



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BLOOMINGDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION SINCE 1980

THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

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Zoominations Lights the Night at Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo

By Kayla Hayes



TEMPLE OF HEAVEN

Have you run out of date night ideas? Need something new to do with the family? Valrico and Brandon offer a lot for Bloomingdale residents, but consider travelling a little further into Tampa for a limited time event that is sure to delight and amaze the entire family!

Zoominations, a Chinese Lantern Festival at Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo, is unlike anything you've seen at the Zoo, or in Tampa, or in the Southeastern United States for that matter! From Beijing, to London, to Toronto, to our very own backyard, this lantern festival is an authentic cultural experience that will "WOW" all ages.

Young ones will be amazed as the Zoo transforms after dark into a radiant experience with 30 colossal lantern displays, some made from unexpected materials, and splashed with vibrant color. There is a 60 foot tall Manfeilong Pagoda replica built from 68,000 pieces of porcelain china, Qilin statues made from thousands of medicine bottles filled with colored liquid, and an enormous Temple of Heaven replica and other life-size animal lanterns made from hand spun silk.

Whether you're an adult looking for a cultural experience, or a couple looking for a romantic night out, or a child ready to be amazed, Zoominations has all bases covered.

40 Chinese artisans from the village of Zigong in China's Sichuan province arrived at the Zoo in mid-January to assemble these amazing displays, which look incredible by day, but are spectacular by night.

Besides a lit walk through the Zoo, Zoominations also features Chinese performers at two free shows during the evening, an artisan market with unique handmade crafts, and a dinner show with Asian cuisine for an additional cost.

Zoominations is a limited time engagement ending on May 31. Don't miss out on this truly unique experience. Visit TampaLanternFest.org for more information, and to purchase tickets. Zoo pass members receive discounted admission.

Photos: Lowry Park Zoo



PORCELAIN PAGODA



DRAGON



TEMPLE DOG



WHIMSICAL PANDAS



KOI FISH



ZOO ENTRANCE

Zoominations, a phenomenal Chinese lantern festival, features massive, colorful displays, acrobats, food, and unique items to purchase. The display is at the Lowery Park Zoo through May.

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PLEASE RECYCLE



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Spring is nature's way of saying, 'Let's party!' *Robin Williams*



YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER



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Tampa Bay Times

The official publication of the BHA since 1980

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

YOUR INSIDE CONNECTIONS

Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, Inc.

3509 Bell Shoals Road - Valrico, Florida 33596 - (813) 681-2051
Email: Bloomingdale.Homeowners@gmail.com
Website: www.BloomingdaleHOA.com

BHA Board meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at the Offices of Bloomingdale Special Taxing District:
3509 Bell Shoals Road
Valrico, Florida 33596

Directors at Large:

President: <i>George T. May IV</i>	<i>Billy Hightower</i>	<i>Joanie Wilson</i>
Treasurer: <i>Dennis Osborn</i>	<i>Mary Galin</i>	<i>Suzy Watts</i>
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Meet Your BHA Board

By Kayla Hayes

Suzy Watts serves the Bloomingdale community as the BHA secretary. Her family – husband Tim, daughter Maggie (20) and son David (19) – has lived in Windsor Woods for 24 years. Now an “empty nester,” she has been a board member since November 2014.

“I love Bloomingdale. This is my first house. As a newlywed couple, we could barely afford our five-bedroom house. Neighbors wondered why we got all those bedrooms. We told them we would fill them up,” Watts said, and they did.

Watts is the Medical Coordinator at Brandon Outreach Clinic. In her free time, she enjoys working out at Campo YMCA and gardening, with “mixed success.” What she enjoys most about living in the Bloomingdale community is that she has great neighbors, her kids received quality education from Alafia, Burns and Bloomingdale, and she can walk to the YMCA.

Watts’s vision involves “unifying Bloomingdale’s 5,200 homeowners, the largest community in Hillsborough, so we can influence our roads, commercial development, and safety.” She enjoys supporting her community, and her neighbors.



Photo: Joy Boisselle

Suzy Watts greeted residents with her smile at the BHA’s recent community clean up.

Bloomingdale Real Estate & Housing Update

By Ryan Brantley

Spring is officially here and with that comes the buying and selling season. Throughout the country, listings are still scarce in many major markets. According to Realtor.com, the number of homes for sale is down 11 percent from this time one year ago. As of March 20 in the Tampa Bay/St.

Petersburg market, there are 20,142 listings, a 0 percent increase or decrease from this time last year. While we are ahead of other markets, there is still plenty of room for improvement.

There are 67 active listings in the Bloomingdale market, up from 52 in March. Only 27 homes came on the market last month. Considering the number of homes in the area, that is still relatively low.

With the increase of homes for sale, it is important to get ahead of the competition. Start your spring-cleaning a little early by getting rid of unnecessary clutter. Remove décor and family photos from walls to de-personalize the space and appeal to more buyers.

Make sure to do all of the little things that your neighbors might not, like pressure washing outdoor areas or painting the trim. That bright white can really make a room pop. Do everything possible to bring sunlight in such as painting walls a lighter color or removing dark window treatments. Bring in fresh smells to make your home more inviting.

These simple steps will put you on the fast track to selling your home quickly and for the right price!

**MLS statistics include Bloomingdale East and West valid March 1- 24. Sales not entered into the MLS did not count in these statistics.*



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www.chaddertongroup.com

Dining with Dave



Name: The Stein & Vine
Cuisine: Gastropub – a bar and restaurant that serves high-end beer and food
Location: 827 W. Bloomingdale Avenue
Kings Row Shopping Center
(Corner of Bloomingdale and Kings)
Phone: 813-655-4786

Tampa is has become quite the beer mecca in recent years resulting in an abundance of gastropubs for our imbibing and dining pleasure. Though most are located in trendy areas such as Ybor City and Seminole Heights, one of the best is located near Bloomingdale.

Tucked away in Kings Row Shopping Center under the big “PUB” sign resides The Stein & Vine, which boasts a fantastic and constantly evolving row of beer taps and bottle options. The “Stein” list is well balanced and the staff not only knows how to pour a proper pint (or snifter or goblet) but also is well versed in each beer offering. The “Vine” food menu is not as thorough, but is certainly more extensive and experimental than most local restaurants.

The Stein & Vine will draw you in with the promise of a good drink, but will keep you there with astounding culinary offerings.

While Tater Tots have become a staple of many local establishments, The Stein & Vine does them to perfection! I highly recommend the bacon and fried egg combo and a side of in-house chili. For a taste of something unique, the Pig Wings (a porcine take on tradition) appetizer followed by an order of succulent Curious Traveler Drunken Shrimp that takes advantage of one of their more unique drink selections.



Photo: The Stein & Vine

Prefer something a little meatier? The 33 1/3 Cheeseburger is a half-pound burger that is 33% bacon ...the word you are looking for is “OMG!”

The one downside to the Stein & Vine is simply a lack of space. The bar is small, the dining area is tight and it is common to wait for a table. However, as of this review date, the owner is expanding into an adjoining space which will effectively double the pub’s size. I have no doubt that the popularity of The Stein & Vine will quickly grow to occupy the addition.

The dining menu changes almost daily. To keep up with limited offerings like Kentucky Beer Battered Grouper, Korean Mahi Tacos, or a personal recent favorite, the Breuben, be sure to “Like” the Stein and Vine on Facebook.

BLOOMINGDALE

SPECIAL TAXING DISTRICT

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BHA COMMUNITY CORNER

DON'T FORGET TO LIKE US ON FACEBOOK! 

1st Quarter Membership Drive Continues

Please consider joining and strengthening the one organization that represents the entire Bloomingdale community of over 5,000 homes and 23,000 residents.

Many initiatives are planned this year, and we need your support. For those that have already joined the Association and/or donated to the scholarship program, we sincerely thank you for your support.



Most recently, the BHA completed the annual community clean up, has begun the application review for the \$2,000 scholarship award, and later this month, will conduct the charity golf tournament in support of K9s for Warriors. Additionally, the board is preparing correspondence to the Board of County Commissioners and the Metropolitan Planning Organization addressing traffic concerns on Lithia Pinecrest road and Bloomingdale Avenue.

Board members continue to attend meetings at county concerning long-range transportation issues, the upcoming Bell Shoals widening project and others. Much is planned and funding by way of your membership helps the all-volunteer board to accomplish the multitude of programs and services that make our community better.

Join today! Make checks payable to the BHA and mail to 3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33596, or stop by the office and drop off your check. The easiest way to join is to use our PayPal option. Go to www.bloomingdalehoa.com, look for the PayPal link in the lower right corner and follow the simple instructions. **Note: The BHA no longer has an active post office box address. Please update your automatic bill pay if applicable.**



The Annual Community Clean up held March 7 is a major BHA membership benefit. Pictured are volunteers, board members, and partners from the event. See the full story this issue. Photo: Joy Boisselle

BHA EVENT CALENDAR

If you have events pending in our community, e-mail bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com, or call 813-681-2051. We want to help you promote your event.

Monday, April 13, 6:30 p.m. / Bloomingdale Special Taxing District Monthly Trustee Meeting, Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road. The BSTD is seeking new trustees to fill vacancies. Call 813-684-6667 for information.

Tuesday, April 14, 6 p.m. / Go Hillsborough Transportation Meeting, Workshop 2, "Making Choices, Bell Shoals Baptist Church, 2102 Bell Shoals Road, Brandon, 33511. To RSVP, go online to <http://gohillsborough.org/>.

Thursday, April 16, 7 p.m. / Bloomingdale Area Community Council chaired by Hillsborough County Master Deputy Curtis Warren, Bloomingdale Community Station, 3622 Erindale Drive, 813-635-8040. Learn about safety and security issues affecting our community.

Saturday, April 18, Noon Registration / BHA Charity Golf Tournament benefitting K9s for Warriors, Summerfield Crossings Golf Club, Call the BHA at 813-681-2051 for information, additional information this issue.

DATE CHANGE! Tuesday, April 21, 6:30 p.m. / BHA Monthly Board Meeting, Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road. Residents always welcome.

Saturday, May 9, Hillsborough County 12th Annual Neighborhood Conference / Details will be published in the May Gazette. For information, call (813) 307-3564.

BHA BRIEFS

March Board Meeting Highlights

An after action review of the completed community clean up took place. The board discussed adding additional containers and a revised traffic plan.

The board initiative to develop a single deed restriction document for non-mandated sections in the community continues and a draft will be presented to the board at the April meeting for study and review. Golf tournament planning continued. President George May attended the first Go Hillsborough transportation meeting in Brandon and briefed the board on the process.

Dann Berkowitz resigned as the board secretary to assume duties as the Vice-President, board member Suzy Watts became the new secretary. The board needs three new members. Interested residents are asked to attend a few meetings to see if joining the BHA board is a "good fit" for them. Contact 813-681-2051 for information.

2015 BHA Charity Golf Tournament

This year's tournament is Saturday, April 18 at the Summerfield Crossings Golf Club in Riverview. The BHA, again this year, selected K9s for Warriors to receive all funds raised. Why? This group trains service dogs (many from shelters) for our wounded warriors, and Bloomingdale has a large military population. We need sponsors, donations, players, and volunteers. Call the BHA at 813-681-2051 for information. See flyer and additional information this issue.



Bouncer, a K9s for Warriors trained service dog, will be at the upcoming BHA Charity Golf Tournament benefitting the organization. Photo: Gazette File Photo



Photo: Joy Boisselle



Yard of the Month is sponsored by Ace Hardware of Bloomingdale. Send your Yard of the Month nominations to: InBloomingdaleNews@gmail.com or call (813) 681-2051

Winners will receive a \$25 gift card redeemable at Ace Hardware of Bloomingdale



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PLEASE CHECK THE BHA COMMUNITY CORNER FOR ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS RIGHT HERE IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

"EGG"STRAVAGANZAS TODAY!

Color "Your Egg" Run / April 4 / 8 a.m. / Newsome High School / 16550 FishHawk Crossing Blvd., Lithia / 5k & Fun Run/Walk (less than a mile). Come be a colorful egg for charity! The race takes place behind NHS. Color stations along the course will douse participants in a variety of spring-like festive colors. Please wear eye protection (sunglasses/goggles). \$25 registration. Kids 5 and under free with paying adult. All proceeds benefit Seeds of Hope, Inc., which gives food to people in need.



Photo: Newsome High school

First UMC Brandon Easter Extravaganza / April 4 / 9-11 a.m. / First United Methodist Church of Brandon / 121 North Knights Avenue, Brandon / First UMC of Brandon is having a FREE Easter Egg Hunt for the kids! Schedule: 9:15-9:45 Breakfast Theater, 10:00 Egg Hunt ~ Pre-K- K, 10:15-10:45 Breakfast Theater, 10:45 Egg Hunt ~ 1st- 6th

Glazer Children's Museum Egg Hunt / April 4 / 8:30-10 a.m. / Glazer Children's Museum / 110 W Gasparilla Plaza, Tampa / Enjoy an egg-citing morning full of hunting, prizes, and refreshments. Eggs are hidden throughout the Museum, including a special area for children ages 3 and under. Enjoy a light brown bag style breakfast and meet some fuzzy friends from Old McMicky's Farm. Don't forget to bring baskets or bags to collect your eggs. Admission price includes all day play in the Museum after the Egg Hunt. General Admission \$12.

Plant City Annual City-wide Easter Egg Hunt / April 4 / 10 a.m.-12-p.m. / Otis M. Andrews Sports Complex / 2402 East Cherry Street, Plant City / Bring your own basket! Four age groups: 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 and 9-11. Other activities will open after the Egg Hunt and they will close at noon. FREE hot dog and drink for all youths up to 12 years old! Non-refundable Bunny Dollars will be on sale at the event for \$1 each to be used for inflatables, air brushing, trackless train ride, and digital photo with the Easter Bunny. Egg hunt is free, additional food & activities range from \$1- \$5.

sounds of the instruments offered for private lessons at Music Showcase. Strum a guitar or sound the trumpet! Join us and see what sounds you can make in this fun interactive workshop and get a goody bag. Not sure what suits you, join us and find out. Ages 3-10. For more information call 813-685-5998.

Paint the Town 5K & Family Fun Walk / Children's Obstacle Course / April 18 / 8 a.m.-3 p.m. / Center Place Fine Arts & Civic Association, Inc. / 619 Vonderburg Drive, Brandon / 5K registration begins at 7 a.m.; starts 8 a.m. This is not a timed event. T-shirts provided to pre-registered runners. The Family Fun Run/Walk Registration is at 8 a.m.; start time is approximately 9:30 a.m. Six obstacles dot the Family Fun route for children. T-shirts may be purchased. Enjoy music, games, sand and marble art, balloon bending, photo booth, face painting, food, drinks, and more! A "BUY IT NOW!" auction includes tickets to Walt Disney World, airline tickets, and more! 5K runners have a chance to win \$100. Children who raise \$50 in sponsorship dollars have a chance to win four Walt Disney World tickets! To register or for information, visit www.centerplacebrandon.org or call 813-685-8888.

Crawfish Festival / April 18 / Noon-4 p.m. / Winthrop Pole Barn / 11349 Bloomingdale Avenue, Riverview / The Rotary Club of FishHawk and Riverview is hosting a crawfish festival charity event. All money raised goes to local charities and scholarship funds. There will be live music and plenty of food, drinks, vendors and activities for the children. Entry is FREE. For reserved Crawfish meal tickets, please purchase tickets before the April 12 deadline for \$15. Reservations guarantee a Crawfish Meal is available the day of event. Other food items and beverages will be available for purchase, including Cajun food, hamburgers, and hotdogs. Free hotdogs to children that bring nonperishable food donations. For information, visit www.FishhawkRiverviewRotary.org.



Photo: FishHawk/Riverview Rotary Club

Mustang Miler 5K and 1M Fun Run / April 25 / 6:00 a.m. / The first annual Mustang Miler 5K and 1M Fun Run hosted by St. Stephen Catholic School in Riverview the children of St. Stephen Catholic School. The race, supported by the Winthrop Town Center, starts on Winthrop Commerce Avenue and proceeds directly to the Winthrop Estates and Condominiums. Register online at active.com (search Mustang Miler) or you can register the day of the event at the Green located in the Winthrop Town Center behind the Egg & I.

First packet pick up is at St. Stephen Catholic School on April 24 from 4-7 p.m. Second packet pick up is at 6 a.m. the morning of the race. The 5K Race begins at 7:30 a.m. and the 1M Fun Run begins at 8:45 a.m. Parking is available in the Town Center lots and on adjacent streets. This family friendly event features food, vendors, sponsor giveaways, t-shirts and medals for race participants.



Presented by ST. STEPHEN CATHOLIC SCHOOL
Courtesy: St. Stephen Catholic School

Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church Golf Tournament / May 2 / 1 p.m. tee off / River Hills Country Club / 3943 New River Hills Parkway, Valrico / Third annual tournament benefits the ministries of Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church. Event includes 18 holes of golf, certificate for free round of golf, range time with pros, gift bag, raffle, silent auction, putting and driving contests, hole-in-one contest, and dinner and awards ceremony. Individual \$85; foursome \$340. Sponsorships available. For information, call 813-689-3130.

Kentucky Derby Party / May 2 / 4:30-7:30 p.m. / The Regent / 6437 Watson Road, Riverview / The Brandon Outreach Clinic is hosting its Fourth Annual Kentucky Derby Party fundraising event! Attendees will view a live stream of the race and enjoy a "Taste of the Derby" with local restaurants handing out their favorite fare. What would a Kentucky Derby Party be without a Mint Julep and fancy hats? Put



Photo: Suzy Watts

on your finest and win the Most Beautiful Hat Contest, the Most Creative Ladies' Hat Contest, or the Dapper Gentleman Contest. There will be a photo booth, open bar, group painting, and entertainment provided by the Bloomingdale High School Jazz Band as well as a DJ. All proceeds will benefit the Outreach Clinic. Tickets are tax deductible and are \$75 per person; tickets are available by calling 813-654-1388 or visiting www.brandonoutreachclinic.com.

Brandon Ballet Presents Hansel and Gretel / May 2 at 7 p.m. and May 3 at 4 p.m. / HCC Mainstage Theatre / At E. Palm Avenue and N. 14th Street, Ybor City / A new ballet with musical score by Russian composer Reinhold Gliere, Hansel and Gretel takes creative twists and turns inspired by the famous Grimm Brothers' fairy tale. Tickets: \$15-\$30. Purchase tickets at www.tututix.com/brandonballet. For information, contact the Brandon Ballet Administrative Coordinator at dance@brandonballet.org or call 813-684-4282.

UPCOMING & ONGOING

Tai Chi for Teens and Adults / First and Third Fridays Every Month / 10-11 a.m. / Bloomingdale Regional Public Library / 1906 Bloomingdale Ave. / Tai Chi reduces stress and increases stamina, flexibility, and alertness. Bring a mat or towel and wear comfortable clothing. Limited to 25 participants. Call 813-273-3652 for more information.

Busch Gardens Food and Wine Festival / Weekends Through April 26 / 12-9 p.m. / Corner of Busch Boulevard and 40th Street, Tampa / Feed your appetite for adventure with wild flavors and concerts for every taste. Busch Gardens invites guests to unleash their inner foodie with sample-size tastings of delicious cuisine and spirits. Sample more than 65 fine wines, 50 craft brews, and featured cocktails. The Festival is included with any Pass, Fun Card, or daily admission.

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Email your nomination to bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com no later than May 1. Include your name and contact information as well as your nominee's name and contact information. The winner will be notified before Mother's Day on May 10. Questions? Contact the BHA at (813) 681-2051. Open to Bloomingdale residents only.

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to benefit
K9S FOR WARRIORS

April 18 • 1 p.m.
Shotgun Start • Registration begins at 12 p.m.
Summerfield Crossings Golf Club
13050 Summerfield Boulevard, Riverview

 Register by April 4 • \$85 per person, \$300 for a foursome
Besides fun and supporting a great charity, golfers can win great prizes and will be treated to an Italian dinner buffet. And, the whole event is tax-deductible.
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For more information:
BHA office at (813) 681-2051, email at bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com
Suzy Watts (813) 681-3474, email suzy@dbsox.com
Heather Michael (813) 340-6547, email hgolf75@yahoo

BloomingdaleHOA.com



facebook.com/BloomingdaleHOA

****Save The Date and Let's Get Some Tails Wagging! ****

The BHA and our local Bloomingdale Avenue Chipotle Mexican Grill join forces in a fundraising effort for K9s for Warriors on Sunday April 19 from 4-9 p.m. Mention K9s for Warriors when you order and Chipotle will donate 50 percent of the ticket to this deserving group. Help us, help them!

GIVING A NEW LEASH ON LIFE TO RESCUE DOGS AND MILITARY HEROES



K9S FOR WARRIORS

2015 Golf Tournament Sponsors
The BHA sends a huge thank you to our sponsors as of publication. A complete listing will appear in our May issue along with event coverage.

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Egg Color Disaster or Success? Try a Stencil

By Nicole Cluck

Over time, certain colors have become associated with specific holidays such as red and green for Christmas and for the Fourth of July, red, white and blue. Easter is no exception, though it is the one holiday that includes a rainbow of colors.

Traditionally during holidays, people decorate their homes, and parents and teachers make crafts with their kids. For Easter, the top craft is coloring eggs.

Is there a skill to coloring eggs or can anyone do it with a simple technique? People have used crayons, markers, even stickers to decorate their Easter eggs. Borrowing a technique from Halloween pumpkin carving, using a stencil can make one's eggs appear as if Picasso himself painted them.

Simply print a pattern from an online source; check Pinterest or buy a craft stencil. Cut out the pattern, making sure it is designed with holes in it. Place the stencil on the egg and dip a q-tip in whichever premixed coloring you chose, and then color within the holes of the stencil. Boiled eggs work best.

Easter embodies the essence of spring. Let your imagination run wild and use bold, bright colors and subtle pastels. Thanks to a simple stencil, no longer is coloring Easter eggs next to your artistic friend a dreaded event, but rather one that will leave a lasting memory.



Photos: www.pepperdesignblog.com



Photo: Nicole Cluck

For many, Easter is a time of reflection, family gatherings and the Easter bunny. Happy Easter, Bloomingdale!

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Dress Up is Not Just Kids' Play, It's Cosplay

By Miriam Leech



A young Rennie Starks transformed herself into Sailor Moon. Today, her alter ego is Sailor Venus from the same series and the character/costume for which she is most famous.

Bloomington resident Rennie Starks made her first costume at age 6. Drawing on the sewing skills her grandmother taught her, and her innate creativity, the youngster turned herself into Sailor Moon—a popular Japanese anime character. Seventeen years later, her love of costumes has turned into a full-time career for the Bloomington woman.

Since 2012 Starks has worked as a local theme park performer. She also works for a friend's company, A Dream Come True Entertainment, making costumes and performing at birthday parties and special events as popular characters.

However, Starks' true passion is Cosplay.

Cosplay, a blend of the words costume and play, is performance art in which participants called cosplayers wear costumes and fashion accessories to represent a specific character or idea. Favorite sources are Japanese manga (comics) and anime (animation), comic books and cartoons, video games, and live-action films. Cosplayers not only dress as a particular character, but also often role play to take on the character's persona.

In 2013, Starks began attending Cosplay conventions and established a Facebook page, Rennie Starks Cosplay, to make a name for herself in the industry. So far, she has made over 50 character costumes.

"I make everything on my own. I enjoy the art of it," says Starks. She not only sews her costumes, she fabricates weapons and armor, and even makes wigs, wings, and shoes.

For each convention, Starks typically has three or four costumes unveiling at least one new character each time. For her, the conventions are about the fun. "You immediately have a common interest with the people you meet, so you make lots of friends," says the cosplayer. She participates in panel discussions, both in character and out, but no longer competes in

costume contests. Instead, she takes pictures with fans (frequently) and spends time with fellow cosplayers.

Florida's largest comic book, sci-fi, anime, fantasy, and gaming convention, MegaCon, takes place April 10 through 12 in Orlando, and Starks will be unveiling two new costumes for the event—Rapunzel, the Brothers' Grimm and Disney character, and Rikku, from the Final Fantasy X-2 video game.

Of all the costumes she has created, Sailor Venus is the one she is most famous for and considers her alter ego. The character is from the Sailor Moon series, taking her back to where she began as a 6-year-old.

Starks also keeps busy creating YouTube videos, writing articles for AllThatCosplay.com and streaming video on Twitch TV for gamers. For more on Rennie Starks Cosplay, visit www.facebook.com/renniestarkscosplay, www.twitter.com/renniestarks, www.instagram.com/renniestarks, or www.allthatsepic.com/author/renniestarks.



Professional cosplayer Yaya Han is Rennie Starks' hero. Starks had the opportunity to meet and receive advice from her at last year's MegaCon, Florida's largest convention for all things anime, gaming, and fantasy. Both were My Little Pony characters.



Rennie Starks' most challenging costume is Tiny Tina from the Borderlands 2 video game. The character has many elements to maintain to ensure she keeps her realistic animated look.

Campo Family YMCA Kicks Off Annual Community Support Campaign

By Miriam Leech



Campo Family YMCA annual community support campaign chair and Bloomington resident Cindy Moran (pictured left) and Executive Director Cindy Sofarelli donned their best super hero attire to celebrate the kickoff of the 2015 Community Campaign

Positive energy and excitement filled the room as over 60 members and guests helped the Campo Family YMCA kick off their annual community support campaign on March 5. In keeping with this year's theme, Be Someone's Super Hero, Captain America and Superman were on hand to celebrate the event. Also appearing were the Rays' mascot Raymond, the Chick-Fil-A Cow, and of course, the Y Guy.

This year, the Campo Family and FishHawk YMCA's hope to raise \$65,000. Charitable gifts from donors help provide financial assistance for children, adults, and families to participate in Y programs. One hundred percent of funds raised go back into the community to help everyone regardless of age, income, or background.

Heading up the 2015 Community Campaign is Bloomington resident Cindy Moran. "This is my third time living in Bloomington, and I keep coming back because this is home," said Moran. This is her first year chairing the fundraiser. Moran is also a member of the Board of Directors.

Through funds raised last year, 600 kids learned life-saving swim safety skills, 157 kids went to summer camp, 1,100 students received backpacks and school supplies and 252 teens benefited through youth programming and leadership opportunities. Health and confidence boosting programs reached more than 8,000 people, 64 cancer survivors and

family members participated in Campo's Livestrong program, and 59 adults took part in the diabetes prevention program.

Testimonials from those who have benefitted from YMCA financial assistance made possible by the Community Campaign provided an emotional impact on the evening.

There are numerous ways to participate in the fundraiser—become a community partner in the campaign to raise funds; volunteer time at the Y during events or outreach programs; join the Youth Development, Healthy Living, or Social Responsibility committees; or become a Campo Family YMCA Board member.

If interested in being a part of the Campo Family YMCA community campaign contact the Y at 813-684-1371.



Teen leaders volunteered their time to join the Y Guy in welcoming members and guests to the Be Someone's Super Hero event and encouraging everyone to get involved in raising funds for the annual Community Campaign.



Photos: Campo YMCA



Ellen Bess has been writing for nearly as long as she can remember. Her humor columns have appeared in newspapers and periodicals in North Carolina, Georgia and central Florida. She lives with her husband, Frazier, a retired high school Chemistry teacher, one cat and two dogs (all rescues) in Bloomingdale West.



Cat People vs. Dog People

I've come to the notable conclusion (I say "notable" because it's right here in my notes) that the world is comprised of two groups of folks: Dog People (DP) and Cat People (CP). They pretty much make up the world as we know it and a more opposite duo never existed. Having been both, I know.

I used to be a Cat Person. I am still owned by an ancient member of the species who spends his days, nights and all hours in between, in what appears to be a coma. But I also have two dogs who consider most cats to be nothing more than Doritos with fur and fangs; slightly more troublesome to eat, but not much.

CP's differ from DP's in many ways, but the most striking variance is a craving (or lack thereof) for independence. CP's like the idea of being able to set out some fresh water and kibble and a couple of clean litter boxes and taking off for Cancun for the weekend. DP's hang around the house and think that Cancun is a way of packaging raccoon steaks.

CP's are generally more fastidious than DP's and are genuinely mortified if a cat hair surfaces in your drink or dinner. DP's have a slightly more cavalier attitude. The offending dog hair will be unceremoniously lifted

out (maybe) with the philosophical observation that the hair "probably didn't eat much."

When you visit a CP, you can pretty much count on kitty leaping into your lap, especially if you happen to dislike felines. The CP will fly across the room like he was on fire, scoop the little varmint from your lap, and scold "No, No! Bad Kitty!"

DP's, on the other hand, aren't afraid to let you know the pecking order of things the second you cross the threshold. If you should commit the unpardonable sin of quietly suggesting that the mutt might be happier outside or in another room or, better yet, a different solar system, the DP will look you steadily in the eye and remind you "...the dog lives here. You're just visiting."

Now, I'm not trying to make it look like Cat People are weirder than Dog People. I've been in both camps and know that each has its pros, cons and own set of problems. I will say, however, that I've never heard a Dog Person "Oh, yuck"-ing because he caught his dog wandering all over the kitchen countertops.



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After a false start last year, the Hillsborough County “Bell Shoals Widening” project will begin in late summer according to County project manager Ben Kniesly. Bloomingdale community leaders met with Kniesly, Newland Communities project manager Duane Milford, and TECO project administrator Arlee Jones on March 25 at the Bloomingdale Community Office to receive an update on the upcoming construction.



Photo: Joy Boisselle
Community leaders received a Bell Shoals Widening project briefing from project managers on March 25 at the Bloomingdale Community Office. Pictured are, left to right, Newland Communities manager Duane Milford, BHA president George May, county manager ben Kniesly and TECO manager Arlee Jones.

“Bell Shoals Road traffic count is at 35,000 vehicles per day,” Kniesly stated. The project will reduce traffic congestion, increase the traffic capacity and maximize safety along the corridor.

The \$50 million dollar project – funded by Newland Communities and Hillsborough County – consists of widening a 3.1-mile portion of Bell Shoals Road from just south of the Alafia River to approximately 1,200 feet north of Bloomingdale Avenue. Construction will take place over a 30 month period.

The design includes transforming the two-lane, undivided rural road to a four-lane, divided urban artery featuring 12-foot vehicle lanes, a 4-foot bike lane and sidewalks in both directions. In addition, the bridge at the Alafia River will be widened and intersection improvements will be made at each of the Bloomingdale community entrances at Glenhaven and Garnet Drives, and Glen Hollow and Rosemead Lanes. Major intersection improvements will occur at Bloomingdale Avenue and Bell Shoals Road.

Attendee concerns, not immediately addressed, included planned landscape removal and replacement at entryways, and noise buffering along the corridor. Several cited the

prolonged Boyette Road widening project, which tested commuter and resident patience alike, as a major concern for the Bell Shoals project. In response, Kniesly stated that the Bell Shoals Road project would be monitored at all levels to ensure timely completion in an effort to minimize resident inconvenience and frustrations.

Site project manager Duane Milford added, “My job is to make sure the project is coordinated [between TECO and the contractor] and I am obligated to challenge the timeline. We want to get it [the project] done.”

Milford explained further that the project is divided into four distinct construction segments (Segments 1, 2A, 2B, and 2C) and one bridge phase. Construction on the bridge is estimated to take 18 to 20 months and will begin concurrently with the construction effort on Segment 1 at Waterford Run Drive. Once a road segment nears 90 percent completion, construction will begin on the next segment and so on until completion. While a more expensive construction method, county officials chose the plan in order to minimize traffic disruptions.

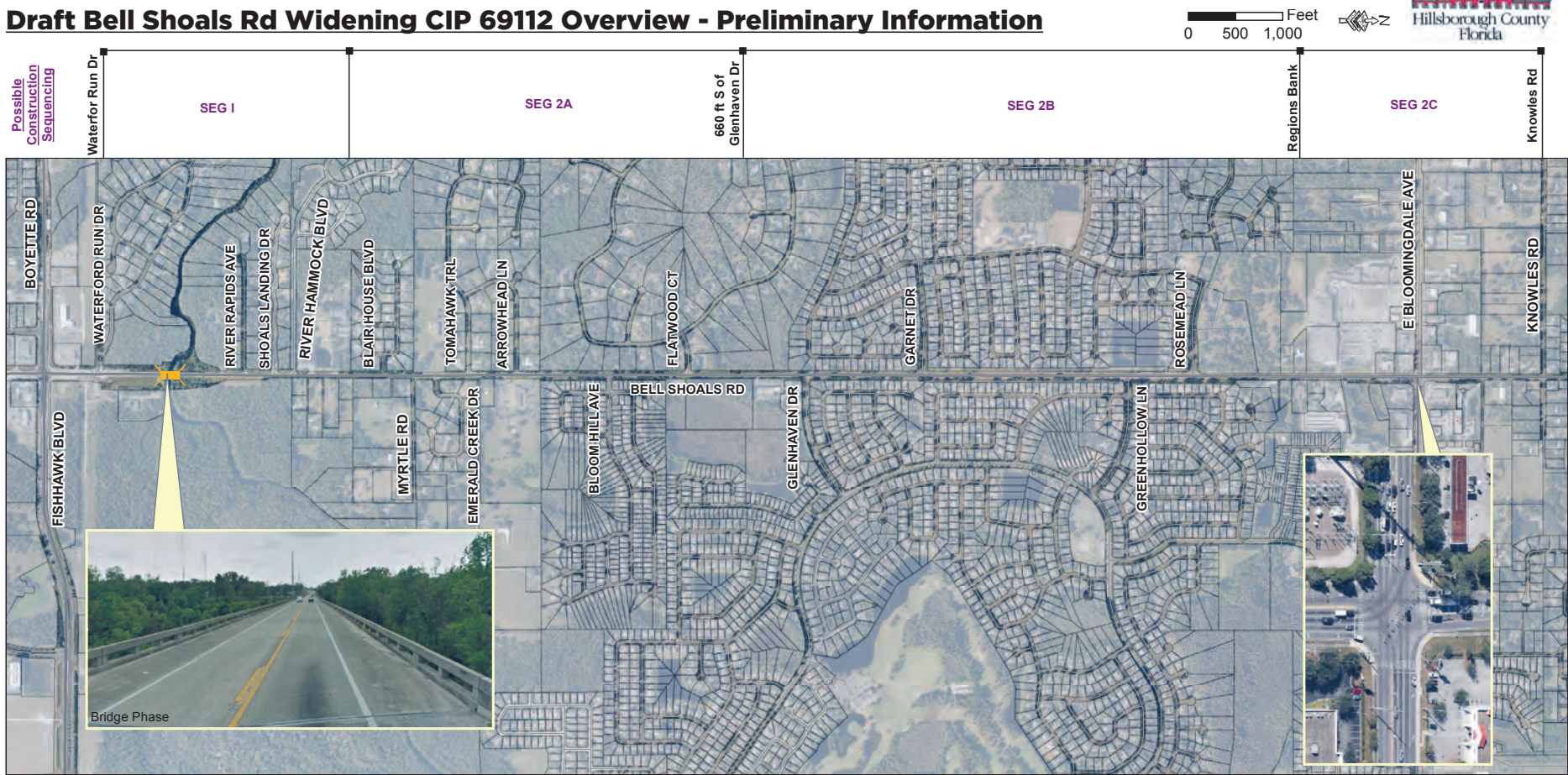
“While there may be a few exceptions,” Milford said, “we expect to maintain two lane traffic during construction and follow a weekly work schedule with no nighttime work.”

This meeting was just one of several scheduled by project officials directed at leaders in communities affected by the upcoming work. Kniesly stated that a public meeting will be held in May to share project details with community residents. Meeting information will be posted online at Facebook/BloomingdaleHOA as they become available. He, also, urged residents to attend the GO Hillsborough Workshops currently ongoing to ensure their transportation concerns are heard.

For information, visit the county website at www.hillsboroughCounty.org/CountyProjects.



Draft Bell Shoals Rd Widening CIP 69112 Overview - Preliminary Information



The Bell Shoals Widening Project overview in map form provided by Hillsborough County. Construction will begin this summer at the Alafia River bridge and Waterford Run Drive. Officials estimate construction will reach Glenhaven drive in approximately 18 months. Provided By: Hillsborough County

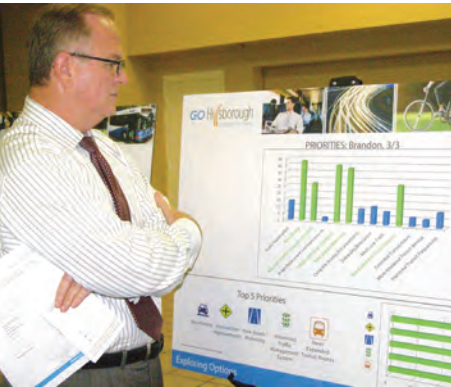


Anyone who has lived in Hillsborough County for more than a week knows there are a variety of transportation issues that need solutions. To find these solutions, Hillsborough County elected officials, government and transportation officials are seeking the involvement of those who know these problems the best, the residents who travel the roads and highways every day.

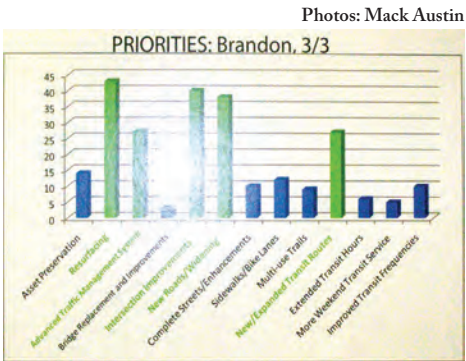
County officials, including Commissioner Stacy White, have put together a special inter-active program called “GO Hillsborough,” a four-workshop series at various locations throughout the county. Each workshop builds on the last and includes defining the issues, options, choices, and consensus.

Residents are encouraged to attend these meetings and become a part of the solution to Hillsborough County’s transportation issues. Transportation is one of the most important elements of our everyday lives. No one knows the transportation problems you face better than you do. Your ideas and suggestions are needed to find the right solutions.

For information, visit to www.GOHillsborough.org.



George May, president of the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association (BHA), carefully reviews a chart showing the most recent graphic representations of area transportation priorities based on input from area residents who have attended prior “GO Hillsborough” workshops. He stated that he was “attending the meeting to express his opinions both as a Bloomingdale resident and as President of the BHA.”



This graphic chart, prepared by the “GO Hillsborough” team, shows the current transportation priorities based on input from area residents. The top three priorities are resurfacing, intersection improvements and new roads/widening. Area residents can provide their input to this project by attending the next meeting on April 14 at Bell Shoals Baptist Church.



Construction Updates

Photos: Mack Austin



Major site preparation, including drainage installation and utilities, continues at the Super Wal-Mart construction site.



What a difference professional attention can make! Hillsborough County Code Enforcement, under the direction of Commissioner Stacy White, made significant improvements at the site of the vacant property, formerly Sweetbay, on Bloomingdale Avenue. Code Enforcement will continue to direct further improvements at the site. Officials are also looking into possible businesses for this site.



Great progress is visible at the Bloomingdale Fire Station #7 construction site. Sidewalks, the parking lot, landscaping and the roof are all in place. Completion of the complex interior is underway, and a June opening is expected.



BLOOMING IN BLOOMINGDALE

Photo Provided By: Peter and Eileen Kadzielewski

...HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

Editor's Note: A column for our green and brown thumb gardeners penned by local garden experts and amateurs from the Valrico Garden Club (VGC). To learn about the VGC, contact Mary Kay McMahan at 813-684-6323, email danmcmahan@aol.com or visit Facebook/Valrico Garden Club.

Floral Design - From Extravagant to Simple, Anyone Can Do It By Gwen Graverson

Would you like to create floral arrangements like a professional? You can, but in the beginning everyone is a novice, so start off by keeping the colors and kinds of flowers simple. Use flowers that you like and use supplies and materials that you may find around your home.

Begin with an inventory of what you already have available. Who doesn't have a cabinet full of containers, silk flowers, and fillers? Bargain shop at yard and estate sales to build your stash. In floral design, just about anything goes including pinecones, stones, colored glass gems, or even Gasparilla beads.

Hit your local craft store for reusable supplies like floral tape, floral wire, scissors, wire cutter, wooden or bamboo picks, and floral foam. If you plan on a fresh arrangement, buy a few aqua tubes. Next, check your yard and garden for possible cuttings. Leafy plants can fill in the background of an arrangement and don't forget decorative branches.

Decide on an informal vs. formal design, say sunflower vs. calla lilies. Consider using long-lasting flowers like hydrangeas that can be dried and used later in a dried floral arrangement.

Then, decide whether you want fresh, dried or silk flowers and remember, costs vary depending on your choice.

There are a number of floral design books available to help you learn the basics. Buy them or visit the library. Even better, many tutorial videos will give you step-by-step instructions as you create your design.

If you want to learn in a classroom setting, the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. (FFGC) offers floral design study units. Check class schedules through the FFGC website at www.ffgc.org, call (727) 393-8276, or email CLUCIA02Luc@aol.com for information.



From simple to elegant, one's imagination and creativity is the only limit in floral design.



Photos: Herb Pettway

The University of Florida and the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) located in Hillsborough County provides a valuable monthly tool for the budding nature lover.

April "To Do List":

- Plant and fertilize annuals and outdoor potted plants. Water wisely, as April is a typically dry month.
- Spray roses to prevent black spot and powdery mildew disease.
- Control thrips on gardenias and roses.
- Control lawn weeds.
- Remove thatch from lawns. Thatch, a layer of organic matter, builds up between the soil and grass blades. Thick thatch can cause mowing and pest problems.
- Verticut St. Augustine and Bermuda lawns; power rake Bahia lawns.
- Watch for signs of turf insects. Treat if necessary. Look for Chinch bugs in St. Augustine lawns that cause brown, dry patches. Sunny areas are affected first.
- Seed, sod or plug lawns, correct yellowing (iron deficiency) in Bahia lawns.

For 25 years, the Brandon Outreach Clinic has provided free health care to low income individuals and families without health insurance. On February 25, the Community Roundtable of Brandon recognized the clinic as Non-Profit of the Year.

Recent government numbers show that while 16.4 million Americans have gained health insurance since the Affordable Care Act was passed, 13 percent of adults still lack coverage (source: The Wall Street Journal). With its group of dedicated volunteers the Brandon Outreach Clinic annually provides over 2 million dollars of health care with a budget of around \$200,000.

The clinic receives no federal funding, depending solely on local donations, modest grant money, and fundraisers. If you would like to help support the efforts of the clinic, plan on attending the Kentucky Derby Party, their signature fundraising event on May 2, 4:30-7:30 p.m., at The Regent (see the Community Calendar for details).

With approximately 500 patients, Brandon Outreach Clinic provides primary care including diagnosis, treatment, medications, follow-up care, and laboratory tests. Onsite volunteers who specialize in women’s health, pediatrics, orthopedics, pulmonology, and gastroenterology are available to patients.

The clinic also provides referrals to local specialists that donate their services. Also available to anyone in the community is a

lending closet full of crutches, knee braces, walkers, potty chairs, and other medical supplies.

Executive Director Debbie Meegan and Medical Coordinator Suzy Watts, both residents of Bloomingdale, are passionate advocates for their patients. Says Watts, “We are filled to the brim. We never turn anyone away.”

For many patients the clinic has become their medical home, receiving x-rays, bloodwork, anti-biotics, and other necessary services for years. Lab work and medications are the most costly services for the clinic to provide within its budget.

To be eligible for services at the clinic, potential patients must be documented residents of Hillsborough County, and gross household income (per household size) must fall between 100 percent and 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. For those who fall below that level, the clinic refers patients to Hillsborough County Healthcare where they can receive free care including hospitalization.

Patients interested in care and who meet the requirements should call the clinic at 813-654-1388. A volunteer will call back to set up a paperwork appointment, and then volunteer medical professionals take care of them. The Brandon Outreach Clinic is located at 517 N. Parsons Avenue. For information visit www.brandonoutreachclinic.com.




Photos: Miriam Leech

The Brandon Outreach Clinic sees approximately 500 patients, has over 300 volunteers, and was recently recognized by The Community Roundtable of Brandon as Non-Profit of the Year for its contributions to the residents of this area without health insurance.





Clean, well-equipped exam rooms await patients who are looking for primary and specialized health care at the Brandon Outreach Clinic, located next to the Emergency Care Help Organization (ECHO) on Parsons Avenue.




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APRIL 2015

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BLOOMINGDALE COMMUNITY STATION NOTES



By Community Resource Master Deputy Curtis Warren

PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT HELPS CATCH CRIMINALS

Personal involvement of concerned, dedicated residents combined with teamwork results in a big difference in our crime rates. To those of you who have been involved, please continue your involvement and renew your commitment to work with the Sheriff's Office. When you alert us, we can take immediate action to chase down these criminals and put them where they belong – behind bars!

The Sheriff's Office has many successful programs in place to improve the quality of life in our community. Intelligence-led policing is one of them! It replaces the previous Community Policing Program, which was very successful.

Intelligence-led policing is a major factor in reducing crime rates and stopping criminals that invade our area. Intelligence-led statistics show that only 6 percent of criminals commit 60 percent of major crimes.

As technology advances, we have been able to improve the techniques and procedures used to monitor, observe, track and arrest criminals. Social Media has proven to be a great tool in tracking criminal activity and eventually solving crimes and making arrests!

If you have concerns or issues involving your community and you would like to discuss them while working together with other members of the Bloomingdale community, I would like to "invite you" to become a part of our team!

Come to one of our monthly Bloomingdale Area Community Council (BACC) meetings. The BACC is made up of concerned residents, homeowner associations and Sheriff's officers who work together to improve our community. The BACC meets the third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Community Station on Erindale Drive.

DO THREE THINGS TO STOP CRIME!

At our March BACC, we reviewed recent crime statistics and criminal activity in the surrounding area. We noticed some obvious patterns. The first example involves vehicle burglaries. In all of the incidents, vehicles were either left open or had valuables left in them. This is just an open invitation for criminals. The Solution – Do these three things: **lock your vehicles, remove all valuables from vehicles and close your garage doors.**

A recent incident involved a homeowner leaving his garage door open – "For just a few minutes." After those few minutes, he returned to find his \$1,200 Trek bicycle stolen.

Luckily, the bike owner had taken photos and recorded the bike's serial number. When the thief took the bike to a local pawnshop...he was not so lucky! Detectives investigating the case were able to locate the bike and return it to its owner. If you have valuables like this bike, take photos and record serial numbers!

Finally, Detective James Howell briefed the BACC on the arrest of a burglar found through a homeowner calling about suspicious activity in her area. She provided him with valuable video from her sophisticated home security system. The system had excellent recording capabilities. The resident learned to use the system properly and checked the video frequently. The video helped solve several burglary cases!

"OPERATION MEDICINE CABINET" IS A SUCCESS

As part of the community's annual clean-up event held March 7, the Sheriff's Office completed another successful "Operation Medicine Cabinet." The program helps residents properly dispose of outdated and unused medicines and drugs.

Working with Kristi Campbell from HOMEINSTEAD Senior Care, Sheriff's deputies and volunteers collected over 100 pounds of unused and outdated prescription medicines and drugs ensuring the medicines cannot be abused or end up in our water system.

The Sheriff's Office would like to thank the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association for their assistance and the help of their volunteers. Also, thanks to the county Parks Maintenance staff who provided invaluable support during this project. A special thank you to the Bloomingdale Medical Associates, local Publix, CVS and Walgreens pharmacies, the YMCA and the Fish Hawk "Talon" for helping publicize the event. Also, thanks to the many residents who took the time to bring in their expired and unused medicines for proper disposal and destruction.

Still have meds needing disposal? There are receptacles located at all HCSO District Offices. Only pills are accepted. No liquids or sharps! The nearest office in our area is District II at 2310 North Falkenburg Road. Open 24 hours.

Photo: Joy Boisselle



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Sheikh World Center Tampa, FL

PRESENTS

Home Instead Senior Care

OPERATION MEDICINE CABINET

DROP OFF your EXPIRED or UNUSED Medications and HELP SAVE HILLSBOROUGH'S WATER SYSTEM

Sun City Center Community Association Community Hall
1910 S. Pebble Beach Blvd.
Sun City Center, FL

April 2, 2015
9:00 am—12:00 pm

Operation Medicine Cabinet collects expired or unwanted prescription and over-the-counter medications for proper disposal. Improper disposal such as flushing drugs down the toilet or drain leads to the contamination of Florida's aquatic environment. Wastewater treatment systems are not designed to remove these medications from our water. Help keep our water system safe. Bring your medications to Community Hall!

Over 11,000 pounds collected in Hillsborough County since 2006!

For more information, contact Home Instead Senior Care 813-684-1972

Master Deputy Curtis Warren displays medications dropped off by residents taking part in the BHA's Community Clean-up as part of the HCSO's Operation Medicine Cabinet. The next Operation Medicine Cabinet is in Sun City.

VANDALISM - A SERIOUS CRIME!

Vandalism comes in all shapes and sizes. It can be spray painting graffiti on a wall or tearing down fencing or destroying private property. It can also be very costly in time and money spent to repair damages.

When vandals are found and prosecuted, even if they are minors, their parents can be held liable for the cost of any damages and repairs. Vandals can wind up with criminal records that can affect their futures.

Anyone seeing vandalism in progress or its aftermath should call the Bloomingdale Sheriff's Community Station at (813) 635-8040. Please note the date, time and location, and descriptions of the vandals and any vehicles they are driving. If possible, take photos. Only observe the vandals from a distance. Do not confront them!

All vandalism reports will be investigated and arrangements made to repair damages. Remember, there are only a few deputies in our area but there are thousands of homeowners. We need your eyes and ears to help protect tax dollars and property.

If you witness a crime, drop a dime. Remember, you can remain anonymous!

Vandalism costs Bloomingdale residents money. Using our special tax dollars, the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District installed doggi pot stations throughout the community. These receptacles help keep our community dog waste free and are for resident convenience. Unfortunately, they are frequent vandal targets.

Photo: Bloomingdale Special Taxing District



On the Road with Ryan

Ryan Brantley, a local Realtor and travel writer, has traveled extensively throughout Florida and the Caribbean. Put your seat belts on and enjoy the ride as Ryan shares her adventures with our community!

Native Floridians know that the end of March marks the beginning of beach season and many day trips away. Depending on which area of the sunshine state you call home, likely makes a difference in which beach is a family favorite. For those quick weekend getaways, check out these top Florida beaches just a short drive away.

Daytona Beach - Just opposite Orlando on Florida's west coast is Daytona, one of Florida's most famous beaches and well known for NASCAR racing. Once a spring break top destination, Daytona also offers family fun such as putt-putt, paddle boarding, thrill rides, and its famous boardwalk. It is also one of the few places you can still drive your own vehicle onto the beach for as little as \$10 per day. Accommodations range from small motels to high-rise beachfront hotels and can be booked through most major travel sites.

Anna Maria Island - Home to Turtle and Holmes Beaches, Anna Maria Island is a favorite for its local flair. Residents fight hard to keep restaurants and stores local to the island making every meal something you can't find just down the street. The

small beach town draws visitors from all over the country and even celebrities like Cameron Diaz can be seen walking the sands or strolling the shops. It is also one of the easiest beaches to access with various parking areas, if you know where to look. Most rentals on the island are privately owned or condo-hotel style. Find a local rental expert to get the most bang for your buck.

Siesta Key - Located just an hour away, Bloomingdale residents are fortunate to be so close to the number one beach in America! In 2013, Siesta Key was even ranked #16 in the world! Perhaps it is number one because of the beautiful people dominating the volleyball courts or the village with its unique restaurants or possibly, it is the pristine white sand that literally is one-of-a-kind. Fun Fact: Siesta Key's sand really is special! It is composed of 99 percent quartz, which stays cool to the touch. If you didn't notice before, your feet will now! Book well in advance, there are no major hotel chains and local residences book up fast!

So this April, pack your beach chairs and hit the road to get started on the base tan for the season!

Beach season is upon us and Anna Maria Island is a favorite destination for many. Despite being a tourist mecca, the Island has managed to maintain a small town feel and pristine white beaches.

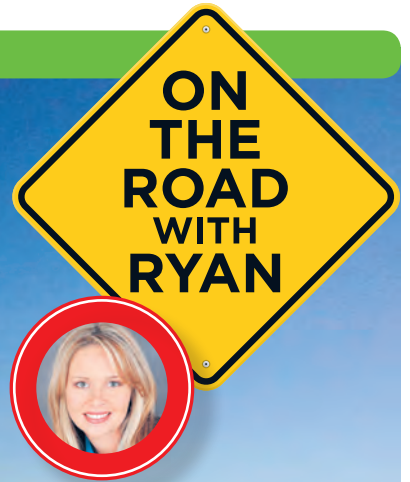


Photo: Ryan Brantley

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106224-1

Saturday, March 7 was an unseasonably cool and overcast day. That, however, didn't stop Bloomingdale residents from arriving in a steady stream to unload their unwanted furniture, stoves, refrigerators, outdated medications and computers during the always successful Bloomingdale Homeowners Association Annual Community Clean-up Day.

The event, funded by the BHA and a grant from the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners was held at the Hillsborough County Parks Maintenance Facility off Natures Way. Volunteers provided the muscle behind the event's success and numbered at over 20 adults and high school students, many from the National Honor Society at Bloomingdale High School.

Learning from last year's overwhelming response, the BHA added additional roll-off containers to accommodate the anticipated volume of trash and traffic. Five dumpsters were filled to capacity just shy of the event's 1 p.m. closing time and no one was turned away.

Like last year, several organizations collaborated with the BHA to provide a one-stop and drop capability for resident convenience. Included this year were UrbanErecycling, the Sheriff's Office Operation Medicine Cabinet, and Hillsborough County's Parks and Recreation and Environmental Services.

The Annual Clean-up Day is a service provided to residents by the BHA and a valuable membership benefit. Your support to continue to fund this annual event is needed. Join the Association today, and help keep our community trash-free. For information on how to become a member, call (813) 681-2051 or email bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com.

Photos: Joy Boisselle



Volunteers unload "junk" at the Annual Cleanup Day on March 7. Five commercial containers were filled to capacity totaling over 150 cubic yards of bulk trash and debris.

It may not take a village, but the BHA's cleanup does require the services of a front loader manned by Clayton Weaver, Hillsborough County Parks Maintenance Facility.

Residents took full advantage of UrbanErecycling, a local company accepting computers and parts, flat screen televisions and a myriad of other electronics. The company recycles the throw-aways keeping area landfills free of potentially dangerous and environmentally harmful items. Pictured are Manuek Ledesma, left, and Greg Rabinowitz.



The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office through "Operation Medicine Cabinet" collected over 100 lbs. of outdated and unwanted medications at the annual clean up. Kristi Campbell, owner of Home Instead Senior Care, assisted law enforcement in the collection effort. Also pictured are Master Deputy Curtis Warren, left, and Mack Austin.



At day's end, five commercial containers stand completely filled with resident cast-offs. More than 300 residents participated.



New to the event were Hillsborough County Environmental Services representatives who provided information to residents about the county's Cooking Oil Recycling Effort - C.O.R.E. Pictured are Kelsey Smith, left, and Kizuwanda Agee.

What does effective loft really mean...

By J.D. Carino (Bloomington CC Campus)

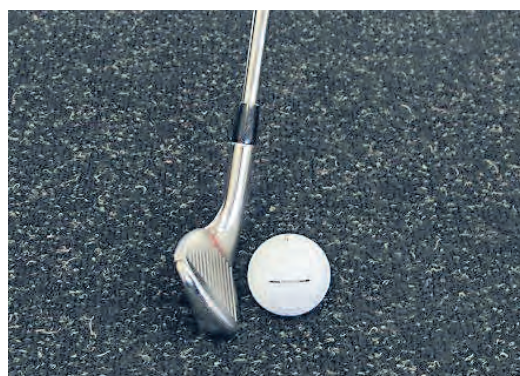
Ever wonder why your buddy's 9 iron shots go 145 yards but yours goes 120 yards. It's because you are not using your club's loft correctly. It's called measured loft versus actual loft or effective loft. Look at the three different shaft angles to the right.

My 9 iron, top picture, has a measured loft of 43 degrees (depending on manufacturer) and typically goes around 145 yards.

Amateurs help the golf ball in the air by flipping their wrists adding effective loft 47 degrees to the 9 iron causing the ball to go higher and shorter distance. See the reverse shaft lean pictured in middle picture

Professionals keep their hands in a forward shaft lean and decrease loft creating a lower ball flight and increased distance effective loft 39 degrees, see bottom picture. This is one big reason professional golfers can hit their ball a long way.

Next lesson: Distance control using the clock method. Any questions or for lessons, visit CochraneGolfSchools.com or call J.D. at 813-957-3205.



John E.S. Cochrane
GOLF SCHOOLS

Living Well

By Teri Bartus, MA, CPT



Teri Bartus is the founder and practice director of Flourish Weight Loss Center, in the River Hills Professional Center of Valrico. She considers it her joy and privilege to help women design and achieve their personal best in wellness. Teri has lived in the Central Florida area for over 25 years and now resides in the Somerset development of Bloomington. She has three lovely daughters, two great sons-in-law and twelve amazing grandchildren.



To learn more about Flourish Weight Loss Center, contact Teri at (813)309-3349, email teri@flourishdesigningwellness.com or on the web at www.flourishdesigningwellness.com.

Soul Food: It's Not Just Great Eating

People that we encounter in life won't remember most of what we say, yet they will remember the kind of person we are. The quality of our souls will surely touch others for good or for harm. If we want our lives to count for good, we must feed and care for our souls.



Photo: ryanhomesblog.com

Being a part of an engaged community can be a primary source of "soul food" for the entire family. With people moving at a faster pace due to technology, job changes and busy schedules, it is quite a challenge to care for one another in our own neighborhoods. It can be all too easy to become isolated in our homes, detached from others. An important part of our personal and family wellness is to meet regularly with others to share, care and play together.

We have to be pretty deliberate to be and stay active in community. This can simply come down to finding, supporting and interacting positively with people who share common interests. Whether your shared interests rest in the well-being of your neighborhood or extend to the global community, you may consider:

- Meeting other families by attending neighborhood events.
- Personally greeting newcomers in the neighborhood.
- Organizing a block party.
- Supporting schools, community outreach groups and local merchants.
- Relaxing in the front yard rather than the backyard when the weather is nice.
- Turning off the TV or computer and taking regular walks in the neighborhood instead.
- Inviting folks over for a meal to get to know them better.

How do you feed and nourish your soul? I would love for you to share your ideas and pictures with me. Email your story to teri@flourishdesigningwellness.com. You just may be part of a future column!

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106212-1



Events listed may be subject to change. Check with your school to confirm event dates and times prior to attending.



ALAFIA ALLIGATOR ALLEY

April 13 – Report Cards Go Home

April 22 – Spirit Night, Chipotle on Bloomingdale Avenue from 5-9 p.m.

Mint and Book Swap: Every Wednesday from 7:30-7:55 a.m., come to Room 208 to swap out your books.

Spirit Friday: Be sure to wear your Alafia T-shirt every Friday to show your school spirit!



CIMINO COUGAR CENTRAL

April 10 – Celebrate Character Day and wear silver for Self-Control.

April 13 – Report Cards Go Home

April 16 – Spirit Night, PDQ at 134 S. Gornto Lake Rd, Brandon from 4-9 p.m.

May 1 – Celebrate Character Day and wear yellow for Compassion.

Copy Team: Have a few hours to spare on Fridays? Interested in helping out our fantastic staff by becoming a member of the copy team? We are looking for a new member to join us on Fridays to help make copies and laminate. Flexible hours and no experience necessary. If you would like to help out, contact CiminoPTA@gmail.com.



BURNS BRUINS BANTER

April 6-10 – Spring Book Fair

April 8, 13, 29 – Football/Volleyball @ Burns 6 p.m.

April 13-16 – FSA, 6th grade Math part 1 and 2

April 17 – FCAT, 8th grade Science

April 20-21 – FSA, 7th grade Math part 1 & 2

April 22-23 – FSA, 7th and 8th grade Math part 1 & 2

April 24, 27 – FSA Makeups

April 28-29 – FSA, 6th grade Reading part 1 & 2

April 30 / May 1 – FSA, 7th grade Reading part 1 & 2

Morning Tutoring: Tutoring is available from 7:30-8:30 a.m. for Math, Science, Language Arts and Social Studies. Help is available for classwork, homework, FCAT Prep or to improve grades, in general. For information, contact Mr. Riley at 813-744-8383 ext. 235.



BLOOMINGDALE HIGH BULL BUSINESS

Check out the BSHS calendar at <http://bloomingdale.mysdhc.org/> for more April events.

April 6 – Flag Football vs East Bay @ Bloomingdale HS

April 9 – Softball vs Leto @ Bloomingdale HS

April 13- 7 – FSA, 10th grade ELA

April 18 – Charity Garage Sale, Honors Parking Lot, 8 a.m.

April 20 – FSA, Biology EOC

April 27-30 – FSA, Algebra II EOC, 9th grade ELA



BULLS BRIEFS

Golf Tournament: Support the Athletic Boosters: Register now for the Bloomingdale Athletic Booster Club Golf Tournament! The event will be held at the Bloomingdale Golfers Club on May 30, with tee off at 8:30 a.m. Registration ends May 15, limited to the first 36 paid teams.

Legacy Bricks: Buy a brick to help us build our new field house. Leave your mark forever. Please notify all current and former students of this great opportunity. Forms are available at bloomingdale.mysdhc.org/Files/legacybrick.pdf. Bricks cost \$100.

Microsoft Student Advantage Program: Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) is excited to announce the Microsoft Student Advantage program, which allows students to download and install Microsoft Office ProPlus desktop applications on their home computers FREE! For information on how to get this offer, visit the Bloomingdale HS website at bloomingdale.mysdhc.org.



A Night at the BULLagio
Casino Night / April 18 / 7 p.m.
/ The LOFT Event Lounge / 709
W. Lumsden Road, Brandon /
The Bloomington High School
Ragin' Bull Band invites you
to join them for an adult-only
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and silent auction. Tickets on
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couple. Ticket includes drink
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unlimited hor d'oeuvres. Table
sponsorships available for \$200
and up; includes VIP reception
from 6-7 p.m. and silent auction
preview. All proceeds benefit the
Ragin' Bull Band. See BSHS
band members for ticket and
table sponsorship sales, or e-mail
raginbullfundraising@gmail.com.

RAJUN' BULL CASINO NIGHT

**Bloomington High School
Ragin' Bull Band
CASINO NIGHT**
Saturday, April 18, 2015—7-11 p.m.
\$35 per person/\$60 per couple
The LOFT Event Lounge
711 W. Lumsden Rd., Brandon

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Burns Music Program Builds Record of Excellence

By Mallory Hillary

Photo: Burns Middle School Band Boosters

Every year, about a week before the school year officially starts, a group of new students enters Bloomingdale High School – This group is different from other freshmen, they are the new music students. From uniform fittings to band camp, these freshmen have a completely unique experience at Bloomingdale from their peers.

The differing perspective begins at Burns Middle School long before the students can say, “Rajun’ Bull.” The Burns Middle School music program has been active since the school opened in 1986, and is the largest contributor of students to the Bloomingdale Music Department.

While the Burns Music Program has many components – Orchestra, Chorus, and Band – the Burns Band is the largest, having added a colorguard and a drumline within the past five years. These auxiliary units enhance the band program, as well as differentiate it from other middle school groups.

Kevin Lewis, Burns band director, attributes the success and influence of the program on the work ethic of his students and instilling “a strong understanding of the fundamentals of music reading and performance.” This year, 42 students earned superior ratings, the highest level of recognition, at the Solo and Ensemble Festival.

The band program starts the year with a marching season including performances at Middle School Band Night at BSHS and local parades. Marching season transitions to concert season, with performances both at the school and in the Bloomingdale auditorium.

“They [the students] have an understanding that everything we do should be done to a level of excellence,” he explained.

The Burns Band undoubtedly aids whichever music program its students enter after leaving middle school. A great program requires a great leader and Lewis is just that. His unwavering dedication to his students is the foundation on which his students begin their music journey.

The best part about being Burns band director according to Lewis is “When they [students] understand that their hard work and time have paid off. [And] When they have fun making music.”



The Burns Middle School Symphonic Band in performance mode at the recent Music Performance Assessments where the group received “Superior” ratings.

Photo: Mallory Hillary



The Burns Colorguard warms up at practice. The guard is the newest auxiliary unit to the Burns band.



BSHS Football Players Sign Letters of Intent

Photos: Deidre Morgan

On March 25, coaches, family, friends and teammates gathered to watch three members of the Bloomingdale football team sign their Letters of Intent. A Letter of intent signals an athlete’s commitment to play for a specific school at the collegiate level. Typically, athletes earn scholarships to play as well. Tarron Hampton will play for Wayne State University, while Tarick Barnes and Will Morgan both signed with Ave Maria University.



Will Morgan with parents Terry and Deidre Morgan.



Tarron Hampton with parents Andre and Nicole Hampton.



Tarick Barnes pictured with his parents Lenier and Kim Barnes and grandmother Helen Barnes.



Bloomingdale Baseball Team Participates in Saladino Tournament

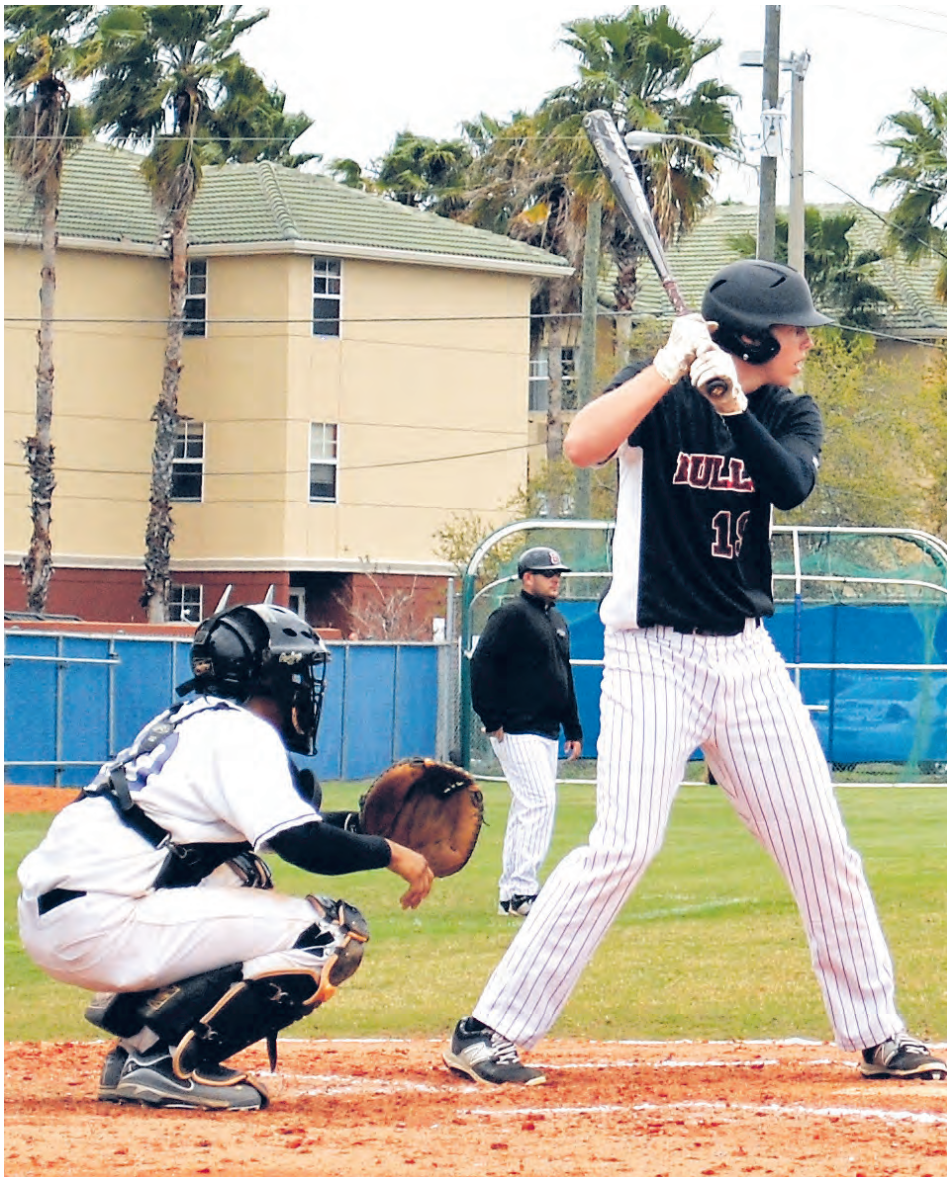


Photo: Deidre Morgan

The Annual Saladino Baseball Tournament kicked off at high schools around the county on March 7. Every spring for the past 35 years, Tony and Bertha Saladino play host to this great event where area high school baseball players showcase their skills. The Bloomingdale Bulls Baseball team made it to the quarterfinals this year losing to Strawberry Crest 2-0. Senior Logan Crouse, pictured, takes the plate against Spoto High School on opening day of the Saladino Tournaments.



Sever's Top 10-in-11 Defines Music Tradition at BSHS

By Suzanne Jones

April 30 marks the end of Fine Arts Department Chair Jon Sever's 11th year as Director of Bands at Bloomingdale Senior High School. To commemorate this milestone, he shared a list of his top ten memorable experiences over the last eleven years at Bloomingdale – also known as Sever's "Top 10-in-11."

The List:

1. Getting hired as Director of Bands
2. The recent music department trip to Rome, especially the Pope's New Year's Day Blessing
3. The 2009 Jazz Ensemble's performance in New York City as part of Broadway Classroom, an educational experience for students visiting Broadway
4. The 2009 band's performance at the NFL Experience prior to Super Bowl XLIII in Tampa. Bruce Springsteen's half-time performance with the E Street Band inspired the following year's halftime show and Jazz Band's current drum set.
5. 2009-2010 award for Teacher of the Year
6. The 2010 music department trip to London
7. Earning "Grand Champion" awards for concert band competition performances in Atlanta, Myrtle Beach, Orlando and Gatlinburg
8. Updating the Rajun' Bulls look with new uniforms
9. Last year's marching band participation during the exciting football season where the Bulls football team earned a spot in the playoffs
10. Collecting photos from students who go on to study music in college

Jon Sever, left, provides last minute instruction to students before a November 2014 appearance on WFLA-TV Channel 8's taping of syndicated morning talk show Daytime.



Photo: Principal Susan Burkett, BSHS



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