

THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

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PROVIDED

Bloomington resident Kendall Duncan and Honor Flight veteran John Eberle take in the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Honoring the Greatest Generation

Honor Flights take those who served in World War II to see the monuments erected in their honor.

See story, page 8.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Honest disagreement is often a good sign of progress."

Mahatma Gandhi

Center Place invites artists to participate in first children's art show

BY LAURA CONE
THE BRANDON NEWS

Budding artists will get the chance to step into the spotlight with the first Little Monsters Create Children's Art Show at the Center Place Fine Arts & Civic Association in Brandon.

Dawn Galia of Valrico, the executive director of Center Place, said the children's art will be hung in Center Place's Grand Room gallery July 8 to 31.

"We have a different art show every month," Galia said. "We have theater for the kids and a lot of art classes for kids, but we have never had an art show just for our kids. We thought it would be something that would involve the whole community."

Galia said children who earn first, second or third place will win cash prizes. They will host an art reception including refreshments on July 11 at 6 p.m. at the Center Place, 619 Vonderburg Drive, Suite. B, Brandon. They will present awards at 6:30 p.m.

She said awards will be given in three age categories: ages 4 to 6, 7 to 10 and 11 to 13. The event is open to the public.

"The kids love winning prizes," Galia said. "Some of the kids are great little artists. We thought it would be nice to put their art on exhibit for a change."

She said some of the art that may be accepted includes drawings, paintings, photography, ceramics, jewelry, clay and wood.

The 2-D artwork must be matted or a wrapped canvas which will need to be wired to hang. They won't accept anything over 11 by 14 inches. Photography must be matted, with nothing over 11 by 14 inches. Three-D pieces must not exceed 12 by 12 inches, with a weight limit of 3 pounds.

"We have been in the community since 1976 so, to me, we must be doing something right," she said. "The arts make a change in every child's life. Most of the kids involved in arts tend to be more involved with different clubs. They seem to be more community minded."

Participants must also submit two typed 3-by-5 index cards with each art work with the following information: name, title of work, artistic statement and phone number.

"They can be as creative as they would like," she said. "It can be something they did at school or at home."

She said entries may be submitted June 24 to 28 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Center Place Fine Arts & Civic Association. She hopes to make it an annual event.

"We have glass cases to put three-dimensional art in such as jewelry or clay or a mosaic piece," Galia said.

There is a \$5 entrance fee, per piece or three pieces for \$10. Artwork should be picked up on July 31 by 5 p.m.

For information, email cpfinearts@verizon.net or visit their website at centerplacebrandon.org.

Yard of the Month



Tom and Yolanda Gacio

2117 Golf Manor Blvd

Bloomingtondale East

Yard of the Month is sponsored by Ace Hardware of Bloomingtondale

Send your Yard of the Month nominations to inbloomingtondalenews@gmail.com or call (813) 681-2051. Winners will receive a \$25 gift card redeemable at Ace Hardware of Bloomingtondale.

Hurricane expo

Learn ways to "survive, thrive and stay alive" at the free 2013 Tampa Bay Hurricane Expo from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Museum of Science & Industry, 4801 E. Fowler Ave.

Find out what to do before, during and after a storm. Learn the importance of having a solid disaster plan in place well in advance to aid in a quick recover after a storm.

Radio Disney will provide kid-friendly entertainment, games and other activities, while the adults enjoy a variety of speakers and vendors. There will be a resiliency/survivor's panel at 10 a.m. with real stories from people who have experienced and recovered from a disaster and meteorologist weather panel Q&A's at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

For information, visit www.TampaBayHurricaneExpo.com.

BHA reopens Bell Shoals office

The Bloomingtondale Homeowners Association has recently moved back into an office shared with the Bloomingtondale Special Taxing District (BSTD). Residents are invited to stop by with inquiries during office hours. Ask for Office Manager, Joy Boisselle.

Bloomingtondale Homeowners Association
3509 Bell Shoals Road,
Valrico, FL 33596
Phone: (813) 681-2051
Email: bloomingtondale.homeowners@gmail.com
Office hours: Monday through Wednesday, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., and Thursday 11 a.m.-2 p.m.



BY KIM MILLER

Dottie Bradley and Jane Neal discuss the crocheted dress Megan Khor (center) made for the “Newborns in Need” program

Giveback program crochets comfort in community

By KIM MILLER

There is a small group of volunteers that meet the first Wednesday of every month, 6 to 8 p.m. at the Bloomingdale Public Library. These volunteers are part of a group, led by Dottie Bradley and Jane Neal, called the Bloomingdale Giveback Program.

They started the program about a year ago, providing handmade blankets, teddy bears, newborn clothing, and other knit items to various area organizations.

Most of the crocheted newborn clothing goes to Newborns in Need, a nonprofit organization dedicated to taking care of needy babies. In working with Brandon Regional Hospital they have donated 120 caps and 17 blankets to the program. They also donate some of their handmade items to the Joshua House, which is a safe haven for abused, abandoned, and neglected Tampa area children. The Bloomingdale Giveback Program donates more than newborn clothing and blankets; 13-year-old Megan Khor has come up with a pattern to make crocheted diaper bags for the mothers. Many area nursing homes enjoy shawls, blankets and scarves provided by the program. Dottie has also been working with the Bloomingdale Fire Rescue to provide them with felt hand-sewn balls, teddy bears and blankets for children after a fire.

“Children need something to call their own after such a devastating loss,” expressed Dottie. “We are trying to give them that something again.”

The program always needs volunteers, no matter their previous needlework experience. Dottie, Jane, and Megan are more than willing to teach anyone how to crochet or knit. And some project tasks require little expertise. Friends of the Bloomingdale Library funds the program, providing it with yarn and other essentials; volunteers are welcome to bring their own supplies if desired.

Prospective high school volunteers may be interested to learn that they can earn Bright Futures community service hours by participating in the program. Interested persons should feel free to attend any of the Wednesday meetings. Contact the Bloomingdale Regional Public Library at (813) 273-3652 for information.

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

President:
George May
Vice president:
Jim Harris
Secretary:
Daniel Berkowitz
Treasurer:
Dennis Osborn
Director at Large:
Mary Shaw

The Bloomingdale Gazette

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Protesters line streets against big box

STAFF REPORT

During rush hour on May 7, approximately 200 protestors lined the sidewalks from Bloomingdale High School to the YMCA, and north from Bloomingdale Avenue to Guiles Road. They came armed with signs protesting the proposed building of a big box store near Bloomingdale Avenue and Lithia-Pinecrest Road, and sported neon bright T-shirts in hopes of catching the attention of drivers on their way home. The protest was organized by a group of concerned citizens calling themselves "CAN-DO" (Coordinated Active Neighborhoods for Development Organization).

Overall, the concerns expressed were about safety, noise, property values, increased traffic, impact on schools, and impact on ancillary roads when people try to avoid the increased traffic along Bloomingdale and Lithia-Pinecrest. Residents also voiced concern for small businesses in the area that will be impacted by a big box store, and the impact on the library, YMCA, and Bloomingdale Little League.

"Two hundred sixty-one apartments in such a tiny area isn't right, let alone the increased traffic, increased crime, and impact on the environment; everything about this project is wrong," said Jeanne Poliseo. Poliseo was there to show her support and voice concern about the apartment complex that

is part of the projected big box development plan.

Patrick Crump, who lives across the street from the proposed development site said, "This development is going to decrease my property value, and there is going to be so much noise and havoc." He also takes walks back on that property on a daily basis and had seen gopher turtle burrows, which are a protected animal.

Not just adults in the community appear to be upset; elementary school students Eric Marshall and Alexander Williams are young residents of the neighborhoods across from the site. Both boys expressed worry about being able to get enough quiet time to do homework and rest for school the next day. They also said they hope they will still be able to play safely outside with friends in their neighborhood.

The protest raised awareness in the community as evidenced by an increase in persons wishing to become involved with CAN-DO in preventing the planned development. The group's May 14 meeting was moved from the Bloomingdale Public Library to the Palms Community Church to accommodate its growing numbers. The group also recently retained the services of Tampa land-use lawyer Pamela Jo Hatley.

"We are asking Pamela Jo Hatley to help us find answers to questions that our commissioners are either unwilling or unable



KIM MILLER

Sign waving protest draws attention to community's plea to prevent building of big box store and apartments on Bloomingdale Avenue near the high school and public library.

to provide," said CAN-DO steering committee member Jerome Monette. "The county commissioners may say there's nothing they can do to stop this development, but we are committed to pursuing every option available to save our community."

On May 15 CAN-DO was added to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) meeting agenda. Commissioner Hagan explained that the BOCC is legally limited in its

ability to prevent the development from occurring; however, he moved to dedicate all developer transportation mitigation funds from this project to improve transportation issues in the area. Other board meeting outcomes included directing staff to include specific recommended transportation projects when the development agreement is presented to the board, and to address during the budget process any new transpor-

tation funding shortfalls that might exist for this project.

CAN-DO invites interested persons to sign their petition on change.org which has reached over 1000 signatures, and to visit www.hillsborough-county.org for information on voicing concerns directly to the county commissioners. CAN-DO meeting dates are also posted to change.org.

Hillsborough County Commissioner Al Higginbotham To Meet On June 10 With Residents On The Proposed Development On Bloomingdale Avenue

What: Listening session to give residents an opportunity to voice concerns
When: Monday, June 10 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Where: Brandon Recreation Center, 502 E. Sadie St. in Brandon
Format: Opening presentation followed by public comment

Hillsborough County Commissioner Al Higginbotham, District 4, wants to hear from residents regarding the proposed development on Bloomingdale Avenue near Lithia Pinecrest. This proposed Mixed Use development would include retail, apartments, and other businesses.

This meeting will be held on Monday, June 10 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Brandon Recreation Center, 502 E. Sadie St. in Brandon. There will be a brief presentation from the County Attorney's office that will be followed by an opportunity for residents to provide comment. The Brandon Recreation Center can seat approximately 450 people.

Speakers need to register and will have a specified time to speak - up to 3 minutes, depending on the number of speakers - to present their views on this proposed development.

BHA asks residents to help continue the spirit of community

What defines Bloomingdale as a community — as more than a just a random cluster of subdivisions? In short, it's the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association (BHA). The BHA works hard on behalf of Bloomingdale homeowners to ensure that their collective interests are represented and to maximize their quality of life as community members. Now is the time for homeowners to get involved in the BHA and make sure their voices are heard.

The BHA is a voluntary organization that was founded by residents in 1979 primarily to help represent the interests of homeowners who lived in neighborhoods without mandatory membership associations — organizations legally empowered to

manage and enforce deed restrictions. Over one-third of Bloomingdale homeowners still reside in voluntary HOA neighborhoods and are essentially without a voice unless they become BHA members.

Fielding resident complaints is not the BHA's be-all and end-all. For all Bloomingdale homeowners, it strives to imbue the true spirit of community. The BHA's strictly volunteer Board of Directors and committee members lead a variety of efforts aimed at meeting the organization's goals such as promoting a spirit of neighborly relations; achieving cooperation in obtaining improved utilities, governmental services, and other beneficial improvements for the community; promoting

physical improvements of the community for the common good of its property owners and residents and providing opposition to any act that may tend to depreciate the property values in the community.

How can you help the BHA build "community"?

1. Make sure your voice is heard. Become actively involved in the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association. A number of board positions are open, and committee volunteers are always needed (e.g., for the annual family fest). Interested persons are encouraged to contact the BHA office by calling (813) 681-2051 or via email to bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com. Attend monthly meetings to become better informed and to voice questions or

concerns. Meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Bloomingdale Community Offices located at 3509 Bell Shoals Road.

2. Support the BHA by paying voluntary memberships dues. For just seven cents a day (\$25 per year), homeowners can help the BHA provide valuable community services and events: annual cleanups, annual Family Fest, the Bloomingdale Community High School Scholarship Fund, Santa and Mrs. Claus' annual visit, the community web site, deed restriction control, the Bloomingdale Gazette newspaper, and much more!

In June, Bloomingdale residents will receive their 2013 Membership Packet. The packet includes

a membership letter explaining the various services the association provides and the application. The mailing also includes a letter detailing the B.J. Stelter Community Scholarship program with a support request. Residents may continue to submit dues and donations via check, and will soon have an online payment option. Look for a PayPal link on the BHA web site (www.bloomingdalegazette.com). Help ensure that Bloomingdale continues to be more than just a cluster of random subdivisions. Join with the BHA to help make the community a better place to live.

Note for residents who paid 2012 dues: Residents who recently paid 2012 dues may be surprised with the June membership

drive mailing. Normally, the BHA operates on a calendar year schedule and residents receive the annual mailing during the 1st quarter of the year. The board has undergone major changes within the last year, which resulted in delay of the 2012 dues drive by nearly nine months into the calendar year. The 2013 dues drive was then postponed for six months to gain some separation between the 2012 and 2013 mailings. The BHA board is working hard to reenergize the many programs and services provided by the association to the Bloomingdale community. The board is also committed to ensuring that the 2014 membership drive occurs on time and in the first quarter of the calendar year.

Now that school is out, summer camps to the rescue

Looking for something safe and fun for the kids to do this summer? Here is a short list of camps in the Bloomingdale area for children and teens.

BSHS Bulls Basketball Day Camps – At Bloomingdale High School Gym

Ages: boys and girls entering grades 4-9 in the fall.

Dates: M-TH, 6/10-6/13, 6/17-6/20, 6/24-6/27, 7/8-7/11.

Time: 9 a.m.-noon students entering grades 4-6; 1-4 p.m. students entering grades 7-9

Cost: \$75 per session. Fees include camp T-shirt; and, instruction from boys head coach Joe Willis, girls head coach Joel Bower, and Bulls Varsity team girls and boys.

For information and registration forms contact Joe Willis at joseph.willis@sdhc.k12.fl.us or by phone 813.298.3448.

Brandon Wrestling Camps – At Brandon School of Wrestling,

124 Edwards Ave., Brandon. Camp features basic drills in wrestling, instructional tapes, competitions, latest moves in takedowns, reversals, escapes, pinning combinations and riding skills. Staff: Coach Russ Cozart - Wrestling Coach for Brandon Sr.H.S.

Ages 6-19 yrs. Beginners are welcome. Campers should have good level of physical fitness and desire to learn how to wrestle or to become a better wrestler.

Dates/Times: 8:30 a.m.-noon (most sessions), 1 week sessions 6/10-8/16.

Cost: \$125 per week. Contact Russ Cozart at 813.545.6310 with questions, or visit www.brandoneagleswrestling.com.

Campo YMCA – 3414 Culbreath Rd, Valrico.

This summer, the Campo Y offers: Traditional Day Camp with theme weeks; Leaders in Training (LIT) Camp for teens and pre-teens; Sports Camps like volleyball, basketball and triathlon; Dance Camp; Cheerleading Camp; Specialty Camps including Art, Drama and Creative Writing. To ensure all youth have the chance to experience camp, the Campo Y offers financial assistance to those in need. For more information, contact Dan Ribas at Dan.Ribas@tampaymca.org or 813.684.1371.

Florida Academy of Performing Arts (FAOPA) – Music Showcase,

Offers children the opportunity to be involved in a full-length production, enhance stage presence, character development, professional choreography, costume/Set design, and behind the stage tech training.

Ages 13-plus: Sweeney Todd 6/24-7/12 and Hairspray 7/22 -8/9

Ages 9-13: Annie Jr., 7/8-7/19 and Aladdin Jr., 8/5- 8/16

Ages 5-9: Annie Kids, 6/10-6/21 and Aladdin Kids, 7/22-8/2

(All day camp offered in afternoons.)

Contact FAOPA at 813.685.5998 for details and pricing, or visit www.faopa.org.

Hit the Trails Running Camps – At Hawk Park, FishHawk Ranch

For athletes that know conditioning is an important, decreasing injury, and getting the most out of themselves and their sport.

Conditioning Camp – Dates/Times: M, W, F, 7:30-9 a.m., 6/10-6/14, 6/17-6/21, 6/24-6/28, 7/8-7/12, 7/15-7/19

Two-Week Advanced Conditioning Camp – Dates/Times: M-F, 7:30-10 a.m., 8/5-8/9 and 8/12-8/16

Cost: \$50 per week (weekly payments accepted)

For more information contact Steve Dunn, RRCA Certified Running Coach, at Hit the Trails running store, 13433 Fishhawk Blvd. Telephone: 813.681.6141.

Karma Kids Summer Mini Camps – At Karma Yoga, 4363

Lynx Paw Trail, Valrico.

Your child's yoga mat becomes a magic carpet! Hang on and enjoy the ride as kids soar in yoga class specially designed for them, plus adventure through magical games, music and dance, story-telling, art, fitness, and healthy snacks. Relaxation techniques, yoga postures that promote balance and flexibility, self-esteem builders, and tons of fun are all a part of the plan this summer! Summer kids' yoga is taught by Carolyn, Tina and Megan. To keep things fun- space is limited.

Dates/Times: 12:30-3 p.m., 6/19-6/21, 7/17-7/19, 8/7-8/9

Cost: \$65 per session (\$55 for siblings), \$20 deposit required.

Contact information: 813.489.9644, or visit www.karmayogafitness.com.

The Village Early Learning Center Summer Program –

3741 Canoga Park Dr

(Bloomingdale West) Fun field trips, lots of projects and a variety of experiences will keep your child busy all summer long! "Be a star" (dance, performance and music); "Arts of Many Dimensions" (artist, techniques and mediums); Culinary arts; "Real American Heroes" (police, fire, military); "Be an Olympian" (Olympic sports and Village ELC Olympics!); "Scientist Save the Earth" (environment, recycling, building rockets and doing experiments).

Ages: 6 - 12 yrs (Fun and loving care available for ages 6weeks to 5 yrs too) Camp Dates: 6/10-8/16

Cost: Weekly rate \$145 (\$85 registration fee - drop in rates available)

Contact information: 813.651.0779 or www.villageelc.com.

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BSHS, Beef 'O' Brady's team up for fundraiser

By KIM MILLER

For the past four years BSHS head boys basketball coach, Joe Willis, and local Beef 'O' Brady's owner Cormac McCarthy have teamed up to raise money for "Lyrics for Life" by hosting a student-faculty basketball game. This year the two community leaders expanded the single event into a two-day fundraiser held May 10-11. Proceeds were donated to help lymphoma cancer patient Roger Camille and his family defray some of the costs for his medical treatment.

McCarthy and Willis offered to help the family after learning that this year's stem cell replacement therapy will prevent Roger from working for three to six months. Roger, who was diagnosed over a year ago, is the fiancé of longtime Beef's employee Kim Jaqua. Together the couple has a 2-year old son, Christian.

"This was way bigger than I thought it'd be," said Jaqua. "It's overwhelming, really, and great to see so many people here and helping support our family."

The two-day event was off to a running start after the first jump ball whistle sounded at the BSHS student-faculty basketball game.

"The students get very excited for this game to take place," said Willis. "They want to really beat the teachers."

The first 15 students that turn in \$10 get to play on the student team. The only condition is that student players must be seniors who are not on the BSHS basketball team.

Student player Justin Ambrosino couldn't wait for the experience to play ball with friends, and against teachers he has

grown close with over his four years at BSHS. His most exciting moment of the game was when he got to shoot a free throw.

"It's weird how quiet the gym gets, everything stops, and all eyes are on you," Ambrosino stated with a smile.

"It's overwhelming, really, and great to see so many people here and helping support our family.."

Kim Jaqua

This year's game was nearly tied at the end of the third quarter but the teachers ran away with bragging rights winning 49-31. The win brought the teacher overall annual fundraiser event record to 3-1, proving yet again that faculty still has game. Willis clearly enjoys the challenge and good naturedly pointed out, "the students don't age, but the teacher's do, and we still win."

In addition to raising money through team player fees, fans paid \$1 to shoot from the 3-point line, or \$3 to shoot from the free throw line for six free wings.

The following day, Beef 'O' Brady's held an all-day yard sale in the restaurant's parking lot. Patrons enjoyed shopping, face painting, games, raffles, live entertainment, and a bouncy house.

"We had a goal, and we surpassed that goal," said McCarthy.

One patron raffled off the chance for someone to shave his beard and head, which alone raised \$650.

Lisa Kauffman contributed to this article.



KIM MILLER

Coach Joel Bowers goes up for the jump ball against Sr. Justin Ambrosino, while Coach John Booth and Sr. David Campa look on



Tyler Myers before and after raffling off his locks and beard.



KIM MILLER

Coach John Booth takes a shot over Justin Ambrosino



MIRIAM LEECH

Bloomingdale Library Teen Advisory Board President Hannah Bartlett leads an event-planning session at the group's kick-off meeting on May 6.

Teen advisory board kicks off a new year at Bloomingdale library

By MIRIAM LEECH

A jewelry-making workshop on June 10, an iron chef competition on July 10, and a Harry Potter event on Aug. 9 are just some of the events the Teen Advisory Board (TAB) will be helping with this summer at the Bloomingdale Library.

The newly-convened TAB held their kick-off meeting on May 6. According to board sponsor Kimberly Eversole, the 13- to 18-year-olds help younger children enjoy events like Lego Block Parties and Tail Waggin' Tutors, where new readers can practice their skills on

four-legged friends. TAB members also participate in the library's Give Back Program, which serves the local community. High school members earn an average of 50 service hours each year, which count toward the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship.

Besides signing up for volunteer opportunities at the kick-off, TAB President Hannah Bartlett, a sophomore at Bloomingdale High School, led a brainstorming session for group members to toss around ideas for teen events. For the fall the TAB has decided to hold a Masquerade Party.

BSHS team brings home state title



Boys 4x800m relay team brings home gold. Pictured: Andrew Le Blanc, Ryan Chadderton, Coach Steve Littleton, Kevin Heron and John Bryant.

By KIM MILLER

The weather for this year's class 4A state track and field finals on May 4 was far from optimal for running. Winds blew so hard that it seemed the rain fell sideways. Track coach Steve Littleton encouraged runners Ryan Chadderton, Andrew Leblanc, Kevin Heron and John Bryant as they lined up on the University of North Florida track for the race they had been training for all season, the 4-by-800m relay. After a disappointing seventh place finish last year, Littleton knew the team was ready to win it this time.

"You could see it in their eyes."

Before the race Littleton, who has worked with the team for three years, told the boys that everyone was running under the same conditions. It was their choice to fold, or make the negative into a positive.

Going into the race the Bulls were ranked sixth. In fact, race announcers finally figured out the team's name going into

the second lap of the last leg.

John Bryant ran the first 800m of the relay. He went out strong, but got caught up in some bumping, got tripped up a couple of times, and ended up boxed in for most of his second lap.

"I thought I was going down on that second trip up, and all I could think of was not letting my teammates down," said Bryant.

Ryan Chadderton, who ran the second 800m, set a goal of catching as many runners as possible to put the team's next runner, Kevin Heron, in a good position. Chadderton made good on his goal and caught four runners giving Heron room to play and set up the last leg for Andrew LeBlanc.

"Kevin closed that gap so quickly, when he came around on that last 200m, I yelled for him to slow it down a little because I knew Andrew doesn't like to be in the lead," revealed Littleton.

Andrew Leblanc grabbed the baton for the last leg and ran with it.

"I hoped I would get the

baton the way I wanted to get it; it happened, and I was able to run my race," commented Leblanc. Leblanc was in second place in the last 200m.

"I'm going to get this kid," Leblanc kept thinking, and he did.

Leblanc finished a five seconds ahead of the second place finisher.

"When I came across the finish line I looked back to see how far the other runners were behind me, and I was surprised. I thought I heard footsteps behind me the whole time," exclaimed Leblanc.

About the team's victory Ryan Chadderton commented, "We did what we were expected to do, and

we won."

Teammate John Bryant reflected on his experience.

"I am so lucky to have come upon a team like this and be a part of it, I still can't believe it."

That moment for Coach Littleton will likely be one of the proudest and most emotional moments of his coaching career, ranked up there with the time his daughter won a state medal at BSHS.

The team and coaches were recognized on May 14 at the Hillsborough County School Board meeting, and at the Tampa Tribune's May 20 Parade of Athletes. Congratulations to the state champion Bulls.

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Bloomingtondale woman takes life-changing flight

By MIRIAM LEECH

Kendall Duncan has taken on some amazing roles in her life. Not only a wife and mother of two, Duncan is a business owner, and was once a zoo-keeper at Busch Gardens, and even served as a surrogate for her best friend's twins. The Bloomingtondale resident most recently served as guardian of an Honor Flight World War II veteran, an experience she describes as "life changing."

Honor Flight Network is a nonprofit organization that transports veterans to Washington, D.C., to visit their memorials. Priority is given to World War II heroes, who are dying at a rate of 800 per day, and to terminally-ill veterans. Each veteran is assigned a guardian for the day-long trip. Guardians physically assist the veterans and make sure they have a safe and memorable experience.

Duncan decided to volunteer to be an Honor Flight guardian along with her business partner, Angie Frazier, after learning about the organization at a marketing seminar. Duncan and Frazier own Canine Cabana, a successful dog daycare and lodging facility in River-view.

The decision to volunteer was an easy one for Duncan, who feels passionate about military causes. Her husband served in the U.S. Army for four years, her father-in-law was a Marine who served in Korea, and through Canine Cabana

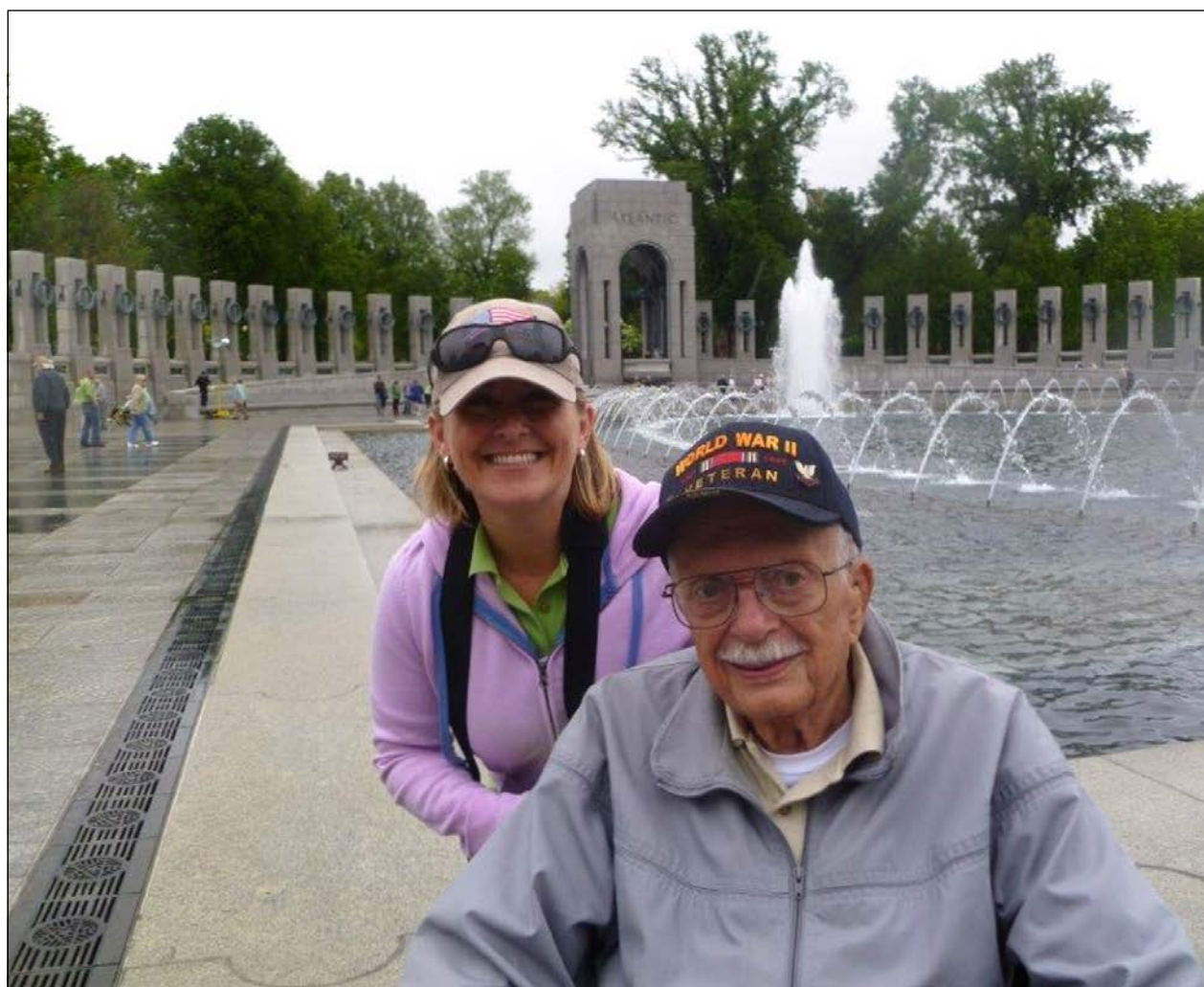
she and Frazier support military working dogs and their handlers by donating to the organization Project Troop Dogs. Additionally, many of their clients, neighbors, and friends are members of the military.

For the May 7 Honor Flight out of St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport, Duncan was guardian to World War II veteran John Eberle. At 91 years old, the Navy veteran proved to be a wealth of information on his time in the European/Atlantic Theater during the war. He shared many stories, including that he met his wife in Scotland during that time; she was one of hundreds of war brides who arrived in the United States aboard the Queen Mary in 1946.

The departing Honor Flight was saluted by a line of first responders who came to the airport to pay tribute. Upon arrival at Baltimore/Washington International Airport (BWI), the group was greeted by a clapping and cheering crowd of well wishers. There they boarded buses and headed to a number of stops including the Iwo Jima Memorial and the National World War II Memorial.

"You could see the pride in the faces of the veterans," noted Duncan.

Of particular interest to Eberle was finding the engraving of "Kilroy" at the memorial. "Kilroy Was Here" was a popular graffiti expression during World War II often found



PROVIDED

Bloomingtondale resident Kendall Duncan and Honor Flight veteran John Eberle take in the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C.

doodled on walls and other places where U.S. servicemen were stationed, encamped, or visited. Duncan made sure that she and Eberle found Kilroy before leaving the memorial; the veteran was thrilled that his research paid off. The final stop for the day was the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum.

"[Duncan] explained every World War I and World War II era plane to me," said Eberle. "I didn't have to read a thing!"

Once back at BWI and on board their return flight, the veterans were given a "Reveille, Reveille, Mail Call!" Each veteran then received a packet of letters written to them by family members, friends, and even school children from their com-

munities to thank them for their service to our country.

"There was not a dry eye on the plane," said Duncan.

When the group arrived back in St. Petersburg they were received enthusiastically all the way to baggage claim, where they were greeted by approximately 300 family members, citizens, and military personnel including Major Gen. Karl Horst, Chief of Staff of U.S. Central Command at MacDill Air Force Base.

The flight was the 10th Honor Flight sponsored by the West Central Florida hub. Costs range from \$65,000 to \$68,000 per flight, and 99 percent of all money donated to the organization goes directly to getting the veterans



Bloomingtondale resident Kendall Duncan waits to board Honor Flight to Washington, D.C. with World War II and Navy Veteran John Eberle.

to Washington, D.C. This flight's group of 80 veterans included three POWs and three women.

"Next to being a surrogate, this was the most

amazing experience of my life," said Duncan. "To come outside of myself and see what these veterans did for their country was humbling."

Professional cartoonist shares his craft at Bloomingdale library

By MIRIAM LEECH

Imaginations soared May 4 – Free Comic Book Day – as comics and cartoon enthusiasts of all ages were treated to the talents of professional sequential artist Andre Frattino at the Bloomingdale Library. During Frattino's workshop, aspiring artists learned about the history of sequential art, the official name for comics, as well as the elements that go into creating a comic strip.

"Comic strips are hard to draw because you have to tell a story in four to six frames," explained Frattino.

Children, teens and parents were given time to create their own six-frame comic strip. Some were inspired by a love of race cars, some by sports, and some by their favorite super heroes. Young artist

Lorenzo Bevilaqua created a super hero named Blast who had to fight off evil bad guy Metro in his comic strip, while his brother Luciano created a comic he titled, "Martial Arts Madness."

Ironically, Frattino was inspired to become a cartoonist at the age of 12 after attending a workshop on comics at his own local library. He went on to graduate from the Savannah College of Art and Design in Georgia with a BFA in Sequential Art and a minor in Ad Design. It took Frattino two years to complete his first graphic novel. He is currently attending the University of Florida pursuing a Master's degree in Art Education.

"A successful cartoonist should write about what he knows, write about what he loves, and should

keep it simple but neat," said Frattino.

A native of Gainesville, Frattino is the creator of the comic strip "Son of a Gator," and has written several graphic novels including "The Reaper of St. George Street" and "The Adventures of Flagler's Few, St. Augustine's Ghost Hunters." His upcoming graphic novel will be set in Tampa and revolve around the Gasparilla Pirate Festival.

Three lucky participants won gift certificates to The Comics Club comic book store in Brandon during Bloomingdale Library's celebration of Free Comic Book Day. In addition to sponsoring Frattino's workshop, Friends of the Bloomingdale Library teamed up with Schaumburg's Dreamland Comics to hold a "free comic book day" giveaway.



MIRIAM LEECH

Sequential artist Andre Frattino demonstrates the art of creating a comic strip character during his cartooning workshop held at the Bloomingdale Library.

Bloomingdale Senior High School honors seniors for achievements



KIM WALLACE

BSHS honored seniors on Thursday, May 2. School administrators, counselors, and teachers recognized 250 seniors for their achievements in the classroom and in the community. Senior boys posing for a group shot before the ceremonies. Pictured are Ryan Chadderton, Samer Hussamy, Marc Cohen, Andrew Goto, and James Rentz.

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Fairy tales do come true

By MIRAM LEECH

It was a packed house May 16 for "Goldilocks and the Three Pigs," a musical performed by kindergarten through second-grade students at Alafia Elementary School. Even the Brothers Grimm would have been impressed by the story, a blending of the classic fairy tales "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" and "The Three Little Pigs."

Written by Alafia parent Tyler Leavitt, the tale begins when the three pigs strike out on their own after being given the boot by their parents for eating them out of house and home. The Bear Family also searches for a new home while Goldilocks tries out their porridge

and furniture. A crew of construction workers tries to build just the right house for the pigs, but the big bad wolf has other ideas. In the end, everyone finds their perfect place.

The Leavitts, who have four children at Alafia, own the Tampa Bay Family Theater and approached the school's PTA about sponsoring a show. According to the show's director Amy Leavitt, the response was overwhelming.

"We had over 160 students audition, so we had to split them into two shows."

Besides the Goldilocks production, Alafia's third through fifth graders performed the musical "Wonderland" on May 17.



MIRIAM LEECH

The Bear Family, played by Maddie Peacock, Kassandra DuPont, Ella Vandagriff, and Hayden Holmes, search for a new home during the Alafia Elementary musical production "Goldilocks and the Three Pigs."

Student performers shine at Burns talent show

By MIRIAM LEECH

Singers, dancers, musicians, and even a magician were the stars of the Burns Got Talent Show, which took place on April 25 in the Bloomingdale High School auditorium. Ten acts selected during auditions performed for a panel of three judges hoping to win top honors for the evening.

Lexi Bishop who opened the show, chose to play one of her favorite piano pieces, "Graduation Day." Backstage Lexi confessed, "I'm a little nervous, but I have been playing this piece for three years and practicing for a month and a

half!"

Scoring the performances to determine first, second, and third place trophy winners was no easy task for this year's talent show judges: Victoria Blevins, owner of Victoria's School of Dance; Desiree Parris, piano teacher at the School of Fine Arts in Brandon (and alumna of both Burns Middle School and Bloomingdale High School); and James Rigby, music teacher at Cimino Elementary School.

The highest score went to first place winner and audience favorite Seth Alderman. Alder-

man's rendition of "Mack the Knife" was a spot-on tribute to Bobby Darin who made the song a hit in 1959. Said Alderman, who has been singing since age 6, "My dad introduced me to Darin and I just really liked him."

Second place winner Aliya Siegel performed a lyrical dance choreographed to the song "Hang with Me." Siegel hopes to pursue dance as a career. Lexi Leggett and Brianna Valasquez performed an original vocal duet, "I'm Gone," which earned them the third place trophy. Leggett played guitar and was ac-

companied on vocals by Valasquez.

Other performers included Jewel Craig and Taryn Grapes; Bernard Acosta; Cheyenne Aguirre; Nichelle Garcia, Bethany McCullum and Sarah Overly; Alesiya Jemison; and Mable Kerker. Special performances were put on by the Academy of Dance Dynamics and the Spectrum Dance Team from Victoria's School of Dance.

Emcees for the show were Chris Bass, Shayla Epps, and Jake Tonski. Parent organizers were Carla Overly and Barbara Watts.



MIRIAM LEECH

Eighth graders Lexi Leggett and Brianna Valasquez perform an original vocal duet earning them 3rd place honors.

Community Station Notes

*Protect children in the community***Community Resource
Master Deputy
(CRD) Curtis Warren**

We recently watched with thanks and horror as three young women and a little girl were rescued from the home of a predator in Ohio after being kept as prisoners for over 10 years. Many people wonder how this could happen in the girls' own neighborhood. The fact is that there are predators and some live in our state and county. Several young women in their early 20s were recently rescued from prostitution rings in Pinellas and Polk counties. Rather than developing paranoia, communities can practice care and vigilance when it comes to protecting their children; parents can leverage two important tools — information and communication.

Neighborhood involvement was one critical factors in the escape of the

young women in Ohio. It illustrates that community involvement doesn't mean nosey neighbors; it means concerned neighbors. Crimes can be solved and prevented when residents are vigilant in watching for and reporting suspicious activity, which includes strangers in the neighborhood, unusual traffic and solicitors. Report suspicious activity by calling the Sheriff's Dispatch at (813) 247-8200, or call 911 if it is an emergency.

**Curtis Warren**

Parents should take the time to communicate openly with kids about "stranger danger." Teach kids how to protect themselves and watch after one another when parents aren't around.

Thanks to computers we have access to a wealth of helpful information for keeping kids safe. Find it, share it and use it. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) is a great source of detailed information on

child safety, abduction, runaways, internet safety, predators and offenders. For more information, visit the safety tips section of FDLE's Sexual Offenders and Predators page. To help families with missing children visit the Hillsborough County Missing Persons Directory. Keep an eye out. You might just help find them.

**School is out –
make a plan with your teen**

Now that school is out, it's time for parents to sit down with their kids and work out a plan for this summer. It doesn't take long for kids to get bored, which sometimes leads to "boredom crimes" such as vandalism or stealing on a dare. Set some very specific rules such as notifying you about where they are at all times and who they are with. Ensure that they know the consequences of getting into trouble, especially if it is something that will result in a crim-

inal record. Teens will also be driving more, so be sure that they know and obey the rules. We want them to enjoy their summer vacations and not end up in trouble or injured in an accident.

**Hurricane season begins in June –
get ready now**

The weather throughout our nation has already been tragic and destructive, so now is the time to prepare your family, your home and your businesses. The Hillsborough County Emergency Management website, www.hillsborough-county.org/emergency, offers lots of critical information to help you prepare for storms, evacuations and for recovery.

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!

Bloomington Buzz**The perfect Father's Day gift****By LISA KAUFFMAN**

Spiffy new socks? A fancy grill set or another terrific tie? It's not always easy to know what dad wants on his special day. To shed light on this annual mystery, the Gazette asked fathers to share their ideal gift ideas for Father's Day, celebrated this year on June 16.

"I'd like my child to do the yard work for me," said father Tom Linsky.

New dad Vic Rebernigg suggested, "A fancy dinner where my I can dress my baby up, and the family can enjoy a nice dinner together."

"I want to spend the day with my kids," commented James Anteau, "possibly take them to Disney or somewhere we can all have fun."

Dad, Jeff Shotwell, said

**Tom Linsky**

"I could really use some new cornhole bags."

Tony Pendino hopes the day will be spent with his family. "It's just important we can spend time together, whether it's going to the beach or to Busch Gardens, Father's Day is about the family being together."

**Vic Rebernigg****Tony Pendino**

BHA and BSTD - separate responsibilities, common goal

Bloomington Homeowners Association (BHA) and Bloomington Special Taxing District (BSTD) are again sharing an office space. They also share a common goal — serving the interests of Bloomington homeowners. The two organizations work together, but function independently to meet resident needs.

BSTD

- Organization – BSTD is a government agency run by a board or trustees. BSTD Trustees are elected officials who serve a term of four years. To run for election, individuals must be registered voters residing in Bloomington.

- Meetings – Monthly meetings held in BSTD offices (3509 Bell

Shoals Road)

- Funding – BSTD is funded from non-ad-valorem taxes. Currently homeowners pay \$130 a year, regardless of property value.

- Responsibility – Makes decisions about the common areas of Bloomington (the area from the edge of the street, not including the sidewalk, to the walls of neighborhoods). They also maintain all the major entranceways ensuring that the landscaping is fresh and the lighting is in good working order.

BHA

- Organization – BHA is led by a voluntary board of directors. Board members are nominated by and voted upon by BHA members.

- Meetings – Monthly meet-

ings held in BSTD offices (3509 Bell Shoals Road)

- Funding – BHA is a non-profit, all-volunteer 501(c)(4) organization and is funded through voluntary contributions (dues) by Bloomington homeowners.

- Responsibility – Operates as an umbrella organization representing the entire Bloomington area: 41 neighborhoods with over 5000 homes. Works with the community, community organizations, and residents to promote a spirit of neighborly relations and physical improvements of the community for the common good of its property owners and residents.

Contact information for both BSTD and BHA is listed elsewhere in the Bloomington Gazette.

WEEKEND EVENTS

Model trains: The Great Train Expo will be in the Special Events Center at the Florida State Fairgrounds, 4800 U.S. 301 N., Tampa today and Sunday. The model train and railroad show will open at 10 a.m. each day with hands-on exhibits, demonstrations, workshops, dealers, collectors and a chance to operate model trains. Admission is \$7; children 12 and younger are free. There is a \$6 parking fee and attendees are asked to use the Martin Luther King entrance.

Ice cream scoops: Learn about the invention of the ice cream scoop using innovative animations at 3 p.m. at the Riverview Branch Library, 10509 Riverview Drive, Riverview. An ice cream social following the program. Musical concert: The Plant City Community Choir will celebrate its fifth anniversary with a concert at the Eastside Baptist Church, 1318 E. Calhoun St., Plant City. The Salute to Community Music will feature a blend of sacred and secular songs from each of its past concert seasons. The doors open at 7 p.m. for the 7:30 performance. Door tickets are \$7 and will be available at 6:30 p.m.

Sunday

Mountain biking: There will be a training class for mountain biking beginners at 9 a.m. through Wilderness Park at Veteran's Memorial Park, 3602 U.S. 301, Tampa. SWAMP, SouthWest Association of Mountain bike Pedalers, will take riders through the paces. There is a \$2 parking fee. For information, go to www.swampclub.org or call (813) 689-5109.

For more, see www.bloomingtongazette.com



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