

JOURNAL

HAZELWOOD ■ BRIDGETON ■ SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2004

Roadside reflections a sign of the times

Family attracts attention for
their mailbox messages

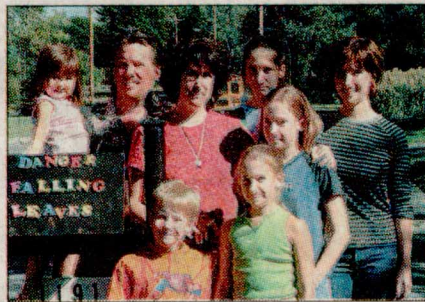
By **BRYCE CHAPMAN**
STAFF WRITER

A few are political. Some are personal. Many are puzzles.

But, by and large, the vast majority of colorful messages posted on a mailbox on Old St. Charles Road in Bridgeton during the last five years have been just "plain silly," said Bob Duplantier, originator of the locally infamous quips.

From "Lose Pounds Fast. Shop in England," to "Let it be over," a message referring to the belated 2000 presidential election results, Bob, his wife Evann and their six children have posted hundreds of messages on their mailbox since they moved into their house in the 11900 block of Old St. Charles Road in 1999.

"We've really had a great response,"



BRYCE CHAPMAN PHOTO

The Duplantier family stands by their mailbox last week in the 11900 block of Old St. Charles Road. The family has been posting messages on the mailbox since they moved their home in 1999.

Bob explained. "Every time we're out in the front yard, someone stops to tell us how much they like our messages."

Last week, as a steady stream of drivers passed by, the mailbox sported an appropriate message for the

▼ See **ROADSIDE**, Page A4

▼ **CONTINUED FROM A1**

Roadside:

approaching fall season: "Danger: Falling Leaves."

The messages, made with children's multicolored magnetic letters, began as a way to utilize an otherwise unattractive part of their mailbox, Bob explained.

Before the Duplantier family moved into the house, its mailbox had apparently fallen victim to vandals driving by with baseball bats.

"I guess they used to have mailbox bashers," he said.

To help curve the problem, the

previous owner had installed a piece of metal around the top of the mailbox.

So when the Duplantier family moved into the house, they decided to convert the protective piece of iron into a practical sign.

"It looked like a sign, so we used it as a sign," Bob said.

Since then, with the exception of a running gag, the messages have changed every week.

"For instance, one time we had, 'If you lived here you would be home,'" Bob said. "Then the next week we had, 'If you lived here, where would we live?'"

While the messages cover a wide range of topics, the family tries to avoid divulging their politi-

cal beliefs on the mailbox.

"We try to steer clear of the political messages," Bob said with a chuckle.

Evann added, "Yeah, we don't want people to throw things at us."

It might be one of the reasons the family has had such a rousing response from routine passersby.

"People leave us messages all of the time," Evann said. "They just leave them in the box. We never even meet them."

The family has a stack of letters and cards to show for it.

One resident, who goes out of her way to read the messages, wrote: "Thank you for your pearls of wisdom, food for thought and reasons to smile."