



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BLOOMINGDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION SINCE 1980

THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE



VOLUME XXXV ISSUE 8 AUGUST 2015 www.BloomingtondaleHOA.com

Japan... A playground for Strawberry Crest HS Students!



Photo: Will Leech

Cross this one off the bucket list! Strawberry Crest High School International Baccalaureate students enjoyed a weeklong trip to Japan this summer. Pictured from left to right: Will Leech, Jasmine Philipoom, Kristin Cash, Hannah Profit, Delaney Wise and Kristen Gaertner. The trip was part of the school's Education First program.

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WINNER

**2013 & 2014
Hillsborough County
Neighborhood
Recognition Award**

**Best Communications
Newsletter Category**

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration. *Thomas Edison*

PLEASE RECYCLE

THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

YOUR INSIDE CONNECTIONS

Bloomington Homeowners Association, Inc.

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

BHA Board meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at the Offices of Bloomington Special Taxing District:

3509 Bell Shoals Road
 Valrico, Florida 33596

Directors at Large:

President: *George T. May IV*
Vice President: *Daniel Berkowitz*
Secretary: *Suzy Watts*
Treasurer: *Mary Galin*

Billy Hightower
Charlie Woodcock
Beth Smedley
Joanie Wilson

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER



JOY BOISSELLE

Editor - The Bloomington Gazette

3509 Bell Shoals Rd.
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 Email: InBloomingtonNews@gmail.com
 Website: www.BloomingtonHOA.com

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General Manager

Brandon & Southshore Times

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 Riverview, Florida 33578 - (813) 661-2438
 Email: tdelcastillo@tampabay.com

Tampa Bay Times

The official publication of the BHA since 1980
 The Gazette is delivered free to Bloomington residents on the first Saturday of each month.

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 Lithia Springs, Foundation Christian,
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 www.krkcirca.com
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Yard of the Month



Photo: Joy Boisselle

Frank & Andrene Thomas 2204 Lodgeview Drive Valrico, FL 33596 (Somerset)



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



Bloomingdale Real Estate & Housing Update

By Ryan Brantley



The Chadderton Real Estate Group
Keller Williams Realty

813-924-8187
Ryan@RyanBrantley.org
www.chaddertongroup.com

There are many reasons why people attend an open house. They could be actively looking for a home or simply have curiosity about what the interior of a neighbor's house may look like, especially in comparison to their own. Who hasn't driven by a gorgeous home on the water with an open house sign out front and simply stopped in to see this exceptional property that is just beyond their means?

Almost anyone who has bought or sold a home has opened up their house or at least attended an open house when in search for a new property. But how beneficial are they?

The bottom line is that the odds of the eventual buyer walking into a property on an open house are slim. What an open house can do is give a seller perspective on how potential buyers see a property.

As agents, we always ask visitors to tell us their thoughts on how the home shows in regards to curb appeal, pricing, work to be done, and ability to view themselves in that particular property. Armed with this information we can make adjustments to get your home sold faster. Open houses are also great for buyers who are either just starting to look or need to get an idea of what their budget actually affords.

One alternative option is the Broker's Open House. This is when all agents from all brokerages in the area

hold an open house for other agents to view their listings. In our area, this usually occurs on Tuesdays. This allows agents to preview a home for clients. It's also a great way to get opinions from other agents.

Whether you decide to open your doors or not, make sure to ask your agent how holding an open house is beneficial. Who knows, your open house could be the one that does bring that buyer. As always, before opening up your home, make sure to lock up all of your valuables, open your blinds, and turn on all lights to make your home as inviting as possible.

MARKET UPDATE

July was a huge month for Bloomingdale. There were 26 new listings, 32 sold, and a whopping 64 are currently under contract. 60 houses are currently listed so we are on track to blow this time last year out of the water.

**MLS statistics include Bloomingdale East and West valid July 1-22. Sales not entered into the MLS did not count in these statistics.*



Bloomingdale Homeowners Association Seeks New Board Members

Do you care about our Bloomingdale Community and want to take an active role in its future?

Then, the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association (BHA) wants you to become part of "Team Bloomingdale." The Board meets on the second Tuesday of each month at the Bloomingdale Community Office on Bell Shoals Road at 6:30 p.m.

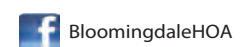
Board members serve our community through committees including:

- The Bloomingdale Gazette
- Bloomingdale HOA website and Facebook
- Santa and Mrs. Claus Visit/Charity Food Drive
- Annual Clean-up
- Charity Golf Tournament
- Fall Festival
- Scholarship
- Deed Restriction Compliance/Education/Information
- And More

Not sure you have the time? The BHA encourages all interested residents to attend a few board meetings to see the Association at work, and to determine if joining the Board is a good "fit." Remember, the current board members are residents, like you, who have the betterment of our community as their number one goal.

Call 813-681-2051 or email bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com.

www.BloomingdaleHOA.com



BHA COMMUNITY CORNER

DON'T FORGET TO LIKE US ON FACEBOOK! 

2015 Membership Drive

Please join today! For \$25 a year (less than 50 cents a week), you can help us continue to keep Bloomingdale a great community in which to raise a family, and a great place to call home. With five months remaining of the 2015 membership drive and two upcoming and large-scale events – the annual Fall Festival followed by our Santa visit and food drive – we need your support.

Your \$25 contribution funds all services and programs of the BHA. The BHA is the only community organization representing Bloomingdale's nearly 5,000 residences and over 40 neighborhoods in mandatory and voluntary Homeowner Associations. The BHA is an IRC 501(c) (4) non-profit organization, run entirely by volunteers who live in your neighborhoods.

Make checks payable to the BHA and mail to 3509 Bell Shoals Rd., Valrico, FL 33596. An easier method is to use our PayPal option. Go to www.bloomingdalehoa.com, look for the PayPal link and follow the simple instructions. All membership money collected goes back to our community, and all residents are welcome at our monthly board meetings on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Bell Shoals office.

Note: The BHA no longer has an active post office box address. Please update your automatic bill pay if applicable.

Your BHA membership provides:

- for 35 years, a monthly professionally published and award-winning community newspaper, *The Bloomingdale Gazette*
- an "all things Bloomingdale" online information sources at www.bloomingdalehoa.com, and Facebook/BloomingdaleHoa.com
- an office and staff
- a family-friendly fall festival
- a 28 year Santa visit tradition
- an annual clean-up day for bulk trash items
- a yard of the month program, student of the month program and a \$2,000 scholarship program
- deed restriction compliance and code enforcement assistance
- a volunteer program for students needing community service hours
- An exciting initiative to establish a single deed restriction document and mandatory HOA for non-mandated neighborhoods helping to preserve property values and neighborhood standards
- a continued and strong voice at county and state meetings dealing with transportation and other issues affecting our quality of life and much more!

None of these programs would be possible without your support. Join TODAY!



BHA EVENTS 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, August 10, 6:30 p.m. / Bloomingdale Special Taxing District Monthly Trustee Meeting, Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road. Call 813-684-6667 for information.

Tuesday, August 11, 6:30 p.m. / BHA Monthly Board Meeting, Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road. Residents always welcome. Call 813-681-2051 for information.

Thursday, August 20, 7 p.m. / Bloomingdale Area Community Council, Bloomingdale Community Station, 3622 Erindale Drive, 813-635-8040. Learn about safety and security issues affecting our community.

BHA BRIEFS

July Board Meeting Highlights

The BHA, unanimously, approved a revision of the Association By-Laws. It is the first update since 1986. The final version will be available online at the BHA website no later than mid-September.

Discussions included the progress of the single source deed restriction initiative. The Board voted to begin the process with three neighborhoods – Windsor Woods, Chadd's Ford and Bloomingdale Estates – as opposed to the entire non-mandated community due to size and time constraints. Residents in the selected neighborhoods will be notified as details become clearer.

The community clean-up day will add additional trash dumpsters, possibly up to 10. In addition, the Board is debating adding a community yard sale the week prior to the clean-up day to help residents remove their bulk items easily. Want to add your opinion on a community yard sale? Post your feedback on our Facebook page.

Save the Date! Fall Festival is Oct. 24 at the Bloomingdale Golfers Club!

Plans for this year's event include food trucks, entertainment and more business participation. Volunteers are needed and business participants are encouraged to contact the BHA to reserve their space. Call 813-681-2051 or email bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com.



Dining with Dave Presents Local Establishment Updates

Sluggers Neighborhood Grill and Bar
109 West Bloomingdale Avenue
(corner of Bloomingdale and John Moore)
813-661-6700

Sluggers, originally reviewed May 2014, is under new management and the improvements are evident. A slimmed down menu focusing on traditional burgers and bar food, an expanded beer selection, and overall improved service and quality. For sports fans, they now have the Big Ten Network, SEC Network, and the Golf and Tennis channels to complement ESPN, Fox Sports and more. New co-owner Chris Linder tells Dave that he wants Sluggers to be a true neighbor establishment for kids and sports fans of all ages.



Sluggers
NEIGHBORHOOD GRILL & BAR
Photos: www.sluggersgrill.net

Times Square Pizza Company
927 East Bloomingdale Avenue (Bloomingdale Square) - 813-651-0122

Dave's personal favorite pizza place, New York Times Square Pizza, originally reviewed September 2014, has changed their name to simply Times Square Pizza Company. The menu has been expanded and they now have a website to make ordering your favorite pie that much easier.



La Villa Mexican Grill
4377 Lynx Paw Trail in Valrico
813-324-8839

La Villa Mexican Grill, originally reviewed August 2014, has had so much success they have moved to a new and larger location just off Lithia Pinecrest Road. Dave has not had the chance to visit them there yet, but hears many good things and will stop by soon.



Photo: www.thesteinandvine.com

The Stein and Vine
827 West Bloomingdale Avenue
(Kings Row Shopping Center)
813-655-4786

One of the Brandon and Tampa area's premiere Gastropubs, The Stein and Vine, originally reviewed April 2015, has doubled in size! The food is still fantastic and the beer selections (along with ciders and wines) have nearly doubled as well. The expansion allows half the restaurant to be set aside for special occasions and tastings.



Jaymer-Que

One of Dave's favorite BBQ places, Jaymer Que, originally reviewed July 2014, has unfortunately gone out of business. Details on their (hopefully temporary) displacement is available on their website. Get on the mailing list for updates and catering information.



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

TAX FREE FOR BACK-TO-SCHOOL!

Florida Back-to-School Tax Holiday / August 7-16 / Don't miss out on this back-to-school event! This year the tax holiday has been extended from 3 days to 10! During this period no Florida sales tax or local option tax will be collected on clothing, footwear, wallets, and bags that cost less than \$100; school supplies that cost \$15 or less; and the first \$750 of the cost of personal computers and related accessories. For complete details visit the Florida Department of Revenue website, dor.myflorida.com.



THIS WEEKEND!

Tampa Bay Comic Con / August 1, 8 a.m.-Midnight (Exhibitor Hall closes at 6 p.m.); August 2, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. / Tampa Convention Center / 333 S. Franklin Street, Tampa As Florida's #1 family-friendly and fan-owned comic book convention, the Tampa Bay Comic Con is the perfect place to let your inner-nerd run wild and free! Numerous tables of comics, videos, toys, action figures, Anime, Star Wars, artwork, trading cards and other collectibles are included in the cornucopia of nerdy fun. Celebrity appearances include Linda Hamilton from Terminator, Carrie Fisher from Star Wars, Lea Thompson from Back to the Future, Matt Ryan from NBC's Constantine, and numerous artists and writers from popular comic book series. Celebrity autographs and photo ops are separate tickets. Tickets \$30 (12 and under free). For information, call 813-274-8511 or visit www.tampabaycomiccon.com.



THIS WEEKEND!

Back to School Festival / August 2 / 1-4 p.m. / Campo Family YMCA / 3414 Culbreath Road / Benefitting the YMCA Backpack Program, the 13th Annual Back to School Festival features over 100 indoor vendors, music, and entertainment. Entry fee per family: bring \$10 worth of school supplies or a \$10 cash donation to be donated to the backpack program. Call Marie Gilmore at 813-657-2418 for information.

\$1 SUMMER MOVIES!

Summer Fun Flicks / August 4 and 11 / 10 a.m. / AMC Regency 20 Theatres / 2496 West Brandon Blvd., Brandon / \$1 movies presented every Tuesday. Doors open at 9 a.m. PG-13 option each week. Tickets can be purchased in advance.

Schedule:

- August 4 Dolphin Tale 2 or X-Men First Class
- August 11 Annie or X-Men Origins: Wolverine



Brandon Ballet Auditions / August 8 and 15 / The Dance Center / 161 E. Bloomingdale Avenue, Brandon / The Brandon Ballet will hold its annual auditions looking for company dancers and Nutcracker extras for the 2015-2016 season. Brandon Ballet offers high-quality, classical ballet training, and performs at two or three major, full-length ballets each season including The Nutcracker and a spring performance, as well as annual galas and mixed repertory performances. There is a \$25.00 non-refundable audition fee for all auditions. Contact Brandon Ballet at dance@brandonballet.org or 813-684-4282 with any questions.

Company Training Dancer and Pre-Professional Program, August 8

9:30-11 a.m. – Dancers not on pointe or pointe 1 (9 years and up)
 11:15 a.m.-12:45p.m. – 2nd year pointe (10 years and up)
 1-3 p.m. – 3rd year pointe (11 years old and up)
 A Parents Meeting lasting approximately 30 minutes will follow each audition.

Company Professional Dancers, August 15

2-3:30 p.m. – Professional dancers (17 years and up). Please call for details.

Nutcracker Extras, August 15

9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. – 7 years and up

Ask a Lawyer Series / Wednesday, August 11, 7 p.m. / Brandon Regional Library Community Room, 619 Vonderburg Drive / As a public service, members of the Brandon Bar Association provide brief presentations on legal topics and attorneys answer questions from the audience. This month's topics are Domestic Violence Injunctions, Elder Issues and Personal Injury Law. The series continues on the second Wednesday of September. Questions? Contact Attorney Brent Rose at 813-712-9121.



Family Fun Fridays / August 14 and 28 / 6:30-8:30 p.m. / Campo Family YMCA / 3414 Culbreath Road / Join the Campo Y for an evening of activities for everyone in the family! Although free, registration is required! Signup sheet will be at the Welcome Center. **This is a member only event.** For information, call 813-684-1371.

Brandon Sports and Aquatic Center Community Day / August 15 / 11 a.m.-3 p.m. / Brandon Sports and Aquatic Center (BSAC) / 405 Beverly Blvd., Brandon / Join the Brandon Sports and Aquatic Center (BSAC) for a special Community Day celebration! Local organizations, vendors, and businesses will be onsite. Bring the family to enjoy BSAC activities and games; PLUS the BSAC swimming pool will be open! This is a great opportunity to learn about BSAC's programs and impact on the community. There is no charge to attend and the event is open to the public. For information, call 813-689-0908.



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

Annual Congregation Beth Shalom Open House / August 23 / 9:30 a.m.-noon / 706 Bryan Road, Brandon / Welcome to Congregation Beth Shalom, a Reform Jewish Congregation in Brandon. We invite you to join us for our annual open house, a time when we show you how the temple can be of aid to you. The Open House will showcase the many activities and committees of CBS. Registration will be available for religious school and Hebrew School for students needing to attend on Wednesday evenings and Sundays. Stay and be our guests for our annual bagel brunch. RSVP at 813-671-1707 or e-mail at phylnew@verizon.net.

Summer Power Math Workouts / Monday-Friday, 2:30-7:30 p.m., through August 28 / Mathnasium / 1048 Bloomingdale Avenue, Brandon / Preventing summer learning loss and helping students prepare for what lies ahead. For some, that means a solid review of previous material. Others benefit from previewing upcoming concepts. Most will get some of both. Featured programs include **Summer Pass**-12 sessions of Power Math Workouts (1 hour each) (\$99 enrollment fee; max \$149 per family), **Extended Summer Pass**-18 sessions of Power Math Workouts (1 hour each) (\$99 enrollment fee; max \$149 per family), **Mathnasium Membership**-Get the best rate with unlimited sessions each month. Choose the membership level that works for you and see your knowledge and enjoyment of mathematics grow. For information, call 813-655-MATH (6284), e-mail brandon@mathnasium.com, or visit www.mathnasium.com/brandon.

UPCOMING IN SEPTEMBER!

3rd Annual Festival of Flight / September 11-13 / Tampa North Flight Center / 4241 Birdsong Blvd., Lutz / Festival of Flight brings hot air balloons, planes, deltas, kites, helicopters, and all forms of flight together in one location to share our passion for flight. Admission is free; parking \$5. Hot air balloon ride tickets must be purchased in advance at www.americanballoonrides.com or 813-243-9507. Balloon ride pricing is \$189/adult; \$125/child (5-12). For more information visit www.festivalofflightwesleychapel.com.



Highlights include:

- Friday, September 11** – Gates open to public, 5:30 p.m. Hot Air Balloon Night Glow, 7:30-9 p.m.
- Saturday, September 12** – Hot Air Balloon Launch, 7 a.m. Hot Air Balloon Tether Rides, 7 a.m. - 1 p.m. (weather permitting) Specialty Car Show, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. T-6 Flyover, 6:30 p.m. Hot Air Balloon Night Glow, 7-9 p.m.
- Sunday, September 13** – Hot Air Balloon Launch, 7 a.m. Festival Close, 2:30 p.m.

3rd Annual Flavor Run / September 12, 9 a.m. / Florida State Fairgrounds / The Flavor Run 5k is the original fruit-flavored color powder run started in Tampa Bay! Run, walk, or stroll the event! Post-run festival includes everything from fruit, vendors, and live entertainment to children's activities. Flavor exclusive tickets include flavor shirt, race bib, tattoo, flavor packet, and finisher's medal. Kids, 6 years and under, run/walk FREE! For information or to buy tickets, visit www.flavorrun.com.

Tickets:

- Race Day Tickets** – \$50/\$60
- Youth Tickets (7-15 years)** – \$25 (until September 11)
- Race Day Youth Tickets (7-15 years)** – \$35
- Join/Create a Team** – Save \$5 when you get your friends together to run.
- Family 5k Tickets**–Save \$5/person when you sign up the family as a team (2-10 members) at one time!



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County News Briefs



Accreditation Team Invites Public Comment

Agency members and the public are invited to offer comments to the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation assessment team regarding the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office. A team of assessors from the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation (CFA) will arrive on Aug. 4 to examine all aspects of the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office policies and procedures, management, operations, and support services.

The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office must comply with approximately 260 standards in order to receive accredited status. Many of the standards are critical to life, health and safety issues. A copy of the standards is available through the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Public Information Office in Tampa at 813-247-8060.

As part of the on-site assessment, the CFA wants public input. For more information regarding CFA or for persons wishing to offer written comments, write: CFA, P.O. Box 1489, Tallahassee, Florida 32302, or email to info@flaccreditation.org.

Once the CFA assessors complete their review of the agency, they report to the full Commission, which will then decide if the agency is to receive accredited status. Accreditation is for 3 years and is a highly prized recognition of law enforcement professional excellence.

Hillsborough County Awarded \$28.5M for Oil Spill Claim

The Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) passed a resolution July 15 to ratify a settlement with BP Oil that will pay the County \$28.5M. The settlement covers monetary damages incurred by the County following the malfunctioning of BP's Deepwater Horizon in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010.

"This settlement is a reward for the incredible job our businesses did, allowing us all to flourish despite trying circumstances," said Commission Chairwoman Sandra Murman. "The oil spill took a real toll on our tourism industry, and we are so pleased to have secured this relief for our hardworking residents."

The settlement is due to be paid in a lump sum in the next 90 days, and the BOCC will be responsible for determining how it will be spent.

HCFR Station 7 Uncoupling Ceremony and Open House

On Aug. 14, Station 7 will officially open to the residents of Bloomingdale. The ceremony will begin at 10 a.m. followed by an Open House at 11 a.m. HCFR invites everyone to join them. There will be station tours and activities for children to experience a day in the life of a firefighter. Come out and enjoy!



Campo YMCA and ECHO Fill Backpacks, Aug.15

By Miriam Leech



It's back – backpack stuffing, that is! Once again, Campo YMCA and the Emergency Care Help Organization (ECHO) are teaming to hold the annual Backpack Outreach Event at Camp Cristina on Aug. 15.

Every year the event provides Greater Brandon area students, in grades K-12, with backpacks stuffed with essential supplies for the school year. The event is designed for pre-registered families facing financial hardship or recovering from job loss, fire, or another qualifying emergency.

Heading up the event for the third year in a row is Bloomingdale resident Carol Scheafnocker. As chairperson she is once again looking to the community for donations. "We are shooting for supplies for 1,600 1st through 12th graders," says Sheafnocker.



Items needed include backpacks, pens/pencils, composition books, spiral notebooks, wide-ruled and college-ruled paper, pocket folders, markers, colored pencils, glue sticks, scissors, and 2-inch erasers. Corporate donors and individuals are being asked to sponsor items, fulfilling the entire need or a portion thereof.

Members of the community also can drop off donated items or cash donations at YMCA Camp Cristina, Campo Family YMCA and North Brandon Family YMCA. Checks can be made out to Campo YMCA and should reference backpack event – a donation of just \$20 can purchase a backpack with all the necessary supplies for one child.

Qualified families can register by contacting Kavita Marballi at the Campo Family YMCA via email to Kavita.Marballi@tampaymca.org, or by phone at 813-684-1371, ext. 1606.

The Backpack Outreach Event takes place Aug. 15, 9-11 a.m., for pre-registered families **only** at Camp Cristina, 9840 Balm Riverview Road in Riverview.



Gazette File Photo/Miriam Leech

Bloomingdale resident Carol Sheafnocker knows a thing or two about stuffing backpacks. For the third year in a row, she is heading up the Backpack Outreach Event at Camp Cristina on Aug. 15. Help her send kids to school with a pack full of needed school supplies.



The Morgan Family attend a 2012 football game at Raymond James Stadium. Everyone in the family is a die-hard Washington Redskins fan. Left to right: Terry (husband), Will (son), Deidre, and daughters Natalie and Crystal.

If you've noticed her name in the Gazette bylines, you know that Deidre Morgan is the guru of school sports in our area and other school-related news. She has been a Bloomingdale resident for ten years and a Gazette writer for two.

"I love to cover school news, because it keeps me connected to what's happening in and around our schools," stated Morgan. "I am also biased because I love sports!"

Morgan's family, who are openly die-hard Washington Redskins fans, consists of her husband of 26 years, Terry, and their children Natalie (24), Crystal (22) and Will (18). Will graduated from Bloomingdale High School with the class of 2015 and will be studying Biochemistry

at Ave Maria University on a football scholarship. Crystal is in the nursing program at Miami Dade College, while Natalie, a UCF grad, is a Sales Executive for Marriott Hotels.

"Being from Virginia and away from family, the Bloomingdale community makes you feel like you are living among family," Morgan said. She and Terry, a retired Army Colonel, chose to live in Bloomingdale for the top-rated schools and friendly residents. Her vision for Bloomingdale is to "keep that welcoming feeling so that more families will want their children to grow up here."

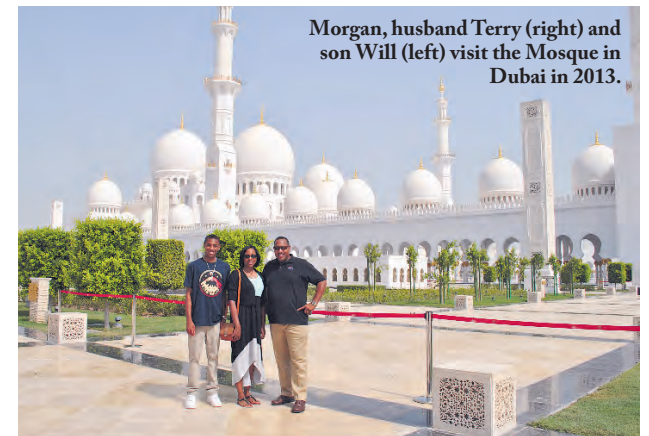
Morgan's favorite article to write for the Gazette was covering Bloomingdale High School's "awesome" Bulls Football year under Head Coach, Brian Surcy. "It was a pleasure to interview him, because he is a Bloomingdale resident and Bloomingdale High graduate, and it was great to see him get to live out his dream of coaching his alma mater," explained Morgan.

Besides writing, Morgan enjoys scrapbooking, reading, and watching and attending sporting events. She is a part-time paralegal and also substitute teaches in local schools.

Morgan believes that the Gazette serves the community by providing information and resources to Bloomingdale residents, and envisions it becoming an even larger source of information.

Thank you for serving our readers, Deidre, by keeping us 'in the know' about the next generation of sports stars and educated professionals emerging from our community!

(Editor's Note: Behind the Byline will introduce our community to the many talented and dedicated people who are the backbone of this award-winning newspaper. All but one of our writers live in Bloomingdale, thus our unofficial motto, "By residents, for residents.")



Morgan, husband Terry (right) and son Will (left) visit the Mosque in Dubai in 2013.

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Bloomington's own Michelle Hernandez is the new Honorary Mayor of Brandon, raising more than \$55,000 – the most of any female elected to the position in its history – for local charities.

“The number just blows my mind,” said Hernandez, who hopes others will be inspired to enter the race in the future. “I was just everybody’s crazy waitress, so anybody can do this.”

Ten percent of the money raised was allocated to the non-profit Community Roundtable, who runs the annual mayor’s race. The remaining money was split between Center Place Fine Arts & Civic Association, the Brandon Foundation Angel Program, and the Bloomington High School Academic Foundation at a check presentation held July 13.

Said Bloomington High School Principal Sue Burkett, “Watching this community rally around Michelle was truly humbling; it was a testament that when people give their heart and build relationships within the community, the community will support that person and give back tenfold.”

Burkett continued, “Michelle was our first choice to help start our vision for an Academic Booster Club to help support the teachers and students directly in the classrooms – no ice cream or pizza parties but real tangible items that keep the teachers relevant and students engaged. Michelle surpassed all expectations in the first year with the Booster Club. Words can’t begin to describe how grateful we are to have her on our team!”



Photos: Hernandez Family

Newly-elected Honorary Mayor of Brandon Michelle Hernandez rode in the Brandon Fourth of July parade after presenting over \$55,000 to the Community Roundtable in funds raised during her race.

In addition to the money raised during her mayor’s race, the Bloomington resident is also proud of the in-kind donations her campaign was able to make to local charities:

- Lighthouse Ministries - 24 bags of clothing/household goods
- Goodwill - 8 bags of clothing/household goods
- Hillsborough County Animal Shelter - 3 bags of sheets/towels for animals
- First United Methodist Church Men’s Resource Center - 14 bags of clothing
- Women’s Resource Center - 16 bags and two racks of clothing
- Mary and Martha House - 12 bags of clothing
- Gigi’s Quilt Shop - 8 bags of jeans for summer campers
- Miss Linda Herndon’s Etiquette Class - 2 racks of upscale clothing for scholarship students
- ECHO - 34 bags of clothing and household items; 45 jars of peanut butter and 31 jars of jelly for summer pantry.

Hernandez will spend her one-year term acting as a liaison between the Community Roundtable and the citizens of Brandon, as well as supporting Community Roundtable events such as Holiday Cards for Troops, the lighting of the Brandon Christmas tree, the Community Affairs Dinner, and the Annual Golf Tournament.

Congratulations, Mayor!



Janine Nickerson of the Community Roundtable (pictured right) presents the Honorary Mayor of Brandon sash to Bloomington resident Michelle Hernandez.



The Honorary Mayor of Brandon race was a family affair for Bloomington’s (pictured from left) Kenneth, Abby, and Michelle Hernandez.

Attention, Bloomington Residents!

Planning on digging on your property? Every digging project, whether large or small, requires a call to 811. To save time, money and possible injuries, CALL 811 before you dig! Make sure you know what’s below!

Photo: www.sunshine811.com



**Know what’s below.
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Teri is the founder and practice director of Flourish Weight Loss Center, in the River Hills Professional Center of Valrico. She has lived in the Central Florida area for over 25 years and now resides in Bloomingdale's Somerset development. Teri has three daughters, two sons-in-law and twelve grandchildren. To learn more about Flourish Weight Loss Center, contact Teri at 813-309-3349 or www.flourishweightloss.com.



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.

TIME FOR CHANGE - BODY MASS INDEX

Body mass index (BMI) is a measure of body fat based on height and weight that applies to adult men and women. No, friend, your BMI is not outside of a healthy range because you are too short! The truth is that every day that you are carrying excess weight, your skeletal structure is bearing up under a constant strain that it was not meant to carry.



Photo: www.arthritisselfmanagement.com

I have worked with hundreds of patients in physical rehabilitation, helping them to adjust psychologically to permanent losses. They would plead with you to take action before you begin to experience permanent loss of mobility.

If your BMI is over 24.9, please do something every day to bring your weight into a healthy range.

How is BMI interpreted for adults?

For adults 20 years old and older, BMI is interpreted using standard weight status categories. These categories are the same for men and women of all body types and ages. The standard weight status categories associated with BMI ranges for adults are shown in the following table.

BMI	Weight Status
Below 18.5	Underweight
18.5 - 24.9	Normal or Healthy Weight
25.0 - 29.9	Overweight
30.0 and Above	Obese

Table: www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/adult_bmi/index.html#InterpretedAdults

Take Advantage of the Following Community Resources:

- Brandon Regional Hospital offers free health education classes in Diabetic Self Management and Weight Loss Options. Call 813-681-5551 for August scheduling.
- Flourish Weight Loss Center offers Cooking and Shopping tips, as well as free Weight Loss Assessments weekly, on Wednesdays. Call 813-309-3349 for scheduling.
- Publix Shopping Center at Winthrop provides free workshops on Nutrition, Shopping, Diabetic Carbohydrate Counting and more. Check the Customer Service Desk for the most recent event calendar.



Photo: www.canyonranch.com

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Sights, Sounds and Tastes... Strawberry Crest Students Experience Japan

By Kayla Hayes

This summer, a group of Strawberry Crest High School (SCHS) students traveled to Japan for the cultural experience of a lifetime. 25 students and chaperones departed June 22 for a weeklong stay in the “Land of the Rising Sun.”

SCHS organizes an overseas trip each year through the Education First (EF) program for International Baccalaureate (IB) students. This year’s Japan trip featured visits to Tokyo, the Hakone Mountains, Kyoto and Osaka.

“My favorite part was visiting Kyoto, because we stayed in the same hotel with other EF groups, so we made a bunch of friends,” said Will Leech, one of the students on the trip. “There were groups from Oregon, New Hampshire and Nevada. I am still in contact with some of them.”

Fellow traveler Kristin Cash noted how the influence and mingling of the past and present was different from the U.S. “My favorite thing about Japan was how all the history was plainly infused with modern life. Castles and shrines were easily found among subway lines and neighborhoods.”

When asked if he would recommend the summer trip to other students, Leech said, “I would tell them to do it. It’s very worth it, because it’s not an experience you can get any

other way. People go to sushi places in America, but you don’t really get a taste of what it’s like to see a different culture.”

His advice to students, who sign up for future trips, would be to learn more of the language than just what you need to get by. “There were a bunch of nonsensical translations like ‘You can’t be able to go here’ on a roadblock sign for American tourists,” he explained.

“The biggest culture shock was that even the people who live in Tokyo still have very traditional customs. There is such a stark contrast of modernism and traditionalism,” said Leech. “In Japan you can see everything from a giant Buddhist statue to a giant robot statue,” he continued.

“I also thought it was interesting how some parts of Japan were very industrial, and others were like third-world countries,” he added. Given the chance, Leech said he would go back again to visit Mount Fuji.

Echoing fellow students’ sentiments, Kristen Gaertner said, “My favorite thing about Japan was seeing a culture so opposite from our own and getting to experience so many new things! I only wish we could have had more time there.”

For information about SCHS programs, visit www.schs-ibpartner.org.



Sampling the local food was a real treat for from left Delaney Wise, Kristin Cash, Will Leech (all rising seniors) and Kristen Gaertner (rising junior).



A trip highlight was a visit to the Kinkaku-ji Temple, “The Golden Pavilion,” while visiting Kyoto. The temple is a widely recognized attraction and is located on Kyokochi, the mirror pond.



The Japanese monkey is a popular sight. SCHS students spent time in the monkey parks in the area.

Strawberry Crest students enjoyed a traditional Japanese dinner featuring five flavors, five colors and five cooking styles. To add to the experience, students wore kimonos while dining.



A trip to Japan would not be complete without a noodle shop lunch. Pictured with chopsticks at the ready are Kristen Gaertner, left, a rising junior, and Kristin Cash, right, a rising senior.



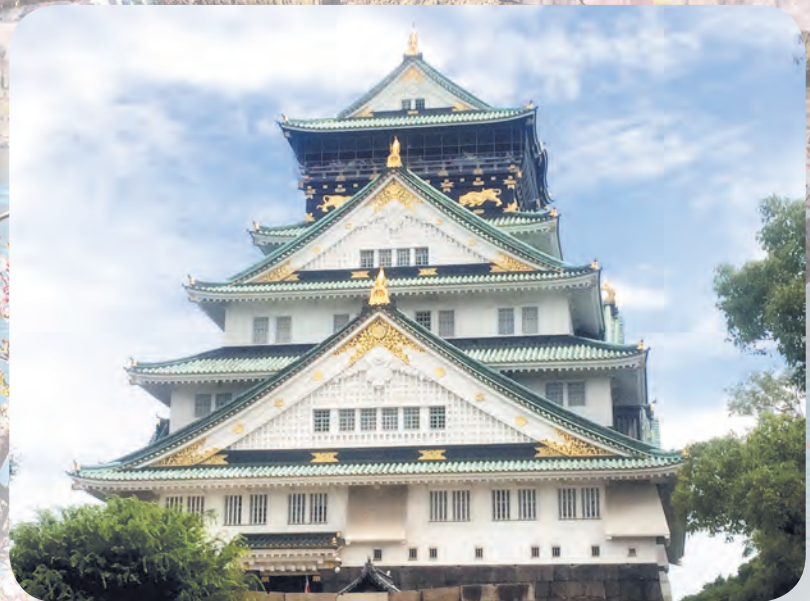
Students enjoyed a birds-eye view of Tokyo from the observatory on top of Metropolitan Government Building 1, formerly the tallest building in the city until 2007. With good weather, tourist can see famous landmarks including Mount Fuji the Meiji Shrine, and the Tokyo Dome.



ular animal in Japan. at one of the many he region.



During their stay, a few students channeled their inner samurai or farmer. At 200 yen (less than \$2), this was one of the more affordable activities during the week. Pictured left to right: Daylan Smallwood, Hailey Camp, Hannah Bodden and Dallas Upton.



The trip included a visit to the Osaka Castle Park. While castle construction began in 1583, little remains of the original version, which now houses a museum. The park surrounding the famous landmark includes 600 cherry trees.



...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.

COMING UP CACTI... MORE FUN IN THE SUN

By Gwen Graverson

Even though our grandchildren don't live nearby anymore, the impressions they left on our home are all around – none more so than the six-foot tall spineless prickly pear cactus planted by our granddaughter Emmi. Starting from one cactus pad, this specimen, pictured, grew to its current size within the past four years.

The Prickly Pear (with the long sharp spines) is a native plant to Florida and can grow from three to 20 feet in height. They are easy to grow and can be planted all year round. Flower colors range from orange, red, purple and white.

The spineless cacti are a better choice, but beware, as the tiny glochids (slivers) are irritating to the skin. For that reason, wear thick gloves and long sleeves when planting.

Take your time planting cacti as the pads can easily break off. If that should happen, don't worry, plant it anyway and it will still develop roots and grow. It is recommended to plant the cactus at the same level it was growing in the nursery pot. My technique on the other hand, is to just dig, plant, cover (as simple as 1-2-3). Exterior support may be necessary for larger plants until they are established.

You may want to consider planting the cactus in a rock garden with maximum sun. As to soil, a half and half mix of soil and sand should be used. Not much is mentioned on watering other than, water in a well-drained area and less is best. If overwatering occurs or the plant sits in water, it can cause root rot.

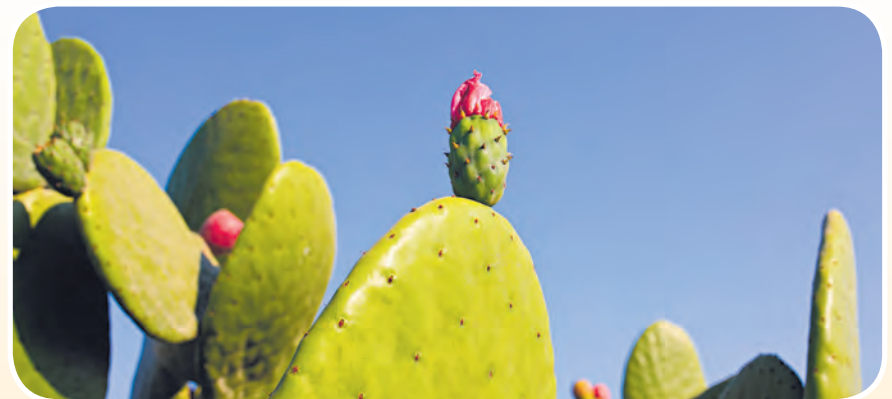
Security could be an added bonus – plant an assortment of spiny cacti around your home as a possible deterrent against intruders. Be careful with location choices as you could end up victimized by your own plants.

According to WebMD, young Prickly Pear Cacti can be eaten raw or cooked and they are rich in vitamins. The older the cactus, the tougher it is to eat, so stay away from the older growth! Research also indicates that the plant can lower blood glucose by decreasing the absorption of sugar in the stomach and intestine. It may decrease cholesterol (the bad) levels and kill viruses in the body.

Coming soon! August marks ten years since Hurricane Katrina. Hurricane preparation for our homes and families is an ever-popular topic, but how often do we consider the trees and plants we have on our property? Can they withstand weather events like a hurricane, tropical storm or tornado? Would they cause damage and destruction not only to your property, but also to other's? Future articles will address this and more, so stay tuned.



The spineless prickly pear cactus is easily grown in our area. In just four years, this specimen has grown over six feet. Curtaz Rodgers provides a human yardstick to illustrate the size of the plant.



UPCOMING EVENT

The Tampa Home & Garden Show, Sept. 4-6, at the Tampa Convention Center, 333 S. Franklin St., Tampa. This event showcases products from agriculture, forestry, household industries and more. Free admission. For information, call 877-730-7469 or check out the website: <http://tampahomeandgardenshow.com>.



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.

August "To Do List":

- **Bedding Plants** – Remove spent blooms, cut back and fertilize flowering annuals and perennials to extend the bloom season into the fall months.
- **Poinsettias** – Pinch back Poinsettias and Mums before the end of the month for fall time for buds to form for winter bloom.
- **Ornamental Plants** – Rapid growth and leaching rains may result in nutrient deficiencies in some plants. Fertilize those plants that show signs of deficiencies.
- **Vegetables** – For summer gardens to be successful, crops need a good start that enables them to stand up to disease and insect pressure in the humid, hot weather.



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.



Still Waiting for Wisdom

If “wisdom comes with age,” why am I so confused? Correct me if I’m wrong (and I’m sure you will), but doesn’t it seem to you that the older we get, the more there are of things we simply don’t understand?

Take all of those fools who seek out an escalator so they can walk, or better yet run, up or down the moving steps. Why do they do that? I always figured that escalators are for able-bodied people like me who are too bone-lazy to hike up the staircase, yet too embarrassed to ride the elevator.

We’re the ones who gingerly leap onto the bottom escalator step, place our bags on the tread ahead or beneath (depending if we’re going up or down. You figure it out.), and place a death grip onto the handrail. Just about then, some idiot will come hauling by like he was on fire, taking the steps two at a time and generally muttering something unintelligible.

I do not understand these people. They are a hazard.

Besides, let’s face it: People who ride escalators already have the common fear that a power failure or computer glitch or sunspot or full eclipse or something will cause all of the steps to suddenly flatten out and we’ll go tumbling down feet over fanny onto the potted plants below. We do not need some pinhead with a White Rabbit fixation rocking our boat.

And why did grocery stores decide that I needed a choice of bags in which to cart off my purchases? Don’t I look confused enough already?

I have just been forced to choose among 72 different laundry detergents, 108 brands of dog food, 16 types of toothpaste and 8 “grinds” of hamburger. I will go home unsure of my decisions and wondering if, for the sake of \$.76 savings, I have condemned my husband to potential gum disease.

And these clowns want to further complicate my life by forcing me to decide between a plastic bag whose handles will self-destruct halfway to my car, and a paper bag, the bottom of which will disintegrate somewhere between the bagger’s loving ministrations and the parking lot.

Why?

And, speaking of bags, why do convenience store clerks ring up our milk, bread, newspaper, cat chow and paper towels, look us squarely in the eye and inquire, “Wanna bag for this?” Well, since juggling isn’t my forte, a bag would be nice, yes. Moron.

I am also confused by those who become nearly incontinent with glee when they are given the opportunity to strap narrow pieces of wood to their feet and sit in a swinging bucket for 30 minutes that will take them to the top of a mountain from which they will propel their bodies with reckless abandon. They call this “skiing” and it is supposed to be “fun.”

I always want to sit these people down in a quiet spot and ask, “So, have you ever heard of Sir Isaac Newton? Gravity, my friend, is not just a good idea. It’s the law.” I may not yet have acquired much “wisdom,” but I’m an old hand at “pain.”

Perhaps I’m not quite old enough for wisdom to set in. Perhaps that will come with time. Or, perhaps, I’ve just become a precocious old coot, bypassing the middle man entirely and settling straight into curmudgery. That would certainly explain a lot.



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Wanted: A Forever Home and Family

Hillsborough County's Pet Resource Center has the Right Pet for You

Hillsborough County's Pet Resource Center (PRC), the county's animal shelter has hundreds of cats and dogs looking for their "forever" homes. Each month, we will showcase a few of those pets that need your help.

It's the "dog days of summer," and the shelter is beyond full of homeless but deserving pets! At your County shelter, dogs and cats are surprisingly affordable – at one location – open seven days a week.

Each comes fully vetted with a full complement of services (adding up to a savings of hundreds of dollars). While some fees may apply, PRC adoption packages can save "prospective parents" anywhere from \$250 - \$400 (depending upon the weight of the pet).

For information on adoptions and foster care, lost pets or spay/neuter vouchers, contact the PRC at (813) 744-5660 or visit www.HillsboroughCounty.org/Pets. Located on Falkenburg Rd., the center is open daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Here are just a couple of our fabulous faces:



Boo

Boo is a tall, handsome boy with a kind and gentle nature. This 3-year old Anatolian Shepherd mix arrived stray but seems housetrained and well-mannered. He is fully vaccinated, neutered, licensed and microchipped. Adopt Boo, ID# 28263447; he is lonely, sweet, affectionate, and ready to show his gratitude to a loving forever family.



Mona

Mona is an exotic but friendly diva of 2 years waiting for an appreciative family home. This luxuriously medium-haired diluted Tortoiseshell cat is actually quite a low-maintenance princess – down to earth and sociable. She gets along with people and other cats, too. She is fully vaccinated, spayed, licensed and microchipped. Adopt Mona, ID# 28554508; she is purr-fect.

Hillsborough County Press Release

TODAY!

Pet Resource Center Marks First Saturday Celebration Anniversary
Summer heat safety tips, half-price pet specials, and free cake!

Hillsborough County's Pet Resource Center (PRC), the County's animal shelter and the First Place for Pets, celebrates the first anniversary of the popular First Saturday Celebration event today, Aug. 1, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the PRC located at 440 N. Falkenburg Road in Tampa.



In addition to family-friendly festivities and adoption specials, experts will be on hand with tips to keep pets safe in the stifling heat of August. In a dramatic demonstration of the devastating effects of heat upon pets left in cars, thermometers placed inside a parked vehicle will display temperature readings next to everything from plush-toy pets to perishable items as they melt in the Florida elements.

The First Saturday Celebration's first anniversary includes:

- Heat stroke prevention/first-aid information
- A bounce house, music, exhibitors, free anniversary cake, and other refreshments
- Half-price pet adoptions and special gifts for adopters (spaying/neutering, vaccinations, microchip, and Hillsborough County license tag included)
- Hillsborough County Fire Rescue with a real, in-service fire engine
- Volunteer rescue partners and foster pets returning from home care and ready for adoption

Monthly First Saturday Celebration events began in August 2014 to help attract shelter visitors and adopters with family-friendly fun, music, educational exhibitors and affordable pet specials. Last year, successful community support helped to achieve positive outcomes for more than 13,000 homeless pets -- a landmark success for the County animal shelter.

Hillsborough County's Pet Resource Center is often the first place to receive lost and surrendered animals, and the shelter hopes to be the first place adopters come to select a new pet. The facility is open daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. for adoptions, lost pet searches, low-cost spay/neuter vouchers, and Hillsborough County pet license tags.

For more information on pet adoptions or First Saturday Celebrations, contact Hillsborough County's Pet Resource Center at (813) 744-5660 or visit HillsboroughCounty.org/Pets.





When going outdoors, many people think about what they will need to have fun – towels, floaties, outdoor games – but many don't even think twice about what they need to be safe; safe from the sun that is.

The sun is a star that projects not only heat but also light. Part of that light is ultraviolet radiation (UV). The sun's UV wavelengths are UVC, UVB and UVA and vary based on wavelength and range. UVC rays are the shortest of the sun's rays. They are the least likely to penetrate through the earth's ozone layer.

On the other hand, both UVA and UVB rays penetrate the atmosphere and play an important role in conditions such as premature skin aging, eye damage (including cataracts), and skin cancers. They also suppress the immune system, reducing your ability to fight off these and other maladies. ([http:// skincancer.org/](http://skincancer.org/))

UVB rays are responsible for most sunburns and other types of skin damage due to unprotected exposure to the sun. These rays can reflect off snow and ice and retain 80 % of the ray's harmful effects. The reflective property of UVB rays gives them the ability to harm a person twice with the same ray. In addition, they uniquely can affect a person year around meaning sunscreen is even necessary in the winter.

UVA rays are the longest of the sun's non-visible rays. These rays can penetrate glass whereas UVB and UVC rays cannot. These rays are considered the most harmful and they penetrate skin more deeply. While they are responsible for the beautiful tans many people want, the bottom line is that tans are basically skin injury and damage.

According to skincancer.org, a tan results from injury to the skin's DNA; the skin darkens in an imperfect attempt to prevent further DNA damage. These imperfections, or mutations, can lead to skin cancer. Skin cancers strike more than a million and more than 250,000 Americans, respectively, each year, and account for 8,000 deaths in the U.S. annually.

Skin experts recommend an SPF of 15+ for everyday use year round and 30+ for extended hours outdoors. When purchasing sunscreen be sure to buy one labeled UVA/UVB protection. This will protect your skin from the sun's harmful rays.

Fun in the sun is part of our everyday Florida life. Be smart and wear sunscreen, it could literally save your life.



Even on an overcast day while boating on Tampa Bay, the sun's rays can be dangerous. Cover up and wear sunscreen.



Prevention Guidelines:

- Seek the shade, especially between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Do not burn.
- Avoid tanning and UV tanning booths.
- Cover up with clothing, including a broad-brimmed hat and UV-blocking sunglasses.
- Use a broad-spectrum (UVA/UVB) sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher every day. For extended outdoor activity, use a water-resistant, broad-spectrum (UVA/UVB) sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher.
- Apply 1 ounce (2 tablespoons) of sunscreen to your entire body 30 minutes before going outside. Reapply every two hours, or immediately after swimming or excessive sweating.
- Keep newborns out of the sun. Sunscreens should be used on babies over the age of six months.
- Examine your skin head-to-toe every month.
- See your physician every year for a professional skin exam.

Source: www.skincancer.org

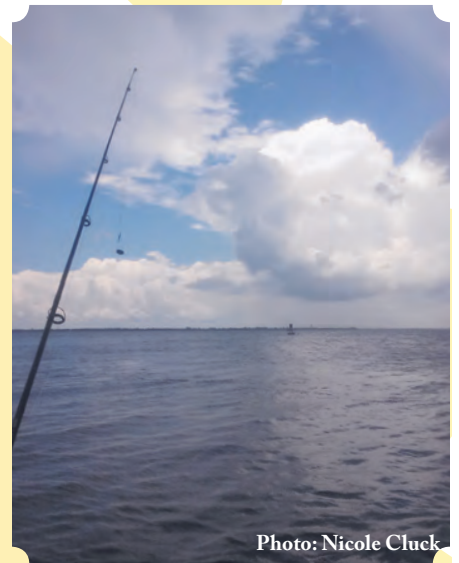


Photo: Nicole Cluck

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INs & OUTs

WHAT RESIDENTS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT MARIJUANA GROW HOUSES...

This is not a subject many folks think about or even want to hear about. But, Hillsborough County law enforcement reports this type of illegal activity does take place in our area.

More and more of these grow houses have been found in suburban areas over the years, and where there are grow houses, there is the potential for violent crime.

Sometimes the discovery of a grow house is by chance. This past May, Hillsborough County deputies found a grow house when they responded to a report of a fight. Another grow house was discovered in June when authorities responded to a domestic dispute. Other grow houses have been identified when TECO employees who have had special training find suspicious line hookups.

Another source helping deputies to locate and bust grow houses have been from anonymous tips received through CRIME STOPPERS at 1-800-873-TIPS (8477). Many of these tips come from residents who notice something “not quite right” at a home, but just aren’t sure what is going on. Deputies investigating these calls have found grow houses.

There are a number of signs that a building, home or business may be being used as a marijuana grow house. These include the following:

- A buyer or tenant unload unusual equipment and very few household furnishings.
- A buyer or tenant unload copper and/or PVC pipe, soil, halogen lamps, large amounts of black plastic aluminum ducting and fans.
- Residents and others come and go at unusual hours, but never stay overnight.
- Little or no garbage is brought to the curb each week.
- Mail is rarely delivered to the house.
- Windows are dark and may be secured with metal bars.
- Strong and strange odors are coming from the house.
- Humming sound of fans or generators.
- Individuals arriving at the house to mow the lawn, put toys in the front yard and then leave.
- People entering and exiting only through the garage and the garage door is kept closed.
- Excessive security such as guard dogs, “keep out” signs, high fences, chains and gate locks.

Anyone noticing any of the above signs should first be careful and not approach the property. Second, observe activities and take notes of car models and colors, tag numbers and suspicious individual descriptions

Finally, call CRIME STOPPERS at 1-800-873-TIPS (8477) or TEXT “CSTB plus the tip” to 274637. Callers may be eligible for a cash reward. Community involvement in identifying these grow houses is critical to getting them out of our neighborhoods and making our communities safer.



Photo: Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office

Along with the marijuana found in this Brandon grow house, there was also a large amount of cash and weapons. Residents should be alert to the signs of criminal activity in their neighborhoods.



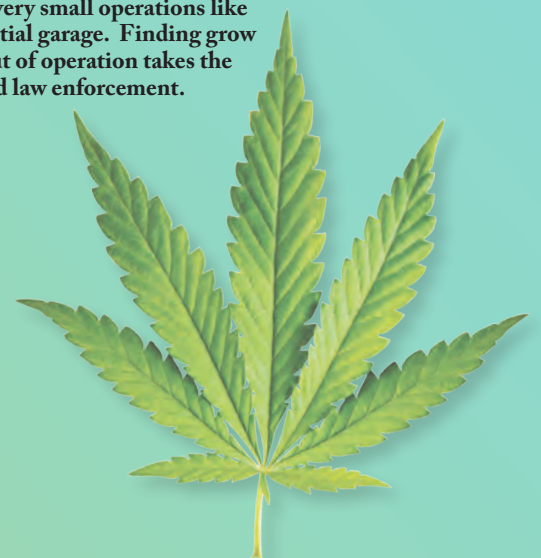
Photo: Pasco County Sheriff's Office

Many grow houses start as very small operations like this one housed in a residential garage. Finding grow houses and putting them out of operation takes the cooperation of residents and law enforcement.



Photo: Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office

Over 237 pounds of processed marijuana and large numbers of marijuana plants were found in this grow house along with \$240,000 in cash. Know the signs and report suspicious activity in your community.



Walmart Supercenter



This photo shows the backside of the Walmart Supercenter near the Subway on Lithia-Pinecrest Road. Despite stormy weather in the area, estimates are for an early 2016 completion.



Photos: Mack Austin

The Walmart Supercenter includes this access road by the Bloomingdale library (east side). Walmart is visible in the background.

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BLOOMINGDALE COMMUNITY STATION NOTES

By Community Resource Master Deputy Curtis Warren



SCHOOL STARTS AUGUST 25! OBEY TRAFFIC LAWS - PROTECT OUR KIDS!

Following the rules below will help keep our kids safe:

1. Drivers must stop both ways for school buses picking up or discharging children on roads without median dividers.
2. Drivers must not speed in school zones! There are no excuses for speeding, but especially in school zones. Speeding fines are doubled in school zones.

Teen Driver Fact: Traffic crashes are the number one cause of death for Florida's teenagers. This cause of death is preventable in nearly 80 percent, repeat: 80 percent, of crashes. Talk to your teens about safe driving!

MONTHLY BACC HIGHLIGHTS: IMPORTANT SECURITY NOTES

The Sheriff's Bloomingdale Area Community Council (BACC) members received briefings on recent criminal activity in our community. These included:

- Empty homes and vacant property: Several empty homes and vacant properties have been broken into or occupied by squatters. Keep an eye on these properties and report suspicious activity to the Sheriff's Office at 247-8200.
- Business Burglaries: Several businesses on Bloomingdale Avenue were burglarized last month including the Verizon store near Firehouse, the Advanced Auto store in the same area and AJ's Bikes near the high school. In all cases, glass doors were either broken or attempted to be broken. Be alert for suspicious activity and report it immediately to the Sheriff's Office at 247-8200!
- Vehicle Burglaries and Thefts: Car hopping has decreased in our area but Boyette and Fish Hawk Roads communities had over six vehicles that were left open, broken into and items stolen. One vehicle was stolen after the thieves found an extra set of car keys left in the glove box. Remember: only vehicle owners can protect their vehicles from thefts. Lock your vehicles!
- Crimes must be Reported to be solved: Several crimes have gone unsolved because residents did not take the time to report them. Report crime so detectives can investigate, solve and prevent other crimes from occurring. Call HCSO at 247-8200 to report crimes!

SPECIAL DRIVING CONSIDERATIONS ON BLOOMINGDALE AVENUE

With several construction projects nearing completion and several more upcoming, Bloomingdale Avenue drivers will need to pay extra attention to their driving! The new South Brandon Fire Station #7 is now operating 24/7 and drivers must watch for the warning lights as fire engines leave and enter the site. Construction on the new Super Wal-Mart by the library continues. Construction on the Bloomingdale Avenue and Culbreath Road intersection will be starting soon. Drivers should adjust their driving and travel plans in this area.

BURGLARIES AT PARKS

Deputies have responded to several calls after burglars broke into cars at state and county parks in Hillsborough County. Residents visiting any of our beautiful parks should make plans to protect their personal property by leaving valuable items at home. They should also secure any items left in their vehicles so that they are out of sight.

BE EXTRA ALERT DURING STORMY WEATHER:

During the many heavy storms that we have in our area, drivers should try to wait out the worst of the weather. If driving during storms is necessary, be extra careful. Use situational awareness and slow down.

In our community, there are many trees with large hanging limbs on Culbreath and Bell Shoals Roads and also Natures Way Boulevard. Last month, a large oak tree fell across Bell Shoals Road just south of Brooker Road during a heavy storm. This is why drivers in our area should be extra careful when driving during stormy weather. Luckily, there were no injuries.

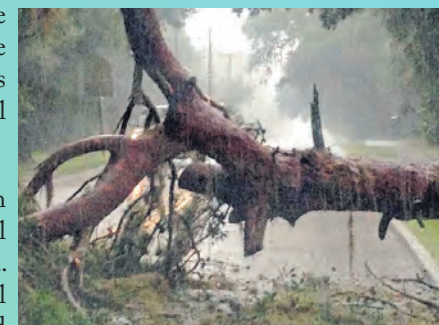


Photo: Bay News 9

KIDS AND PETS IN HOT CARS (CSO SANDY CAPITANO)

On average, 38 children die in hot cars each year from heat-related deaths after being left or trapped inside cars. This type of tragedy is entirely preventable. One organization that works to educate drivers on kids, cars and safety is "KIDS AND CARS". Their website is www.KidsandCars.org. All parents and anyone responsible for children should visit this site for important information on how to keep children safe when they are being transported in cars. Then, share these safety tips with childcare providers, teachers, relatives, friends, family members and neighbors! It could save a life.



What is Hinging (of the Wrist)...

By J.D. Carino (Bloomingdale CC Campus)



One of the common errors amongst amateurs is the placement of the club in the left hand. When done incorrectly, it will prevent you from hinging the wrist. Hinging adds a second lever to your swing and increases swing speed tremendously.

The placement of the left hand grip is diagonally across the fingers (red line) and underneath the heel. Most times the grip is held under the thumb pad (blue line), great for putting but disastrous for full swing.



John E.S. Cochrane
GOLF SCHOOLS

On the back swing, with the left arm at 9 o'clock (even with the ground) the club shaft should be at a right angle (90 degrees) with the correct hinge.

Next lesson: Bending from the hips not the waist, what do you mean? Any questions or for lessons, visit CochraneGolfSchools.com or call J.D. at 813-957-3205.





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

School Board Member to Meet with the Community

Meet District 4 School Board Member Melissa Snively on Aug. 20 from 6-8 p.m. in the BSHS Media Room.

HCPS Launches Newsdesk

Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) announces the launch of "newsdesk," a new online source for good news happening in our schools! "newsdesk" features outstanding and engaging stories relevant to students, families, employees, and the community. Come see what makes our schools so special and unique at <http://communication.sdhc.k12.fl.us/news/>.



All Schools and District Offices closed Fridays this summer

All Hillsborough County public schools and district offices will be closed on Fridays through Friday, August 14. Summer hours Monday through Thursday are 7 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.

mySPOT... The One Spot for Parents

mySPOT, the Student Parent Online Toolkit, provides HCPS parents quick access to key district resources and links. mySPOT connects parents to a single "Hub" of information that supports a child's academic achievement and social growth – enabling parents to easily navigate through what's important when it comes to the progress of their own child. mySPOT... The One Spot for Parents, automatically places important resources for each child, front and center! For more information on how to register your mySPOT account, go to <http://myspot.sdhc.k12.fl.us>.



AUGUST 25 - FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL SEPTEMBER 7 - LABOR DAY (NO SCHOOL)

Check out the student academic calendar for the 2015-16 school year at <http://sdhc.k12.fl.us/calendar/>.

ALAFIA ALLIGATOR ALLEY

New Student Registration: Registration for the 2015-2016 school year begins August 3, 7:30 a.m.-3 p.m., Monday-Thursday. Registration information is posted under the Resource Tab on the school's home page at www.alafia.mysdhc.org. Supply list now available online at www.alafia.mysdhc.org.

CIMINO COUGAR CENTRAL

New Student Registration: Registration for new students will resume on July 27, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday – Thursday in the school office.

Drama Kids Camp: When school is out – Drama is IN! If you are looking for a fun camp for your kids this summer, and want to help support the PTA at the same time, look no further!

Drama Kids offers different weeklong programs that run on half day and full day schedules. Children participate in a variety of activities including speech, creative movement and improv. They will also be directing and producing their own show...everything from scripting to blocking, backdrops, props and costumes. Classes are available for children ages 4-17. To register, go to Drama Kids International website at <http://dramakids.com/fl6/camps-events/>. Ten percent of all proceeds will go back to our school when you enter the promo code "Cimino" in the registration comments section.



The Best Leading The Rest!

BURNS BRUINS BANTER

- August 13 Incoming 6th Grade Ice Cream Social, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
- August 20 6th Grade Open House, 2-3 p.m.
- 7th and 8th Grade Open House, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Help us earn free Microsoft Surface tablets! "Bing in the Classroom" has created a way for parents, teachers and schools to earn FREE Microsoft Surface tablets for use in the classroom. To learn more and to help Burns earn FREE tablets visit www.bing.com/classroom/getinvolved/parent or visit the Burns website at www.burns.mysdhc.org.



BLOOMINGDALE HIGH BULL BUSINESS

- August 14 – Football Red and White Game at Bloomingdale, 7 p.m.
- August 21 – Football Pre-Season Classic at Chamberlain High School, 7:30 p.m.
- August 28 – Football vs. Newsome, 7:30 p.m.
- September 3 – JV Football vs Newsome, 7:00 p.m.
- September 4 – Football at Gaither, 7:30 p.m.

BULL BRIEFS

Summer Reading: Get a jump on your summer reading. Visit www.bloomingdale.mysdhc.org, books are listed by grade.

Freshman GAP Camp: Make new friends, meet upperclassmen, teachers and counselors, and get to know Bloomingdale during this four-day summer program! Two Gap camps are offered: August 3-6 and August 10-13 from 8 a.m. to noon. Learn about our campus, extracurricular activities, clubs, traditions, resources, AP programs, college/university awareness and much more! For information, contact Cara Diehl at cara.diehl@sdhc.k12.fl.us.

Social Media: Remember to follow all the latest news and updates of Bloomingdale on Facebook, Instagram, Snap Chat and You Tube by using @BloomingdaleSHS.





Bulls Football Participates in Pre-Season Scrimmages

By Deidre Morgan

Like most high school football teams during the off-season, the Bloomingdale Bulls football team is preparing for the upcoming season by practicing drills and working out in the weight room. In addition, players have been sharpening their skills and putting them to the test against other teams in the county by competing in pre-season scrimmages called “7 on 7” tournaments.

Players participated in the BCP/BHSN 9 Route 7 on 7 at the Fishhawk Sports Complex, the Wildcat 7 on 7 in Wesley Chapel and the 7 on 7 Sling and Shoot at USF.

Good luck to the team on Aug. 14 as they begin their season at home at the “Red and White Game.” Go Bulls!



Bulls senior wide receiver Jordan Keijers catches a pass while participating in the area’s 7 on 7 series, a competition among high school football teams held during the summer.



An alert Freddy McCoy, senior running back, is ready for a hand off during pre-season football scrimmages held over the summer.



Photo: Mike Skinner

Defensive end Sam Skinner, a junior, is “all smiles” as he runs into the end zone for a touchdown.



Bloomingdale’s Best of the Best... Recognizing Excellence in Our Community

Staff Report

Returns Next Month! We want your Nominations!

The Best of the Best Student of the Month Program (BOB) recognizes outstanding students in our community. If selected, the student receives a \$25 gift card provided by our sponsor, Ray Chadderton of The Chadderton Group of Keller Williams Realty. Send your nominations to bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com or call 813-681-2051. Nominees must be in home, public, or private school and residents of Bloomingdale. Include the nominee’s name, address, phone number, email and school attending. In addition, provide a short paragraph detailing why he/she should receive the award.

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Anyone who has walked the halls of Bloomingdale High School or been to any sporting event has seen Principal Sue Burkett – she is the one always smiling and cheering on her school. For the past three years, she has been leading Bloomingdale High School with pride.

Asked why she pursued a career in education, she said, “I have always wanted to be a teacher. When I was in first grade in New York, we had students across the hall that were physically impaired. When I was able, I always asked to go over to play and help with the kids. Since then, I knew I wanted to teach special education.”

Burkett obtained both her Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees at the University of South Florida. She feels many people have misconceptions about principals, particularly their upbringings and backgrounds.

“I grew up in the Bronx. My father had an 8th grade education and my mom a high school diploma,” she explained. A first generation college graduate, this dedicated educator grew up poor in the “hood.” “I hope that my own experiences help me relate and succeed with my students who struggle or aren’t “traditional” students,” she added.

Burkett’s vision for Bloomingdale is simple: “I want Bloomingdale to be the best school in the county! Some might say that means test scores and grades, but to me that means that

we aren’t losing kids in the cracks of life.” Readyng students for life is difficult to do, but Burkett’s philosophy is to start by caring and building relationships by communicating with students on their level.

“There is an old saying ‘kids don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care’,” she said, adding, “I truly believe that and I am grateful my staff believes that too.”

“I want students to leave here with a solid foundation of who they are so they can make decisions that will help them be productive citizens and give back – whatever that looks like for them,” she explained. “There’s no concrete way to do that because every kid is different. It’s a really hard job but we [faculty and staff] come in every day and do our best to do what is right for kids!”

Building a strong community bond is important to Burkett as well. She actively looks for ways to reach out to the community and build partnerships. A bond she explained does not mean just asking for money or donations, but rather looking for ways the school and its partners can benefit from each other.

“The stronger this school is, the stronger the community is. People want to live in this area, because we have great schools.”

Burkett believes you should always take a piece of what you see others doing successfully, try to adapt it and emulate it. “I hope I do the same for my staff and students!”



When Bloomingdale Principal Sue Burkett isn’t taking the Bull by the horns, she loves going to the beach with her two teenagers, Jake and Becca, and her long-term boyfriend Steve. This fall, Burkett and crew will be doing double-duty at Bulls sporting events and Tampa Bay Buccaneer games for which they are season ticket holders.

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