

THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

VOLUME XXXIV  ISSUE 2  FEBRUARY 2014

PUBLIC MEETING TO ADDRESS BLOOMINGDALE AREA TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS CAN-DO ENCOURAGES RESIDENTS TO ATTEND

The Hillsborough County Public Works Department has scheduled a public meeting in the Bloomingdale High School auditorium on Tuesday, Feb. 4, 6:30-8:30 p.m. to discuss Bloomingdale area transportation improvements.

The Feb. 4 meeting is in follow-up to the Board of County Commissioners' December 2013 meeting agenda item having to do with the provision and use of funds for improved transportation in and around the area of the proposed big box store on Bloomingdale Avenue.

The Board voted to approve the Prop Share Agreement in December; however, they

agreed to hold off until February on the allocation of the funds to give staff time to meet with the community and obtain public input.

"We hope the community turns out in big numbers for the Feb. 4 meeting," commented Rodney Biddle of CAN-DO (Coordinated Active Neighborhoods for Development Organization). "It's important that those directly affected by increased traffic due to the proposed big box development attend the meeting and convince the BOCC that the \$564,196 from Redcast (the developer) should be used right here on Bloomingdale Avenue—not in another area of the county." For more information visit www.bloomingdalebigbox.com or www.hillsboroughcounty.org.



BHA ACCEPTING 2014 BLOOMINGDALE COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS



Bloomingdale Homeowners Association Secretary and Scholarship Chairperson Daniel Berkowitz presents last year's BHA Scholarship to Robert J. Bullara.

Bloomingdale High School seniors looking for money to defray the costs of furthering their education need look no further. The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association (BHA) announced today that the Bloomingdale Community Scholarship Fund is now accepting student applications. The \$2,000 scholarship named in honor of former Bloomingdale Principal, B.J. Stelter, serves to reward outstanding Bloomingdale High School seniors who plan to continue their education in college or vocational school programs.

To be eligible, applicants must be residents of the Bloomingdale community, and the applicant's parent/guardian must be a current member of the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association. In addition, the applicant must have at least a weighted 3.0 grade point average at the time of scholarship disbursement, and must be accepted at a two- or four-year accredited college or university. The application selection criteria includes: Community Service, Extra-curricular activities, Essay, Academics, and Letter of Reference. Applicants will be judged solely on merit, not financial need.

The deadline to apply for the scholarship is April 1. The winning student will be announced at the BHA board meeting on May 13. Applications are available at the high school guidance office, the BHA office, and online at the BHA website at www.bloomingdalegazette.com. For more information, call 813-681-2051, or email bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Let us love winter, for it is the spring of genius." *Pietro Aretin*

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PLEASE  RECYCLE



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>	

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER



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YARD OF THE MONTH



Photo: Cassie Newman



Chuck & Marcia Hoening
402 Bayfield Drive (Bloomingdale Estates / West)

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

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



Attention Homeowners

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097547-01

Spring Group Swim Lessons / Registration opened Jan. 20 Campo Family YMCA / 3414 Culbreath Road.

- Morning classes for Parent-Child and Preschool run Feb. 24-April 4.
- Saturday morning classes for Parent-Child, Preschool, Youth, and Adult run March 1-29.
- Evening classes for Parent-Child, Preschool, Youth, and Adult run March 17-April 17.

Contact Noel Russell for more information at 813-684-1371 or nrussell@tampaymca.org.

Civil Rights—"Blues Got Us" Music Program

Feb. 1 / 3:30-5:30 p.m. / Bloomingdale Regional Public Library

Notable folk and blues music duo Bill and Eli Perras present an inspiring one-hour song and story program in celebration of Black History Month. Free event open to all ages.

Public Meeting on Bloomingdale Area Transportation Improvements / Feb. 4 / 6:30-8:30 p.m. / Bloomingdale High School Auditorium / 1700 E. Bloomingdale Avenue

The Hillsborough County Public Works Department has scheduled a public meeting to discuss transportation improvements and receive community input for the Bloomingdale area. For more information call Steve Valdez, Citizen Services Manager, (813) 272-5275.

MythBusters: The Explosive Exhibition / Opens Feb. 7 / Museum of Science and Industry / 4801 E. Fowler Avenue, Tampa

Can you huff, puff, and blow a house in? Does toast always tend to land butter-side down? Does running in the rain get you less wet than walking through it? Can you really make a canoe out of duct tape? Spend a day as a MythBuster to uncover the truth behind the myths for yourself. And while you're at it, watch live demonstrations put on by MOSI's MythBusting facilitators and peruse props and gadgets from the show. For exhibit and ticket information visit www.mosi.org.

Anansi & The Tree of Life / Feb. 6 / 10:15 a.m. / Center Place Fine Arts & Civic Association, Inc. / 619 Vonderburg Drive, Brandon

Collection of African tales told with puppetry, storytelling, and audience participation. The great Baobab tree spreads its limbs giving food and shelter to all the animals. There in its branches lives Anansi the Spider, full of mischief and schemes. Always quick to steal and cheat, Anansi never learns his lesson. He perpetually comes back for more, providing humor and positive life lessons for us all. Katie Adams' Make Believe Theatre uses colorful puppets, a large-sized Baobab tree with shadow

puppets, and African music to bring these stories to life. Stories include Anansi and the Hat Shaking Dance, The Secret Heart of the Tree, and The Red and Green Hat. Open to the community. Grades Pre-K-3. Visit www.centerplacebrandon.org for more information.

Valentines Event: A Total Eclipse of the Heart / Feb. 14 or Feb. 15 / Museum of Science and Industry / 4801 E. Fowler Avenue, Tampa / First Seating: 5:30 p.m.; Second Seating: 7:30 p.m.

Take pleasure in a truly unique Valentine's Day experience under the stars of MOSI's planetarium. Your reservation includes a light dinner underneath a changing sky that will take you to romantic cities like Paris, Buenos Aires, and Fiji. Enjoy the timeless tales of ancient love stories as told by the stars while enjoying the cuisine made famous by these beautiful cities. Explore the chemistry of love by creating your own signature scent while listening to the world's most adored love songs. It is a night to be remembered. Limited seating available; pre-registration required. Program fee: \$100 per couple; MOSI member: \$80 per couple. For more information visit www.mosi.org.

Boy Scouts Badge Event / Feb. 15 / 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. / The Florida Academy of Performing Arts at Music Showcase / 402 Oakfield Drive, Brandon

Earn your SHOWMAN activity badge and your MUSIC belt loop in ONE DAY! The Florida Academy of Performing Arts will assist you in earning both the Showman activity badge and the Music belt loop during a fun, energetic, and interactive workshop. Attend as a den or an individual. Participate in many different activities from the Puppetry, Music, and Drama requirements. Adults can stay or drop off child to earn the showman activity badge. Price: \$12.00/person. Register online at www.musicshowcaseonline.com.

Your Health: Prevention, Protection, and Preparation for the Future / Feb. 18 / 7:30 p.m. / Adult education seminar at Congregation Beth Shalom of Brandon / 706 Bryan Road, Brandon

Sue Pagano, Community Representative in Professional Relations at Lifepath Hospice, will address a holistic approach to palliative care for chronic diseases, the services which Hospice can provide, and decision-making tasks facing caregivers. Free and open to the public. For more information, contact Janice Perelman at chinadolljp@verizon.net or (813) 571-2029.

Are You My Mother? / Feb. 28 / 10:15 a.m. / Center Place Fine Arts & Civic Association, Inc. / 619 Vonderburg Drive, Brandon

At long last, Baby Bird emerges from her shell and expects to be

greeted by her mother's song. But her mother is not there. Where is she? Why isn't she home? With the help of Dog, Cat, and Hen, Baby Bird sets out in search of Mother Bird in this colorful musical adventure based on P.D. Eastman's whimsical and well-loved picture book. Presented by Arts Power. Open to the community. Grades Pre-K-3. Visit www.centerplacebrandon.org for more information.

UPCOMING & ONGOING

Yoga Teacher Training and New Student Special / Beginning weekends March 1 / Karma Yoga Studio / 4363 Lynx Paw Trail, Valrico

Karma Yoga is thrilled to offer Yoga Alliance-Approved 200- and 500-hour Yoga Teacher Training programs. Trainees will be exposed to many different practices, teaching styles, and points of view. Yoga teacher training graduates will be eligible for Registered Yoga Teacher (RYT) status. Karma Yoga is running a new student special of unlimited yoga classes for only \$50. Classes are held 7 days a week. As a multi-specialty studio, Karma offers everything from Hot Yoga to Gentle Yoga. Information about training and classes is available at www.karmayogafitness.com or (813) 489-9644.

VPK Informational Night / March 6 / 7 p.m. / The Village Early Learning Center / 3741 Canoga Park Drive, Brandon

Learn all about The Village ELC's VPK program--with governmental rules discussed, and The Village VPK programs explained. All current preschool students please attend, and prospective community students welcome to attend. Free babysitting with RSVP. Please call (813) 651-0779.

6th Annual Winthrop Arts Festival / March 22-23 / 10 a.m.-5 p.m. / Winthrop Town Centre / 11252 Winthrop Main Street, Riverview

The Winthrop Arts Festival is passionate about creating an arts environment for Winthrop and the greater Brandon area. The festival strives to bring together the community through the beauty of the artistry and musical performances to enhance the art appreciation of everyone attending this wonderful event. This year the festival will showcase the work of one hundred artists, in categories ranging from oil paintings to ceramics to jewelry, with musical entertainment provided by local musicians and schools. For more information visit www.winthropartsfestival.org.



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NEW SMOOTHIE SHOP TAKES OVER FORMER ROBEKS LOCATION

YoYo Juice, the new specialty smoothie and juice shop in Plaza Bella, serves up a variety of fresh-squeezed juices, all-natural smoothies with no added sugars, salads, gourmet wraps and other snacks.

The store's name – "YoYo Juice" – was invented by store owner Scott Laviano's son, Scott Jr. When the family was too busy to sit down and eat together due to after-school activities, Scott and his wife Rose would tell the kids, "You're on your own for dinner." When the Laviano's decided to start a juice and smoothie shop, they couldn't think of a better name than YoYo Juice.

"When you're on your own for dinner, YoYo Juice has wraps, salads, smoothies and more. The title also implies that you're on your own when it comes to your health, and we provide healthy options," said Laviano.

The shop opened Jan. 3. "We looked at multiple companies before deciding to move here, but we loved that the previous owners had built their business up from the bottom for six to seven years. The owners wanted to retire, so we took the smoothie shop and brought it into the technology age," Laviano said. YoYo Juice has online ordering, digital signs in-store, and a Facebook and Twitter account.

Robeks associates were invited to continue working at YoYo Juice when the previous owners retired last year, and some stayed. Laviano encourages the associates to invent new smoothies. Two of these bold, yet delicious, inventions – Elvis and Nectar of the Gods – are featured on the menu.

"Our smoothies have no added sugars, which separates us from other smoothie shops like Tropical Smoothie Café and Smoothie King," Laviano said. The best-selling smoothie so far this year has been the Sunrise Strawberry – a classic strawberry and banana smoothie. All of the smoothies are made-to-order with fresh ingredients from local growers, such as Collins Produce Inc. on S.R. 60.

Laviano is big into supporting the community. He and his wife have been involved in fundraising for their children's sports booster clubs in Massachusetts, where their daughter Caitlin, 14, swims competitively. The family is still in transition to Florida where they have dreamed of residing and operating a business together. Their two sons – Joe, 20, and Scottie, 17, are in college, while Caitlin will be starting at Bloomingdale High School next year.

"I want to get into the high schools and really work with the schools for spirit nights," said Laviano, who has great fundraising ideas. YoYo Juice already sponsors Bloomingdale's baseball team, as well as this year's Miss Tampa Bay Teen.

YoYo Juice runs specials every month. February's special is the Sunrise Strawberry in light of Plant City's annual Strawberry Festival. Every Wednesday is "Wheatgrass Wednesday" with \$1 wheatgrass shots, and any order of a medium or large smoothie and wrap saves \$2 daily.

"The wheatgrass is so healthy. It has so much chlorophyll. I also love the wraps and salads," said Janet Komanchuk, a regular at YoYo Juice. "I was a supporter of Robeks before, and now it's great to have Scott with YoYo," she continued.

For store hours or to order online, visit www.yoyojuice.com or e-mail Laviano at scott@yoyojuice.com. YoYo Juice is located at 1044 Bloomingdale Ave. and can be reached at 653-4300. Follow YoYo Juice on Facebook (www.facebook.com/yoyojuiceinc) and Twitter (@YoYoJuice).



Store owner Scott Laviano gladly accepts a lucky \$2 bill gift from a new YoYo Juice customer.



Photos: Kayla Hayes

YoYo Juice pairs a high tech look with locally grown produce.

A favorite Brandon restaurant is about to open its doors right here in Bloomingdale! The Shrimp Boat Grill is moving from La Viva Plaza at the corner of Lumsden Road and Kings Avenue to its brand new location in Plaza Bella, right on Bloomingdale Avenue. The doors are set to open the first week in February.

Chef Al Paone opened The Shrimp Boat 10 years ago. He and his son Albert, Jr. work the kitchen to create fresh, classic seafood dishes along with gourmet selections and the restaurant's signature homemade ice cream.

Paone explained that the new location will have a bigger kitchen and more seating. He is especially excited about the new outdoor seating area that he plans to make climate-controlled. In a front corner of the new restaurant sits a piano—there will be live music several evenings a week. And the new bar area boasts color-changing LED lighting that gives it a fun vibe. The restaurant is known for its gourmet drinks.

On Saturday nights, The Shrimp Boat Grill will continue to offer its Category 4 tasting menu for \$27. The younger Chef Albert creates a 4-course meal that includes seasonal selections, international influences, and original dishes, and is different each week.

One recent Category 4 offering included Seared Sea Scallop, Mushroom Duxelle, Sumac Crusted Cauliflower, and Crispy Kale. New and returning customers can also order off the regular menu.

"I have been in the restaurant business my whole life," said the elder Paone. The Philadelphia native starting working at age 17 in his mother's tavern. He knows all the ins and outs of bringing in the freshest seafood and preparing it for optimal flavor for his restaurant's guests.

The Shrimp Boat Grill will be opening at 1010 Bloomingdale Avenue (near the corner of Bloomingdale Avenue and Bell Shoals Road) in the space previously occupied by The Cheddar Biscuit.



Photos: Miriam Leech

The popular Shrimp Boat Grill is moving from its Brandon location and will be opening the week of February 1st at the corner of Bloomingdale Avenue and Bell Shoals Road in the Plaza Bella shopping center.

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It pumps, soars, pines, breaks, flutters, sinks, leaps, swells, cares, loves, and has songs written about it...Of course, it's the heart! As is fitting, this vital organ has an entire month devoted to its care.

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death, in men and women, in the United States. According to the Center for Disease Control, one in every three deaths is from heart disease and strokes, which is equal to approximately 2200 deaths a day. Every year about 715,000 Americans have a heart attack. About 600,000 people die from heart disease in the U.S. each year.

The CDC in conjunction with the American Heart Association is highlighting the "Million Hearts" initiative this month. This national initiative started in 2011 and aims to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes in the U.S. by 2017. The "Million Hearts" initiative challenges everyone to protect themselves and their loved ones from heart disease and stroke by understanding the risks, and the steps to prevention. To learn more about this program or to take the pledge for the "Million Hearts" initiative go to <http://wwwmillionhearts.hhs.gov>.

The statistics of heart disease are alarming but can be preventable and controllable. The do's and don'ts may appear daunting, but everyday prevention starts with small steps.

1. Eat a healthy diet- there are many free websites to you choose a diet that will fit you and your lifestyle. Just a couple are www.ChooseMyPlate.gov and www.cdc.gov
2. Maintain a healthy weight- being overweight or obese can increase the risk for heart disease. To determine if you are in a healthy weight range go to <http://cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/index.html> this site will help you determine your body mass index (BMI).
3. Exercise regularly- just 30-40 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise 3-4 times a week is sufficient.
4. Monitor your blood pressure-high blood pressure often has no symptoms, so it should be monitored regularly. There are blood pressure measuring machines in pharmacies and Wal-Mart. Normal blood pressure measurement is 120/80.
5. Don't smoke

6. Limit alcohol use- men should have no more than two drinks per day and women one.
7. Have your cholesterol checked
8. If you have diabetes get it under control
9. If you are on medicine for high blood pressure, high cholesterol or diabetes...Take it!



For more ideas about for better heart health visit:
http://www.cdc.gov/salt/healthy_heart_tips.htm

Feb. 7 is a special day dedicated to raise awareness of heart disease in women. It has been dubbed "Go Red on National Wear Red Day." On this day show your support for women with heart disease by wearing something red.





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BLOOMINGDALE COMMUNITY STATION NOTES

By: Community Resource Master Deputy Curtis Warren

OVER SIXTEEN YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE BLOOMINGDALE COMMUNITY!

This month marks sixteen years since the Sheriff's Community Station opened in Bloomingdale. That was 1998. Just try remembering what was going on in the world and in our community that far back. Do you remember these events – Google is founded, the Broncos win the Super Bowl, Microsoft releases Windows 98 and the average price of a gallon of gas was \$1.06!

The success of the Sheriff's Office operations in our area has been due to the outstanding cooperation and support of Bloomingdale residents and the surrounding communities. Local policing continues to make our community a safer and more secure place to live and raise our families.

Groups like the Sheriff's Bloomingdale Area Community Council (BACC) continue to work directly with residents in identifying critical concerns and finding solutions. The BACC needs more members from homeowners' associations to become actively involved to help improve the safety and security of the Bloomingdale community.

Several new members attended the January BACC meeting, which included a briefing on local crime statistics indicating a significant decrease in crime in our area. The statistics also show that vehicle burglaries continue to be the major problem, especially those caused by residents leaving their vehicles open!

Members were also instructed on how to properly report suspicious activities or emergencies.

- When an emergency such a fire or medical event occurs, call 911.
- When a crime is taking place or law enforcement is needed call the Sheriff's Dispatch at 247-8200!
- For problems such as road conditions or signs down call the County's Public Works Customer Service Center at 635-5400.

Residents interested in information on the BACC can call the Community Station at 635-8040 or come by the station at 3622 Erindale Drive (Intersection of Erindale Drive and Lithia-Pinecrest Road). You're also invited to attend the next BACC meeting on Thursday, Feb. 20 at 7 p.m. at the Community Station.

Sheriff's programs such as the Volunteer Citizen Patrol Program have provided outstanding assistance to all of us in law enforcement and improved our ability to provide Bloomingdale's residents with secure home and work environments. More Bloomingdale residents are needed to help build this valuable source of support for the Sheriff's Office operations in our community. Residents who are interested can visit the Sheriff's website at www.hcso.tampa.fl.us for info or call Deputy Loraine Jordan at 247-8223!

PLEASE STAY SAFE AND SECURE!

TEEN DRIVER CHALLENGE TEACHES SAFER DRIVING



Classes are currently being scheduled for March and April. Sign up now—space is limited!

One of the Sheriff's newest programs involves working with teen drivers to provide them with critical driver training. Statistics show that motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for drivers 15 to 20 years old.

The "Teen Driver Challenge" is a defensive driving and vehicle control program designed for teenage drivers. The two-day program provides teen drivers with additional knowledge and understanding of how to safely handle a vehicle in a variety of conditions and situations.

The objective of the program is to enhance a young driver's awareness of the complex task of operating a motor vehicle and to create and practice skills that will prepare them to anticipate and handle hazards that occur daily in normal driving conditions. All classes are conducted under the direct supervision of certified driving instructors. The Teen Driving Challenge is an effective program at reaching teens, modifying their attitudes and producing better, safer drivers.

The classroom portion of the training is held 6 p.m.-10 p.m. at 2008 E. 8th Avenue, Tampa. The driving segment is conducted 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. at the Sheriff's training site at 14603 State Road 39 in Lithia.

For more information contact the Sheriff's Community Outreach Division at (813) 247-8115 or visit the Sheriff's website at www.hcso.tampa.fl.us to obtain the proper forms for the classes.

Monday, Feb. 10 is national Clean Out Your Computer Day, a holiday recognized annually on the second Monday in February. Local businessman and founder of One Stop PC Help, Matthew Myers shares his recommendations for cleaning up your PC.

1. Clean up the hard drive by using the Disk Cleanup tool that comes with all versions of Windows. To watch a video to learn how to use the Disk Cleanup tool, visit www.windows.microsoft.com and search for 'Delete Files Using Disk Cleanup.'
2. Clean out dust from keyboard and computer by unplugging the computer and removing left side cover. Use compressed air clean out all fans and keyboard. Replace the side cover and plug the computer back in.
3. Remove viruses by downloading and installing 'Malwarebytes,' which is an anti-spyware remover. Malwarebytes can be downloaded at www.malwarebytes.org.
4. Clean up email by simply deleting unneeded emails and then delete all items in the deleted items folder. Email can also be archived, which will remove the items from the Inbox and place the emails in an archive folder.

5. Of course, if DIY is not your style, computer service companies such as One Stop PC Help can clean up your computer for you.
- One Stop PC Help is a 'one stop shop' for all PC and networking needs. Visit www.onestoppchelp.com or call 433-6310 for more information.



Since 1976, every U.S. president has recognized February as Black History Month—a time to celebrate African American achievements and how they have helped shape America. The Bloomingdale Regional Public Library is celebrating Black History Month on Feb.1 by hosting the Blues Got Us civil rights song and story program. The library also suggests a number of books written by popular African American authors for both children and adults.

Popular children's book authors for Black History Month include: Eloise Greenfield (The Great Migration, 2011), Jacqueline Woodson (Locomotion, 2003) and Jerry Pinkey (The Tortoise and the Hare, 2013).


The Bloomingdale Regional Library's top ten adult authors for Black History Month include: Ernest Gaines (A Lesson Before Dying, 1993), Maya Angelou (I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, 1969), Langston Hughes (Shakespeare in Harlem, 1942), Richard Wright (Native Son, 1940), Toni Morrison (Beloved, 1987), Zora Neal Hurston (Their Eyes Were Watching God, 1937), Alice Walker (The Color Purple, 1982), W.E.B. DuBois (The Souls of Black Folk, 1903), Ralph Ellison (Invisible Man, 1947) and James Baldwin (Go Tell It on the Mountain, 1952).

You can find all of these authors and more at the Bloomingdale Regional Public Library.



To learn more about "The Blues Got Us" Music Program and other events visit www.hcplc.org, or call 273-3652. Still to come this month is an Introduction to Digital Photography course on Feb. 10, the Green Dragon Mah Jongg Club every other Tuesday (monthly) and book discussions for adults on Feb. 6 and Feb.17.


If you haven't visited the Bloomingdale library since its recent expansion and renovations, February should be the month to check it out!



Bloomingdale Regional Public Library
Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Libraries


Civil Rights—Blues Got Us Music

Saturday, Feb. 1 3:30 p.m.



Notable folk and blues music duo Bill and Eli Perras present an inspiring one-hour song and story program in celebration of Black History Month. They intersperse original and traditional music and songs with stories of icons of the civil rights movement, such as Dr. Carter G. Woodson, the Tuskegee Airmen, Harry T. Moore, Martin Luther King, Jr. and events that led up to the civil rights movement.

For adults.



Funded by the Friends of the Bloomingdale Regional Library.

The views expressed in this program are those of the presenter(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official policy, position, or opinions of Hillsborough County, Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Libraries, or the Friends of the Library of Tampa-Hillsborough County, Inc. who do not endorse the presenter(s).

1906 Bloomingdale Ave., Valrico, FL 33596 | 813-273-3652 | hcplc.org

TAXING DISTRICT SEEKS TRUSTEES

The Bloomingdale Special Taxing District (BSTD) is seeking two individuals to serve on its Board of Trustees. Although Trustees are elected officials, two seats on the current board have been vacated and will be filled through a vote by other Trustees.

- Vacancy BD2 –term ends Sept 2014
- Vacancy BD6 –term ends Sept 2016

BSTD Trustees meet on a monthly basis (more often if required), and make decisions about the common areas of Bloomingdale—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 regularly enhanced and the lighting is in good working order. Meetings take place at the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico.

Because the BSTD is a government agency, Trustees must meet certain requirements:

- Live in Bloomingdale and be a registered voter
- Attend regular monthly meetings (2nd Monday of the month)
- Attend standing committee meetings (4th Monday of the month)

While not required, Trustees may benefit from having experience in business, long-term planning, contracts and an ability to deal professionally with other board members and contractors.

If you are interested in giving back to the Bloomingdale community by serving as a BSTD Trustee, please contact the BSTD office at (813) 684-6667, and plan to attend the next regularly scheduled board meeting on February 10 at 6:30 p.m. All meetings are open to the public.

BLOOMINGDALE

SPECIAL TAXING DISTRICT

BLOOMINGDALE

3509 Bell Shoals Road
Valrico, Florida 33596
(813) 684-6667 Office
(813) 684-2358 Fax
BSTD@verizon.net

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INs & OUTs

WHAT EVERY BLOOMINGDALE HOMEOWNER SHOULD KNOW ABOUT FORECLOSURE... SADLY, IT'S A WAITING GAME

The Bloomingdale community, like many others across the country, experiences its fair share of properties in foreclosure. While many residents know someone who has been personally involved in the foreclosure process, many more residents experience the aesthetic aftermath in their neighborhoods. Often times this includes a lack of property maintenance and lawn care, and trash left behind as the property owners vacate the residence. This INs and OUTs focuses on resources available to help residents maintain their neighborhood standards, and what role the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association (BHA) plays in the process.

Understanding the basics of foreclosure is critical to knowing what you, the resident, and BHA can do when faced with a property in foreclosure. A foreclosure is simply the process of taking possession of a mortgaged property as a result of the mortgagor's failure to keep up mortgage payments. Generally, foreclosure is initiated by the financial institution (the lender) that holds the loan agreed upon between the bank and buyer. Sounds like it would be an easy process, but in Florida, foreclosures involve several lengthy steps, which together can take over two-and-a-half years on average. In our community, at least one property is nearing the three year mark.

In 2013, the Florida Fair Foreclosure Act was passed to streamline and speed up the foreclosure process. Whether the new rules will help still remains to be seen as lenders must provide more documentation to start the process.

What does this mean to Bloomingdale residents? While in foreclosure, the foreclosed-upon owners typically spend little to nothing on property upkeep; and based on BHA experiences, banks wait for the final foreclosure outcome before expending any funds at their level. While this is a win-win situation for the banks and former owners, it is not the best situation for neighboring residents, the BHA, and our community.

What can be done? The BHA is limited in its ability to force compliance of deed restrictions covering basic property upkeep in the community's voluntary HOA neighborhoods. The association attempts to achieve compliance through a series of three letters to the property owner detailing the violations. After the third effort, the issue is elevated to County Code Enforcement. Currently, the BHA has forwarded 20 homes to county that have since been identified as foreclosure properties.

Once at county-level, Code Enforcement personnel attempt to contact the owners (bank or resident). The county cannot levy fines or issue citations as long as the property is still in the foreclosure system. Only when the property has been sold and a new owner takes possession, can real efforts be directed at bringing the property back to reasonable living standards. County personnel do try, as does the BHA, to contact the lenders about the conditions of the foreclosure properties. In some cases, the lenders have shared in the community's concerns and taken steps to maintain the homes. The bottom line: It is a "wait, and wait some more" situation.

What can Bloomingdale residents do?

1. Contact the BHA and identify any properties that appear to be abandoned, vacant, in disrepair, or generally, in an unkempt condition. One of the most obvious clues to a property entering foreclosure is an overgrown lawn. Depending on the condition, the BHA will either send the community's deed restriction letters, or forward the complaint immediately to county-level.
2. Try and contact the former owner, or begin a letter-writing campaign directed at the lender. There have been a few success stories from residents taking this route.
3. Finally, some concerned and proactive residents have been mowing these foreclosed properties. While their frustration is understandable, it should be noted that without permission to enter the property, these residents are trespassing.

Currently, the BHA is exploring other avenues to address property maintenance issues. Any updates on this issue will be passed to residents via the Gazette, the community website, and Facebook. The BHA shares residents' concerns and will explore every possibility available.

Do you have a question on deed restrictions or other local home ownership requirements? Email your questions to bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com, and check the Gazette for answers.

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY BUILDING ADDRESS REQUIREMENTS

FYI, Bloomingdale Neighbors! In an emergency situation, time is of the essence. Fire and Rescue personnel must be able to locate homes quickly. Seconds could be the difference between life or death, or a property catastrophe.

Hillsborough County Ordinance 87-6 requires all buildings in Hillsborough County to "have an address number posted on the front facade of the building, or on a separate structure such as a mailbox, post or other visible structure. The numerals used shall be of a contrasting color than that of the structure upon which they are posted, made of a durable weather resistant material, permanently affixed, and shall be clearly visible and legible from the public or private right of way on which the building fronts."

In addition, neighborhood deed restrictions may have stricter address requirements. The bottom line is: This is for safety's sake. Make sure emergency responders can get to your home by ensuring your address is clearly identifiable from the street.

BHA 2014 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE OFF TO A BRISK START

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association (BHA) 2014 Membership Drive officially kicked off on Jan.15 when over 5,000 membership notices were mailed to Bloomingdale property owners. Now, as is said in the sports world, the ball is in your hands.

The BHA needs your support to continue the many programs and activities directly related to providing the best quality of life possible for all residents. Membership is one of the lowest, if not the lowest, HOA costs in the county at \$25 annually, or less than 7 cents a day. More importantly, all membership funds are returned 100 percent to the community. The all-volunteer board of directors receives no compensation for the time and effort they devote to keeping Bloomingdale a great community in which to raise a family, and a great place to call home.

This year, your membership funds will support the continued improvement of our professional community newspaper, The Bloomingdale Gazette, and the unveiling of the new and completely updated BHA website early this spring. The BHA Facebook site is gaining momentum daily, and will endeavor to provide updated local information of interest to those in the community. Customer service will remain a priority with a goal of decreasing response time to residents to less than 48 hours. In addition, the BHA established an email alert system for passing urgent/emergency notifications to residents.

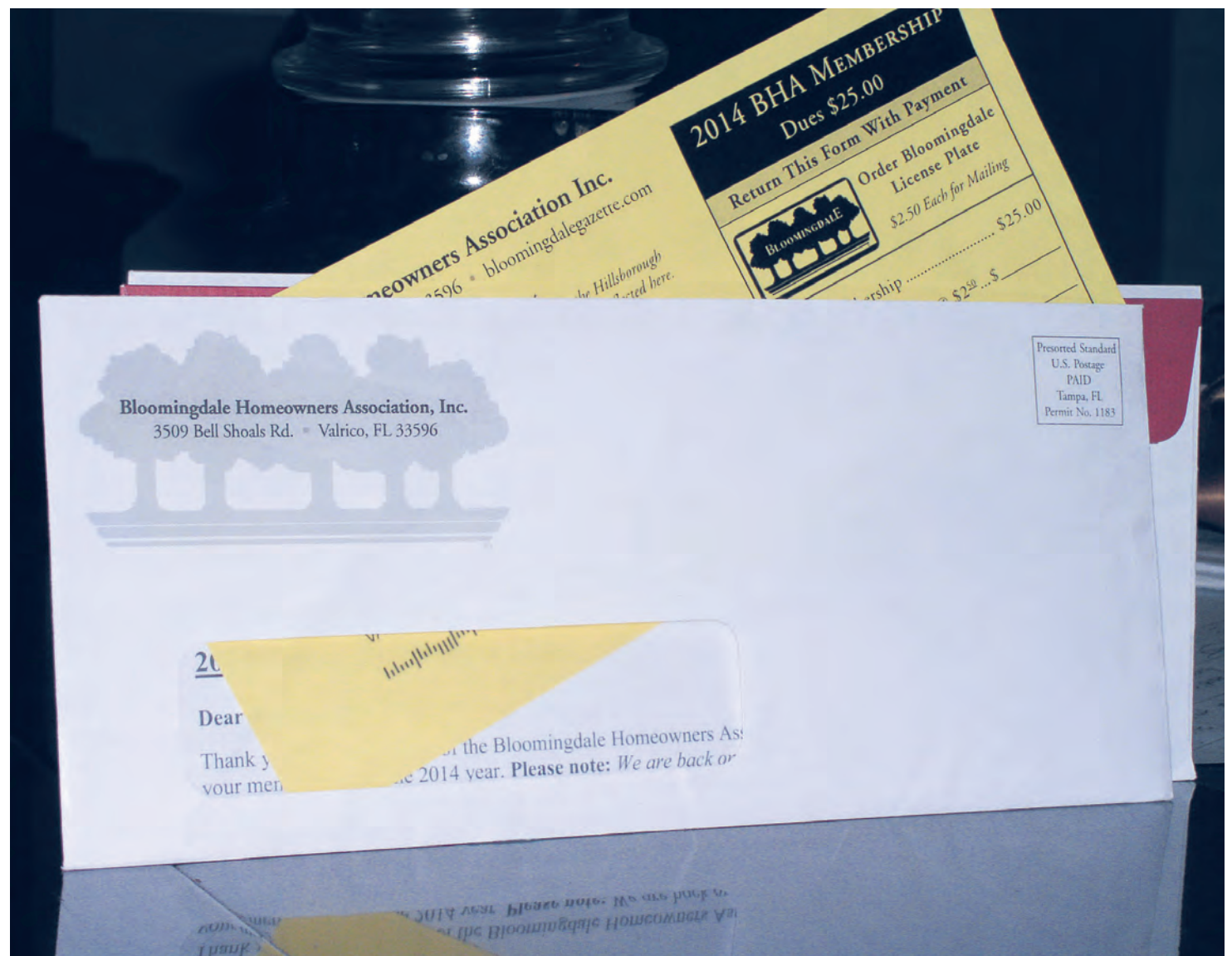
No BHA programs are free, and resident support is critical to the Board's plans for the 2014 year. Several programs are well underway including the first-ever deed restriction update for Bloomingdale Estates, the neighborhood naming and sign installation for Sections A and M, and the improved deed restriction compliance program which benefits all residents by providing information and education about our neighborhood standards, known as deed restrictions.

Additionally, the BHA offers a resident high school senior the exclusive opportunity to benefit from the BHA's \$2,000

scholarship offered each school year, and all residents are afforded the opportunity to unload their "junk" during our community clean-up day held in the spring. Tentatively, the BHA is working on a spring golf tournament fundraising event, and a larger family-oriented community event in the fall. Finally, no year would be complete in the community without our annual visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus. This cherished event will be entering its 27th year.

If you didn't receive your 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. The BHA needs your support now. Please submit your membership reply today.

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



RESIDENT VOTING CONTINUES IN EFFORTS TO NAME SECTIONS A AND M

Residents in Sections A and M have a chance to clearly let their voices be heard in the process to name their respective neighborhoods. Sections A and M are the last of 12 neighborhoods in the community that the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association has provided with neighborhood signs through the Name your Neighborhood program.

So far, Section M residents have a clear favorite with Fairway Park gathering 90 percent of the vote. Coming in at a distant second is Bell Grande Heights. In Section A, voting is spread evenly between Springvale Greens Reserve, Spring Hollow Estates, and Orangepointe Estates.

If you live in Sections A and M, vote today.

Section A proposed names

Springvale Greens Reserve

Spring Hollow Estates

Greenvale Estates

Orangepointe Estates

Section M, proposed names

Fairway Park

Bell Grande Heights

Hacienda Grande

Callista Heights

Voting will continue through the end of February. Residents can vote either via email, by Facebook message, or by telephone. Residents must provide a name and address or their selection will not count towards the total votes cast. Once the votes have been tallied, the neighborhood names will be announced in the Bloomingdale Gazette, and online. In addition, an unveiling ceremony will be held when the signs are completed and ready for installation.

For information, contact the BHA at 813-681-2051, or by email at bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com.

VOTE NOW

Residents of Sections A and M are asked to continue voting on names for their neighborhoods. Vote via email, telephone, or mail-in ballot.

NEIGHBORHOOD PETIQUETTE

RESPONSIBLE PET OWNER MONTH OFFERS PURRRRFECT OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN NEW TRICKS

Bloomingdale West resident Joanie Wilson and her family frantically searched the area for their two Yorkies, Gracie and Sammie, who uncharacteristically escaped from the family's gated backyard in November 2013. The family posted signs; talked with neighbors and neighboring businesses; posted photos on Facebook and Craig's List; and searched several local online lost and found pet sites in hopes that someone had seen and could help them locate Sammie and Gracie. In the end it was a Facebook response that helped locate Sammie; and Gracie was found by Joanie in a wooded area after talking with a nearby Little Footsteps employee who thought she saw the little dog.

The common denominator to finding Gracie and Sammie was neighbors helping neighbors (whether face-to-face or on Facebook). Residents count on those in the community to help when furry friends go missing; on the flip side, residents should be able to count on each other to be responsible pet owners. Since February is Responsible Pet Owner Month, it's a great time to start practicing neighborhood petiquette, and to prepare for those hopefully rare and unforeseen critter escapes.

- Be a good neighbor. Follow county code requirements to keep dogs and cats under your direct control (e.g., on leash or by fencing). Clean up after your pets. Spay or neuter animals to cut down on feral animals in the community.
- Have your pet micro chipped, and be sure to keep your address and other information up-to-date with the microchip company. Likewise, update pet tags with current phone numbers.
- Make sure you have photos of your pets handy just in case they go missing.

If your pet goes missing:

- Do send an email with photo to the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association and we'll post your missing pet notice on our Facebook page
- Do ask your neighbors if they have seen your pet
- Do not post missing pet flyers around the neighborhood. Stapling flyers to signs can damage street signs that are very costly to repair or replace. In addition, it is a Hillsborough County code violation to post signs in public areas—when noticed they are removed by workers.

Lost and found pet resources:

- LostandFoundPetsofHillsboroughCounty (Facebook)
- Hillsborough County Animal Services department: www.hillsboroughcounty.org
- Bloomingdale Homeowners Association Facebook: Contact the Association with missing pet information by phone at (813) 681-2051, or email bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com.



As promised, this month is dedicated to Bloomingdale's market trends for 2013 and I come bearing great news for my neighbors! In a snapshot, the median Bloomingdale home sold in 2013 listed at \$214,900 with a purchase price of \$214,500 (\$100.86/square foot), and was on the market 14 days until contract. Compared to 2012, Bloomingdale saw a 9.29% increase in list price, and an 11.89% increase in purchase price (12.05% per square foot) with a 62.17% decrease in days until contract!

Want some more good news? Approximately 32% of all sold homes in 2013 were short sales and foreclosures, down from 39% in 2012. While the 2013 Hillsborough County and Florida state statistics have yet to be released by FloridaRealtor.org, Bloomingdale's 2013 median sale price shows a 6.74% increase over Hillsborough's 2012 single family home median of \$190,000 and a 16.09% increase over Florida's median of \$180,000. Our neighborhood appears well on the road to recovery, so congratulations neighbors—we should all be proud to live in such a well-established community.



Dina White
Realtor

Century 21 Shaw Realty
Group
1725 Highway 60 East
Valrico, FL 33596
813.509.7780
dina.white@century21.com

For those thinking about selling, this is a fantastic opportunity to mitigate losses and continue to capitalize on low interest rates. Please check back

next month as we enter real estate's busiest time of the year! Until then, stay warm and safe, and don't hesitate to contact me for more information if you or someone you know is thinking about buying or selling!

Statistics encompass Bloomingdale East and West and were compiled from the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) using closed sales between January 01 and December 31, 2013. Special condition sales such as foreclosures and short sales are not included in medians for either Bloomingdale, county, or state numbers. Data does not include For Sale by Owners. For a comprehensive breakdown by neighborhood or price range, please contact me directly.)



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GOT JUNK? BHA ANNOUNCES ANNUAL COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP DATE

DISPOSE OF HOUSEHOLD AND GARAGE JUNK FOR FREE

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association community is holding its annual Cleanup Day on Sat., April 12 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. (or until trash bins are full). More details will follow in the March edition of the Bloomingdale Gazette, on the BHA website, and on our Facebook page.

There is no charge for drop off service and identification is not required; residents will only be asked to sign in with their name and address. No businesses or contractors may make use of this service. This is for Bloomingdale residents only.

The collection site is on Natures Way at the Hillsborough County Parks Maintenance Facility near Alafia Elementary School. A detailed listing of accepted items will be published in the coming weeks.

Volunteers are needed to help unload cars and direct traffic. High school students earn community service hour credits for helping with this project. For information, contact the BHA at 813-681-2051 or by email at bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com.



RAJUN' BULL CASINO NIGHT



BLOOMINGDALE HIGH SCHOOL RAJUN' BULL BAND CASINO NIGHT

MARCH 22, 2014 ♦ 7-11 P.M. ♦ \$40 PER PERSON
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BLOOMINGDALE ESTATES RESIDENTS COMPLETE FIRST DRAFT OF DEED RESTRICTIONS UPDATE

In January, Bloomingdale Estates volunteers completed the first draft of their neighborhood deed restrictions in their continuing efforts to be the first Bloomingdale community ever to attempt a deed restriction update. Neighborhood volunteers and the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association will meet later this month to discuss the project, and determine current and future plans. The timeline continues to be:

- A February meeting to assess what has been done and still needs to be done in the process
- Distribution of updated deed restrictions to residents
- A voting date set, and the process for voting collection determined (60 percent resident approval is required)
- Revisions completed
- Final legal review
- Recording of the document with county

Residents should continue to look for more information in the Gazette, on our Facebook site and our community website at www.bloomingdaelgazette.com. Volunteers are welcome. For general information, contact the BHA at 813-681-2051, or email to bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com.



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If one of your New Year's resolutions is to get fit in 2014, you are not alone. Nearly two-thirds of adults in the United States who make New Year's resolutions have set fitness goals as part of their resolution. Of those, 73 percent will give up before meeting their goal, according to a recent online study. Fortunately, the Campo Family YMCA has just the program to help you keep your resolve!

Fit First Rewards is a member appreciation program designed to reward you for committing to that "First Step" in your fitness journey. It works like this:

- Schedule your 4 Fit First Sessions, included with your membership, with one of their certified personal trainers.
- Complete all four sessions within 60 days.
- Receive \$40 in Fit Rewards that you can apply towards any Y program.
- For extra rewards, complete a tune-up workout 4 weeks later with one of their certified personal trainers and receive an additional \$20 in Fit Rewards.

According to Rommel Velasco, Senior Wellness Director, "Here at the Y we are always looking for fun ways to help you achieve your goals."

Fit rewards cannot be used for monthly membership fees and cannot be redeemed as cash. Other restrictions apply. For more information, contact the Campo Family YMCA at (813) 684-1371.



Campo Family YMCA Fit First Trainer Kelly Seymour (center) delights in working with clients, from left, Ben Brown and Jim Bottoms, both of whom are Bloomingdale residents.



Photos: Miriam Leech



Campo Family YMCA Senior Wellness Director Rommel Velasco takes the blood pressure of new Fit First client Phillip DiGregoreo as part of developing a fitness program designed to help DiGregoreo meet his goals.

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Mark your calendars and brush off your passports. The Village Early Learning Center's Multi-Cultural Fair is scheduled for Saturday, March 29, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. and will be the culmination of the school's "International Week." The community is invited to experience dancing and music from all over the world. If you have ever wanted to travel around the world, the Village Early Learning Center's Multi-Cultural Fair may be just the ticket. And you don't have to leave Bloomingdale!

For the foodies at heart, local food trucks will serve up international cuisine. Visitors will also get to enjoy cultural and native costumes from all over the world. There will be performances by various community groups, and Village students will also perform dances they have learned.

This is the third year that Village ELC has hosted this free community event. Children who attend will be given a "passport" that will enable them to "travel" from country to country within the school and on campus, as well as to hear stories and see items from the countries being studied by the Village students. Additionally, "traveling" children will be able to do crafts native to the different countries represented.

This event is sponsored by The Village Family Foundation, a non-profit organization, and the Parent Advisory Committee of the preschool. The school's goal is to raise awareness of the world around us and its different cultures. Last year over 28 countries were represented by faculty members and families at the fair, including Honduras, England, India, China, Costa Rica, Peru, Russia, and of course, the United States.

The Village Early Learning Center is located at 3741 Canoga Park Drive in Bloomingdale West. Any international community members, organizations, or groups that wish to participate and/or share their information can contact the school to arrange details at (813) 651-0779.



The Village Early Learning Center will host its third Multi-Cultural Fair on March 29th, a free community event where families can experience dancing, music, food, and crafts from all over the world.

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What Family Members Say about Alzheimer's Care at Superior Residences

Sisters Terrie and Dawn knew their mother needed the assistance with daily living that they could not provide her. After researching various Alzheimer's communities, they visited Superior Residences of Brandon and found it to be the perfect home for mom.

Dawn stated, "The fact that all the staff at Superior understands Alzheimer's makes us comfortable. And Mom has felt safe and comfortable since the day she got there." Terrie agreed by emphasizing, "They're wonderful caregivers. It's a special gift they have and we're fortunate they're here. They know our mother and they love her."

Find out first hand why our community is aptly named Superior Residences and may be the better choice for your loved one. Call today for your personal tour.

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ALL SCHOOLS

Feb.7 Fair Day/No School (Applies to Cimino, Alafia, Burns and Bloomingdale High. Other Hillsborough County schools may be closed for Strawberry Festival day instead. Check <http://www.sdhc.k12.fl.us>.)

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

BLOOMINGDALE HIGH SCHOOL

Feb. 8 ACT testing at Bloomingdale
Feb. 22 College Goal Saturday @ Bloomingdale, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Feb. 25 FCAT Writes
Feb. 26 FREE SAT for all juniors—NO access/voucher code required! □

CIMINO ELEMENTARY

Feb. 14 All Pro Dads – 7 a.m. in the multi-purpose room
Feb. 21 Field Day – All day event

La Cubanita Café (in the plaza behind Topper's & KFC) donates \$1 to Cimino for every meal ordered (any day) when customers mention they are from Cimino.

ALAFIA ELEMENTARY

Every Wednesday morning the PTA will be holding a book exchange in the Alafia MINT. Bring in a book you no longer want and exchange it for a book that was donated. If you don't see a book you want that day you can get a ticket to come back the next Wednesday.

BURNS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Feb. 5 Soccer vs Barrington @ BSHS, 6 p.m.
Feb. 6 Chorus Solo & Ensemble MPA @ Steinbrenner HS
Feb. 11 Soccer vs McLane @ BSHS, 6 p.m.
Feb. 13 Scoliosis Screening in the Gym, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Feb. 14 Chorus/Orchestra Performance at the FL State Fair, 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Feb. 18 Soccer vs. Randall @ Newsome HS 6 p.m.
Feb. 21 Fitness Challenge Run, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Feb. 25 FCAT Writes
Feb. 26 FCAT Writes
Feb. 27 Soccer vs. Rodgers @ Riverview, 6 p.m.



FREE SAT AT BLOOMINGDALE

Hillsborough County is one of two large districts in the nation who are using bulk registration for the first time, and all required information will be directly uploaded from the district system to College Board. Admission tickets will be directly mailed to student's homes the week of February 10. STUDENTS MUST HAVE THEIR ADMISSION TICKET AND PHOTO ID TO BE ADMITTED ON TEST DAY. If a student does not receive their ticket by Feb. 21, please contact Leena Hasbini via e-mail at Leena.Hasbini@skhc.k12.fl.us and she will provide the necessary steps to make sure that they are able to obtain it before test day. It is important for all juniors to establish a free online College Board account in order to print their admission ticket, view their scores and request score reports online.

SAT/ACT Prep-students interested in practice for these tests may participate in the free online programs available through our school district. The only required information is our school code: 101778. We also have practice books available for students to check out. New SAT prep courses through the school district will be available in February. Information on dates and locations and the applications are posted on the Guidance website @ bloomingdaleguidance.org.



BLOOMINGDALE TEACHERS AND STAFF AWARDED FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

The Hillsborough Education Foundation's Excellence in Education Program showcases educators and school personnel who consistently bring forth their best efforts and utilize their talents to ensure the students they serve receive the best education possible.

This year's Bloomingdale High School award winners:



FADIA RICHARDSON - Teacher of the Year. Teachers of the Year are selected by their peers for dedication to their students and exceptional support of academic achievement. Fadia Richardson teaches French and has been doing so at BSHS since 1992. "Ms. Richardson has been

teaching a long time, but continues to find ways to engage students about French," said Principal Susan Burkett. "She's an 'old school' teacher with new school methods."



Photo: Heather Hanks

AMBER LITTLETON - Ida S. Baker Diversity Educator of the Year. Awarded to an outstanding educator who serves as a role model to improve the educational status of their diverse students. Ms. Littleton is a graduate of Bloomingdale High School and has worked at her alma mater as an ESOL (English as a Second Language) teacher since 2007. "Ms. Littleton is a ball of fire," commented Burkett. "She gets kids that are apprehensive about the

English language, and she finds a way to help each of them be successful."



Photo: BSHS Yearbook

VIVIENNE CHASE - Instructional Support Employee of the Year. Awarded to school personnel that support the district through administration, transportation or health services. Ms. Chase is the Secretary for the Assistant Principal for Curriculum (APC) and works in the school's main office. She has been with the school since 2006, consistently demonstrating a cheerful willingness to assist office visitors in any way she can. "She is always positive—always willing to help," said Burkett.



BURNS MUSIC DEPARTMENT STUDENTS SELECTED FOR ALL-STATE AND ALL-COUNTY

By: Suzanne Jones

Thirty Burns Middle School student-musicians were selected through audition to participate in this year's All-County and All-State music festivals.

The Florida All-State Music Festival took place Jan. 9-11 in downtown Tampa. All-State students rehearsed for 15 hours on Thursday and Friday then performed a concert on Saturday.



Burns All-State and All-County band and orchestra students. Front row: Josh Wingfield and Will Steck. Middle row: Cierra James, Tatum Phillips, Daniela Negron, Vanessa Chung, Grace Daigle, Abby Williams, Vreanna Bautista and Ashley Russell. Back row: Haley Cooper, Caterina Recina, Collette Raymond, Joey Smith and Tristan Conner.

Burns All-State and All-County chorus students. Front row: Shaun Fidler, Stella Choi, Elisia Carter, Josh Harbord, Liberty Longanecker, Meghan Cona and Grace Currie. Back row: Grace Heron, Madison Hillgruber, Carlie Lopez, Dylan Cripe, Julia Harbord and Tylynn Krohne. Missing: Bryce Fuson and Robert Fernandez.

The Hillsborough All-County Music Festival took place Jan. 23-25. Students took part in two evening practices and one full-day rehearsal in preparation for their performances. Concerts took place on Jan. 25 at Riverview High School.



Photos: Deidre Morgan



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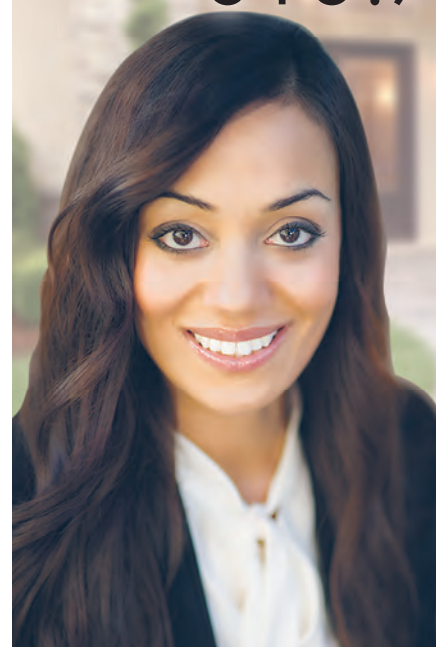
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While many students were sitting back enjoying their holiday break, Bloomingdale High National Honor Society (NHS) students took some time to give back to the community. These students invested an afternoon of their school break at Metropolitan Ministries in Tampa working in the kitchen, the grocery department, the clothing store, and the warehouse.

Metropolitan Ministries endeavors to be “America’s most effective caregiver to poor and homeless people,” and volunteerism (along with community donations) is a critical component the organization’s success. The kitchen at Metropolitan Ministries serves approximately 2500 meals a day. Volunteers are used to prep and serve the food to the 52 resident families, independent clients and families, and walk-ins. Others help keep the clothing and grocery stores stocked and organized, and aid clients in their shopping choices. Warehouse volunteers assemble large pieces of donated furniture for clients and organize donations to be distributed to the proper departments.

One of 15 Bloomingdale NHS student volunteers, senior Michaela Phillips stated, “I love the people here; they are really nice and have a lot of respect for you. I used to volunteer every Friday for a year, but I got too busy, and had to give it up. My favorite part about the whole experience here is that the clients really appreciate everything you do for them.”

In addition to volunteering at Metropolitan Ministries this year, the NHS has collected box tops for donations to local elementary schools, donated my coke rewards points to Special Olympics, volunteered at The Night of a Thousand Stars (a prom for people with special needs), aided with Strides for Education, and today (Feb. 1), are hosting a Capture the Flag event that will benefit the Wounded Warrior Project. The Community is invited to come out and cheer on their favorite team from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Bloomingdale High’s Charley Harris Stadium. One team will be voted most spirited (based on donations), all of which will go to the Wounded Warrior fund.

To learn more about Metropolitan Ministries and volunteer opportunities visit www.metromin.org.



Morgan Pinckard and Lindsey Johnson prepare clothes to restock the clothing store.



Photos: Kim Miller

Bloomingdale National Honor Society students spend a holiday break Monday helping out at Metropolitan Ministries located at 2002 N. Florida Ave in Tampa.



FORMER BULL JACLYN JOHNSON SPRINTS INTO HEAD TRACK COACH POSITION

By: Kim Miller

She graduated from Bloomingdale Senior High School in 2006; was coached, and now is being handed the whistle by her predecessor, Jennifer Beach. For Coach Beach handing over the whistle after 10 years is bitter sweet, but she knows the girls track team is in good hands with new head coach Jaclyn Johnson. Johnson considers herself fortunate to now work alongside volunteer coaches Bateman and Littleton who taught her much about the sport as a BSHS student. "I learn something new from them every day," said Johnson.

While at BSHS, Johnson ran Cross Country and Track. She ran the 800m, mile, 4x800m, 4x400, and did the long jump. She excelled at the 800m and the mile, and her 4x800m team held the school record up until last year. Johnson qualified for the state Cross Country Championships and her 4x800m team qualified for the state Track Championships.

After graduating from BSHS, Johnson continued her running career at the University of Central Florida. While at UCF she ran Cross Country; and during track season the 800m and the mile were her specialties. She graduated with her Bachelors degree in sports fitness, teaching and coaching.

Johnson returned to Bloomingdale as a resident and a teacher at BSHS where she now teaches AVID I, II, III, and IV. She loves being back at her

alma mater, giving back to her community, and to the students at BSHS.

Looking at the season ahead, Johnson said, "We thought this was going to be a rebuilding year. But based on the Cross Country season, I think we are going to do pretty well, and I am very excited."



Coach Johnson (in Gators sweatshirt) warms up with her runners.



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