

# HEADLINER

HEATHER LAKES OF BRANDON PUBLICATION

*Celebrate!*

There's always something to Celebrate!  
Easter, Cinco de Mayo, Mother's Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day,  
Father's Day and let's not forget April Fool's Day all around  
the corner... the Board would like to wish you all fun and  
safe celebrations! We hope to see you at one of our monthly  
meetings...

They are every 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month.

**APRIL, MAY, JUNE 2011**

### The Heather Lakes Headliner

Published quarterly by the  
Board Of Directors:

Heather Costa, President  
heather@heatherlakes.org

Kevin Anderson, Treasurer  
k.anderson@heatherlakes.org

Kim Edwards, Secretary  
k.edwards@heatherlakes.org

Gail Callinan, Director  
G.callinan@heatherlakes.org

### Property Management

Communities of  
America, Inc.  
(813) 685-6473

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### Publication Staff

PUBLISHER:

Heather Lakes at  
Brandon, Brandon Florida.  
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:  
Heather Costa, Gail Callinan,  
Kevin Anderson  
Kim Edwards

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## A Message From The President *Heather Costa*

Happy Spring Heather Lakes!

Winter is over and it is now time to spruce up the landscaping. Before you get started, remember that you must have approval for all changes you make. Please see the ACC form in this newsletter that must be submitted to make those changes. It is also time that the board improves the landscaping of the inner entranceways. We have had many delays and roadblocks regarding this improvement project but it should be a go soon!

I hope that you have noticed the major improvement already completed this spring, the walls. The board started this project in the middle of 2010. We hired an expert that did an analysis of our 20-year-old walls. This expert stayed on the job ensuring that the company we hired maintained proper specs when completing repairs and painting. The paint we chose is an anti-graffiti paint. This will help us with neighborhood vandalism and those pesky rust spots. The board is very happy with the results!

The board is in need of a few new volunteers. We need board members. If you have an interest in helping improve Heather Lakes and can dedicate the time, please call COA or attend a board meeting

for more information. We need help from our residents.

I want to apologize for the board meeting in February. We found out about a scheduling error early in the week. Signs were posted alerting our HOA members of the change but these signs were stolen. I am not sure why someone would want used signs but because proper notice was not given to the neighborhood, the meeting had to be cancelled. Our meetings are now at the Bloomingdale Public Library on the second Thursday of the month at 7pm. Please come out and see what it is all about!

As always, if you have a great idea for the newsletter or would like to contribute to the newsletter, please email us. We want to hear from you.


See you on the second Thursday of the month!



## Board Meeting Topics

During our annual budget meeting (thank you to those of you who attended- we welcome everyone to all meetings), one resident thought it would be a great idea to publish agenda items from our monthly meetings in our newsletters! We agree! Here are the topics we discussed at our recent meetings (the March meeting takes place after publication of this newsletter):

- Update on the Interior Plant Beds - to be replaced once cold freeze season ends.
- Update on wall repairs/paintings - vines removed, repairs have begun, and we received the coating expert's first inspection report showing issues/required changes that were reported to the repair company.
- Necessary pump repairs were brought to our attention - approved for repair.
- Heather Lakes website - updates to be made soon and ideas for new content and layout were discussed.
- Financial status review - all good feedback was received for the year thus far.
- Status update/manager's report on deed violations and neighborhood drive through.



# Heather Lakes

## Board Of Director Meetings

Association dues are due on the first of, April and July

\* If you cannot find your new assessment package, contact COA (813) 685-6473 immediately to avoid late fees.

**April 14, 2011**  
Monthly Meeting- **7:15 pm**  
at the Bloomingdale Regional Library  
The ACC committee will meet at 7:00 pm.

**May 12, 2011**  
Board of Directors Meeting- **7:15 pm**  
at the Bloomingdale Regional Library  
The ACC committee will meet at 7:00 pm.

**June 9, 2011**  
Board of Directors Meeting- **7:15 pm**  
at the Bloomingdale Regional Library  
The ACC committee will meet at 7:00 pm.

*Dates and location are subject to change. Please check our website (heatherlakes.org) or call COA to confirm the meeting.*

## 5 Little Known Places

Travelers love Florida with a passion, and for a good reason too. What's not to love when there is fun, sun, sea and sand to be had all year round? To make your next vacation in Florida even more interesting, here are five hidden spots you visit for a truly unforgettable experience!

### 1. Stuart/Martin County

Fishing enthusiasts will definitely love this place - More than 800 species of fishes can be caught offshore! For those who are not into sport fishing, they can opt to just enjoy the relaxing scene while basking in the soothing jazz music in downtown Stuart. Watch out for the vibrant Pirate Fest in September all year!

### 2. Bahia Honda State Park, Florida Keys

Want to get away from the hustle and bustle of frantic city life - but don't actually want to wander too far from the urban setting? Grab your loved ones and head towards the Bahia Honda State Park where you can truly unwind amidst a wild tropical background. The beaches are too breath-taking for words - and once you get your eyes peeled off the glory of the sea, perhaps you can start thinking about snorkeling underwater, exploring the many bike trails and go hiking. Do note that there are two beaches - one located north and the other, south. The former is good if you want a peaceful setting overlooking a verdant lagoon while the other overlooks the wide ocean.

### 3. Crystal River

Who says you need an amusement park to keep the kids happy? Just over an hour outside Orlando is a little place

called Crystal River brimming over with natural attractions such as manatees, gentle creatures that congregate in Crystal River due to its desired temperature. This is the only place in the entire United States where the public can legally frolic about with the manatees. You can opt to bring your own snorkeling equipment or rent some gear nearby to get an up-close-and-personal experience with these delightful sea cows. Otherwise feel free to explore nearby areas and go bird-watching, swimming, and kayaking.

### 4. Ocala, Marion County

Think horses and chances are the state of Kentucky with all its thoroughbred horses would come to mind. However, you will be surprised to find that Ocala has more horses than other areas in the United States. Horse farms, horse trails and verdant greeneries dot the scenic countryside. The Ocala National Forest is a must-visit with its variety of bird species and hiking trails. The Silver Springs theme park offers a slightly more exciting solution to fun with glass bottom boat rides and live bands.

### 5. Clewiston

Question: Which town is nicknamed the sweetest town in America? Answer: Clewiston. No, they don't have the most candy stores, but they do boast a large production volume of sugarcane. Besides agricultural tours, travelers can visit Lake Okeechobee to try their hand at fishing and catching a good sized blue gill, largemouth bass and other varieties of fresh water fishes. Be sure to hire an experienced guide to help you navigate your way through the swamp and waters.

# ACC Form



## Heather Lakes Home Improvement Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Heather Lakes approved paint colors can be viewed at local Porter Paints\* stores. All color choices must still be submitted for approval. If your home improvement project includes replacement siding, the new siding color is also subject to approval.

Check the appropriate boxes:



\_\_\_\_\_ Painting

\_\_\_\_\_ Architectural Additions (property survey must be attached showing dimensions, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Fencing- Only 6 foot privacy fencing is permitted with the exception of lake front property. (property survey must be attached showing dimensions, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Shingles (attach a color sample and indicate the color of your home)

Note: You will need a county building permit for all types of construction.

PAINT	<u>Brand/Color</u>	<u>Finish</u>
Main House	_____	_____
House Trim	_____	_____
Other (be specific)	_____	_____



Please attach sample paint colors.

**FENCING**      \_\_\_\_\_ White PVC      \_\_\_\_\_ Natural Wood      \_\_\_\_\_ White Painted Wood

By signing below, I agree not to begin property improvements until the board of directors has notified me in writing of their approval. If any change is made that is not approved, the board retains the right to have the property owner remove the change within a 30-day period. The cost of removal remains with the property owner. All approved requests must be started within 60 days of approval or the request becomes VOID.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Send completed, signed form to Communities of America, c/o Heather Lakes at Brandon Architectural Review Board, PO Box 2608, Valrico, FL 33595-2608. The board will respond within a 30-day period from the time received. Heather Lakes does not assume responsibility for lost mail. For ARC status and questions, please contact COA at (813)685-6473.

Date Received by Association \_\_\_\_\_ Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Rejected \_\_\_\_\_

Association Approval by \_\_\_\_\_

## Homework

<http://www.pmct.org/helpsucceed/homework.html>

### How many times has this scene occurred?

Kid: Can I go out for a while?

Parent: Do you have any homework?

Kid: Nope!

Think back to when you were the "Kid" and you'll have an idea of how often "nope" is an accurate answer! It's not very likely that your son got his homework done in school, or that your daughter's teacher didn't give any. It's just that, to kids, homework might not seem nearly as important as other activities.

Most teachers assign homework almost every day. Class time seldom is sufficient for kids to master challenging subjects, so afterschool study and practice is essential. A little help from a parent can go a long way towards making homework time more productive. Try these suggestions from the U.S. Department of Education, and see what a big difference they can make:

1. Show you think education and homework are important.
  - Do you set a regular time every day for homework?
  - Does your child have the papers, books, pencils, and other things needed to do assignments?
  - Does your child have a fairly quiet place to study with lots of light?
  - Do you set a good example by reading and writing yourself?
  - Do you stay in touch with your child's teachers?
2. Monitor assignments.
  - Do you know what your child's homework assignments are? How long they should take? How the teacher wants you involved?
  - Do you see that assignments are started and completed?
  - Do you read the teacher's comments on assignments that are returned?
  - Is TV viewing cutting into your child's homework time?
3. Provide guidance.
  - Do you understand and respect your child's style of learning? Does she work better alone or with someone else? Does he learn best when he can see things, hear them, or handle them?
  - Do you help your child to get organized? Does your child need a calendar or assignment book? A bag for books and a folder for papers?
  - Do you encourage your child to develop good study habits (e.g., scheduling enough time for big assignments; making up practice tests)?
  - Do you talk with your child about homework assignments? Does she understand them?
4. Talk with someone at school when problems come up.
  - Do you meet the teacher early in the year, before any problems arise?
  - If a problem comes up, do you meet with the teacher?
  - Do you cooperate with the teacher and your child to work out a plan and a schedule to fix homework problems?
  - Do you follow up with the teacher and with your child to make sure the plan is working?

Parents of teenagers will have to modify some of these specific suggestions, but the general principles still apply. Your teen may be too old to have an "A" paper displayed on the refrigerator, but he's not too old to profit from your encouragement, your guidance, and your good example. When you involve yourself in your youngster's homework, you're saying "I care -- I care about your self-discipline, I care about your success, and I care about you." That's a message every child needs to hear every day.

## Hillsborough County Graduation Times

Hillsborough County Graduation times, dates, and locations have changed. All graduation ceremonies will take place at the State Fair Grounds this year. Please see the list below for the changes.

### STATE FAIR GROUNDS EXPO HALL

Commencement Date	Time	School
Thursday, June 2, 2011	9:30 AM	King
Thursday, June 2, 2011	1:00 PM	Newsome
Thursday, June 2, 2011	4:30 PM	Sickles
Thursday, June 2, 2011	8:00 PM	Lennard
Friday, June 3, 2011	9:30 AM	Steinbrenner
Friday, June 3, 2011	1:00 PM	Leto
Friday, June 3, 2011	4:30 PM	Plant
Friday, June 3, 2011	8:00 PM	Durant
Monday, June 6, 2011	9:30 AM	Armwood
Monday, June 6, 2011	1:00 PM	Chamberlain
Monday, June 6, 2011	4:30 PM	Riverview
Monday, June 6, 2011	8:00 PM	East Bay
Tuesday, June 7, 2011	9:30 AM	Plant City
Tuesday, June 7, 2011	1:00 PM	Gaither
Tuesday, June 7, 2011	4:30 PM	Bloomingtondale
Tuesday, June 7, 2011	8:00 PM	Spoto
Wednesday, June 8, 2011	9:30 AM	Jefferson
Wednesday, June 8, 2011	1:00 PM	Robinson
Wednesday, June 8, 2011	4:30 PM	Freedom
Wednesday, June 8, 2011	8:00 PM	Hillsborough
Thursday, June 9, 2011	9:30 AM	Strawberry Crest
Thursday, June 9, 2011	1:00 PM	Wharton
Thursday, June 9, 2011	4:30 PM	TBT
Thursday, June 9, 2011	8:00 PM	Brandon
Friday, June 10, 2011	1:00 PM	Blake
Friday, June 10, 2011	4:30 PM	Middleton
Friday, June 10, 2011	8:00 PM	Alonso



## Hiring A Lawn Company

We have all picked up the phone to hear a lawn service pitch from time to time. Often they start out with a pitch like, "we were in your neighborhood and notice that your lawn needs some care".

Let's face it we know our lawns might need upkeep like re-sodding, weed control, fertilizing or insect control. It's just a fact of life when you have a lawn. It always needs something. I fell for that routine recently and hired a lawn service company. Maybe you can benefit from what I learned.

The person that called me told me he had been in the neighborhood and had seen my yard first hand. He promised they would inspect my trees. I mentioned periodic problems with scale on my sago and the fact that I am considering removing it so that no other trees in the area get affected. I also told him I keep a close eye on it as I am treating it. He promised to have his tech look at the tree and treat it, if necessary. They would also check the lawn for fire ants and other insects, treating for them as required. All this in addition to putting down weed control and fertilizer for one price! I walked around the yard identifying two large fire ant mounds and several patches of weed growth that I knew he would see and treat. Yippee my yard problems were going to be solved!

As it happens, I was out of town when the tech came over to do the initial application on my yard. When I got home there was a nice sign on my grass warning people to stay off until it was dry, etc. The next day I walked around my yard. Fire ants, I thought bah! I kicked the mound and immediately saw that the fire ant issue had NOT been addressed. I moved on very quickly. Looked at the sago, no it didn't appear that anything had been done. Hmmmm, I looked at the nice report from the company. They didn't do weed control because I have rye grass in my yard. If they checked the yard and were "at" my house before hand wouldn't they know the rye grass was there? OK, so no weed control. Surely the insect control was done? No, that wasn't checked either. Nothing was identified as done other than applying potash to my yard and applying pre-emergent

weed control. Hard to prove as there is no visible signs. So for my money I got a nice little sign and all the same problems I had before. Oh yeah, and a bill for services rendered.

Lucky for me this company didn't require a contract and I cancelled the service. But you can learn from my mistakes. So here goes.

If they call to say they have been to your house and have seen your lawn, ask for particulars. What did they see that needs to be done? If you know what kind of grass you have, ask them if they deal with that type. If they seem surprised you have Bahia, Rye, or another grass. You know they haven't been anywhere near your property and are fishing for business. They may be legitimate, but it's not good business to start out with a lie to potential customers.

Second, check references and the Better Business Bureau ("BBB"). I did do this. This company is reputable. But for me they weren't the right company.

Third, make sure you and they agree on what needs to be done and what you receive for your payment. Be home for the first visit so you know what has been done.

Finally, ask your neighbors for a referral. All the lawn service companies put little signs in yards. If the yard looks great stop and ask if they are happy with the service. If so, set up a trial with the company. If not, knock them off your list of potential service providers.

If you live on one of our lakes, be sure you address this with the company. I specifically instructed them not to put any fertilizer outside the fence line to protect the lakefront. Ask them about their experience in dealing with lakes, if it sounds fishy don't bite.

The point is... be informed and smart. Know your yard and what needs to be done. Don't buy the generic "you have a weed problem and it looks like you might have an insect issue too". This is Florida, weeds and bugs are always around. Be smart with your lawn, and be smart with your money.

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## Household Clutter

Eventually, we all look around our homes and wonder “where did all this come from”? I have just realized a change must be made. How do you tackle the clutter monster and regain your home?

To identify your clutter, start with a notebook and walk around your home. Step inside the door of each room and note all the distracting, disorganized areas. Then open drawers and closets to see which are hiding useless, outgrown things that your family no longer wants or needs. Closets and drawers are small projects you can tackle one at a time, as time allows. Use the notebook to help you keep track of areas you want to clear out. Keep it in a handy location. Not in one of the piles of papers on a desk.

Plan your attack. Pick a room and select one cluttered area in that room. You will need four boxes. Label them keep, storage, trash, and give away. Plan on spending about 10-30 minutes each day sorting things into these boxes. You didn't create clutter in an hour, take your time. Make clear choices on what to keep and what to toss. A little sorting every day will make a big difference.

After you sort and organize one area, move to another in the same room. Although we are tempted to dive in and do it all in one sweeping movement, taking time to really look at what you have will prevent you from tossing car titles or the valentine gift received from your daughter five years ago. Be sure to finish one room before going to another.

So the boxes are full, what now? The “trash” box or bag is easy. Fill it and toss it. The stuff in the keep box should be put away as you finish sorting. Especially if the items belong in other areas of the house, garage, or car. It's easier to find something if it's in its place. The “donate” box is also easy. Call for pick up or drop it off at a thrift store, homeless shelter, or a church donations box. It doesn't matter where, just move it out.

The “storage” box is the hardest. Look at the box(es) one final time and ask yourself the following. Do I really use this? Will I really wear the boot cut jeans that were in style 5 years ago? Am I keeping the ugly ashtray Aunt Esme gave me even though no one in the house smokes, because it was a gift? Someone will want your discards! Sell them at a garage sale, donate them to a worthy charity or even consign them to a shop or E-bay. Your unwanted stuff could be someone else's treasure. If you have thing you can't bear to part with, sort like with like and put in plastic bins that can be stored in your storage unit or garage. Mark the bins clearly. Or number them clearly and keep a notebook with a list of the contents of each bin. For example, Bin 1 is serving dishes and candlesticks. Bin 2 is beach towels and snorkels. What you keep is easier to find with the list. You will find items quicker and will save money by not repurchasing the same thing again. When you have finished a room, step back and really appreciate what you have done. The clutter cleared, order is restored and there is a calm space in your home. Now, let's get to work!

Oh wait... don't forget to play music and keep the TV off!

## Mother's Day

### Mother's day is Sunday, April 8<sup>th</sup> – Don't Forget Mom!

Do something special and unexpected this year. Beyond Mother's Day cards, gifts and flowers, there are dozens of unique and sincere things you can do to keep Mom surprised and pampered all day. Catch her off-guard with a special gesture!

Kids - Simple Tips To Surprise Mom On Mother's Day  
Mother's Day comes once a year, so let's make the most of it. Here's an idea: Has Mom nagged you to clean your room or tidy up the garage or play area? Why not actually clean Mom's room on Mother's Day! Even basic chores done ahead before the celebrations start are a welcome sign that it's going to be a great day:

- Help with chores
- Put away toys
- Clean your room
- Do your homework
- Do the laundry
- Cook dinner for Mom

Anything you can do to make her life easier on Mother's Day will be a special surprise. If nothing above sounds quite right, check out these ideas:

#### Dad - Surprise Your Wife On Mother's Day

Your wife deserves a special Thank You. If you have small children, coordinate a festive Mother's Day dinner or breakfast. Pull the team together to get the daily chores done without her help.

Have the kids left home? Spend some quality time with your wife and just say “Thanks.” We've got lots of ideas to show her how much she means to you:

- Clean the kitchen after dinner
- Help with the chores
- Take the kids away for an afternoon
- Do the grocery shopping or the laundry
- Cook dinner
- Take her out to a movie
- Anything to help



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## April 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

## May 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

## June 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- April 1<sup>st</sup> -  
HOA fees are due
- April 1<sup>st</sup> -  
April Fool's Day
- April 2<sup>nd</sup> -  
98 Rockfest (St. Pete Forum)
- April 9<sup>th</sup> -  
Professional Bull Riders (St. Pete Forum)
- April 24<sup>th</sup> -  
Easter
- April 29<sup>th</sup> -  
Tim McGraw (Amphitheatre)
- May 1<sup>st</sup> -  
WWE Presents Extreme Rules (St. Pete Forum)
- May 5<sup>th</sup> -  
Cinco de Mayo
- May 8<sup>th</sup> -  
Mothers Day
- May 19<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> -  
Toy Story on Ice (St. Pete Forum)
- May 30<sup>th</sup> -  
Memorial Day
- June 10<sup>th</sup> -  
Katy Perry (St. Pete Forum)
- June 17<sup>th</sup> -  
Def Leppard (Amphitheatre)
- June 18<sup>th</sup> -  
Keith Urban (St. Pete Forum)
- June 19<sup>th</sup> -  
Father's Day
- June 22<sup>nd</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> -  
Cirque du Soliel (St. Pete Forum)
- July 1<sup>st</sup> -  
HOA fees are due