

THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

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TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

With traffic already an issue for many residents of Bloomingdale Avenue, many ponder the possible impact of a proposed big box store along the heavily travelled roadway.

Will big box mean big impact?

A proposed big box store along Bloomingdale may change more than just the area landscape. *See story, page 8.*

INSIDE

Athletes moving to the next level

Nine Bloomingdale Senior High School athletes will take their game to collegiate fields. *See story, page 6.*

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Baseball is like church. Many attend – few understand.”

Leo Durocher

New store offers area fresh take on grocery shopping

BY MIRIAM LEECH

From escargot to edamame, The Fresh Market will soon be pleasing the palates of foodies right here in Bloomingdale. The store has signed a lease to occupy 18,000 square feet of space south of Stein Mart in Lithia Crossing shopping center. The Fresh Market is slated to open in Dec. 2013 according to Lori Wick, Director of Marketing for Kite Realty, the shopping center's management company.

Bleu Salon & Spa will be moving to accommodate the new grocery store. Bleu Salon owner Mike Jonson has announced that he's moving his salon across the street to the Shoppes of Lithia, anchored by Publix. The former Studio Eyes Optical has not announced a new location. Gumballs & Overalls children's boutique has already moved to its new location at 3239 Lithia Pinecrest Road next to Sun-Coast Credit Union.

Lithia Nail Designs manager Cindy Lieu said her shop will be relocating to the old Chase Bank space next to the Urgent



TOM LEECH

The Fresh Market is known for its open-air market feel and locally-grown fresh produce.

Care, giving them more room to provide services. She said originally they were told the nail salon would be moving in February but now that date has been pushed to possibly in May.

Rena Burser, Stein Mart store manager, wants her customers to know that despite rumors the store was moving into the vacant Albertsons space they are not relocating.

"We have been told that our normal business and parking area will not be disrupted during con-

struction," said Burser.

However, according to Kite Realty, Stein Mart will be sprucing up their look with interior improvements to their sales floor, fitting rooms, and restrooms to make shopping even more comfortable for its patrons.

The Fresh Market is a specialty grocer providing high-quality products in a unique atmosphere with a high level of customer service.

"We are excited about our continued expansion in the South, and in Florida in particular," said Randy Kelley, senior vice president of real estate and development for The Fresh Market. The company currently operates 129 stores in 25 states, primarily located in the Southeast, Midwest, Mid-Atlantic, and Northeast.

"From bountiful produce and a full-service meat counter to convenient prepared foods and an in-store bakery, customers will discover that our stores are committed to variety, freshness and value as well as superior customer service," said Craig Carlock, the company's president and CEO.

Yard of the Month



**Robert and Sigrid Jaeger
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Bloomingdale West**

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Send you 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.

Annual community cleanup set for April 20

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association will be holding its annual Neighborhood Pride Community on April 20 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The cleanup will be held at the Hillsborough County Parks Department maintenance yard on Nature's Way Boulevard. Residents are invited to round up and drop off unwanted household items that are not usually collected by residential trash pickup. Past clean ups have yielded a wide variety of items including a dishwasher, hot water heater, snow skis, furniture, mattresses and barbeque grills. Volunteers will be on hand at the maintenance yard again this year to help load dumpsters with unwanted household items.

Cleanup day volunteers are still needed. This opportunity is ideal for students wanting to earn community service hours. Volunteer slots will be filled on a first come, first served basis. For additional information on the Neighborhood Pride Community Cleanup or to volunteer, contact Bloomingdale Homeowners Association at (813) 681-2051 or email bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com.

Home sales spring forward in Bloomingdale

BY SUZANNE JONES

Thinking about selling your Bloomingdale area home? We hate to see you leave, but if you are preparing to sell your house, now is the right time. Not only is spring hot for home sales, but the area real estate market is warming up for sellers.

“Recent statistics indicated that Tampa area sales in January 2013 were the highest level in the past five years,” commented Mary Shaw of Signature Realty Associates. “Currently, homes sold are averaging 96 percent of the listing price, and are on the market 78 days on average before receiving an offer.”

When it comes to selling a home, the goal is to get

prospective buyers there and make them never want to leave. Attracting prospective buyers to your home is a matter of pricing it right and getting the word out.

“There are two methods many people use to determine home value,” explained Shaw. “Sellers may pay for an appraisal, but to avoid that expense they may obtain a comparative market analysis, which can be prepared by a Florida Licensed Real Estate Professional.”

Once the home is priced to sell, use advertising and open houses for maximum exposure. Shaw stresses that well-staged photographs uploaded to popular internet sites are a critical component to attracting buyers.

“Ninety percent of homes purchased were first found online,” she commented.

Bloomingdale is a terrific community. Online advertising and flyers set out in your home should inform prospective buyers about the quality area public schools and family-friendly activities like Bloomingdale Little League and Campo YMCA programming. For commuters, stress that getting to Tampa has been eased by the Selmon Expressway; and, express Hartline bus service to MacDill AFB is available and free with an authorized pass to military and government civilian personnel.

Make them never want to leave. Buyers want to picture themselves living

comfortably in your house. Pump up the curb appeal. People scouting property may drive by your house in advance of scheduling a viewing, and decide whether or not to see the inside of the home based solely on the outside appearance. If you don't have a green thumb, consider hiring a landscaping or lawn care company to help out for a couple of months during the spring real estate push.

“The way you live in a home and the way you sell a house are two different things,” added Shaw. “Make minor cosmetic and home repairs; declutter counter tops, walls and rooms; arrange furnishing attractively; and hide the kitty litter.”

Shaw also suggests set-



PROVIDED

Mary Shaw, GRI, CDPE, FMS (Florida Military Specialist) is a Bloomingdale resident and realtor with Signature Realty. Home buyers and sellers are invited to visit www.BloomingdaleREagent.com and www.PCS2MacDill.com for more information, or contact Mary via phone at (813) 416-6245.

ting out a vase of fresh flowers, baking some cookies, and ensuring the front door bell works.

Field of Honor

The Veterans Council of Hillsborough County will conduct their quarterly Field of Honor Ceremony at 11:30 a.m. Saturday April 6 at Veterans Memorial Park, 3602 U.S. 301N, Tampa. This event will honor those who have given their all in support of Operation Enduring Freedom during the previous three months. This memorial service is open to the public and all are encouraged to attend.

YOUR INSIDE CONNECTIONS

BLOOMINGDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION INC.
 PO Box 7221,
 Brandon, FL 33508
 Phone: (813) 681-2051

E-mail: bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com

BHA board meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Offices of Bloomingdale Special Taxing District, 3509 Bell Shoals Road. They are open to Bloomingdale residents.

Web site: bloomingdalegazette.com

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Vice president:

Jim Harris

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Daniel Berkowitz

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Dennis Osborn

Director at Large:

Mary Shaw

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Academic honors awarded to neighborhood students

BY MIRIAM LEECH

Each fall most high school juniors across the nation take a standardized test called the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT). Based on their answers to specific questions, the students may qualify for prestigious scholarships and to participate in recognition programs conducted by the National Merit Scholarship Program and National Hispanic Recognition Program. Nine seniors from the Bloomingdale community who attend Bloomingdale High School and Strawberry Crest High School International Baccalaureate (IB) Program were selected as National Merit, National Achievement, and National Hispanic Scholarship Finalists.

Bloomingdale students Travis Bird, Ian Ludden, and James Rentz were named National Merit Scholarship Finalists

along with two members of Strawberry Crest's first IB graduating class, Katie Callahan and Allison Stahr.

The National Merit Scholarship Program recognizes students who receive the highest scores on the PSAT/NMSQT. There are several levels of recognition: approximately 34,000 students receive Letters of Commendation, approximately 16,000 students are notified that they have qualified as semi-finalists, and ultimately in February of each year approximately 15,000 students are notified that they have been selected as finalists. Scholarship awards vary, as do financial support offers from universities and colleges.

The National Achievement Scholarship Program recognizes Black American students who receive the highest scores on the PSAT/NMSQT. Approximately 1,300 finalists were noti-



MIRIAM LEECH

National Merit Scholarship Finalists Allison Stahr (left) and Katie Callahan (right) are ready for the next academic step. Stahr will attend Macalester College in Minnesota majoring in history and a foreign language; Callahan will attend the University of Texas at Dallas on full scholarship majoring in biomedical engineering.

fied in late January, including Ashley Montgomery from Bloomingdale High School.

The National Hispanic Recognition Program

identifies outstanding Hispanic/Latino students and refers them to colleges and universities particularly interested in these students. Bloom-

ingdale High School students Kathryn Lee, Daniel Monaghan, and Christian Mora were named National Hispanic Scholars.

Things to do

Hummingbirds: "Get Those Hummers!" will be presented from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday April 9 at the Seffner-Mango Library, 410 N. Kingsway Road, Seffner. Master Gardener Heather Diaz will present the program about hummingbirds found in Hillsborough County. It will include information about the plants and the feeders that will attract them to the yard. For information, call (813) 685-1055.

Celebrity chef: Chef Sarah Grueneberg will be a special guest chef April 10-11 at the Rolling Pin, 2080

Badlands Drive, Brandon. For information about this appearance or to register, go to www.rollingpinonline.com or call (813) 653-2418. Fifteen percent of all seats sold will go to the Brandon Foundation.

Wild Game Night: The Brandon Rotary Club's 37th Annual Wild Game Night will take place at 6 p.m. Friday April 12 at Lupton's Boggy Bottom Ranch, 8407 Lupton Place, Plant City. Tickets for the event at \$75 and include dinner, an open bar, door prizes and raffles. All proceeds go to support local charities. For tickets and

more information, call David West (813) 927-7174 or Pat Skidmore (813) 741-3790.

Ballerina party: The Brandon Ballet will have two Ballerina Princess Parties Sunday April 14 at the studio, 161 E. Bloomingdale Ave., Brandon, at 1 to 2:30 p.m. and 3 to 4:40 p.m. Children ages 4 through 7 can wear their favorite princess costume, dance with the Brandon Ballet Ballerinas and decorate a cupcake. To register, call (813) 684-4282. Tickets are \$20 and available at www.shop.brandonballet.org.

Bloomingdale Community Scholarship Fund now accepting applications

Bloomingdale Homeowners Association is now accepting applications for its annual \$2,000 scholarship. The objective of the scholarship is to reward and encourage local high school seniors who are residents of the Bloomingdale community to pursue a college career, and to honor the exemplary efforts and outstanding dedication of B.J. Stelter, the Principal of Bloomingdale High School from 1991 to 2005. A singular award is made each year to a graduate of the current school year. The 2012-2013 application process will run March 1, 2013 to May 1, 2013 and the recipient will be announced in late May.

Please email the BHA at bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com for more information or to obtain the application form.

Bloomingtondale West turns multi-cultural hotspot

BY MIRIAM LEECH

Chilly weather did not deter the community from coming out for the second Annual Village Early Learning Center (ELC) International Festival on Saturday, March 2. Over 28 countries were represented by faculty members and families at the event.

Truly an international family, Henry and Elsa Guanzon and their 4-year-old son Daniel, a student at the Village ELC, sponsored a display on Mrs. Guanzon's native Peru. The table display included artifacts from Peru, and family photos from a trip to Machu Picchu, a 15th century Inca site. Raised in Canada, Mr. Guanzon's background is Filipino, Chinese, and Spanish.

Other countries represented include Honduras, England, India, China, Costa Rica, and of course, the USA. Teacher Heidi Borgeas held a cooking demonstration, showing visitors how to make Greek Spanikopita. Dancers and musicians from the Philippine Cultural Center performed, and Village students demonstrated square dancing. Volunteers Dan and Patti Wilkerson donate their time to teach Village third, fourth, and fifth graders how to square dance at the school.

International foods were also available from local food vendors. Tiki Cone served up chicken wings from the Dominican



MIRIAM LEECH

Children from Trinidad and Tobago serve visitors Aloo pie, made from spicy potatoes and flour, with tamarind chutney.

Republic, empanadas from Puerto Rico, and chcolados from Columbia. Gringos Burrito Box and Jimmy's Meatballs also served food and drink.

Mosaic, a global provider of phosphates and nutrients and headquartered in Florida, donated \$500 to help sponsor the event.

"We help the world grow the food it needs, so the international theme ties in with our mission," commented Jessica Kap-paz, a representative of Mosaic who attended the festival. Many of Mosaic's

local employees have children who attend Village.

According to Susan Miller, owner of Village ELC, close to 300 visitors attended. While the weather kept some people away, Miller was pleased to announce, "The festival was even better this year."

The Village Early Learning Center is a 10,500 square foot, free-standing facility located at 3741 Canoga Park Drive, Brandon, Florida. Village ELC programs are available for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years. Visit www.villageelc.com for additional information or call (813) 651-0779.

Rep. Raburn moves office to Bloomingtondale

BY KIM MILLER

Bloomingtondale welcomes Florida State Representative, Jake Raburn (R-Riverview) to the neighborhood. Raburn recently moved his local office near to the Sheriff's Bloomingtondale Community Station on Erindale Drive, just west of Lithia-Pinecrest Road. Here's a little background on one of Bloomingtondale's newest residents.

Jake Raburn was a mere 27 years old when District 57 elected him representative to the Florida House of Representatives in November 2012. That made Raburn the youngest representative ever elected. He is a native of Hillsborough County; a product of the Hillsborough County School District; and a proud University of Florida Gator.

"I've always been intrigued by the political process. In my personal life I help operate a small family business and I see the way we deal with government on a daily basis. I wanted to be part of the solution, helping small businesses be prosperous. I hope one day to I'll be able to pass our business on to our children," said Raburn.

Raburn says his political interests aren't dedicated only to small business. Other areas he hopes to impact are education, agriculture, and transportation. Two of the education-related issues he is interested in working on are legislation to increase access to career and technical education for public middle and high school students; and, proposal of

a bill that would allow school districts to open their facilities for public use by "removing some of the liability" the schools would suffer if people get injured while engaged in these public activities. In agriculture he would like to include a bill that would streamline statewide fertilizer regulations.

Raburn sits on the Florida House State Affairs Committee and four subcommittees: Education Appropriations, K-12, Transportation and Highway Safety, and Health Innovation.

Mr. Raburn's local office is now located at 3618 Erindale Drive, Valrico. They are open weekdays during regular business hours, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The office telephone number is (813) 653-7097.

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National signing day celebrated at Bloomingdale

BY KIM WALLACE

Families and coaches gathered in the school cafeteria on national signing day – Feb. 6 – to congratulate nine Bloomingdale Senior High School student-athletes on signing letters of intent with colleges as far away as Nebraska and New York. So far this year Bloomingdale has celebrated two baseball signings, five girls' soccer signings, one cross country/track signing and one football signing.

National signing day takes place the first Wednesday in February and ceremoniously kicks off the two-month signing period for high school senior athletes in several sports: football, baseball, field hockey, soccer, track and field, cross country

and men's water polo. On this day, thousands of high school student-athletes from across the country receive athletic scholarships upon signing a letter of intent that binds them to attend a university or college for one academic year. Upon signing, other schools are prohibited from recruiting these students. While signing does not guarantee a spot on the team or playing time, it is celebrated as the next phase of life as a college student-athlete.

Bloomingdale High congratulates its class of 2013 athletes on their special accomplishment: Baseball: Cody Crouse is heading to Florida International University (FIU) in Miami and Justin Ambrosino signed with the College of



KIM WALLACE

Seven Bloomingdale seniors sign letters of intent at the after-school ceremony on Feb. 2. Pictured (L to R): Annie Barrett, Brittany Coca, Amber Coca, Brianna Berrios, Elyse Fontecchio, Eugene Baker, and Julie Roggeman

Central Florida. These two young men started playing baseball at a very young age. Both have played all four years of high school baseball under head coach Kris Wilken. Coach Wilken is very proud of both boys' accomplishments while at Bloomingdale and wishes them the best in college.

Girls Soccer: Annie Barrett signed with Mercer University in Macon, Ga.; Brittany Coca will be attending Belmont University in Nashville, Tenn.; twin sister Amber Coca is headed to Wagner University in State Island, N.Y.; Brianna Berrios will remain closer to home by attending Flagler University in St. Augustine; and, Elyse Fontecchio signed with University of North Florida in Jacksonville. Each of these young women has played all four years at Bloomingdale under coaches Sue Peet and Heather Iverson. Peet and Iverson proudly commented that the girls not only played good soccer at BSHS but also



Soccer players sign scholarship letters of intent. Pictured (L to R): Brittany Coca, Annie Barrett, Brianna Berrios, Elyse Fontecchio, and Amber Coca.

demonstrated strong leadership to their teammates and experienced academic success. Coach Iverson reminded them, "always remember you're a student first, and then an athlete." Football: Eugene Baker signed with Big 10 powerhouse, University of Nebraska (Lincoln,

Neb.). "Eugene was a hard worker on the field and always wanted the best for his team; he was positive and very determined to always do his best," commented by Head Coach John Booth. Cross Country/Track: Julie Roggeman will be attending Florida Southern University in Lake-

land. Julie has run for Bloomingdale all four years and specialized in 5K cross country and 800m in track. Head coach Jennifer Beach and assistant coaches Dale Bateman and Steve Littleton are very proud of all Roggeman's accomplishments and wish her the best.

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Dodgeball fundraiser a success for Humane Society club

BY LISA KAUFFMAN

The Bloomingdale High School Humane Society club held its third annual dodgeball tournament March 1 to raise funds for the Humane Society of Tampa Bay. Students began forming teams, holding practices, and thinking up creative team names such as "Dodgefathers" and "Rajun' Balls" months before the tourney. With all of the hype from students, Bloomingdale teachers even decided to create their own team, which included Principal Sue Burkett. Each team was comprised of six to eight individuals who paid \$5 each to participate. In

all, 23 teams participated this year making the event a big success according to senior Anya Jain, club founder and president.

According to Jain, the club chose to organize annual dodgeball tournaments years ago during one of their very first club meetings.

"We wanted to find the most effective way to get our school involved in a fun-spirited competition to support our charity," said Jain.

This year "Da Clique" and "Junior Mafia" went head to head in the final round of the tournament where "Da Clique" came out victorious and was crowned Dodgeball Team

Champion of 2013. The event raised over \$1,500.

"I started the club because I believe that actions speak louder than words and that we should take proactive steps to help end the problem of animal abuse," said Jain.

Jain couldn't be happier about Bloomingdale's student and faculty support.

"My favorite part about dodgeball is watching the school come together and get excited about something so beneficial to a cause we believe in," she said.

Since Jain started the Bloomingdale's Humane Society club three years ago, the dodgeball fundraiser has accumulated a



LISA KAUFFMAN

Winning team, Da Clique, with Bloomingdale's Humane Society president Anya Jain. From left: Becca Brown, Tyler Morton, Rudy Moore, Garrett Lorenzo, Cody Hill, Brandon Miller, Hunter Campbell, Elyse Fontecchio, and Anya Jain.

total of \$3,500. A check for the total amount will be presented to the Humane Society of Tampa Bay during the next club meeting.

Burns Middle School welcomes Mr. DiPrima

BY KIM MILLER

For the first time in Burns school history a male Bruin leads the den. Matthew DiPrima was selected in February for the job of Burns principal after the departure of Susan Burkett, who took over the reigns as principal of Bloomingdale High School. Burkett was well-liked and respected as was her predecessor, Brenda Nolte. While DePrima admits their shoes are tough to fill, he is equipped and ready for the challenge. DiPrima has been working in the Hillsborough County School system for 20 years, most recently as assistant principal of curriculum at Bartels Middle School. He also served as an assistant principal for nine years at Mulrennan Middle School. DePrima

attended USF, has a bachelor's degree in social science education, and a master's degree in educational leadership. He brings to Burns a wealth of knowledge and experience, and has worked with some of the best educators in the county.

"I know Burns' level of success is unparalleled. Burns has great students, teachers, families, and is part of a community that will help ensure its continued success," stated DiPrima.

One of the ways DiPrima aims to continue the excellence at Burns is to encourage collaboration among the faculty. He feels that each educator's experiences are a beneficial source of information for other teachers, and for him. According to DiPri-



KIM MILLER

Mr. DiPrima gives some helpful tips to eighth grader, Jessica Kelley.

ma, encouraging collaborative relationships helps to build and strengthen the atmosphere of trust among the faculty, thus leading to what is best for the students.

With innovative ideas, a positive attitude, and a wealth of knowledge, Mr. DiPrima may be stretching those administrative shoes a little bigger for future leaders of the Bruins den.

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Big box store ready to move into Bloomingdale's front yard

STAFF REPORT

You have driven by it countless times on Bloomingdale Avenue – that big open space near the library. In fact, it may be the most peaceful stretch of your commute. Now picture an extra traffic light by the library, perhaps even a city bus stop nearby, and the blissful hint of country occupied by an apartment community and a big box store. This may delight avid superstore shoppers who have the luxury of venturing out in the middle of the day during the work week. But, the new vision is likely unsettling for many area residents who enjoy dropping into the library, or whose children attend Bloomingdale High School; it's perhaps most disconcerting for commuters. If you missed the other couple of local news stories, and have been relying primarily on rumors, here's some information on how this project came to be and how it could impact you.

Boundaries

The property is bordered on the north by Guiles Road, on the east by the already existing shops along Lithia-Pinecrest, on the south by Bloomingdale, and on the west by the public library and Bloomingdale High School.

Timeline

In 2003 the property was still in the hands of private property owners. While in talks to sell the land, property owners were under the impression the land would be zoned for Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND), in brief known as new urbanism, neo-traditional, or village style, much like the Winthrop development. This

concept would have included a variety of housing types, a mix of land use, an active center, a pedestrian-friendly design, and often a transit option within a compact neighborhood scale area. This design is frequently used to address the problems with associated with suburban sprawl and auto oriented development.

In 2005 the property was sold to Thomas Enterprises. According to the sellers, Mr. Thomas of Thomas Industries worked diligently with the county to bring the original vision to fruition; however, he went into foreclosure on the property waiting for the county to approve his plans. The property was then acquired by M&I Bank of Sarasota.

In 2010 M&I requested the zoning be changed to a multi-use design (MUD) and subsequently sold the property to Redstone Investment. Also known as mixed use, this type of zoning includes residential, commercial, and business all in one area, as well as use and access of public transportation. Public notice to amend the original plan was provided solely through newspaper notices in the Tampa Tribune. According to the Community Affairs Office of Neighborhood Relations there was no legal requirement for the posting of site-specific signs (public meeting signs), as the change from TND to MUD was not considered rezoning. The process required only two public hearings with the Board of County Commissioners and a vote on consistency with the Hillsborough County Comprehensive Plan by the Planning Commission, which was received.

In 2013 the developer (Redstone Investment)



STAFF PHOTOS

West bound traffic at Cade Lane on a Monday morning

submitted a site plan to the county that outlined a big box store, five out-parcels, and a residential property – apartments/townhomes, since single family dwellings were ruled out.

Development on the site may occur in as little as two years from now. Final plans have not been released. The potential to alter the course of development may rest solely with Charles White, Hillsborough County Transportation Review Manager, who can decide to gather more data on area impact from increased traffic while conducting a detailed traffic analysis.

Potential Impact

What is the possible impact on roads?

Lithia-Pinecrest Road is currently rated by Hillsborough County as "F," a failed road, which means it cannot handle existing traffic traversing north and south. Bloomingdale Avenue is a "C" rated road, which means that it satisfactorily maintains its load of traffic; it is also desig-



Monday morning traffic in front of Bloomingdale high school between 7-8am

nated as a truck route. Commuter experience might argue the "C" rating. The addition of apartment/townhomes and a big box store will add retail traffic and residential traffic.

The Feb. 13, 2013, Access Analysis of Bloomingdale Avenue and Lithia-Pinecrest Road indicated that impact to traffic during peak hours is satisfactory (Lincks and Associates). It is uncertain whether anticipated addition of a Wawa convenience store/gas station at the corner of Lithia-Pinecrest and Blooming-

dale was taken into consideration.

The developer's concession is the addition of a traffic light on Bloomingdale Avenue at Blowing Oak Street (the intersection just east of the library) to accommodate turning into the new development. For the library this means closing off the existing turn lane to make room for a turn lane into the development at the new light.

What is will be the impact on schools?

Bloomingdale High School is overcrowded, already exceeding its capac-

ity limit of 2233 students. It is hoped that Redstone is working with Hillsborough County Schools to accommodate Bloomingdale High School and Burns Middle School for the impact on school enrollment with the construction of 250-300 apartments/townhomes. Alafia Elementary is also impacted by this development from a safety perspective. Alafia does not transport students to school via bus; it is considered a walking school. Alafia students walk, ride bikes, or are

What are your thoughts on the proposed big box store?

BY LISA KAUFFMAN

This month the Gazette asked residents to share their thoughts about the proposed big box store development off Bloomingdale Avenue near the Bloomingdale Public Library.

Scott Sandberg, Bloomingdale resident commented, "I first learned about the proposed development plans in the newspaper a couple of months ago. It's not a bad spot for apartments, and it's a valuable piece of land; but you don't want to make an already bad street worse. If they're going to increase density, then they must mitigate congestion with proper ingress and egress to alleviate traffic concerns."

Jaclyn Johnson, Bloomingdale resident and teacher at Bloomingdale High responded, "It's obvious that this construction will congest the roads. I live here, I teach

here, and from what I can tell congestion might be a real concern."

Mitchell McDade, Bloomingdale resident and student of Bloomingdale High said, "There's going to be a large growth of population, which is going to make Bloomingdale a lot more crowded and will create a lot of traffic on Bloomingdale, Culbreath and Lithia, and those roads already have a lot of traffic, especially before and after school. I already see car accidents on Bloomingdale all the time, and with more people and traffic around the high school, I think we will see more accidents too."

Jennifer Beach, Teacher at Bloomingdale High commented, "I'm concerned about the traffic. Bloomingdale and Lithia are not wide enough roads, and with apartments and a major cooperation built there, it will definitely increase traffic."



Jackie Johnson



Scott Sandberg

Burns students saddened over sudden loss of teacher and coach

Burns Middle School mourns the recent passing of ESE teacher and girls track coach Jettrice Barnes. Barnes passed away March 11 and funeral services were held March 16. Barnes was a product of Hillsborough County Schools, graduating from Riverview High School. She later earned her bachelor's degree from University of Florida, and a MBA from Chestnut Hill College in Philadelphia, PA. An automated message from Principal DiPrima went out to parents of Burns students on March 18, the first day students returned to school following spring break. During this telephonic announcement DiPrima assured parents that counseling was available to students on Monday to help them cope with the loss, and expressed that Barnes will be missed by faculty, students and staff at Burns Middle School.

BIG BOX

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driven to school, which necessitates that some students walk or ride bikes along what will be a busier Bloomingdale Avenue. **What will be the impact on community service facilities?**

Three highly used nonprofits are located very near to the development: Bloomingdale Public Library, the Campo YMCA and Bloomingdale Little League. Eastbound library patrons will be forced to make a U-turn at the proposed light, or cut through the new development. Parking at the library will not be increased. Currently, the library has been

assured that while the turn lane will be eliminated, the entrance and exit on Bloomingdale Avenue will not be closed off. The YMCA sits directly across the street from the future development site and Bloomingdale Little League is a stone's throw away. It remains to be seen how additional traffic will impact these organizations.

How will the environment be impacted?

Development negatively impacts the environment. Much of the forestation and greenery will be destroyed. Wildlife will also be displaced. So far, little if anything has been shared by Redstone about their plans to address the environmental impact.

More Information

To date, there are more questions than answers. While it appears that nothing can be done to affect a change to the proposed development plans, elected County commissioners may be willing to share their knowledge if asked. Additionally, residents

may become more informed by reviewing the Access Analysis report prepared for Redstone Investment by Lincks and Associates, Inc. A Preliminary Site Plan is also available as public record. To download these documents visit <ftp://ftp.hillsborough-county.org/web/download/>.



LISA KAUFFMAN

Idol winner Kendall Hayes and her fan club. From left: Kaleb Koutz, Devan Ludden, Jacob Miller, Kendall Hayes, Sam Miller, Heidi Earl, and Bailey Lipsey.

Bloomingtondale Ambassadors host 5th Annual Bloomingtondale Idol Competition

BY LISA KAUFFMAN

The BSHS Ambassadors show choir hosted their annual singing competition, Bloomingtondale Idol, last month. The two-night event began with a preliminary round on Jan. 29, in which twenty Bloomingtondale students who had pre-auditioned each sang a cover song in front of a panel of three judges and an audience of students, teachers, and parents. Eight students advanced to the semifinal round the following week based off of judges' picks and votes from the audience.

During the final round on Feb. 5, the top eight contestants were shaved down to only four: Olivia Figh (freshman), Olivia Nahas (sophomore), Kaylee Konsulis (junior) and Kendall Hayes (senior). After the final vote, Kendall Hayes was awarded the title of Bloomingtondale Idol. "It's very unexpected. Everyone here is so talented," Hayes said. "The most difficult part for me was being confident, I was really nervous. But once you find your confidence you'll do awesome." Hayes performed a rendition of "The

Broken Ones" by Dia Frampton and "It's Time" by Imagine Dragons. Idol judge Miguel Oquendo, a volunteer music assistant at Bloomingtondale, revealed that it was a very close competition. "It could've been any of the top eight contestants. This was the most talented group of contestants we've had," said Oquendo. "It's great to see these kids perform and watch as they progress and improve over the years."

Bloomingtondale Idol is a fundraiser for the Ambassadors, so the group's President, Jonathan Riviere (senior) was understandably pleased to see the event run smoothly. "Setting up a competition like this was definitely a lot of hard work," said Riviere, "but it's a great feeling to be able to announce the winner; and I know exactly how the contestants feel because I was once a contestant in this competition too." Money raised from Bloomingtondale Idol funds the Ambassadors' spring music trip to Myrtle Beach, S.C., where they will compete against other schools from around the country.

Relay for Life - helps close to home

Who do you know with cancer? Whether it's a friend or family member, chances are great that you know at least one person who has been diagnosed with some form of cancer. Cancer is prevalent in America; over 12 million living Americans have had a cancer diagnosis in their lifetime. It can be difficult to know how to help; but local the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life events makes it easy for almost everyone to participate in its efforts to cure, prevent and treat cancer. Relay for Life events take place in many communities during the months of March, April and May.

"People can help by raising money as a Relay participant, donating to team, or volunteering at an event," explains Bloomingtondale East resident Geri Tellier.

Tellier has participated as a walker many times, several of which were at Bloomingtondale High School when her daughter was a BSHS student.

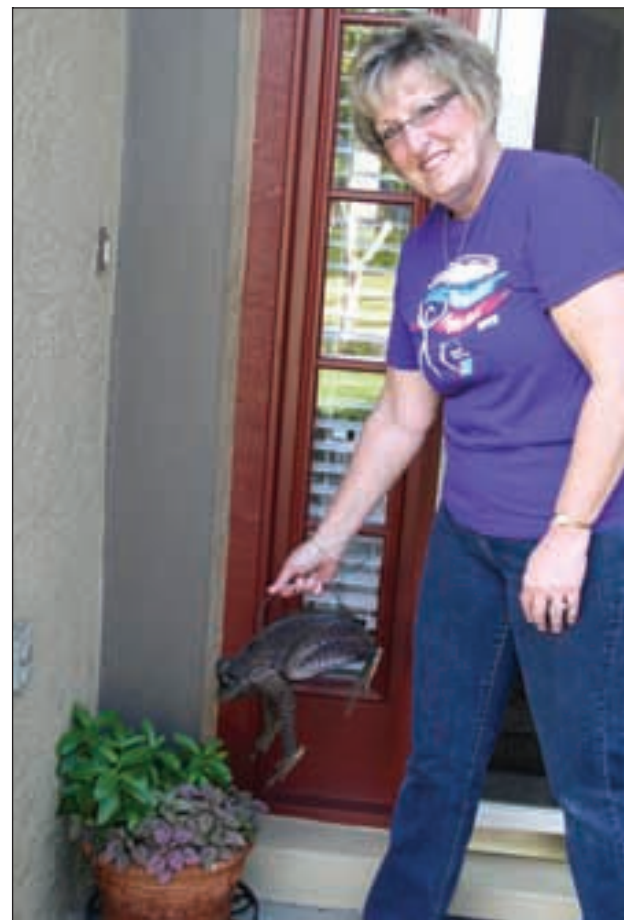
"I walk in support of others I know who have lost their battles with cancer or who are fighting the disease."

Geri's father died of

stomach cancer, which makes participating very personal; but for the past two years the walk has been meaningful in a different way - Geri now walks as a survivor. She has participated in the opening survivor lap at Altamonte Springs and Bloomingtondale High School Relay for Life events.

"We need to do something," said Tellier. "Cancer affects so many people. You just never know when you or someone you love may have need of the services and treatment made possible through organizations like the American Cancer Society or facilities like our local Moffitt Cancer Treatment Center. Before my diagnosis, I considered myself a healthy person I was in good physical shape and felt great. In fact, I remember asking myself, why I made a routine gynecological appointment for the day after my husband and I returned from a cruise in 2008. That appointment was uneventful as always."

Soon after that appointment Tellier began to feel exhausted and started running a low-grade fever - symptoms easily be attributed to a virus possibly



Geri Tellier gardens around her Bloomingtondale home, these days applying lots of sunscreen.

contracted on the cruise. Later symptoms such as severe abdominal pain and bloating prompted more tests and two courses of antibiotics. A little over one month after initial symptoms appeared a CT-scan revealed a large mass on her uterus, cysts on the ovaries, and a possible mass on her breast.

"During my ultrasound, I remember thinking, 'if the technician wishes me well when I leave that's probably a bad sign.' Sure enough, as I left, the technician placed her hand on my shoulder and said, 'good luck.' The mass turned out to be 15 centimeters and I was diagnosed with both ovarian and endometrial cancer. Luckily my husband was with me when I learned the diagnoses; he made the diagnoses; he made sure we didn't leave without first scheduling an appointment at a treatment center. Three days later I underwent surgery for a

total hysterectomy at Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa."

The surgery was successful as was the six rounds of chemotherapy that followed. January 2014 marks Tellier's five-year anniversary. While undergoing treatment at Moffitt, Tellier says she was treated like royalty. She says she is living proof that continued research, access to treatment and support make a difference.

Armed with sunscreen, Tellier walks the Nature's Way loop with friends several times per week as part of her health regimen. Recently diagnosed with in situ (early stage) melanoma (thus far been treated successfully with outpatient surgery), Tellier encourages people to take advantage of every opportunity life offers, participate in a Relay event in some way, and if you walk the Relay, keep it up after the event.

April Area Relay for Life Events

Bloomingtondale High School Relay for Life will be held April 5-6 from 6 p.m. to noon at Bloomingtondale High School. It's not too late to participate. Anyone interested in donating can do so online until Aug. 1, and please come out and cheer on the walkers Saturday April 6.

Visit the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life website (www.relayforlife.org) to donate or for details on the following upcoming Relay events:

Bloomingtondale Senior High - April 5

Brandon High School Track - April 26

Armwood High School Track - April 19

East Bay High School - April 6

Plant City High School - April 19

Greco Middle School - April 26

Trinity Baptist Church - April 6

Infant self-rescue program just in time for summer

BY SUZANNE JONES

Soon Bloomingdale residents will be shopping for pool tools and toys, planning beachside family reunions ... and enrolling their kids in water safety lessons?

The last of these may not seem like the others, but it definitely belongs. Drowning was the leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 4 in the state of Florida for 2010, according to the Centers for Disease Control, and it accounted for 14 deaths among children ages 0 to 6 in Hillsborough County from 2009 to 2011, according to the Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics. As the weather warms and Bloomingdale area children dash for the pool or beach, Campo YMCA is doing its part to help ensure their safety through a relatively new program, Infant Swimming Resource's Self-Rescue – a course aimed at teaching critical water safety skills to children ages 6 months to 6 years of age.

The Infant Swimming Resource (ISR) Self-Rescue program is credited with saving the lives of 800 children since its inception in the mid 1960s, and became available at the Campo YMCA in spring 2012. The four to six week program is taught by independent, certified ISR instructors and is held in the pool five days per week, Monday to Friday for 10 minutes each day. Children ages 6-12 months learn to roll on their backs to float, rest and breath until help arrives. Children 1-6 years old learn a sequence of swimming until they need air, and then rolling onto their backs to rest and breath before continuing to swim to safety. Parental education is part of the initial program and a parent refresher is offered at no charge annually.

"So far we have graduated five children, but we are hoping to enroll 60 children in 2013 now that the program is fully up and running," said Noel Russell, Campo Y Aquatics Director.

"The ISR Self-Rescue program can be relatively expensive with fees ranging from \$265 to \$360 over and above the one-time enrollment fee of \$105," explained Russell. "However, the Campo Y is committed to water safety and works with families to make sure the program is affordable to members and non-members alike through our scholarship program."

The Campo YMCA is one of the largest providers of swim instruction in the area, with 2,244 children enrolled in its swim program in 2012. For more information on ISR or any of the other aquatics programs, visit www.tampaymca.org or call the Campo Y at (813) 684-1371.

BLOOMINGDALE COMMUNITY STATION NOTES

It's my third anniversary as CRD for Bloomingdale

On March 22, 2013 I completed my third year as the Community Resource Deputy (CRD) for Bloomingdale. Thank you for a great three years! I look forward to working with all of you in continuing the outstanding work that has been done to make Bloomingdale and the surrounding communities safer and more secure places to live and work.

CONTINUED COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT EQUALS LOWER CRIME RATES

Many successful programs have been put in place by the Sheriff's Office to improve the quality of life in our community. Community policing is one of the major factors in reducing the crime rates and stopping the criminals that invade our area. The teamwork and personal involvement of concerned, dedicated residents makes the big difference. Thank you to those who have been involved. Please continue your involvement and renew your commitment to work with those of us in the Sheriff's Office. When you alert us we can take immediate action; we will chase down these criminals and put them where they belong – behind bars.

I invite community residents who have concerns or issues to become a part of the Sheriff's Bloomingdale Area



Curtis Warren

Community Council (BACC) or visit one of the monthly BACC meetings. The council is made up of concerned residents, homeowners association members and deputies who work together to improve our community. The BACC meets the third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Community Station on Erindale Drive.

The Volunteer Citizens on Patrol Program is another initiative that has proven to be extremely successful. For those interested please contact our Community Outreach Division Volunteer Section at (813) 247-0944 to find out how you can become an important part of this great team of volunteers. The next training session for the Volunteer Citizen's Patrol Program is scheduled for May. Call for the details.

RESIDENTS MUST TAKE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

A review of Sheriff's crime statistics for our area shows that crime has taken a good drop in District IV, which covers Bloomingdale, Fishhawk and surrounding areas. In reviewing the crime statistics, we noticed some obvious patterns as to the types of crimes and possible causes. Firstly, in all of the incidents of vehicle bur-

glaries, the vehicles were left open. The Solution – lock up your vehicles. Secondly, in home burglary instances, the homeowner made it very easy for the criminals. They left their garage doors open. Again the solution, close your garage door.

These are just two examples of how residents can help decrease crime in our area and not become victims. The responsibility for keeping your homes and vehicles safe and secure starts with you. Do not make it easy for the criminals. Take the time to secure your vehicles and homes.

Remember: If you notice any suspicious activity or a crime being committed, get all the information you can – descriptions of individuals, descriptions of vehicles and license numbers – and immediately call the Sheriff's Dispatch at (813) 247-8200. Time is critical.

Tampa Electric employees battle over barbeque

Employees who work for Tampa Electric Company bring out their big cookers and fire up their competitive spirit every year for their cook-off for charity.

Scarlett Smith of Zephyrhills, who is on the barbeque charity committee, said she expects more than 15 teams will compete to see who makes the best barbeque at the April 6 event.

Smith said the cook-off and Family Fun Day will take place at the Hillsborough County Fairgrounds at the intersection of State Road 60 and Sydney Washer Road from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Smith works as an administrative specialist at TECO. She said the event draws more than 600 people every year.

The money will benefit Operation Helping Hand, which provides assistance for the families of active duty, wounded and injured.

After sampling the different barbeque, participants may vote on the "People's Choice" best barbeque while judges pick the official winner.

Smith said there will also be a dessert competition. For more information, call (813) 781-2662.