

THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

VOLUME XXXIV  ISSUE 1  JANUARY 2014

BELLS SHOALS EXPANSION STARTS THIS MONTH PLAN AHEAD TO NAVIGATE ROAD CONSTRUCTION

by Master Deputy Curtis Warren, Bloomingdale CRD

One of the largest road-related construction projects to take place in the Bloomingdale area begins this month. The widening of Bell Shoals Road from a two-lane, undivided rural road to a four-lane, divided urban facility will require all drivers in this area to be patient, to plan ahead, to slow down and to obey all traffic control measures, signs and laws.

Slated for completion within 18 to 24 months, the Bells Shoals project extends for 3.1 miles from just south of the Alafia River to north of Bloomingdale Avenue. The expanded corridor will have two 12-foot lanes for vehicles, a 4-foot bike lane, and sidewalks in both directions. The proposed design will include widening the existing bridge over the Alafia River.

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The County's local road widening project is anticipated to help improve traffic flow at intersections like this one at Bell Shoals Road and Glenhaven Drive. The project starts this month with completion projected in 18 to 24 months.



Photo: Mack Austin

BHA ANNOUNCES EXCITING CHANGES FOR 2014 - GET INVOLVED

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association is jumping into 2014 with both feet. The all-volunteer board of directors revitalized itself last year by adding new members that brought with them both energy and a determination to enhance BHA programs and services. The organization moved into a new office, hired an office manager to assist residents, started a Volunteer Registry and made significant improvements to the community newspaper, The Bloomingdale Gazette.

Residents will continue to reap the benefits of last year's efforts with several exciting projects planned for 2014. Look inside this issue to learn about web presence enhancements, Name your Neighborhood efforts, new email alert service and much more. Get involved—lend your time to the board, and be sure to renew your BHA membership for 2014 (see BHA 2014 Membership Drive story).



The BHA is currently revamping the community website to be more user-friendly and filled with beneficial current and archived information. A launch date is expected in the 1st quarter of this year. Popularity of the BHA Facebook page continues to grow, and will provide residents with "what's happening now" information. Don't forget to like us!

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"For last year's words belong to last year's language. And next year's words await another voice." T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*

This Month



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PLEASE  RECYCLE



YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

YOUR INSIDE CONNECTIONS

Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 7221 - Brandon, Florida 33508 - (813) 681-2051
Email: BloomingdaleHomeowners@gmail.com
Website: www.BloomingdaleGazette.com

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

Directors at Large:

President: <i>George T. May IV</i>	<i>Billy Hightower</i>	<i>Joanie Wilson</i>
Treasurer: <i>Dennis Osborn</i>	<i>Mary Galin</i>	<i>Ken Smith</i>
Secretary: <i>Daniel Berkowitz</i>	<i>Dina White</i>	



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YARD OF THE MONTH



Photo: Cassie Newman

Jim & Keri Krohne
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Yard of the Month is sponsored by Ace Hardware of Bloomingdale
Send your Yard of the Month nominations to:
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SCHOOL NEWS

All Schools

Jan. 6 Hillsborough County Public School students return to school
 Jan 20 Martin Luther King Day/No School
 Jan 21 Non-Student Day

Bloomington Senior High School

Jan 14-17 Finals week
 Jan 23 9th and 10th grade parent night, 5:30 p.m.; AP Parent night, 5-8 p.m.
 Jan 28 District Financial Aid Night at Riverview HS, 6:30 p.m.

Burns Middle School

Jan 16 All County Chorus Rehearsal at Liberty Middle School, 6 p.m.
 All County Orchestra Re-seating auditions at Williams, 6 p.m.
 Jan 23 All County Orchestra at Williams & Riverview, 8 a.m.
 All County Chorus, 6 p.m.
 Jan 29 Soccer vs. Mann at BSHS

Alafia Elementary

Jan 28 Science Night/PTA General Meeting, 6 p.m.

Cimino Elementary

Jan 14 Sluggers Spirit Night
 Jan 17 All Pro Dads, 7 a.m.

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



JOIN CIMINO FOR SPIRIT NIGHT AT SLUGGER'S

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BSHS FOOTBALL PLAYERS CONGRATULATED AT YEAR-END BANQUET

The Bloomingsdale Bulls Varsity and Junior Varsity Football team held their end-of-the-year banquet on Dec. 10. The Bulls had a very successful record this year of 6-4, the best in school history. Coach John Booth thanked all the players for their hard work and dedication to the season.



Senior David Johnson receives coaches' congrats and his Senior Varsity Player award at this year's team banquet.



Photo: Deidre Morgan

2014

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The Rajun' Bull Marching Band of Bloomingdale High braved uncharacteristically snowy conditions in Ybor City to march in the historic area's 2nd Annual Snow on 7th Parade. The Rajun' Bulls were one of twelve Bay Area high school bands that participated in the Dec. 14 event, lending a total of 1,400 band students to the parade lineup. Mayor Bob Buckhorn led the family-friendly holiday parade, which included pre-show entertainment, snow (courtesy of 32 snow machines), floats and of course, Santa Claus.

Participating in school and local area events like Ybor City's Snow on 7th parade provides students with unique opportunities to apply music education to real-life performance. The Bloomingdale music program has also made it possible for band students to experience performance in other parts of the world—most recently marching in London's 2011 New Year's parade.

Jon W. Sever, Director of Bands for Bloomingdale Senior High School and Music Department Chair, is again spearheading plans for Bloomingdale music groups to travel abroad—this time to Italy in December of 2014. The Band has been invited to march in Frascati's Dec. 30 Street Show (parade) and play in a variety of other musical performance events. Organized by Youth Music of the World, performance opportunities and educational tours are jam packed into one week, including extensive time spent in Rome, as well as visits to Vatican City and the ancient ruined City of Pompeii.

The band is asking for the Bloomingdale community's support to make the trip to Italy possible for band students. A variety of sponsorship, advertising and other fundraising opportunities will be available to supporters throughout the year, including the band's upcoming Casino Night scheduled for March 22. To learn more about this exciting evening, upcoming performance events and band activities, contact Bloomingdale Senior High School at (813) 744-8018.

About the Rajun' Bull Band

With a roster of over 270 students, the Rajun' Bull band is ranked as the largest high school marching band in Hillsborough County. Size is not the group's only distinguishing characteristic; the band consistently performs at the top of its district both musically and technically. Most recently, the Bulls earned the top score of Superior across all categories in the District VII Florida Bandmasters Association Marching Performance Assessment. The band is also highly regarded in the Bloomingdale community for its creative and well-executed halftime shows throughout the BSHS football season. Fans often remain in the stands even after the game to witness more of the group's performance.



Photo: Bonnie Steele

The Rajun' Bulls treat Ybor parade goers to an impressive performance—sight and sound beautifully complimented by the festively snowy conditions.



The Bloomingdale High School Chamber Orchestra was nearly as busy as Santa's elves this past holiday season. As the premiere string group at Bloomingdale, this smaller ensemble is often asked to perform at several events both on and off campus throughout the academic year. November & December 2013 was an especially busy time for the group as they performed at six events.

- BSHS Masterworks Concert with Chorus in performance of John Rutter's Requiem
- Dedication of the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Operation Center, which was named after past Sheriff and State Senator, Malcom Beard
- All Jazzed Up Art Festival, The Regent, Riverview
- Senior gathering at First United Methodist Church, Brandon
- Deaf/Hearing Impaired Party at MOSI
- BSHS Orchestra Winter Concert

Bloomingdale string players run through a tough piece prior to performing at the December dedication of the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Operation Center in Ybor City. Pictured: (Front) Cassandra Newman, Emily Ogden and Ashley Ericson. (Back) Samuel Klunker and Melissa Silebi.

The Bloomingdale High Orchestra program is lead by Dale Lewis, who not only directs the Chamber ensemble, but also the Freshman, Concert and Symphony orchestras. "Our orchestra program is very active and provides music-making opportunities for every level of playing ability and interest," said Lewis. "I'm always excited to see students enjoying music, and I appreciate the opportunity to aid and watch their progress."

Chamber Orchestra at Bloomingdale High is a small, audition-only group of highly dedicated string players. They focus on building their skills in both large and small ensembles and must show their facility in music theory and sight-reading while working at an accelerated pace. The group's size ranges each year; however it rarely exceeds twenty string players. This year's ensemble numbers 16: 9 Violins, 2 Violas, 4 Cellos, 1 Bass. Not only do these students represent the best string players at BSHS, many of them are at the top of their grade level academically and are involved in many other clubs and organizations at Bloomingdale.

If you would like to hear these talented students or inquire about performance availability, contact Dale Lewis at dale.lewis@sdhc.k12.fl.us.



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THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH

Fall festivals and holiday festivities behind us is no reason to hibernate for the remainder of the winter. Here are some events and activities sure to inspire you to brave the January elements.

Bloomington Babe Ruth/Cal Ripkin (formerly Bloomington Little League) Spring Season Registration / 2215 Bloomington Avenue, Valrico / Spring ball registration begins this month. For information on registration fees and times, visit www.blrlf.com.

Saladino Baseball Academy Spring Tryouts / Now Located At Brandon Sports & Aquatic Center 405 Beverly Boulevard, Brandon. The Saladino Baseball Academy has now partnered with Brandon Sports and Aquatic Center. The Academy will be holding tryouts for its spring 2014 Saladino Heat 9U-12U Travel Teams. Practices begin Monday, Jan. 13. Visit www.saladinobaseballacademy.com for tryout dates, times and locations or call (813) 684-8226.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Parade / Jan. 20 / Noon / Downtown Tampa / The 25th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Parade begins at N. 15th Street and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Boulevard, and ends at E. Osborne Avenue and N. 22nd Street. Visit www.mlkjrparade.com for parade route map and more information.

The Main Street Kid's Club, A MathStart Musical by: Stages Productions / Jan. 24 / 7 p.m. / Center Place Fine Arts & Civic Association, Inc. / 619 Vonderburg Drive, Brandon / Inspired by the award-winning series by Stuart J. Murphy, the production tells a tale of adventure, mystery, friendship, and math. Six stories, each focusing on a different mathematical concept, have been deftly woven together and adapted by Scott Ferguson ("Schoolhouse Rock Live!"). MathStart books adhere to The Common Core State Standards for Mathematics and the Standards for School Mathematics, developed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, designed to help educators, textbook publishers, and school systems improve the quality of mathematics education and set goals for assessment criteria. Open to the community. Grades Kindergarten-3. Visit www.centerplacebrandon.org for more information.

Table for Two: The Cookbook for Couples / Jan. 25 / 10:30-11:30 a.m. / Bloomington Library Community Room/ 1906 Bloomington Ave. / Enjoy a presentation with Warren Caterson, the author of Table for Two, in which he shares time-saving kitchen tips, cooking hints, and humorous anecdotes about the challenges and joys of cooking for two. The presentation culminates with a 10-minute cooking demonstration that any home cook can replicate. Call (813) 273-3652.

Brandon Ballet Summer Dance Intensive Auditions / Jan. 25 / The Dance Center / 161 E Bloomington Ave, Brandon / For more information email dance@brandonballet.org, or call (813) 684-4282.

Manatee Viewing Center / Daily through April 15 / 10 a.m.-5 p.m. / 6990 Dickman Road, Apollo Beach / When Tampa Bay reaches 68 degrees or colder, the manatees seek out the Tampa Electric Big Bend Power Station's discharge canal, home to The Manatee Viewing Center. Big Bend's discharge canal is a state and federally designated manatee sanctuary that provides critical protection from the cold for these unique, gentle animals. Call (813) 228-4289 for more information.

Music Showcase & Florida Academy of Performing Arts / 402 Oakfield Dr., Brandon / New programs begin in January: Several musical theatre productions begin rehearsals (1/13-early Feb.), Encore Showchoir (1/15), Digital Photography (1/28). January productions include Pirates of Penzance (13+), and Next to Normal (18+). Visit www.faopa.org for more information or call (813) 490-ARTS (2787).

Wild Dame Night / Feb. 15 / 6 p.m. / Center Place Fine Arts & Civic Association, Inc. / 619 Vonderburg Dr., Brandon / Join Center Place for the 23rd Annual Wild Dame Night, An Evening for Ladies Only featuring a special Stages Productions 3 Little Pigs, Pretty as a "Pig"ture. This event always sells out fast, so purchase tickets as soon as possible. Tickets available Tuesday, Jan. 7 at 9:30 a.m. No reserved tickets. Proceeds benefit Children's Programming at Center Place. Visit www.centerplacebrandon.org for more information.

CAMPO FAMILY YMCA NEW YEAR'S PROMOTION

3414 CULBREATH ROAD, VALRICO



When you join the Y, you're not just joining a gym, you're becoming a member of a supportive wellness community. We have the equipment, programs and people to help you be healthy, be strong and belong! Join Jan. 1-31 and the Campo YMCA will Waive the Enrollment Fee! For more information call (813) 684-1371.



Happy New Year, neighbors! Bloomingdale's real estate market has seemingly taken a back seat in the sleigh as priorities have shifted to family, faith, and friendship. There have been fewer turnovers in our neighborhoods and listings have lingered on the market longer than previous months. This seasonal turn is likely not indicative of the overall annual state trends where owners began to recoup some of the equity lost during the recession. According to Floridarealtor.org, in January of 2013, the median Florida single-family home sold for \$145,000; in November, it sold for \$169,900—a 17.2% increase in only 10 months. Bloomingdale is no exception to these trends. Please check back next month for Bloomingdale's 2013 real estate year in review!



Dina White
Realtor

Century 21 Shaw Realty
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Valrico, FL 33596
813.509.7780
dina.white@century21.com

**Real Estate Statistics for Bloomingdale East and West
Nov. 15- Dec. 15, 2013**

(All data was pulled from MLS and public records with a cut-off date of 15 November 2013 and does not include For Sale or Rent by Owners. Below data varies depending on conditions of sale, financing, square footage, bedrooms, etc. and should be used as a guideline only. For a comprehensive analysis specific to your neighborhood and home or overall real estate questions, please contact me directly.)



Total homes sold: **17**

Foreclosures sold: **5**

Short Sales sold: **2**

Average Days to Contract (not including Short Sales or Foreclosures): **71**

Average Days to Close (not including Short Sales or Foreclosures): **105**

Average Sold Price (not including Short Sales or Foreclosures): **\$156,500**

Number of Total Homes currently for sale (not under contract; including short sales and foreclosures): **60**

Average List Price (not including Short Sales or Foreclosures): **\$235,318**

Number of Homes currently for Rent: **42**

Average monthly rent: **\$1625**

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As a little girl, Kristen Gaertner looked forward to accompanying her mother and sister, Lindsay, to see The Nutcracker at Christmastime, inspiring her to one day perform in the ballet. In December, the 14-year-old Bloomingdale resident performed for a fifth time in the Brandon Ballet's production of Tchaikovsky's magical story of a girl named Clara and her nutcracker who comes to life.

Gaertner has been dancing since she was six, training in ballet, tap, jazz, and pointe at The Dance Center located on Bloomingdale Avenue. She is a Junior II dancer in the Brandon Ballet, and this year the young ballerina danced in the opening scenes as an Older Party Girl, in the Spanish Corps de Ballet, and in the Chinese Corps de Ballet. "It is so cool to perform in The Nutcracker," said the high school sophomore. "I hope seeing the production inspired other young girls to dance."

In addition to the long hours spent taking classes and rehearsing for her parts in the holiday production, Gaertner is a student in the rigorous International Baccalaureate Programme at Strawberry Crest High School, is involved in math club, book club, and drama, and is a Girl Scout.

The Brandon Ballet is in its 20th year, and its performances of The Nutcracker took place Dec. 14 and 15 in the Spoto High School Auditorium. Under the guidance of Artistic Director Octavio Martin, Gaertner noted that the Company is trying new choreography and staging that is very exciting. Says Brandon Ballet, Inc., President Martha Oddo, "We are the best kept secret in Brandon!"

In the spring, Gaertner will expand her repertoire when she performs with the Brandon Ballet in their production of the classic Cinderella.

Brandon Ballet holds auditions at The Dance Center for its June Summer Intensive on Saturday Jan. 25. For more information email dance@brandonballet.org, call (813) 684-4282.



Photos: Miriam Leech

Gaertner (right) dances as an Older Party Girl during the opening scenes of the Brandon Ballet's December performance of the classic ballet.



Bloomingdale ballerina Kristen Gaertner celebrates with flowers presented by her family after her final performance in The Nutcracker.

BELL SHOALS WIDENING (CONTINUED FROM COVER)

This project is anticipated to improve the intersections at Glenhaven Drive, Rosemead Lane and Bloomingdale Avenue, and to increase the level of service along Bell Shoals Road, accommodating higher traffic volumes while maximizing safety along the corridor.

Drivers can expect some changes during the construction period:

- Construction will take place on weekdays between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m.
- In some areas traffic closures may be required. For the safety of workers, pedestrians and other motorists, all drivers must observe all traffic control measures.
- Construction will be in the right of way; however, at times it will be necessary to work on private property. All areas affected by the construction will be restored.
- There will be extensive traffic control measures implemented during the construction. Please observe all traffic signs and be aware of potential shifts in traffic patterns, especially during inclement weather.

This is a much needed construction project. Help make its completion a safe one!

Drive safe, obey the traffic laws and please buckle up!



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UPSCALE BURGER ESTABLISHMENT OPENS IN BLOOMINGDALE

By: Kim Miller

Burger Monger is the newest burger joint to open in the immediate Bloomingdale area. Located in Bloomingdale Square, this restaurant is the fourth of its kind opened by Jake Hickton and his partners. “[We are] very thrilled to be here in the Brandon area,” expressed Hickton, general partner of Burger Monger. “We have seen over 8,000 customers in the two weeks since we have opened this store, and a lot of repeat customers.”

Burger Monger serves 100% pure Akaushi above USDA prime Kobe beef burgers and hot dogs. Their menu includes a variety sandwiches, salads, and serves all-natural chicken breast sandwiches. Sandwiches, hot dogs, and burgers can be topped with 25 of the free toppings offered. Of course the best side to any burger or hot dog is French fries, and Burger Monger’s fries are freshly cut and fried to order. To accompany those great fries and burgers, Burger Monger offers Haagen Dazs milkshakes and malts, refillable soft drinks, as well as wine and beer for the adults.



Customers line up to order freshly custom-created burgers.

When asked what sets Burger Monger apart from other burger restaurants, Jake stated, “We use higher quality ingredients, with no preservatives or additives.”

Burger Monger is open Sunday-Thursday, 11 a.m. – 10 p.m. and Friday-Saturday, 11 a.m. – 11 p.m. The restaurant’s free Loyalmonger program entitles customer members to exclusive offers—every dollar spent earns 1 Burger Monger point. Upon accumulating 200 points, members receive a \$10 gift card for Burger Monger. Members earn double points on Burger Monger Mondays.

For more information about Burger Monger and their menu visit www.Burgermonger.com.



Photos: Kim Miller

Burger Monger opens in Bloomingdale Plaza.

EARLY VISIT BY SANTA A BIG HIT IN BLOOMINGDALE

Santa and Mrs. Claus visited the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association office on Dec. 9 to spend some quality pre-holiday time with neighborhood children. Approximately 75 wondering- eyed tots showed up to sit on Santa’s lap and share their wish lists with the jolly old elf and the missus. Entertainment was provided courtesy of a local student string trio and of course, coloring books.

Voluntary BHA membership dues help to pay for this popular event held annually since 1987. The 2013 visit was also supported through a mini-grant in the amount of \$1,355 from the Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners. Several volunteers in addition to board members gave of their time to make the day run smoothly: Nate Lanz, Sam Berkowitz, Bobby Michael, Sierra Michael, Chris Santarlas, Rachel Santarlas and Gabby Savinon. String players included: Mathias Madray, Holly Earl and Marcella Alfonso. In its desire to give back to the greater Brandon community, the BHA collected 192.9 lbs of food from residents during the Santa visit, all of which was donated to ECHO.



Photos: Suzanne Jones

Lauren Young shares her wish list with Santa and Mrs. Claus.

BLOOMINGDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION AWARDED OVER \$8,000 IN MINI-GRANTS

The BHA pursued five Hillsborough County mini-grants in 2013 to support efforts to strengthen neighborhood ties and provide improved communications to the community. We're pleased to announce that all five grant applications received approval!



- 🌿 **Train the Trainer - \$903**
- 🌿 **Name Your Neighborhood - \$2,500**
- 🌿 **Santa Visit and Charity Food Drive - \$1,355**
- 🌿 **BHA Website - \$2,500**
- 🌿 **Putting a Face on the BHA - \$1,072**

Mini-grant applications are coordinated through the County's Office of Neighborhood Relations, which was created by the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners to act as a liaison between neighborhood associations and County departments. The Neighborhood Mini-grant Program provides funding to neighborhood associations through a competitive grant process, for projects that will improve their neighborhood.

In addition to voluntary HOA membership dues, support from these three grants enables the BHA to provide valuable services and events to residents, and will help to attract prospective home buyers to our community.

🌿 **Train the Trainer**

The Train the Trainer program is designed to improve efficiency and customer service to community by providing the BHA's newly-hired office manager with training in code enforcement and community association management.

🌿 **Name Your Neighborhood**

The Bloomingdale Community consists of over 40 neighborhoods and approximately 5000 residences. Mini-grant funds will be used to name the last two unmarked neighborhoods currently known as Sections M and Section A. Residents in these neighborhoods have the opportunity to weigh in on a name and will benefit from the pride that comes with a distinctive identity.

🌿 **Website Revitalization**

The BHA's current website (www.bloomingdalegazette.com) was launched in January 2000. The site is more than due for a makeover to make it more functional and valuable to residents. Planned enhancements include additional content functions allowing the BHA to post community news and calendar events. Homeowners will also be able to sign up on the site for email updates concerning neighborhoods, schools, county planning and zoning projects and law enforcement issues. A mobile version is planned as well. Operating in tandem with the BHA's new Facebook presence, the redesigned website will strengthen our community through information sharing and make Bloomingdale an even safer place to live with an enhanced ability to communicate public safety concerns.

🌿 **Santa and Mrs. Claus**

The Santa and Mrs. Claus Community Visit and Charity Food Drive is a family-focused, community-wide event that celebrates the holiday season each year. This non-denominational event for children of all ages fosters a sense of community-spirit, giving, and togetherness. In addition, the event serves as a charity food drive for those in need.

🌿 **Putting a Face on the BHA**

The BHA has been rebuilding. In eight months, the board of directors has grown from four members to its full complement of 12. In order to demonstrate to our community that we are back in force, we are proposing an identity-forging program putting a face on the BHA. Included is the production of a "Welcome to Bloomingdale" brochure detailing the history of our community, the BHA's role, programs and activities spearheaded by the BHA, and important contact information. Brochure distribution is planned at all major events and when welcoming new residents to the community.

INs & OUTs

WHAT EVERY BLOOMINGDALE HOMEOWNER SHOULD KNOW ABOUT BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR

Happy New Year! What better resolution for the new year than to become a better neighbor? Research indicates that neighborhoods with peaceful, harmonious environments and cohesiveness among residents tend to be better maintained, and experience a higher quality of life with lower security issues. Who wouldn't want that? Get started by following these six tips:

1. **Communicate with and respect your neighbors.** This year introduce yourself new residents and renew familiarity with longer-standing neighbors. Cultivate that relationship with a friendly hello or wave; your neighborhood will undergo a surprising transformation.
2. **Know the rules.** This includes neighborhood deed restrictions, county codes and ordinances, and rules of the road. Being an informed resident lessens the chance that your actions will create tension with neighbors.
3. **Maintain your property.** Sounds simple, but the BHA receives many complaints about insufficient yard mowing and maintenance. In addition, keep trash cans out of sight, except on trash pick-up days. A home is a huge investment; keep it painted and in good repair. This includes fencing.
4. **Use vehicle driving and parking etiquette.** Don't park on the grass, block sidewalks, or have inoperative or commercial vehicles in the driveway. Be conscious of speed and noise restrictions, and always watch out for children.
5. **Control your pets.** Pick up their messes, keep barking to a minimum, and don't allow pets to roam free.
6. **Finally, if you have a problem with a neighbor, approach them and discuss it in a pleasant non-threatening manner.** Nasty notes or calls to the police are sure to lessen the possibility of developing a real friendship.

Make 2014 the year you create new and lasting friendships with your neighbors. And again, do the right thing—stay informed about mandatory deed restrictions, comply with violation notices, and first and foremost, communicate with your neighbors. The entire Bloomingdale community will benefit.



Do you have a question on deed restrictions, local home ownership requirements or a violation notice? Email inquiries to bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com or call the BHA at 813-681-2051. And of course, check the Gazette for answers.



Bloomingdale Homeowners Association is now on Facebook. Check out our page and like us at: <https://www.facebook.com/BloomingdaleHOA>

We've all likely heard stories of, or have personally experienced, military families marching on with life's everyday tasks through multiple deployments, permanent change of duty stations, and constant transition. These stories hit especially close to home in the Brandon/Valrico area, commonly referred to as "East MacDill" and home to many MacDill-based families. While resilience is a prominent trait of military families, they do not need to endure the challenge of transition alone. Located in the heart of Brandon is an abundance of military resources and assistance, the MacDill Airman & Family Readiness Center's Brandon (AFRC-Brandon) satellite office, which falls under the 6th Force Support Squadron on MacDill Air Force Base.

Not to be confused with the Brandon-based MacDill Community Health Clinic, the AFRC-Brandon assists with military needs such as employment assistance, family and deployment readiness, relocation, personal and work life consultation, financial management, legal assistance and free tax preparation. The center, which is staffed by volunteers and one full-time manager, is open to active duty, reserve, guard, spouses and dependents. Many programs offered focus on spouses, and this, manager Gayle Cook asserts, is one of the Center's strongest contributions to the military community.

One program geared especially to spouses provides assistance with resume building and conducting job searches. The program is supported by the Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance, which allotted one full time advocate, Bill Farnand, to the AFRC. Another program, Heart Link, introduces military spouses married less than five years to military protocol, acronyms, Tricare, and other available programs that may assist a new military family as they settle into careers and marriage.

For additional information on the full spectrum of services offered or to be added to the AFRC-Brandon's email distribution list, please contact Gayle Cook directly at (813) 655-9281 or email sharon.cook.1.ctr@us.af.mil. The center also encourages interested persons to like them on Facebook at Airman and Family Readiness Center MacDill and join the many discussions on issues affecting military families.



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BHA 2014 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE IS UNDERWAY

RESIDENT SUPPORT NEEDED AND WELCOMED

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association (BHA) is back on track for sending membership notices out in the beginning of the year, unlike the past two years in which notices were mailed in June (2013) and October (2012). Join us in renewing your membership for 2014. For \$25 a year (*less than 50 cents a week*), you can help us continue to keep Bloomingdale a great community in which to raise a family, and a great place to call home.

The BHA is the only community organization representing Bloomingdale's nearly 5,000 residences and over 40 neighborhoods in mandatory and voluntary homeowner associations. The BHA is an IRC 501(c)(4) non-profit organization, run entirely by volunteers who live in your neighborhoods. All membership money collected goes back to our community, and all residents are welcome at our monthly board meetings on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Bell Shoals office.

Take a look at the many programs, services, and activities delivered to residents by BHA and made possible through your continued support.

Annual cleanup days made possible by the BHA in partnership with Hillsborough County provide residents the opportunity to drop off unwanted items at a convenient location in the community.



In 2013, the BHA resumed renting office space with the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District. The office is open Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.



Bloomingdale Homeowner Association Scholarship/School Partnerships: Resident generosity provides an outstanding Bloomingdale student with \$2,000 for higher education. In addition, BHA board members interact as liaisons directly with our area schools, our school board, and the Gazette routinely promotes school activities.

The BHA works closely with Hillsborough County officials to provide a voice for the community. BHA involvement with government agencies in 2013 included a traffic study on Natures Way Blvd., a vote against the Big Box development, and feedback to the community on the Bell Shoals Widening Project. If not for BHA lobbying efforts, the Bloomingdale Regional Public Library would have been located in Fishhawk.





Santa & Mrs. Claus/ Charity Food Drive: It's no secret! The BHA sponsors an annual visit with Santa & Mrs. Claus each December, along with a canned food drive to benefit charitable organizations.



Working with area businesses is also an important BHA community contribution. Each month, the BHA selects a "Yard of the Month" residence. Bruce Korte, Ace Hardware, provides the winners with a \$25 gift certificate to the Bloomingdale Ace Hardware store.



The Bloomingdale Gazette: The official newspaper of the BHA since 1980, the Gazette provides vital local information to residents. All Bloomingdale residents receive the paper on the first Saturday of each month. Not getting the paper? Contact our Gazette staff at inbloomingdalenews@gmail.com.

The BHA works with the all-volunteer Bloomingdale Area Community Council, and the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, to help keep Bloomingdale safe. The BACC council meets 7 p.m. on the 3rd Thursday each month at the Bloomingdale substation on Erindale Dr. Citizens Patrol, a Sheriff's Office initiative, launched in Bloomingdale in 2008 to help keep our community secure.



BHA volunteers work to promote compliance with deed restrictions, secure county grants for neighborhood projects, including "Name Your Neighborhood," and promote community cohesiveness through events like the Fall Festival.

If you don't receive a notice, you can still pay by check made payable to BHA, 3509 Bell Shoals Rd., Valrico, FL 33596. An easier method is to use our PayPal option. Go to www.bloomingdalegazette.com, look for the PayPal link, and follow the simple instructions provided. A \$1 processing fee is added. Remember, the BHA needs your support to continue the many services provided to our community's residents.

Starting Jan. 1, 2014 Bloomingdale Little League (BLL) officially changed its name to Bloomingdale Youth Sports Association (BYSA). BLL pulled away from Little League because of what the local club describes as the “administrative nightmare” the park has had to endure. Over the years player numbers have dwindled from over 1200 to 750. According to a president Kenny Hawkins, the BLL board’s pleas to get Little League to heed their concerns over dwindling numbers and splitting of the park between American and National divisions were ignored.

Hawkins commented, “We have tried to get Little League to let us go down to one division, but they wouldn’t let us. So, there was always a rivalry among the teams and the players in the park with the separation of National and American divisions. In the Cal Ripken/Babe Ruth League there won’t be that separation.”



Bloomingdale isn’t the only area abandoning Little League; North Tampa, Lutz, North Brandon and East Bay have also changed affiliations. The conversion allows for a larger boundary from which to pull players. It allows for “real baseball” at a younger level (open bases starting at 11 rather than 13), offers all stars at age 8, expands the junior division to age 15 and the senior division to age 18.

Cal Ripken/Babe Ruth also offers their version of Challenger baseball which they call Bambino-Buddy ball, for players with special needs. Travel ball will benefit from playing under the umbrella of the BYSA, having the advantage of 501(c)(3) status and use of the fields, more so in the fall than the spring.

“I am more excited for this upcoming spring season,” exclaimed Hawkins. “This league will be more about baseball and the players, and less about administration.”

Registration for spring ball begins this month. Visit www.bllfl.com to learn more about BYSA and how to register for the spring season.

CALLING ALL NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORIANS AND SOCIAL BUTTERFLIES

Starting soon, the Gazette will be running a standard column that highlights specific Bloomingdale East or West neighborhoods. We’re looking for residents who have knowledge about their immediate community—historical information, homeownership organization (if applicable) or social activities. To learn more or to share information with the Gazette, contact us via email: inbloomingtonnews@gmail.com.





ALERT

Bloomington residents, do you want to receive up-to-date alerts and emergency communication affecting our area? If so, the new and improved BHA Email Alert system launches today. Go to the Bloomington Homeowners Association website, www.bloomingtongazette.com. Select the "Email Alerts" link to sign up. The first 50 residents that sign up will receive a Bloomington Pride license plate. Winners will be notified separately with instructions on where to pick up the plate. Don't be the last to know!



Like us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/BloomingtonHoa) to further stay informed about the Bloomington community.



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JEWISH DISCOVERY CENTER OPENS IN BLOOMINGDALE AREA

By: Miriam Leech

With a "Mazel Tov" the ribbon was cut, and so opened the new Jewish Discovery Center on Dec. 15 in the Bloomingdale Professional Center. The opening was celebrated by Rabbi Mendel Rubashkin of Chabad of Brandon, his wife Tzippa, and family, friends, and Chabad members from as far away as New York City and Annapolis, Md. Chabad adheres to the Orthodox practice of Judaism, and is a Hebrew acronym for "wisdom, understanding, and knowledge."

Rabbi Rubashkin spoke of the idea, "one Jew doing one mitzvah," or good deed, and the purpose of the center to help make that possible. Additionally, the purpose of the center is to uplift, teach, inspire, and help people "discover the beauty and richness of Judaism," said Rubashkin. He noted that the Jewish Discovery Center is a separate entity from the Chabad and that there is no commitment to their organization involved.

The Rabbi acknowledged outstanding contributions of several guests in attendance at the opening, including Robert and Iris Sandow, Jonothan and Natalee Benjamin, and Steve and Ilene Bliclum. The opening of the center was the result of a "volunteer team effort," said Rubashkin.

Beginning Jan. 8, the Jewish Discovery Center will be offering classes on various topics pertaining to Judaism every Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. Class offerings will include: Mommy & Me Tot Shabbat Experience, learning to read Hebrew and Junior Chefs in the center's kosher kitchen (ages 4-10).

The Jewish Discovery Center is located at 1578 Bloomingdale Ave. For more information, visit facebook.com/jewishdiscovery or call (813) 571-8100. Rabbi Rubashkin can be reached at discoveryrabbi@jewishbrandon.com.



The Jewish Discovery Center located in the Bloomingdale Professional Center opens as a place for Jewish exploration and be enrichment.

Rabbi Yossi and Sulha Dubrowski and Rabbi Mendel and Tzippa Rubashkin cut the ribbon and celebrate the opening of the Jewish Discovery Center.



NEW WATERING RESTRICTIONS IN EFFECT

Hillsborough County lawn watering returned to once per week, effective Dec. 26, 2013. The new schedule for watering established lawns and landscaping in unincorporated Hillsborough County, as well as the City of Tampa is:

- 🌿 Addresses ending in 0 or 1 – Mondays
- 🌿 Addresses ending in 2 or 3 – Tuesdays
- 🌿 Addresses ending in 4 or 5 – Wednesdays
- 🌿 Addresses ending in 6 or 7 – Thursdays
- 🌿 Addresses ending in 8 or 9, locations with no address, and locations with mixed addresses (such as office complexes and shopping centers) – Fridays

All watering must be done before 8 a.m. or after 6 p.m. To learn more about watering restrictions now in effect visit <http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org>.



BOCC APPROVES PROP SHARE FOR BIG BOX AREA BUT HOLDS OFF ON APPROPRIATION

The Board of County Commissioners' (BOCC) regular meeting agenda for Dec. 18 included a two-part agenda item (B-6) having to do with provision and use of funds for improved transportation in and around the area of the proposed big box store on Bloomingdale Avenue. The agenda item called for the BOCC to:

1. Approve the Proportionate Share Agreement (Prop Share) with Red Cast Bloomingdale, LLC "to provide for payment of \$564,196 to Hillsborough County in order to satisfy the transportation concurrency requirements for a mixed-use development, Hillsborough County project #1847, located on Bloomingdale Avenue west of Lithia Pinecrest Road."
2. "Appropriate \$564,196 in revenue contributed by Red Cast Bloomingdale, LLC for private development improvements on Bloomingdale Avenue west of Lithia Pinecrest Road."



(The full agenda item may be viewed at <http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/index.aspx?nid=2565>.)

The Board voted to approve the Prop Share Agreement; however, they agreed to hold off until February on the allocation of the funds, giving county staff time to meet with the community and obtain their input. "The Bloomingdale community needs to be ready to attend a meeting in January regarding the allocation of the Prop Share Agreement funds," stated Rodney Biddle of CAN-DO.

According to Biddle, the BOCC currently recommends that the \$564,196 to be paid by the developer to the County (pursuant to concurrency law) be used to offset a shortfall in another area since they interpret improvements to Bloomingdale/Bell Shoals and Bloomingdale/Culbreath as fully funded under CIP No. 63077. County staff defends this recommended use of the funds in another area by stating that it is in the vicinity of, and will be impacted by, the Red Cast project. Said Biddle, "The Bloomingdale community needs to convince the County that the \$564,196 needs to stay right here—on Bloomingdale Avenue and Lithia Pinecrest Road."

Check Facebook for updates: CAN-DO (www.facebook.com/BloomingdaleBigBox) and Bloomingdale Homeowners Association (www.facebook.com/BloomingdaleHoa).

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BLOOMINGDALE ESTATES DEED RESTRICTION UPDATE PROGRESSES

Residents of Bloomingdale Estates can be proud of their neighborhood. It is one of the oldest in the community, and one of the best maintained. This sense of neighborhood pride is the reason residents, along with the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, are moving forward with the first-ever attempt to update their deed restrictions. In November and December, residents distributed flyers detailing the update process. In addition, a general information article appeared in the December Bloomingdale Gazette.

Here is the planned timeline for the deed restriction update process moving forward:

- ✻ In January, a BHA representative will meet with the core group of residents who are spearheading the update. The goal is to assess what has been done and still needs to be done in the process.
- ✻ A date will be set for distribution of updated deed restrictions to residents.
- ✻ A voting date will be determined, as well as the process for vote collection. A 60% resident approval vote is required.
- ✻ Depending on the voting outcome, revisions will occur, or the document will be sent for legal review.
- ✻ The document will be recorded with the county.

Residents should continue to look for more information in the Gazette, on the BHA Facebook page and the community website, www.bloomingtongazette.com. Contact the BHA at (813) 681-2051 for general information or to volunteer to help with the update efforts.



BLOOMINGDALE COMMUNITY STATION NOTES

By: CRD Master Deputy Curtis Warren

2014 IS HERE, MAKE IT SAFE AND SECURE!

This year will bring changes and new challenges for all of us. There is little doubt that critical decisions made by those in our County, State and National government agencies will affect our local businesses, residents looking for work, schools, military and national security.

Those of us in the Sheriff's Office will continue to make significant progress in providing Bloomingdale and the surrounding areas of Hillsborough County with a safer and more secure place to live, work, run your businesses and raise your families. That is our very reason for being here.

We will continue to work directly with concerned residents from our community through groups like the Bloomingdale Area Community Council (BACC). We would encourage all homeowners' associations in our area to be sure they are represented on the BACC so they can all stay informed on important issues affecting our communities. The BACC meets the third Thursday of each month at the Bloomingdale Community Station on Erindale Drive.

We are also working to expand the number of residents serving on the Sheriff's "Volunteer Citizens Patrol Program." Residents interested in helping to make Bloomingdale a safer and more secure community can contact the Sheriff's Community Outreach Division at (813) 247-0944 for information on this outstanding program.

RESIDENT RESPONSIBILITIES - TEEN SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION

Law enforcement officers in our community have noticed too many accidents involving teen drivers in our area. Every family in our community must work hard to stop these life changing accidents. Some of the most critical involve teen drivers and passengers not wearing their seat belts, and those talking and texting while driving. New laws have been put in place to help reduce these accidents but it all comes down to drivers obeying the laws.

Some areas that continue to contribute to crime in our community include open garage doors, unlocked vehicles and valuables left in vehicles. Lock up your homes and your vehicles! Many of you may be thinking that we mention the same safety and security steps over and over every year. *The simple fact is that suggested actions don't work until citizens take action and practice them!*

Let's make 2014 a safe and secure year. Take personal responsibility for your property, your home and your vehicles. No one will miss them more than you. Also, be a good neighbor and watch out for those who live around you.

HAVE A GREAT 2014!

NAME YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD PROJECT STARTS THIS MONTH
BLOOMINGDALE NEIGHBORHOODS SECTIONS A AND M TO GAIN NEW IDENTITIES

One of the missions of the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association is to foster neighborhood pride, identity, and build a sense of community. Thanks in part to a grant from the Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners and funds from the BHA, that mission continues with the Association's efforts to ensure that every neighborhood in the community has a name and identity through the "Name Your Neighborhood" program.



In the last seven years, the BHA has overseen the funding, resident naming, sign construction and installation for eight unnamed neighborhoods in the community. In August, the BHA applied for, and in December received, funds to help defray the costs of naming the two remaining "nameless" Bloomingdale neighborhoods, Sections A and Section M. These residents will no longer need to resort to long explanations, or send smoke signals when providing directions

to their homes. More importantly, however, residents will share a sense of pride and ownership that comes with the neighborhood name designation.

The Name your Neighborhood project, while funded and administered by the county and the BHA, is designed to give residents the opportunity to vote for the neighborhood name of their choice. Beginning this month, residents of these neighborhoods can vote via email, by submitting the cut-out ballot below to the BHA, or by telephone. Residents must provide their name and address or their selection will not count towards the total votes cast.

Section A is bordered by Springvale Drive, Natures Way Blvd., and Greenhollow Lane. Residents living on the following streets are eligible to vote:

Briarpark Way, Casaba Loop, Greenford Street, Greenrock Place, Greenstone Place, Orange Crest, Orangepoint Road, and Sand Pebble Drive.

Section M is located off Natures Way, and is bordered by the neighborhoods of Chadd's Ford and Fairway Manors. Residents living on the following streets and street numbers are eligible to vote: Bell Grande Drive, Braun Way, Callista Avenue, Dunaire Drive, Haney Court, 1301 to 1313 Holleman Drive, Kristin Place, Letona Lane, Santree Way, and 3901 to 3905 Turnbury Street.

Let your voice be heard, vote today. Once the votes have been tallied, neighborhood names will be announced in the Bloomingdale Gazette. In addition, an unveiling ceremony will be held when the signs are completed and ready for installation. Details will be provided in the newsletter, on Facebook, and the BHA website. For information, contact the BHA at (813) 681-2051, or by email at bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com.

VOTE NOW
Beginning this month residents of Sections A and M are asked to vote on names for their neighborhoods.
Vote via email, telephone, or mail-in ballot.

2014 NAME YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD OFFICIAL BALLOT



BLOOMINGDALE HOA SECTION A
Briarpark Way, Casaba Loop, Greenford Street, Greenrock Place, Greenstone Place, Orange Crest, Orangepoint Road, Sand Pebble Drive
Name and Address:
Only vote once for the neighborhood name you want. Write in suggestions will be counted.
[] Spring Hollow Estates
[] Green Vale Estates
[] Springvale Greens Reserve
[]

BLOOMINGDALE HOA SECTION M
Bell Grande Drive, Braun Way, Callista Avenue, Dunaire Drive, Haney Court, 1301 to 1313 Holleman Drive, Kristin Place, Letona Lane, Santree Way, 3901 to 3905 Turnbury Street
Name and Address:
Only vote once for the neighborhood name you want. Write in suggestions will be counted.
[] Fairway Park
[] Bell Grande Heights
[] Hacienda Grande
[] Callista Heights
[]

Please cut out this ballot and return it to the BHA at 3509 Bell Shoals Rd., Valrico, FL 33596. Or, email your selection to bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com.

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TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE BABY SUITES AT BRANDON REGIONAL HOSPITAL OR TO REGISTER FOR CHILDBIRTH CLASSES, CALL 813.653.1065 OR VISIT BRANDONREGIONALHOSPITAL.COM.