

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BLOOMINGDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION SINCE 1980

THE

AWARD
WINNING

BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

VOLUME XXXV 🌿 ISSUE 9 🌿 SEPTEMBER 2015 🌿 www.BloomingtondaleHOA.com

Back to School in Bloomingtondale!



Photo: Nicole Cluck

Attitude and then, some! Cimino Elementary students, Grace Miller (8), Adrian Zalduondo (9), Skyler Kershaw (10), Caleb Miller (9), Kincaid Roberts (8), and August Roberts (5) express themselves on the first day of school.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Kites rise highest against the wind, not with it. *Winston S. Churchill*

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This Month



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PLEASE  RECYCLE

Winner

2014
Hillsborough County
Neighborhood
Recognition Award

Best Communications
Newsletter Category



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: *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

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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.

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69226-1

Yard of the Month



Photo: Joy Boisselle

Paul & Janice Gorgoglione 747 Fortuna Drive Brandon, FL 33511 (Bloomington West)



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

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

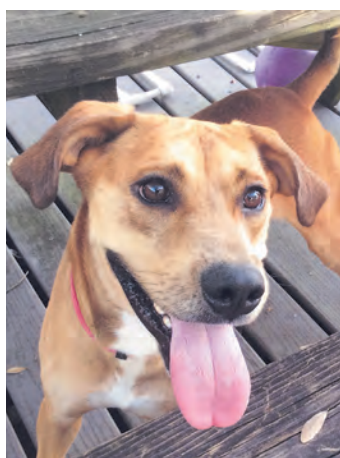


Wanted: A Forever Home and Family

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 many cats and dogs looking for their "forever" homes. At your County shelter, dogs and cats are surprisingly affordable – at one location – open seven days a week. Each comes fully vetted with a 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.

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 at 440 N. Falkenburg Rd., the center is open daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.



Russell

Russell's been packed and ready-to-go for weeks but with few visitors. He could use some after-school fun at your house! Russell (ID2859988) is an approximately 3-year old blonde Labrador mix that likes to play ball and splash in the pool. He'll sit politely for treats and is housetrained, too.



Jonas

For an orphan nobody seemed to care about, Jonas is one positive little pal. The friendly four and half-month old black and gray tiger kitten came to the shelter as part of an unwanted litter. Now, Jonas (ID#29424167) is ready to be someone's biggest fan.

TODAY!

Provided By The Pet Resource Center

Today's First Saturday Celebration Features a Tailwaggin' Tailgate Party

Hillsborough County Pet Resource Center (PRC), the County animal shelter and The First Place for Pets, invites the community for free family fun and a Tailwaggin' Tailgate Party at today's First Saturday Celebration event. The tailgate takes place from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the PRC located at 440 N. Falkenburg Road. As always, admission and parking are free.



Looking to score an adorable, affordable game day pal? The Tailwaggin' Tailgate Party will feature:

- Touchdown Special: \$5 adoptions on dogs weighing 40 pounds or more and reduced prices on all other pets
- New "turf-yards" for adopters to meet, play, and interact with adoptable shelter dogs
- Volunteer rescue partners and foster pets returning from home care ready for adoption
- Free balloons, popcorn, lemonade, music, and fun

Note: The shelter is closed to the public Monday, Sept. 7 in observance of Labor Day.



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 only four months to go, we need your support. Two large-scale events – the annual Fall Festival followed by our Santa visit and food drive – will close out our year and every member matters.

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.



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.

Tuesday, Sept. 8, 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, Sept. 17, 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.

Monday, Sept. 14, 6:30 p.m. / Bloomingdale Special Taxing District Monthly Trustee Meeting, Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road. Call 813-684-6667 for information.

BHA BRIEFS

August Board Meeting Highlights

The BHA, unanimously, approved a single source deed restriction document for our currently non-mandated neighborhoods. The document is now in the BHA attorney's hands for final review prior to beginning the task of vote gathering. The final version will be available online at the BHA website. A first mail out of the document will be to residents in three neighborhoods – Windsor Woods, Chadd's Ford and Bloomingdale Estates. Neighborhood meetings will follow.

Other discussions included Gazette distribution issues (residents are asked to contact the office if they do not receive the paper), a meeting of BHA President George May with Representative Ross Spano concerning transportation issues affecting the community, and the progress of Fall Festival plans.

FALL FESTIVAL, Saturday, Oct. 24, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Bloomingdale Golfers Club

Mark your calendars! The 2015 Bloomingdale Fall Festival will be here before you know it. This community event is fun-filled with activities for all ages – a Halloween Pet Costume Contest and Children's Costume Contest, music, and a "Trick or Treat" Street are just a few highlights. This year, food trucks and more entertainment have been added. The list of participants is growing daily! If you would like to be a sponsor, set-up a booth, or volunteer on the committee, please contact Mary Galin at 813-468-6279, or email bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com. See the Fall Festival flyer and sponsorship information this issue.



Ins & Outs will return next month.

Bloomington Real Estate & Housing Update

A picture truly is worth a thousand words or at least it is in real estate. Humans as a whole are visual and rely on aesthetics to determine if something or even someone is worth their time and energy. As agents, we use photos to market ourselves on business cards, flyers, and even the sign in a seller's yard.

Isn't it just as important to make sure photos of a seller's home are better than the competition?

Unfortunately, many agents overlook the importance of good quality photos. Some believe that a house can "sell itself" in today's market, so they take photos with a cell phone or only put a couple photos into the MLS system. For a seller, this can be a huge injustice.

Most buyers are very excited about the home buying process and spend hours scouring sites like Zillow and Trulia and quickly bypass a home with a fuzzy photo or no interior shots. Before you hire an agent to market your home, ask them how they plan to take photos.

They should be using a high-resolution camera or hiring a professional



By Ryan Brantley

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to make the property stand out. In addition, some agents upgrade their MLS membership in order to include additional photos in the MLS. This can make a huge difference if your property has several attributes you would really like to show off.

Think about the last time you purchased, how much impact did the photos you saw online influence your decision to take a look? Many appealing photos will ensure more potential buyers will view your home thereby increasing the chances of it selling quickly for the right price.

MARKET UPDATE

August saw a slight slowdown in the market with only 19 new listings in comparison to 26 in July and 22 sold compared to 32 last month. However, of the 19 properties that went under contract in August, 12 were on the market 20 days or less. There are currently 67 active listings so if you know someone interested in moving to the neighborhood, they should act quickly!



BLOOMINGDALE

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BLOOMINGDALE

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

Krista Marie Sellars Foundation Nights at Anthony's Coal Fired Pizza / Every Monday and Tuesday in September / 1912 W. Brandon Blvd., Brandon / To help raise funds for the Krista Marie Sellars Foundation and the Campo Family YMCA, Anthony's Coal Fired Pizza will donate all proceeds on Mondays and Tuesdays in September. Half-price craft beers will be available. Tell your server you are dining to support the Krista Marie Sellars Foundation and the Campo Family YMCA!

TONIGHT!

Congregation Beth Shalom Players / Sept. 5 / 7 p.m. / 706 Bryan Road, Brandon / The Congregation Beth Shalom Players present an original drama featuring "fictional members of a Reform temple in a small Midwestern city" to mark the observation of Selichot. An interactive discussion will follow. The show is free and open to the public; one does not have to be Jewish to attend or to understand the themes of the presentation.

Ask a Lawyer Series / Sept. 9, 7-8 p.m. / Brandon Regional Library Community Room / 619 Vonderburg Drive, Brandon / 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 Homeowners and Condo Law, Family Law and Guardian Advocacy. The series continues on the second Wednesday of October. Questions? Contact Attorney Brent Rose at 813-712-9121.

ASK A LAWYER

Blue Mass at St. Stephen Catholic Church / Sept. 9 / 7 p.m. / 5049 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico / To honor area police, firefighters, and emergency responders, St. Stephen Catholic Church will host its annual Blue Mass. Open to all first responders and their families, the Mass features representatives from each branch of civil service and a reception. First responders' spouses, children, and parents are recognized as well. Military members also are welcome. For information, visit ststephencatholic.org or call 813-689-4900.

ECHO's Fall Designer Trunk Show / Sept. 11, 6-9 p.m.; Sept. 12, 9 a.m.-12 p.m. / The Barn at Winthrop / 11349 Bloomingdale Ave., Riverview / Presented by Brandon Legal Group, the trunk show offers most clothing for \$10 or less and provides a large selection of formals and homecoming dresses. Gently used designer shoes, handbags, and jewelry priced separately. All proceeds benefit the Emergency Care Help Organization (ECHO) of Brandon. For information, email JoAnn Deleanides at JoAnn@echofl.org.



3rd Annual Festival of Flight / Sept. 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. 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 information, visit www.festivalofflightwesleychapel.com.



Highlights include:

Friday, Sept. 11 – Gates open to public, 5:30 p.m.
Hot Air Balloon Night Glow, 7:30-9 p.m.
Saturday, Sept. 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, Sept. 13 – Hot Air Balloon Launch, 7 a.m.
Festival Close, 2:30 p.m.

3rd Annual Flavor Run / Sept. 12 / 9 a.m. / Florida State Fairgrounds / The Flavor Run 5k is the original fruit-flavored color powder run and 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 Sept. 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!



AARP of Greater Brandon / Sept. 14 / 11:30 a.m. / Brandon Community Center / 502 Sadie St., Brandon / The AARP of Greater Brandon meets the first Monday of every month unless it is a holiday, then it meets the second Monday. Meetings include speakers, parties, games, etc. Beverages and dessert are furnished. Anyone over 55 is welcome and may bring a friend. For information, call Jean Popovich at 813-689-6590.

Veterans Assistance Seminar / Sept. 24 / Noon-1 p.m. / The Bridges Retirement Community / 11350 Bloomingdale Ave., Riverview / The Bridges will host a veterans assistance seminar to educate wartime veterans about the Federal "Improved Pension with Aid and Attendance" benefit. This benefit can help offset the cost of living in a retirement community for a wartime veteran or his/her surviving spouse. Wartime vets may be eligible to receive up to \$1,759 per month for assisted living expenses. Hillsborough County Veterans Affairs officials will provide information and answer questions about this benefit. The seminar is free and lunch will be provided. Reserve a seat by calling 813-413-8900.

ECHO Career Opportunity Showcase / Sept. 24 / 10 a.m.-1 p.m. / Boys and Girls Club of Brandon / 213 N. Knights Ave., Brandon / Potential employers, resume rewrite advice, and first impression assessments are just a few of the opportunities that await participants. Learn more at www.echofl.org.



Emergency Care Help Organization

Bloomingdale Golfer's Club FORE! Happy Hour / Daily / 4 p.m. / Bloomingdale Golfers Club / 4113 Great Golfers Place, Valrico / Join us for FORE! Happy Hour daily at 4 p.m. for great deals – beverages FORE ½ price, appetizers FORE ½ price, contests FORE great prizes, twilight rates FORE unlimited golf, great instruction FORE fixing your swing, and more! Call the Golf Shop for more information at 813-685-4105.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Holiday Cards for Troops / Oct. 3 / 9 a.m.-3 p.m. / Center Place Fine Arts & Civic Association / 619 Vonderburg Drive, Brandon / FREE! Make hand-made Holiday Cards for Troops. Deployed and/or hospitalized service members receive the decorated cards (blank inside) and are able to write a sentiment and send to their loved ones. Donations appreciated to cover cost of supplies and postage. Ages 16 and up. NO childcare provided. Raffle tickets. Food and refreshments. Arrive early. For information, call 813-685-8888.



September Community Calendar (Continued)

Krista Marie Sellars Foundation 4-Person Scramble Golf Tournament / Oct. 3 / 1 p.m. / River Hills Country Club / 943 New River Hills Parkway, Valrico / The Krista Marie Sellars Memorial Foundation and the Campo Family YMCA present a 4-Person Scramble Golf Tournament, \$110 per person or \$400 for a team. Registration begins at 11 a.m. Join us for contests, raffles, 50/50, and a silent auction. Proceeds benefit the Campo Family YMCA scholarships to children for camp, early childhood development and teen programs.

4th Annual Gifts & Crafts Fair at The Bridges / Oct. 10 / 10 a.m.-3 p.m. / The Bridges Retirement Community / 11350 Bloomingdale Ave., Riverview

Calling all vendors! Register for the Gifts & Crafts Fair at The Bridges. Contact Janet Noah at 813-413-8900 or jnoah@thebridgesbvm.com.

Calling all shoppers! Get ready to shop at this one-stop holiday shopping event! Browse and buy from over 35 vendors presenting unique handcrafted and manufactured products. Sample items include holiday decorations, handmade crafts, stylish jewelry and handbags, bath products, sweet treats, and more. Open to the public; admission and parking are free.

8th Annual Plaza Bella Goes Pink Walk for a Cure / Oct. 17 / 9 a.m. / Plaza Bella / 1078 Bloomingdale Ave., Brandon / Walk to raise funds and awareness for a cure for breast cancer. All proceeds benefit the American Cancer Society, the Brandon Outreach Clinic, and the YMCA's Livestrong Program. Watch for updates on registration or call The Green Boutique at 813-685-9494.

18th Annual Halloween Horribles Parade / Oct. 25 / 3 p.m. / Center Place Fine Arts & Civic Association / 619 Vonderburg Drive, Brandon / Who said the ghost and goblins only come out at night? Costumed munchkins are invited to take part in the annual Halloween parade and will enjoy lots of treat stations hosted by civic clubs and businesses along the route. **ADVANCE TICKETS** are \$2 per child. Children must be between the ages of 3 and 10 years old! Tickets available Oct. 1 at Center Place. For information, call 813-685-8888.



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.

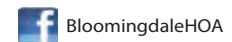
Board members serve our community through committees including:

- 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.

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The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association
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Fall Festival

Saturday, October 24, 2015
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
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Our FREE, family-oriented event features:

- Business information
- Children's and pet's costume contests
- Bouncy houses
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- Raffles
- Face painting & games
- "Trick or Treat" Street
- Mr. Dan the Balloon Man
- DJ
- And more

There will also be appearances from the Tampa Bay Lightning Bug, the Hillsborough County Fire and Sheriff's Departments, and other demonstrations.

Visit us at the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association web page, Facebook page or check your Bloomingdale Gazette for updates and additional information about sponsorship and volunteer opportunities.

(813) 681-2051 • Email: Bloomingdale.Homeowners@gmail.com

BloomingdaleHOA.com

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Fall Festival Promotes Local Businesses

Staff Report

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Fall Festival offers business owners an opportunity to introduce themselves to the residents of the largest community in Hillsborough County. While participation is free, businesses are asked to provide a raffle item, candy for the festival's "Trick or Treat" street, and tables, chairs, and canopy as needed for their booth. They are encouraged to provide promotional materials as well.

No large-scale event is cost-free and sponsors are needed to help the Association keep the event free for residents. There are many ways to help.

All sponsors receive preferred site assignment (up front and centrally located, the higher the sponsor level, the closer to the front), a sign provided for your booth area with your logo and information, and acknowledgements in our Bloomingdale Gazette (reaches 5,200 homes and more than 23,000 residents), on our website, and our Facebook pages. The Gazette is archived on the BHA website so sponsors receive "forever advertising."

There are three sponsor levels:

Silver - At \$75, sponsors will be acknowledged with business card and logo information at least twice, once in October and then in November.

Gold - At \$150, your business card and logo information will be published as well as a business photo/caption.

Platinum - At \$250, all of the above, but a Gazette business profile will be published within 1-6 months of the event as well as a photo of the business and employees.

The committee organizers are open to discuss your sponsorship as well. Some businesses have sponsored free hotdogs for the first \$100 kids, large-scale games, entertainment, DJ, demonstrations, etc. However, money sponsorship is preferred to help defray the costs associated with the event.

For information, email bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com or call 813-681-2051.

Expanding Minds One Reptile at a Time

By Nicole Cluck

Getting children involved in the community is a vital part of a child's development. One way to do this is through attending area events geared towards their interests.

Recently, the Bloomingdale Regional Library did just that with a reptile presentation hosted by Gino Sassani, owner of Lost World Reptiles in Tampa. His fun and educational exhibitions developed from his desire to share his 26-year passion with others. While a variety of reptiles is discussed, Sassani focuses on how to properly care for, handle and approach snakes.

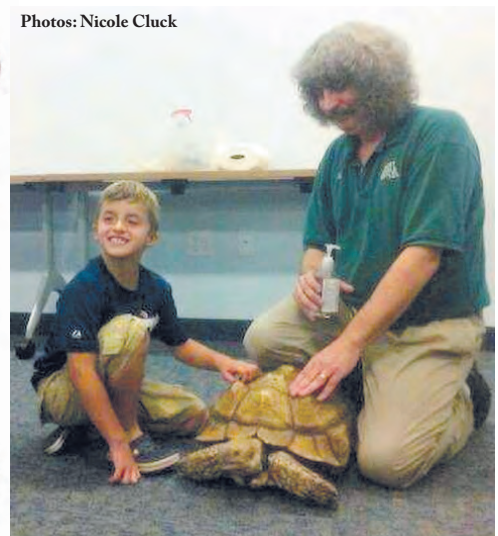
Librarian Allison Wever had a key role in bringing the reptile extravaganza to the library. She explained that events like these "give kids a chance to come in and learn something new, 'cool' and educational."

For many children, science is not an easy subject to tackle, nor the most exciting. Through his interactive reptile events, Sassani just may change that perception one young mind at a time. Check out his website at <http://lostworldreptiles.com/>.

Miss this one? Sassani will be bringing his scaly entourage to the Riverview Branch Library, 10509 Riverview Dr., on Oct. 1 from 4 to 5 p.m.



Reptile expert Gino Sassani actively engages children at a presentation held Aug. 6 at the Bloomingdale Library. Children are encouraged to ask and answer questions throughout his presentation.



Photos: Nicole Cluck

A large crowd of over 100 students and adults attended the reptile presentation hosted by Lost World Reptiles owner Gina Sassani. Participant Mason Roy kneels beside Sassani to investigate a tortoise's different textures.

Photographer and feature writer Kayla Hayes has been a top contributor of the Bloomingdale Gazette since joining the staff two years ago. The Fairway Park resident is a graduate of Bloomingdale High School, where she honed her writing skills before earning her degree in Communications from Southeastern University in Lakeland in December 2014.

Hayes got her start with the Gazette by covering the “Big Box” development—the Super Wal-Mart under construction next to the Bloomingdale Library. It remains a favorite series of articles because she was able to expand her base of writing and dig into the nitty gritty of “hard” news.

“These were different pieces for me and very eye opening,” says Hayes. “However,” she continued, “my heart will always be in positive resident profiles and other ‘happy’ news.”

Hayes believes the Bloomingdale Gazette serves “to form a bond between its readers.” She believes readers enjoy stories about what residents are doing in our community. That is why her vision for the Gazette is to continue on its path of growth and visual appeal.

“I hope residents will never lose the desire to pick up the paper from their driveways and flip through its pages. It’s hard to beat the efficiency of digital news, but there’s nothing quite like holding and reading a well put-together newspaper.”

The oldest of five siblings, the lifelong Bloomingdale resident recently was engaged to a Jared Rogers, who lives in Plant City. One of their first dates was to a community meeting Kayla covered for the Gazette followed by dinner at Olive Garden. “I can’t wait to tie the knot and become this man’s wife! I love him more everyday.”

She is currently employed full time by the Lowry Park Zoo as the marketing coordinator. In her spare time, she enjoys binge watching Doctor Who with her fiancé, photography and reading.

Thank you, Kayla, for providing our readers with stories and photos that reflect your love for Bloomingdale, its residents, and the greater 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.”)



The Hayes family (less sister Kendall) recently visited Alabama to book the venue for Kayla’s wedding. While in Alabama, they enjoyed trail hiking and other outdoor activities. From left are Kayla, Cassidy, Rhett, mom Laura, dad Matt, and Courtney.



Gazette staff writer Kayla Hayes and her fiancé, Jared Rogers, are having a mountain wedding in Alabama this fall.

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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.



Ah, Sweet Mysteries of Life

When you think about it, it's the little mysteries of life that keep it interesting. Oh, I don't mean things like, "Where does your lap go when you stand up?" I mean important enigmas like, "What genius decided it would be a good idea to sew shut bags of dog food and potatoes?"

What sort of diabolical mind would even think of something like that? And then unleash such evil on an unsuspecting public?

Those bags, sewn within an inch of their lives and tied off in a rope of intricately crocheted knots, are the scourge of dog owners and potato lovers. Any attempt to open one of these monstrosities by finding that one string which, when pulled, will result in the satisfying sound of "thri-i-ip" as all the stitches unravel is met with crushing defeat. Plan B involves standing on the bottom edge of the bag and gently tugging on the crochet work. This falls by the wayside when all you have left are a handful of torn string and shredded nerves.



That's when brute force takes over. You grab the bag by its vile little neck, dig your feet in and rip its stitched head clean off. Then you spend the rest of the afternoon sweeping up Gravy Train or fishing potatoes out from under the refrigerator with a coat hanger.

Another little bafflement which never fails to perplex me involves speed limit signs. Oh, I know what they are. I just don't know when they go into effect. Picture this: You are traveling down the road at 45 MPH. In the distance, you see a sign clearly stating "55

MPH". My question is, "When?" Does the speed limit increase as soon as you can see the sign without squinting or does it change at the sign's exact location?

And while we're on the subject, let's discuss highway rest stops (obviously, I am spending far too much time in my car). What earthly good are rest stops flaunting signs proclaiming "no facilities"?

I don't know about you, but my car generally stops only when one or more of its occupants has loudly and colorfully described the potential state of my upholstery and carpet should we not grind to a halt immediately. Children are especially good for a few moments of panicked entertainment since, apparently, their bodies delight in pulling sneak attacks on them ("I have to go right NOW or ELSE!").



When was the last time you pulled into a rest stop just to rest? And when you finished "resting," did you or did you not require the presence of facilities? Right. Who dreamed up that little teaser, anyway?

Was Shakespeare really Shakespeare or was he Bacon? Did Judge Crater just step out for a pack of cigarettes and disappear or was he dodging creditors? Why do twist ties run and hide the second you lay them down? And why, oh why, did they allow Donald Trump behind a campaign podium again? Now, THAT'S a real mystery.

Gold Star Mother's Day – Honoring Our Fallen Sons and Daughters

By Kayla Hayes



The last Sunday in September each year is a national holiday recognized as Gold Star Mother's Day. The American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. (AGSM, Inc.) was formed in the United States shortly after World War I to provide support for mothers who lost children in the war. In Florida today, there are seven active chapters, with the largest existing in Tampa Bay.

The name "Gold Star Mothers" derives from a custom dating back to the early 1900's where military families would display service flags in their front windows with blue star pins to represent active duty family members, and gold star pins to represent family members who had fallen in battle. For the mothers of our fallen heroes, the gold star is a symbol of sorrow, remembrance, and determination to keep patriotism alive.

Besides providing support for one another, members of the AGSM, Inc. (with specific reference to the Tampa chapter) are dedicated to volunteerism, promoting patriotism and more throughout the year.

On the American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. Tampa Bay chapter's website the following statement appears:

"We have become Gold Star Mothers because of the loss of our sons and daughters, who have bravely, and proudly stepped up and served in our military. They have given their lives to preserve the freedom we have enjoyed in the past, but perhaps have taken for granted. We do not take this for granted anymore. We know the indescribable pain of the cost for freedom."

Visit agsmtampa.org for information on the Tampa chapter, upcoming events, joining and volunteering, resources for families and more. You can also find them on Facebook at [Facebook/AmericanGoldStarMothersIncTampaBayFLChapters](https://www.facebook.com/AmericanGoldStarMothersIncTampaBayFLChapters).



Photos: American Gold Star Mothers, Inc.

New Boutique Brings “Rodeo Drive” Style to Bloomingdale

By Miriam Leech

Since its official July 4th opening, T Marie's Fashion & Gifts Boutique has been generating talk all around Bloomingdale. That's because owner T. Marie Benchley saw potential in the weathered, white building on Lithia Pinecrest Road near Bloomingdale Avenue and transformed it into a shop worthy of Rodeo Drive.

Benchley is the chief operating officer of Online Boutiques (www.onlineboutiques.us), where she has been selling fashion worldwide for the last year and a half. It was her daughter, Scarlett, an actress and model, who suggested it was time for a brick-and-mortar store.

“I wanted to create an oasis for shopping, especially for mothers and daughters,” says Benchley of her vision for the boutique. Today, the transformed storefront is a bright shade of yellow, featuring a freshly painted white picket fence on the side. Inside are colorful displays of merchandise including gifts, books, decorative furnishings, accessories, shoes, resort and casual wear, formals, homecoming dresses, and tuxedos.

Benchley, a former model herself, has lived in Brandon since 1999. “I could have opened up a store anywhere in the United States, in SoHo, Beverly Hills, anywhere I wanted to,” said Benchley, whose children attended Bloomingdale and Newsome high schools. “But this is in my own backyard, and I felt Brandon and Valrico really needed it.”

In addition to her fashion business, Benchley is the author of *Once Wicked Always Dead*. In fact, Benchley comes from a well-known family—cousin Peter Benchley wrote *Jaws* in 1974, and the famed Robert Benchley acted and wrote as well.

Benchley describes the response to the boutique's opening as, “absolutely amazing.” She will continue to split her time between Florida and her home in Montana, traveling across the country to buy new merchandise.

Managed by Lindsey Ress, a Newsome High School graduate, and staffed by five fashion sales stylists, T Marie's Fashion & Gifts Boutique, located at 3407 Lithia Pinecrest Road, is open seven days a week Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and from noon

to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Hours can vary based on season and demand. For details on items and brands for sale, visit www.tmariefashions.com or call 813-530-0922.

Photos: Miriam Leech



Author and former model T. Marie Benchley opened her first brick-and-mortar boutique, T Marie's Fashion & Gifts Boutique, on July 4 to create a shopping oasis for affordable fashions and gifts for all budgets.



T Marie's Fashion & Gifts Boutique houses a beautiful collection of dresses perfect for Homecoming or other special events, offering mothers and daughters a unique shopping experience.



Although Benchley could have opened her new boutique, T Marie's Fashion & Gifts Boutique, anywhere in the country; she chose to bring a little piece of Rodeo Drive to Valrico and her own backyard.



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BLOOMINGDALE

Wisdom is not a product of schooling but of the lifelong attempt to acquire it.
Albert Einstein



Photo: Heather Michael

Head to toe perfection... BSHS freshman Sierra Michael is decked out and ready to tackle the world.

A mind is like a parachute. It doesn't work if it is not open.
Frank Zappa



Photo: Walker Family

Valrico Academy 2nd grader Kristian (L) and 4th grader Michaela Walker share a brother-sister moment on their first day of school.



Photo: Nicole Chuck

From the bus stop to the bus to Cimino Elementary – students wave goodbye to their parents, and climb aboard a ride that can result in life-long relationships and an education.



Photo: Breeze Family

Wearing the red and black school colors either by design or by accident, Bloomingdale High School freshman Hailee Breeze has style to spare.



Photo: Wyatt Family

Having a big brother to lean on makes the first day of school a little easier! Pictured are Cameron, attending VPK at Bell Shoals KinderCare and Timothy Wyatt, a Burns Middle School 7th grader.

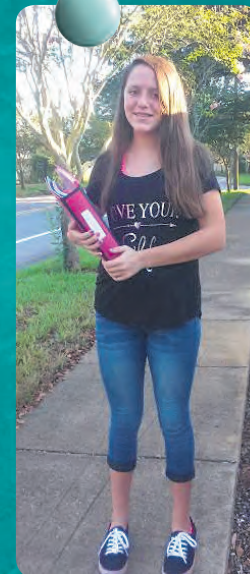


Photo: Nicole Chuck

A brave face and a bright smile will take student Emma Sylva (12) far as she waits for her Burns Middle School bus.

Whether it be anticipation, excitement, or just a return to routine, every day in our community. Back to school for youngsters, older and "wise" parents together for a common goal.

Presented in the next few pages as they embark on the adventure.

Don't worry, be happy.
Bobby McFerrin



You have to get up early to get students to Strawberry.

GOES TO SCHOOL!

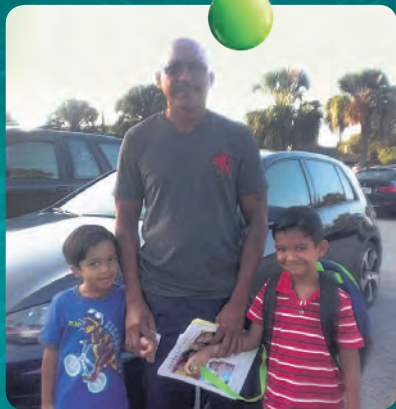


Photo: Nicole Chuck

Brothers Noah (4) and Joshua Sookai (5) took another mode of transportation to school courtesy of their Dad. It's all smiles as they arrive at Alafia Elementary.

Photo: Berkowitz Family



Ready to face the Rajun' Bull Band fans... BSHS freshman Nick Berkowitz gets ready for his debut with the Rajun-Bull Marching Band. This photo was taken prior to the BSHS football team's season opener against Newsome on Aug. 28.

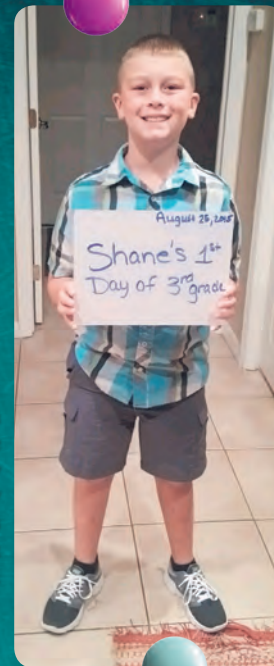


Photo: Billy Hightower

Shane Carlisle, grandson of Bloomingdale resident Billy Hightower, proudly displays a sign noting his first day of 3rd grade at Bailey Elementary.

Excitement, a little fear and dread, the first day of school is a special day. The first day of school brings fresh-faced "new" young adults and, of course, the same old cause...get to school on time.

Pages are a few of our residents as they experience the joys of a new school year. Enjoy!

Children want the same things we want. To laugh, to be challenged, to be entertained, and delighted.

Dr. Seuss



Photo: Will Leech

ly to beat Bloomingdale area IB
y Crest High School in Plant City.

Good teachers are the ones who can challenge young minds without losing their own.

Unknown



Photo: Penn Family

Beautiful sisters, Kelsey (L) and Madelyn Penn are attending different schools this year. Kelsey is an 8th grader at Burns Middle, while sister, Madelyn is a new Lady Bull at Bloomingdale High.



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.

Our Trees vs. Severe Weather (rain, hail, winds, hurricanes and tornados)

By Gwen Graverson

During storm season, most people expect a rainy day or two. However, when a day becomes days of endless rain, the ground becomes soggy and saturated. This saturation also includes trees.

Saturation adds weight to trees and if a tree is unable to bend; it will break or uproot and fall. One example of a tree that does not fare well during a major storm, is a pine tree. The root system for our southern pines extends shallow and wide horizontally at the soil surface more so than down and deep.

The following are some questions that you may need to ask yourself after a severe storm when there's been damage to a tree on your property: Other than the storm damage, is the tree basically healthy/vigorous? Are major limbs broken? Has the leader, the main upward-trending branch been lost? Is at least 50 percent of the tree's crown (branches and leaves) still intact? How big are the wounds? Are there remaining branches that can form a new branch structure?

Next, you will need to make a decision – save the tree, wait-n-see or say goodbye. You may want to contact an arborist for a professional opinion first. Don't let anyone talk you into removing a tree from your property especially when the tree trunk measures five inches DBH (diameter at breast height) or larger, without obtaining a permit before removal. If the tree is dead, the permit is not required.

Keep in mind that there are additional provisions for Grand Oaks, even with pruning. Check the Hillsborough County website for more information: <https://fl-hillsboroughcounty.civicplus.com>. After Hurricane Katrina hit the Mississippi Gulf Coast 10 years ago, a lot of mighty oaks trees in Harrison County were removed believing that they were dead as a result of the storm. People failed to take into consideration the distressed state of the trees and the time needed for them to recover.

The following applies no matter the weather or season and we all need to deal with it... it's called liability. If a tree on your property is not well maintained, is dead or diseased and falls damaging your neighbor's property... as comedian Jeff Foxworthy would say, "You might be liable if..."

Your neighbor's insurance company will pay for the damage and then most likely come after your insurance company for reimbursement in a process called subrogation. If the insurance adjuster finds that you were negligent (didn't maintain the tree properly), your insurance company may end up footing the bill, which could result in higher premiums. So, take this opportunity to talk with your insurance agent about your homeowners/renters policy.

One final thought, don't wait until your tree comes crashing down, take pictures now and keep any documents or receipts of pruning and tree maintenance in a central location.

And while I'm at it...Rain, rain go away and come again another day...



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The University of Florida and the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) located in Hillsborough County

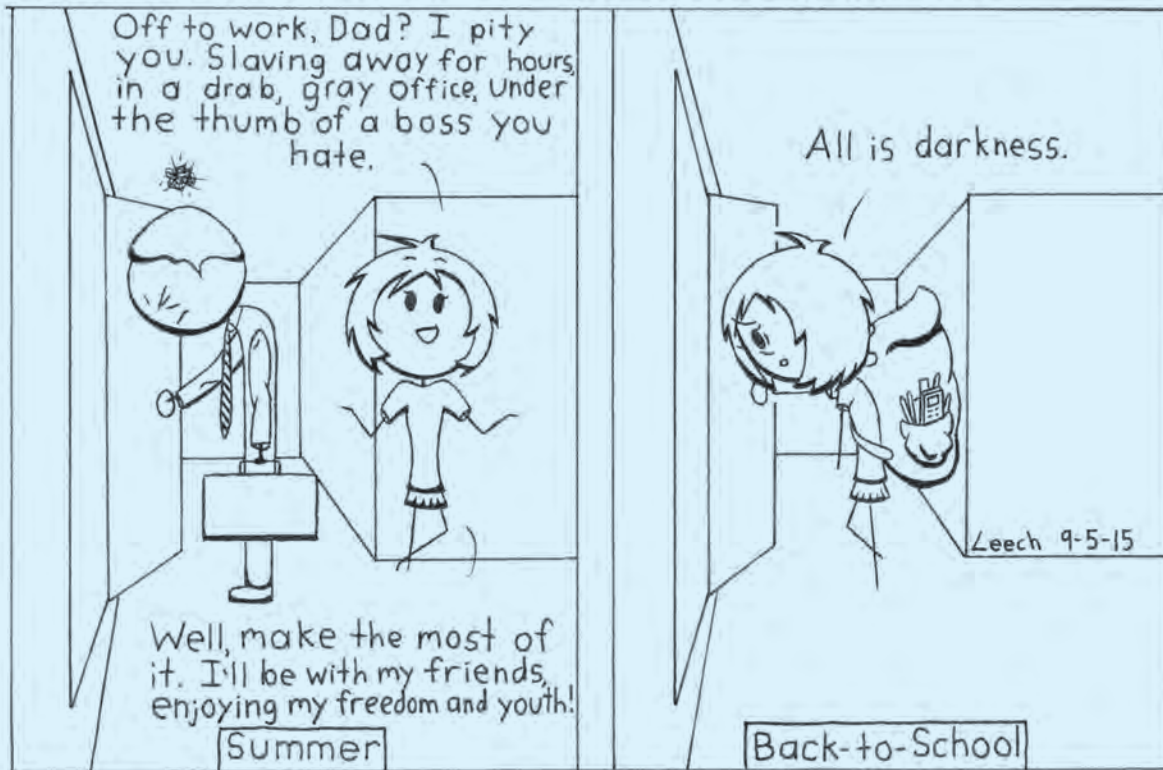
provides a valuable monthly tool for the budding nature lover. Visit their website at http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/lawn_and_garden/calendar/pdfs/June_Central.pdf.

One tool is the Master Gardener Program, which relies on dedicated volunteers who have an interest in gardening and in giving back to their communities. Interested in becoming a Master Gardener? Visit <http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener> to learn more about the program's history and about how to become a Master Gardener. Point of contact is Nicole Pinson, 813-744-5519; email nicolepinson@ufl.edu.

Michigan

Introducing comic strip artist Will Leech and his creation, Michigan. Leech is a Strawberry Crest High School senior.

Michigan by Will Leech



Bending from the Hips...

By J.D. Carino (Bloomington CC campus)

When we say you need to bend over to two o'clock or 45 degrees, how you bend over is critical to an efficient swing. By efficient, I mean a consistent and pain free swing getting your club head back to the ball.

Most amateurs bend from the waist (stomach-blue line) which causes your back to round out. Bending from your hips (shown by the red line) will cause your belt line to angle upwards (45 degrees) and enable you to have a straight or flat back (yellow line).

When your posture is aligned correctly, this allows your body to rotate around your spine more efficiently and pain free. This will help you play through 18 holes of golf without popping Aleve on the back nine.

Next lesson: One plane or two plane swing... what's the difference. Any questions or for lessons, visit CochraneGolfSchools.com or call J.D. 813 957-3205.



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WAYBACK BURGERS

Limit one per visit. May not be combined with any other offer. In-store only. Valid at FishHawk Ranch Location only.
EXP. 12/31/15 BG090515

176419-1

Backpacks Bring Smiles to Students

By Miriam Leech

Smiles were in abundance on Aug. 15 as the Campo Family YMCA and the Emergency Care Help Organization (ECHO) hosted the 17th Annual Backpack Outreach Event at Camp Cristina. Volunteers distributed approximately 1,500 backpacks to pre-registered families in need of assistance with back-to-school supplies. Additionally, families had free access to blood pressure screenings, dental and vision check-ups, seat belt safety information, scoliosis screenings, and pedestrian safety tips.



Photos: Miriam Leech

"This will ensure the girls have what they need for at least the first month of school," said an overwhelmed Catrina Byarse with her daughters, Amiyah, 8, and Jaynece, 4. "All the opportunities the Campo Y has given us are amazing." Their smiles are a testament to the YMCA's and ECHO's continued commitment to providing area students the tools they need to succeed in school.



Overseeing the festivities was Bloomingdale resident Carol Sheafnocker, who served as chair of the outreach event for the third year in a row. "It is a lot of hard work but so worthwhile," said Scheafnocker.



Volunteers like Jephunneh Hicks, a senior at Bloomingdale High School, kept the backpacks sorted and moving.



Home Depot hosted a wood workshop for kids and FishHawk Seeds of Hope provided bags filled with peanut butter, jelly, granola bars and oatmeal.

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 Bloomingdale. 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.

Strong Plans are First Step to Success

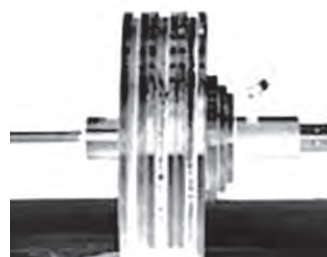
As we usher in a new season and establish new routines, it is good to reflect on the strengthening of some areas that may have become a little "flabby" through the summer. Disrupting routine to relax and refresh can be a good thing for a season, yet planning and structure are necessary for order, purpose and productivity. It is the discipline and rhythm of "picking things up and putting them down" that empowers us to live our best lives.

Whether you have drifted from your exercise routine, stayed up late and slept in all summer, or enjoyed a few more second helpings at the family barbecues; a season change can give you that sense of a new start, a fresh wind to set sail in a better direction.

Take time as a family to plug in all the things you want to include in your family life calendar this Fall- church attendance, game night, bike rides, trips to the farmer's market, fall recipes, sports... Get every family member's input. Rather than only focusing on bad habits to stop, direct your attention to "strength training" for all the great things ahead of you.

Won't you love it when your plan comes together?

"Strength is breaking a chocolate bar into four pieces with your bare hands and then eating just one of those pieces." Judith Voirst



strong(er)

Photo: patchesmssquats.wordpress.com

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Back to school means many things, but for most parents it means reintroducing the infamous back to school routine. This routine generally consists of waking the kids, getting them dressed, making breakfast, packing lunches, and sending them off to school.

School lunches can be a challenge for any “super” mom! While the everyday school lunch sandwich can quickly become boring for kids; today, there is a wide variety of pre-packaged offerings, like Lunchables. Unfortunately, these are not always the most nutritious and costs can quickly add up.

While I cannot help you with persuading little Johnny to keep his socks and shoes on, I can make packing his lunches easier and more affordable for you, and more interesting for your children. As an added benefit, maybe they will want to create and pack their own lunches!

Below is my recipe for a homemade pizza lunchable. Enjoy and feel free to change ingredients to suit your child’s taste buds. One possible change could be a PBJ pizza with raisin or banana toppings...let your imagination run wild. Have a recipe you want to share with our readers? Send it to inbloomindalenews@gmail.com.



Photo: Nicole Usher

Ingredients:

Flatbread (or any kind of soft, but stable bread)
Shredded Mozzarella cheese
Pizza sauce (I used Enrico’s, but any will do)

Optional:

Pepperoni slices
Dried basil
Pineapple chunks, black olives, or any pizza topping
A small treat
(fruit, a small candy bar, fruit roll-up, or Rice Krispy treat)

Directions:

- 1) Cut flatbread into circles with a circle cookie cutter or knife.
- 2) Place 1/4 – 1/3 cup of shredded cheese (about 1-2 tablespoons per pizza).
Place into a small plastic condiment container or a regular size cupcake liner.
- 3) Put 3-4 tablespoons of pizza sauce (1 big spoonful per pizza) into a small plastic condiment container.
- 4) Optional: if using dried basil, put about a teaspoon between your palms, and rub them together (this awakens the dried herb flavors). Stir the basil into the pizza sauce.
- 5) Gather your pizza toppings...2-3 pepperonis per pizza, small spoonful of any other toppings. Put the toppings in small containers or a regular size cupcake liner.
- 6) Using a square plastic container with a lid, insert the flatbread circles, shredded cheese, pizza sauce, and any toppings. If there is extra room, add a special treat to the container.

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County News Briefs



Courtesy: Hillsborough County

Attention Mandatory HOA Leaders! Mini-Grant Deadline Extended

The Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners extended the 2016 mini-grant application deadline to Sept. 11 by 5 p.m. Administered by the Office of Neighborhood Relations, this program provides up to \$2,500 in grant funds to help communities accomplish various improvement projects. For an application and complete guidelines, visit www.hillsboroughcounty.org/DocumentCenter/View/12553.

Types of projects considered include:

- Neighborhood Identity (e.g., brochures, signs, festivals, and education of neighborhood history).
- Neighborhood Leadership Training and Development.
- Start-up Funds for Specific Neighborhood Projects (e.g., newsletters, internet sites).
- Crime Watch (e.g., communication systems with law enforcement).
- Children's Programs (e.g., term neighborhood-operated programs, which benefit children within the association).

The BHA can help your community with advice and the application process. The Association has applied for over 10 grants through the years and has never had a project disapproved. Completed application examples are available for review and can be emailed to board representatives. Contact 813-681-2051 or email bloomingdale homeowners@gmail.com.

Empty now, but during morning hours, this bench and others at entryways throughout Bloomingdale Ridge fill with students waiting for school buses. Bloomingdale Ridge President Terry Hoos spearheaded the "bench project" using funds he received from the Hillsborough County 2015 mini-grant program. The benches provide a safe place for students to sit, they keep students out of the landscape beds and off the retaining walls, and they are an attractive addition to the community. The 2016 application deadline is now Sept. 11... make an improvement in your community!



Photo: Joy Boisselle



New Transportation Plan Meetings Scheduled

Following GO Hillsborough's extensive citizen feedback, it is apparent that citizens believe Hillsborough County is facing a potential transportation crisis. In fact, it is the top concern for citizens – twice that of jobs and our local economy.

GO Hillsborough recommends a fair, balanced, and community-driven transportation plan that will fix our roads first, relieve congestion, redesign transit, and make our lives better. The recommendation is funding this plan by placing a dedicated ½ percent sales tax referendum on the November 2016 election ballot. This will create \$117.5 million annually and \$3.5 billion over 30 years. At the same time a ½ percent sales tax is implemented, new growth will pay an increased and equitable share for its transportation impacts, too.



Go Hillsborough needs your input on which specific projects you want in your neighborhood so the Community Transportation Plan and its funding approach can be finalized. GO Hillsborough will host another 54 meetings in libraries across the County.

RSVP at <http://gohillsborough.org/contact-us>, and make your voice and your choice heard.

Upcoming Meetings in our area:

- Sept. 22 – Brandon Regional Library, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
- Sept. 23 – Bloomingdale Regional Library, 10 a.m. – noon
- Oct. 8 – Bloomingdale Regional Library, 5:30-7:30 p.m.



REALITY CHECK: Tampa is the 11th worst city in the nation for traffic congestion.

Source: 2014 TomTom Traffic Index

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Bloomingdale Avenue and Culbreath Road Intersection Improvement



Current plans for the widening of Bloomingdale Avenue and Culbreath Road call for construction to begin in November. This project will take at least one year.

Walmart Supercenter Construction Update

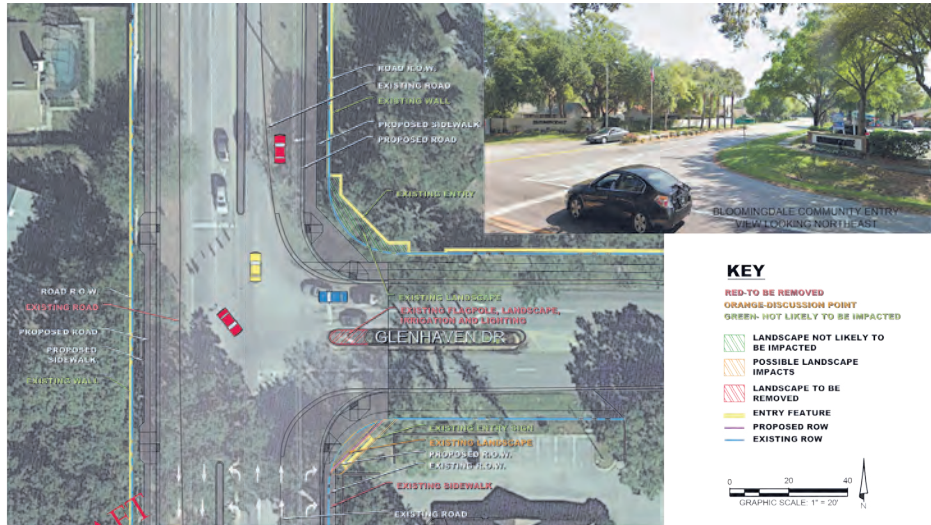


The familiar “arched roof” over the front entrance to the new Super Walmart store on Bloomingdale Avenue is taking shape as construction continues. Current completion estimates call for the store opening in March 2016. Walmart will share site space with new townhouses and several businesses.

CONSTRUCTION Update

Photos: Mack Austin

Bell Shoals Road Widening Project Update



According to Hillsborough County Public Works project managers, updated plans for the Bell Shoals Widening Project are being completed with emphasis on phase coordination. Of primary concern to developers is the relocation and construction of all utilities before actual widening begins. This will minimize disruptions during the construction.

Plans call for two lanes of traffic to be open at all times with no night or weekend work scheduled. Pictured is the draft plan for the intersection of Glenhaven and Bell Shoals Roads. Once the project begins, officials expect to reach this are in 18 months. Public meetings will be announced when details are known.

Glazer Children's Museum

IT'S OUR BIRTHDAY BUT OUR GUESTS GET THE GIFTS!

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BLOOMINGDALE COMMUNITY STATION NOTES

By Community Resource Master Deputy Curtis Warren



KEEP OUR KIDS SAFE - OBEY ALL TRAFFIC LAWS!

Schools are open, school buses are full and traffic is back to its normal congestion. Add several major construction projects ongoing on Bloomingdale Avenue to the mix and know that your daily commute will take longer and require increased defensive driving and situational awareness. Plan ahead, be cautious and practice patience!

Traffic laws protect our kids – follow them! These include:

1. Drivers must stop both ways for school buses making stops for children on roads without median dividers. Example: Bloomingdale Avenue and Culbreath Road. Drivers, who don't stop, put our kids in danger. Also, keep a safe distance between other vehicles especially school buses, **AND SLOW DOWN!**

2. Obey school zone speed limits! Around our local schools, speed limits during school hours are clearly marked at 20 mph. There is no acceptable excuse for speeding, especially in school zones. An actual excuse given to a deputy by a driver – “I was on my cell phone and didn't see the flashing lights!” – Her fine was \$583. Remember, speeding fines **double** in school zones.

3. Obey or pay! - Traffic fines have increased. Deputies are on the scene, radar guns at the ready, around all our area schools. Disregard traffic laws and it will cost you! Save your hard-earned money. Obey the traffic laws and respect the rights and safety of others and save lives!

Special note: Citations costs do not include any possible increases in your auto insurance rates. These increases usually stay on your policy for at least three years. Talk to your teen driver as well, and above all, be a good example.

DISTRACTED DRIVING AND DWI - DANGEROUS AND DEADLY

Nearly 19,000 people across the country lost their lives in traffic accidents. The National safety council recently reported that traffic deaths were up by 14 per cent nationally in the first six months of this year.

The primary causes have been increased speed limits, drivers distracted by cell phone calls or texting and drunk drivers. Do not let one of your family members or you become one of these fatal statistics! These preventable tragedies have affected our area. We have lost too many teens to auto accidents where teens were not buckled up, were distracted, impaired, or speeding. So, do buckle up and obey traffic laws! Do not speed, drink and drive, or text while driving.

DANGER! DANGER! FIRE STATION EMERGENCY SIGNALS ON BLOOMINGDALE AVENUE

Drivers have been observed running the Fire Station Emergency Signals when they turn red and flash! This is both illegal and very dangerous. When the signals turn red, firefighters are preparing to respond to emergencies and a fire engine will be entering Bloomingdale Avenue. Pay special attention when driving in this area. Stop when you see flashing red lights!

Photo: Mack Austin



Too many drivers are not stopping for the fire station's emergency signals!

MONTHLY BACC HIGHLIGHTS

At the August Sheriff's Bloomingdale Area Community Council (BACC) meeting, members were briefed on several issues of concern in our community. These included the following:

1. Crime in our area is down. Be alert and contact the Sheriff's Office at 247-8200 if any suspicious activities are observed.

2. Recent crimes in our area involved burglaries and retail theft.

- The first incident was at Leslie's Pool Supply next to Publix. A burglar entered the store, cut off alarms, opened the safe and removed money. Deputies arrested a suspect.
- The second incident was a burglary of a vehicle near Beef O'Brady's on Bell Shoals. No arrests have been made yet. This incident emphasizes the importance of securing vehicles properly at all times and locations.
- The last incident involved retail theft from Walmart. Several businesses in our area have upgraded to high-quality cameras, which have been instrumental in several arrests.

3. Continue to prepare your home and family for disasters, especially hurricanes! Hurricane season is at its peak; it only takes one big storm to change lives. The first hurricane of the season has already passed. We also all saw the severe damage and destruction caused by the floods in the last two months.

4. You need to protect your possessions! Unlocked garage doors and cars are the main cause of thefts in our area. They are “OPEN/UNLOCKED” targets that are fast and easy. Don't make it easy! Some vehicles that have been targeted had guns in them, making the crime even worse.

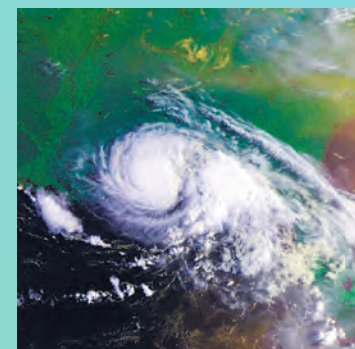


Photo: NOAA

SHERIFF'S OPERATION MEDICINE CABINET IS COMING IN OCTOBER



Presents

Home Instead Senior Care® OPERATION MEDICINE CABINET™

Bring Your **EXPIRED** or **UNUSED** MEDICATIONS
and **HELP SAVE HILLSBOROUGH WATERWAYS**

Hawthorne Village
859 W Lumsden Rd.
Brandon, FL 33511

Thursday, October 8, 2015
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Expired or unwanted prescription and over-the-counter medications from households should never be disposed of by flushing them down the toilet or a drain. Although this method of disposal prevents accidental ingestion, it can cause contamination of Florida's aquatic environment because wastewater treatment systems are not designed to remove many of these medications.

Florida Dept of Environmental Safety

For more information, please contact Kristi Campbell at
Home Instead Senior Care 813 684-1972



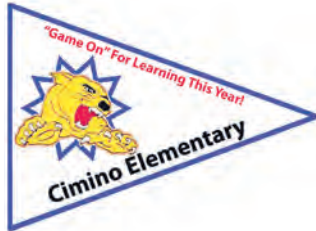
Events listed may be subject to change. Check with your school to confirm event dates and times prior to attending.



SEPTEMBER 7 - LABOR DAY (NO SCHOOL)

ALAFIA ALLIGATOR ALLEY

Sept. 10 – PTA General Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 17/18 – Grandparent Breakfast, 7:30 a.m.
Sept. 25 – Volunteer breakfast, 8 a.m.
Sept. 25 – Back to School Dance, 6 p.m.



CIMINO COUGAR CENTRAL

Sept. 25 – Cougar Challenge Kickoff

BURNS BRUINS BANTER

Sept. 8 – Chorus Parent Booster meeting, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 10 – Band Parent meeting, 7 p.m.
Sept. 16 – Burns Basketball at Barrington, 6 p.m.
Sept. 16 – Bruins Dad Group, 7 p.m. at Sluggers, Bloomingdale Avenue
Sept. 17 – PTSA meeting and pastries with the Principal, 8 p.m., media center
Sept. 17 – Picture Day
Sept. 24 – Burns Basketball at Rodgers, 6 p.m.
Sept. 30 – Burns Basketball at Eisenhower, 6 p.m.



BLOOMINGDALE HIGH BULL BUSINESS

Sept. 8 – Volleyball at Newsome, 6:15 p.m.
Sept. 10 – Underclass Picture Day, 7 a.m./Senior's last chance for yearbook pictures
Sept. 10 – Volleyball at East Bay, 6:15 p.m.
Sept. 11 – Varsity Football vs Armwood, 7:30 p.m.
Sept. 16 – Volleyball vs Strawberry Crest, 6:15 p.m.
Sept. 17 – JV Football at Durant, 7 p.m.
Sept. 18 – Varsity Football at Tampa Bay Tech, 7:30 p.m.
Sept. 21 – Homecoming Ticket sales start, \$20 per ticket
Sept. 22 – Junior class ring assembly, 9:30 a.m.
Sept. 28 – Volleyball vs. Tampa Bay Tech, 6:15 p.m.
Sept. 29 – Junior ring parent night – 5 – 7 p.m., cafeteria
Oct. 1 – Volleyball vs. Durant – 6:15p.m.
Oct. 1 – JV Football vs East Bay – 7:00p.m.
Oct. 2 – Varsity Football at Durant – 7:30p.m.



BULL BRIEFS

Thespian One-Acts

Auditions for the Thespian one-act play to be taken to competition will be on Monday, Sept. 14 from 2-3 p.m. and Tuesday, Sept. 15 from 3-4 p.m. in the auditorium. Anyone wishing to audition must come with a one-minute dramatic monologue prepared. Students only wishing to participate in tech must also come to the audition but do not need to have a monologue.

Thespian IE

Auditions for the Thespian Individual Event Competition (IEs) will be on Wednesday, Sept. 16 and Thursday, Sept. 17 from 3-4 p.m. in the auditorium. Students wishing to compete in the event must audition the piece they are planning to take as there is limited space in the event. You must come prepared with most of your piece memorized in order to rehearse. See fithespian.com/individual-events for complete rules and category listings.

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



Calling all Math enthusiasts in Grades 2, 3, 4, and 5!

5th Annual TriMathlon Registration Starts Sept. 1! / Mathnasium of Brandon in Valrico / 1048 Bloomingdale Ave/ Oct. 17 / 2 p.m. / Registration opens Sept. 1 for the free 5th Annual Trimathlon! Share with your friends, your teachers, and your PTA! Come for an awesome fun day of mathing and your local elementary schools will earn some \$\$\$\$ because you participated! Included are a goody bag for every student and a free (\$19.99 value) downloadable Math Quiz Game Show* if registered by Sept. 30.

Register at <http://www.mathnasium.com/trimathlon>, select the Brandon center, and complete the form. To claim the Math Quiz Game Show, be sure to click the link on the Thank You page once registration is complete. We will send a registration confirmation email to participants.





BSHS Open House Welcomes New and Returning Students



Got Bull spirit? Varsity Cheerleaders, from left to right, Lorin, Tessa, Emily and Hannah were handed out free t-shirts and gave information about cheerleading at the school.



Bloomington High School's Open House held Aug. 20 was jammed with new and returning students and parents. Students navigated the hallways looking for their classes, gathering with old friends, and traveling to the cafeteria to sign up for clubs and activities.



Band Booster's Lori Brown (l.) and Susan Maley take orders for hats, a must-have at all Bloomington events.



Photos: Deidre Morgan

Junior Student Government Association (SGA) member Alexis Shepard strikes a pose with the Bulls mascot.

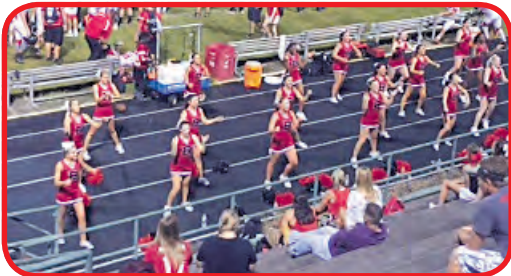


Bulls Win Season Opener



Photos: Deidre Morgan

After last year's history making football season, the Bloomington Bulls football team began this year with a 34 - 15 victory over the Chamberlain Chiefs at the season opener on Aug. 21 at Chamberlain High School. Senior quarterback Isiah McIntyre continued his storied career leading the Bulls with two touchdowns, an 81-yard run and quarterback sneak from the one-yard line. Helping to up the score were receiver Jordan Keijers and linebacker John Locklear with one touchdown each. Go Bulls!



The Bloomington Varsity cheerleaders get the crowd fired up and supply extra Bull spirit!



Practice Makes Perfect



Photo: Deidre Morgan

Members of the Bloomington Crimson Guard begin the new school year back on the practice parking lot. The award-winning group adds a splash of color and creativity to the Rajun' Bull Band half-time presentations.



Bloomington's Best of the Best... Recognizing Excellence in Our Community

Staff Report

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 bloomington.homeowners@gmail.com or call 813-681-2051. Nominees must be in home, public, or private school and residents of Bloomington. 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.

Congratulations to Nick Diaz September's Best of the Best Student of the Month!



Nick Diaz, our community student of the month, volunteers at All Children's Specialty Care Center with Creative Kids. "Nick has an amazing ability with children that have disabilities," Mom Kelly said, adding of the child pictured, "This is one of Nick's favorite little guys; he loves to spend time with him on the craft days."

When asked why he volunteers, he said, "I do it because I love working with the kids and seeing them happy."

Shifting the spotlight from himself, he continued, "Creative kids is very blessed to have some great youth volunteers that help us make all of this possible each month. Our volunteers truly have the heart to serve."

While a good student with a solid academic record, Diaz is most proud of his accomplishments on the Bulls soccer field. A varsity player since his first year, he earned most improved player as a freshman followed by best attacker after his sophomore year. In addition, Diaz travels

Focused, selfless, and athletic – just a few words one might use to describe this talented Bloomington High School junior.

Outside of the classroom is where Diaz really shines. His entire family is a part of a non-profit agency called Creative Kids, which cousin Jennifer Carpiet started over 15 years ago. The organization's purpose is to help sick and hospitalized kids through a variety of programs. Each month, the family donates items to children with long-term illnesses at area hospitals.

"These kids spend more time in the hospital than their own home," Diaz said.

For the past five years, he has worked with the organization amassing hundreds of volunteer service hours in the process. "Boxers by Brothers" is one of the programs he helped start with his brother, Cameron. The brothers add fun designs to boy's boxers and deliver them to cancer patients with a note of encouragement.

"I have made many new little friends over the past 4 years with the patients," said Diaz.

with an elite area soccer team with hopes of one day playing college soccer and ultimately, pursuing a professional soccer career.

He credits professional soccer player, Lionel Messi, for his determination and desire to succeed. "No one thought he could play soccer or have the talent to succeed [because of a genetic disorder]," he explained. "He not only plays professional soccer but is known as the best player right now."

"From that I learned you never should give up, always try hard and never let anyone tell you that you can't do something." Motivating words for anyone to live by. After graduation, this inspiring young man will attend college in Florida or North Carolina to work towards a physical therapy degree.

Diaz and proud parents Chris and Kelly live in Windsor Woods with siblings Christopher (20), Cameron (12), and Taylor (8).

Keep up the great work, Nick!



Determination is etched on Nick Diaz's face. One of his goals is to play professional soccer. Diaz is this month's Best of the Best Student of the Month.



Photo: The Diaz Family

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