professionals tell us that all residents should be prepared to take care of themselves for the first 72 hours following a storm, a critical time when it could be very difficult for us to reach all of our assigned areas due to downed power lines, fallen trees or flooding. All residents should prepare their families, homes and businesses to be self-sufficient until this period of time has passed. There are several sources of information available that tell you how to prepare. You can start with checking out hillsboroughcounty.org/emergency.



Deputy Pete Maurer

Please take the time now to prepare. You can help us serve and protect you, your family and your homes and businesses. Together we will survive.

Parents Must Monitor Idle Summer Hands, Minds

Why do our kids love the summer time, besides the great weather and all kinds of things to do and places to go? It's pretty simple – for many, there are no homework assignments, no classes, no real schedules, no deadlines...just play time.

Hopefully their time will be spent staying out of trouble. Now is the time for all parents to be sure they know where their kids are and what they are doing – especially teens.

Many teens spend a lot of time at home alone while their parents are at work. It is extremely impor-

See SUMMER, Page 23

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SUMMER

From page 22

tant for parents to sit down with their kids and talk about the need to be careful, to be cautious and to think. Emphasize the importance of keeping doors locked, not telling others they're home alone and being sure to lock up when they leave. Talk about how

to stay safe.

Bike safety, pool safety, fire safety and stranger danger are very important subjects that all families should discuss in detail.

Peer pressure can sometimes lead to problems. We all hope that we have instilled in our kids a sense of good judgment and personal responsibility, but

even the best kids can make bad decisions. Parents, set specific rules for them to follow. Don't let them end the summer with a criminal record or a serious injury.

Speaking of getting into trouble, one of the most expensive problems we have is that of graffiti. It comes in all shapes

and colors and yes, sometimes it's a way for gangs to mark their territory.

Should you find some graffiti we ask that you take digital photos, if possible, and forward them to the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District, bloomingdale.district@verizon.net. The incident will be investigated and

then repaired at the expense of the taxing district and Bloomingdale residents.

If you suspect the graffiti may be gang related, call the Sheriff's Office, (813) 247-8200. And cover it up with plastic or a cloth if you can. Let's not give these "artists" any free publicity.

—Pete Maurer

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