



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BLOOMINGDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION SINCE 1980

THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

VOLUME XXXVII ❧ ISSUE 12 ❧ DECEMBER 2017 ❧ www.BloomingtondaleHOA.com

HO, HO, HO! SANTA MAKES HIS 31ST ANNUAL VISIT TO BLOOMINGDALE TOMORROW!

Sunday, December 3 - 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.



Photo: Susan DeLuca

Santa visits Bloomingdale each year to visit with children in the community. Don't miss out on this special neighborhood tradition. The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association is pleased to sponsor this special holiday tradition and charity food drive.

FREE EVENT, Donations gladly accepted.

- Visit Santa
- Share a holiday wish list
- Bring your camera to capture the moment
- Enjoy crafts and other photo opportunities
- Receive a Balloon treasure

Please bring a non-perishable food donation. Food items will be distributed to a local food bank.

New Location: Village Early Learning Center, 3741 Canoga Park Drive



This Month



BHA COMMUNITY CORNER
Page 4

COMMUNITY CALENDAR
Page 6

THE COMMISSIONER'S NEWS
Page 8

iFly
Page 10

NATURES WAY
Pages 12 - 13

BLOOMING/ WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA
Page 16

SCHOOL NEWS
Pages 18 - 23

PLEASE RECYCLE



WINNER

2013, 2014 & 2016

**Hillsborough County
Neighborhood
Recognition Award**

**Best Communications
Newsletter Category**

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Life is what we make it, always has been, always will be." *Grandma Moses*



YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER



JOY BOISSELLE

Editor - The Bloomingdale Gazette

3509 Bell Shoals Rd.

Valrico, FL 33596 - (813) 681-2051

Email: InBloomingdaleNews@gmail.com

Website: www.BloomingdaleHOA.com

Design/Layout: Chris Pascucci, NTZ Studios

Senior Staff Writer: Miriam Leech

Staff Writers: Wendy Knipp, Susan DeLuca and Deidre Morgan



TONY DEL CASTILLO

Advertising Manager
Brandon & Southshore Times

11268 Winthrop Main Street, Suite 101

Riverview, Florida 33578 - (813) 661-2438

Email: tdelcastillo@tampabay.com

Tampa Bay Times

The official publication of the BHA since 1980

The Gazette is delivered free to Bloomingdale residents on the first Saturday of each month.

YOUR INSIDE CONNECTIONS

Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, Inc.

3509 Bell Shoals Road - Valrico, Florida 33596 - (813) 681-2051

Email: Bloomingdale.Homeowners@gmail.com

Website: www.BloomingdaleHOA.com

BHA Board meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at the Bloomingdale Community Office.

President: *George T. May IV*

Vice President: *Suzy Watts*

Secretary: *Joanie Wilson*

Treasurer: *Sean Donahue*

Directors at Large:

Daniel Berkowitz

Bobbi Ferraro

Mary Galin

Carl Hallinan

Billy Hightower

Grace Lewis

Beth Smedley

Charlie Woodcock



Air Conditioning • Plumbing • Electrical

A/C SYSTEM SPECIAL!

All these amazing deals with the Cornerstone Pros Summer Package

- Cash Rebate up to \$1500.00* Instantly • 0% Interest for Months *w.a.c.
- 12 Year Parts warranty, up to 12 Year unit replacement warranty* & extended 12 Year Labor warranty* • 100% Satisfaction Guarantee

Same Day
Service

24/7 Emergency Service

Senior & Military
Discount



CORNERSTONE™

AIR CONDITIONING • PLUMBING • ELECTRICAL

CORNERSTONEPROS.COM

813-343-0964

CAC1816647 & CFC1428982 • EC0001103



Cornerstone Pros has been serving
our community for 11 years with
fast, fair and friendly service!

*APPLIES TO SPECIFIC QUALIFYING
DAIKIN EQUIPMENT



559881-1

\$25 OFF

**ANY SERVICE
REPAIR**
AIR, PLUMBING
OR ELECTRIC

Must present
coupon.
Cannot be
combined-
one per visit.
Exp. 12/31/17

TBT-BG

\$39.95

**77 PT. A/C CLEANING
& CHECKUP**
6 Month Guarantee
FREE 1lb Freon

Must present
coupon.
Cannot be
combined-
one per visit.
Exp. 12/31/17

TBT-BG

\$39.95

SERVICE CALL
M-F 7am-5pm

Must present
coupon.
Cannot be
combined-
one per visit.
Exp. 12/31/17

TBT-BG

**FREE ESTIMATES
& 2ND OPINION**

-New A/C System
-Air Quality Inspection
-Duct Work Replacement
-Water Heater Replacement
-Water Treatment
-Plumbing Whole Home Repipe

Must present
coupon.
Cannot be
combined-
one per visit.
Exp. 12/31/17

TBT-BG
HMAG
Exp. 12/31/17

Yard of the Month



Photo: Susan DeDeLuca



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



Bill & Debbie Schrank

2216 Kenwick Drive Valrico, FL 33596 (Oakcrest)



evolution
primary care



 **Convenient Evening and Weekend hours**

Now Accepting New Patients

We offer convenient hours into the evenings and on weekends

Monday - Friday	12pm - 9pm
Saturday	12pm - 5pm

Book Today at evolutionprimary.com

11264 Boyette Road, Riverview, Florida 33569 | **813.672.2014**

557838-1



50+ Unique Vendors
Selling Handcrafted & Homemade Items !

December
HOLIDAY
Market

Sunday, Dec. 3 • 9am-2pm



Featuring
Fresh Produce, Food (Condiments, Breads, Jellies, Candy, Desserts), Art, Jewelry, Home Decor, Holiday Decor, Plants, Bath & Body Products, & So Much More!

Park Square 16144 Churchside Drive, Lithia
For info or to become a vendor, please call 813-657-6629

561433-1



BHA COMMUNITY CORNER



DON'T FORGET TO LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!

2018 Membership Drive Begins Next Month! The BHA Needs Your Support!

As we close out this year's membership drive, the BHA reminds neighbors how important they are to the success of the Association. Your membership completely funds every program and service.

We finish each year with our Santa visit and food drive – this is Santa's 31st visit to Bloomingdale. These events don't just happen. Hard work, volunteers, time and yes, money make these events happen – Money the BHA receives from you, the resident, during the annual membership drive.

The board wants only to improve our community, first through community building programs like Santa, the Fall Festival, Clean-Up, Garage sale, service hour and scholarship opportunities for youth and second, through programs that highlight community needs and issues to government officials, like development, road and sidewalk issues, and amenities like our parks and the new dog park coming in 2018. The BHA also provides residents with communication lines, which include this paper, the website, Facebook, twitter and a staffed office to assist with inquiries.

Please join the BHA! Your \$35 membership fees are returned 100 percent to the community. And, every member and dollar matter. As a united community, we can make our neighborhoods better.

Make checks payable to the BHA and mail to 3509 Bell Shoals Road., Valrico, FL 33596, or stop by the office and drop off your check. An easier method is to use our PayPal option. Go to www.bloomingdalehoa.com, look for the PayPal link and follow the simple instructions.

The BHA is an IRC 501(c) (4) non-profit organization, run entirely by volunteers who live in your neighborhoods. ALL membership funds go back to our community to help keep the community a great place to live. And, all residents are welcome at our monthly board meetings on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Bell Shoals office.



Note: The BHA no longer has an active post office box address. Please update your automatic bill pay if applicable.

BHA EVENT CALENDAR

If you have events pending in our community, email bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com, or call 813-681-2051. We will help you promote your event on our Facebook page.

Monday, Dec. 11, 6:30 p.m. / Bloomingdale Special Taxing District Monthly Trustee Meeting, Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road. Call 813-684-6667 for information.

Tuesday, Dec. 12, 6:30 p.m. / BHA Monthly Board Meeting, Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road. Residents always welcome. Call 813-681-2051 for information.

Thursday, Jan. 18, 7 p.m. / Bloomingdale Area Community Council chaired by Hillsborough County Deputy Cliff Fletcher, Bloomingdale Community Station, 3622 Erindale Drive, 813-635-8040. Learn about safety and security issues affecting our community

UPCOMING EVENTS

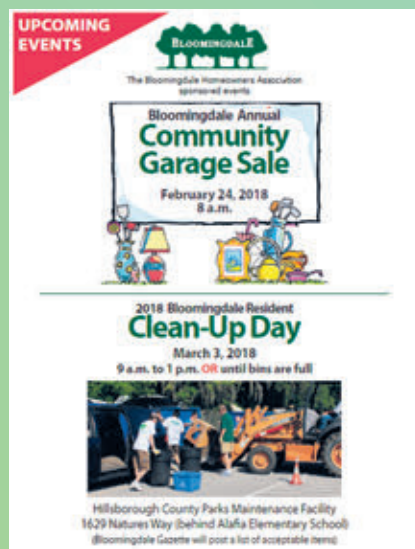
TOMORROW!

Sunday, Dec. 3, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. / Santa Visit and Charity Food Drive at our new venue – The Village Early Learning Center, 3741 Canoga Park Drive! Bring your camera and your kids!

Jan. 1/ 2018 Membership drive starts! Look for your membership invitation! We need your support!

Feb. 24 / Community Garage Sale, details coming soon!

March 3 / Community Clean-Up, Start getting your bulk junk ready now!



BHA BRIEFS

November Board Meeting Highlights and Other Board News

The BHA celebrated the completion of a wildly successful Fall Festival at their new venue, Bloomingdale High School, and finalized plans for tomorrow's Santa Visit and Food Drive.

Elections were held with a change in Treasurer from Sean Donahue to Grace Lewis. Lewis will take the position in January.

Expansion plans were finalized. Expansion plans include business memberships and the inclusion of several neighborhoods. The executive board met on Nov. 29 to discuss the 2018 budget. The board will vote to approve the budget at the December board meeting.

Finally, Gena Torres from Hillsborough County's Vision Zero, attended the meeting and provided a summary of the program which aims to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries to zero. The BHA will work with the organization to implement strategies in our community. Next month's Gazette will include a Vision Zero overview.



Bloomington Real Estate Update

(Editor's Note: Real estate columnist Ronnie has lived in Bloomington for six years with her husband and two children, a son attending University of Florida and daughter at Bloomington High School. A productive Realtor, she is also active in the Bloomington High School PTSA and Girl Scouts.)

Selling over the holidays?

There are currently 45 homes actively for sale in Bloomington! Are you thinking about selling your home over the holidays?

If so, here are a few tips on decorating your house for your holiday showings!

The best idea is to create a cozy vibe with your holiday décor while at the same time keeping the scheme depersonalized. It is important that the buyers can see themselves living in the house, which means avoiding personal pictures and homemade ornaments.

Remember to make each room look spacious. Place a few of your more neutral holiday collections throughout the house and store the remaining for next year. Start boxing up anything that creates a cluttered appearance in the home, particularly if you will not use them again until you are in your new home.

Use scents to make your home feel warm and cheery. Vanilla is a great scent to use throughout the house and citrus is a clean scent to use in the kitchen area. Just a hint of a warm scent will make future buyers feel at home.



By Ronnie McLaughlin

The Chadderton Real Estate Group
Keller Williams Realty

813-601-5659
ronniemclaughlin@kw.com
www.chaddertongroup.com

Neighborhood Snapshot – Bloomington Village

Bloomington Village is a gated community that shares an entrance off Natures Way with the Bloomington Golfers Club. It consists of 57 homes located on Ballyunion Way, Bellerive Place, Crooked Stick and Cypress Point Place. Fourteen homes boast views of the golf course and most have private pools. Four pool homes sold over the past year at an average square foot of \$124.45. The homes that sold averaged 2,858 per square feet.

MLS statistics were based on rough property lines November 2016- November 2017. Sales not entered into MLS did not count in these statistics.



We are proud to announce Real Trends chose our team as one of the "Best Real Estate Teams in America" for 2016 and 2017.

severe weather alerts

Get notified when a hurricane, or other severe weather, is brewing.



Download the
tbo weather app

Need to know?
Go to **tbo**



Your love, Our expertise



Caring for a loved one with *dementia* can become *overwhelming* and the decision to seek help can feel like giving up. But it's never the wrong choice to get the best care.

Superior Residences offers specialized services for those with Alzheimer's and dementia-related illnesses, from temporary respite care to full-time residency. We give families *peace of mind* knowing their loved one is receiving expert care in a secure, compassionate community.



Call to make an appointment today. Visit our community and see how we can work together to give your loved one the best possible care.

(813) 657-8587 • www.SuperiorALF.com
1819 Providence Ridge Blvd • Brandon, FL 33511

Live the Moment...Love the Moment™

Assisted Living Facility #9739

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

T Marie's Valrico Sunday Market / Every Sunday / 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. / T Marie's Fashion & Gifts Boutique / 3407 Lithia Pinecrest Road, Valrico / Shop under the grandfather oaks with 55+ local artisans selling hand crafted, homemade items that will be sure to treat yourself or your loved ones this holiday season. Fun for the whole family!! Free face painting and balloons for the kids, free henna tattoos, live entertainment, delicious food offerings in the food court, and pets are welcome!

The Village Players Present Beauty and the Beast / Dec. 2, 8, 9, 15, 16 at 8 p.m.; Dec. 3 and 10 at 3 p.m. / The James McCabe Theatre / 506 5th Street, Valrico / The classic story of Belle and the Beast, who is trapped under the spell of an enchantress. If the Beast can learn to love and be loved, the curse will end and he will be transformed into his former self. This "tale as old as time" is a great opportunity to bring your entire community together for family theatre at its best. General admission tickets, \$18; Seniors, Military, and Students, \$15; Groups of 10 or more, \$15. To reserve seats, contact Chris at 813-480-3147.

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Community Working Group / Dec. 6 / 5:30 p.m. / The Regent, 6437 Watson Rd., Riverview / This is a great opportunity for citizens in East and South Hillsborough and Polk Counties to learn more about transportation initiatives, share ideas and thoughts as well as provide comments. The first half of the meeting will be presentations from the FDOT, Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning Organization, and the Regional Transit Feasibility Plan. The presentations can be viewed online or in-person. The second half of the meeting will be open conversations with FDOT and partner agencies for those who are attending in-person. Mark your calendars and share this invitation with your neighbors, community members and others. Visit www.TampaBayNext.com for information about this program.

Tax Prep Sign-up

BECOME A TAX VOLUNTEER FOR THE AARP TAX-AIDE PROGRAM.



Training begins in January at the Bloomingdale Library.

Google AARP Foundation Tax Aide Volunteer Opportunities to Sign Up.

For more information e-mail Lee Neal at lee45neal@gmail.com • 813-654-1720

HOLIDAY EVENTS TODAY AND UPCOMING!
Operation: Santa Salute / 12-5 p.m. / Westfield Brandon Town Center / Families that show their military ID will receive one free 5x7 photo with Santa & Mrs. Claus and enjoy a special celebration on Saturday, Dec. 2 from 12pm-5pm at Santa's Holiday Wonderland in Center Court.

Big Red Barn Snow Village and Winter Wonderland / Now through Dec. 31 / 11 a.m.-10 p.m. / 10070 Fern Hill Dr, Riverview / Join us for our Snow Village and Winter Wonderland. We have transformed the back property into a snow village - complete with tubing, sledding, snow man building, and snow showers every hour! After the lights go down, enjoy our Trail of Lights which includes a 60 foot Christmas tree! This is sure to be a one a kind experience! Tickets are limited and on sale now. Tickets are for three-hour increments so that you can enjoy all of the attractions! Children 2 & Under Are Free; Children Tickets are for Children Ages 3-14. Get tickets at <http://big-red-barn1.mybigcommerce.com/snow-village-tickets/>.



2017 Christmas Lane / Now through Dec. 24 / Florida Strawberry Festival Grounds 2508 W. Oak Ave, Plant City / Christmas Lane is a Christmas wonderland housed in the Charlie Grimes Building at the Florida Strawberry Festival. The lane includes light displays, food, carnival rides, Living Nativities each Thursday and Saturday night, a Kidzone with letters to Santa, face painting, and ornaments, and Santa and Mrs. Claus for photos every night except Christmas Eve. Tickets are \$5 for ages 13 and up, \$3 for ages 12 to 4, and free for those 3 and under. Please check out our Facebook page for info and photos at www.facebook.com/events/1511289848931880/.

Wonderland of Lights Drive Thru / Now through Dec. 30 / 6-9 p.m., Sunday- Thursday; 6-10 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays / Hillsborough County Fairgrounds / The Wonderland of Lights will surely dazzle our community this Holiday Season. What will make this festival so unique? This 32-day event incorporates beautiful animated and still LED light displays that will amaze the young and "the young at heart." Plus, it will offer a blend of fun, family activities, and entertainment sure to please all. Take some time to stop at the Christmas village featuring horse-drawn wagon rides, North Pole train ride, amusement rides, food, and crafts. Prices are Cars \$20, Passenger Vans \$25, Season Pass \$35, Limousines \$50, and Motor Coaches \$75. For information, call the Chamber at 813-689-1221.



33rd Annual Lighting of the Christmas Tree / Dec. 6 / 7 p.m. / Center Place Fine Arts & Civic Association / 619 Vonderberg Drive, Brandon / The community is invited to attend this fun evening event for the entire family. This is a FREE event. No tickets required.

Walk Thru Bethlehem / Dec. 7, 6:30-9:30 p.m.; Dec. 8, 6:30-10 p.m.; Dec. 9, 4-10 p.m.; Dec. 10, 4-9 p.m. / Kings Avenue Baptist Church / 2602 S. Kings Avenue, Brandon / The 31st annual Walk Thru Bethlehem is a living recreation of the biblical story of the birth of Jesus Christ. With over 300 volunteers and 20,000 square feet of recreated city, guests experience a 20-30 minute guided tour through the city. There they are introduced to carpenters, wool dyers, temple scribes, innkeepers and at the end, an exhausted couple who has no choice but to see their child born in the humility of a manger.

3rd Annual Shop Local Holiday Expo / Dec. 9 / 9 a.m.-12 p.m. / Park Square in Fishhawk / 16132 Churchview Drive, Lithia / Showcasing local business of Valrico and Fishhawk with good old fashioned fun! Games, crafts, shopping, and don't miss getting your picture taken with Florida Santa and flamboyance of flamingos!



Brandon Ballet Presents The Nutcracker / Dec. 9, 2 and 7 p.m.; Dec. 10, 2 and 5:30 p.m. / Riverview High School Theater / 11311 Boyette Road, Riverview / Experience the thrill and magic of Brandon Ballet's The Nutcracker! With beautiful sets, costumes, and glorious music, enter the magical world of Clara and her Nutcracker Prince, waltzing snowflakes, and the regal Sugar Plum Fairy. Tickets \$30, Adults; \$25, Seniors; \$20, Students (under 12) at www.tututix.com/brandonballet.

Crafts for Kids: Holiday Cards / Dec. 14 / 3-3:45 p.m. / Bloomingdale Library / 1906 Bloomingdale Avenue, Valrico / Join us as we make holiday cards for our loved ones. All supplies are provided, just bring your creativity! For more information call 813-273-3652.

Parents Day Out / Dec. 16 / 11 a.m.-5 p.m. / Campo Family YMCA / 3414 Culbreath Road, Valrico / A day of fun at the YMCA! Your kids will play games, make crafts, have lunch, and SO MUCH MORE! All while you get the day off to get some holiday shopping done! *Note: minimum age is 3, but children MUST be potty trained. Lunch and snack are included. Everywhere members, \$20; Here members, \$28; Non-members, \$35; \$5 off each additional sibling. Register today, or call 813-684-1371 for more information.

Congregation Beth Shalom Shabbat Services / Fridays / 7:45 p.m. / 706 Bryan Road / Welcome the Sabbath on Fridays, oneg, nosh and mingle follow. On Dec. 16 at 7 pm, we will kindle our hanukkah's candles together as we celebrate the Festival of Lights, Consecration and Kabbalat HaSiddur. All are welcome. Call for information: 813-681-6547.

The Commissioner's News

By Commissioner Stacy White Board of County Commissioners, District 4

(Editor's Note: Commissioner Stacy White represents District 4, which includes our Bloomingdale community. He was elected to the Board of County Commissioners in 2014. A Valrico native, White seeks to improve communities like ours. Prior to his election, he served the county as a member of the Hillsborough County School Board. Contact Commissioner White at 813-272-5740 or whites@hillsboroughcounty.org.)



Happy Holidays!

Another wonderful holiday season is upon us, and we are first reminded of how thankful we are for the land we live in, then we celebrate the blessings we have received, and finally we enjoy the close of one year and the beginning of a new one. It is a time to spend with family and friends from near and far, while everyone enjoys cherished traditions.

An unfortunate side effect of the season, however, is all the garbage and recycling it produces. It tends to pile up and there are less pickup days than usual to dispose of it. Knowing that, I asked my staff to get the Holiday trash and recycling schedule as soon as possible so I could share it with you. These dates are the only days during this Holiday season that service is suspended; all other days will have normal service.

- **Christmas, Mon., Dec. 25 - no trash, no recycling, and no yard waste pickups**
- **New Year's Day, Mon., Jan. 1 - no trash or yard waste, but there will be recycle collection.**

As always, I am proud to represent the Bloomingdale community on the Hillsborough Board of County Commissioners, and I wish you and yours a happy holiday season!"

The Commissioner's Brandon Dog Park Update:

The Brandon Dog Park is underway as we head into the New Year! Design work is ongoing and will hopefully wrap up by early 2018, with construction beginning shortly after that.

Bringing in the Dog Park to Saladino Park is going to trigger some great improvements. Included are a walking trail, a large & small dog park each with shade pavilion with synthetic turf, a dog wash station, benches, an expanded & resealed parking lot and a new stormwater pond for improved drainage. Stay tuned for status updates!



Courtesy Photo: Hillsborough County



MAJIK TOUCH CLEANERS

"Experience the Difference"



SHIRTS
\$1.89
Only With Coupon

APOLLO BEACH
645-1499
220 Apollo Beach Blvd

BLOOMINGDALE
643-0922
3425 Lithia Pinecrest Rd.

BLOOMINGDALE
654-8113
3248 Lithia Pinecrest Rd.

BLOOMINGDALE
654-9292
1025 E. Bloomingdale Ave

BRANDON MALL
684-4499
913 Brandon Blvd.

BRANDON
643-6944
1836 W. Lumsden Rd.

FISHHAWK
654-7991
16707 FishHawk Blvd.

PLANT CITY
752-6631
2621 Thonotosassa Rd.
(Plant City Crossings)

RIVERVIEW
672-4022
11444 Hwy. 301 S.

RIVERVIEW
672-1832
11697 Boyette Rd.

RIVERVIEW
671-4156
13196 Hwy. 301 S.

SEFFNER
684-5897
1515 N. Parsons Ave.

VALRICO
654-2324
1999 E. Brandon Blvd.
(SR 60)

VALRICO
643-4825
2511 S.R. 60 E.

SHIRTS \$1.89 Ea.
Laundered only

Valid on incoming orders only.
No exceptions. Not valid with other coupons or promotions.
1/7/18 BG

MAJIK TOUCH CLEANERS

15% OFF ENTIRE ORDER
Dry Cleaning

Valid on incoming orders only.
No exceptions. Not valid with other coupons or promotions.
1/7/18 BG

MAJIK TOUCH CLEANERS

20% OFF Wedding Gowns,
Alterations
& Drapes

Valid on incoming orders only. **No exceptions.**
\$5 minimum order. Not valid with other coupons or promotions.
1/7/18 BG

MAJIK TOUCH CLEANERS

20% OFF ENTIRE ORDER
Comforters &
Blankets

Valid on incoming orders only.
No exceptions. Not valid with other coupons or promotions.
1/7/18 BG

MAJIK TOUCH CLEANERS



BLOOMINGDALE COMMUNITY STATION NOTES

By Community Resource Deputy Clifford Fletcher
and C.S.O. Sandy Capitano

HOLIDAY GREETINGS FROM YOUR BLOOMINGDALE COMMUNITY STATION!

Thanksgiving has passed and Christmas and the New Year are just around the corner. Time marches on and our busy lives just keep getting busier.

Making our holiday seasons safe and secure can be as simple as following some basic rules. When you are away from home, enjoy the excitement of the season, but stay focused and aware of your surroundings.

Lock up your valuables. Remember, in just seconds, a thief can shatter your car window, reach inside and remove any valuables in the open. Predators will watch you stow your purse and other items. It doesn't always have to be holiday packages – it can be as simple as some old CDs or pocket change. Thieves also gain access to any personal information left in your car. Take a little extra time to protect your car and then, enjoy the holidays with your family.

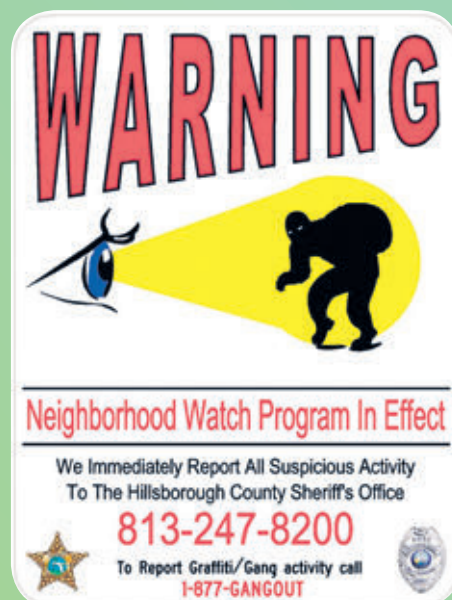
We also need your help to lower crime potential in our neighborhoods. You can help by closing your garage doors when you are not present. Do not think for one minute that predators will pass up your offer for free stuff from your garage and car if you just leave it open.

Just a few days before Thanksgiving around 1 a.m., an attempted burglary call came in on Culbreath near Erindale. With extra deputies and an Air Service chopper being in the area, one arrest was made for drug-related crimes. However, deputies also found several garage doors open around the same time in a nearby neighborhood. Morale of the story – if you are going to make it easy for criminals, they will take advantage of your generosity.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Another way you can help is by starting a neighborhood watch group. Deputies cannot be everywhere at all times. They may not even notice a car or truck that does not belong in your neighborhood. However, those who live in the community will know if strangers are in the area. Neighborhood Watch Programs are a great help to the Sheriff's Office. There have been many cases where good neighbors reporting unusual activities have been instrumental in catching criminals.

To be effective, a Neighborhood Watch



simply needs an alert group of people willing to call the Sheriff's Office when a crime or suspicious activity is observed. Being an alert group will send a message to strangers in your neighborhood that your community watches out for one another. For information on the HCSO Neighborhood Watch Program, visit www.hcso.tampa.fl.us/Departments/Department-of-Operational-Support/Community-Outreach-Division/Neighborhood-Watch-New.aspx

AREA LAW AND ORDER

Between Oct. 18 and Nov. 20, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office conducted 63 traffic stops in Bloomingdale East and West. Those traffic stops resulted in 12 verbal warnings, 34 written warnings, 16 citations and one arrest.

At community entrances and within subdivisions, there were four crashes without injuries, one crash with injuries and a hit and run, which resulted in property damage. There were no DUI's'...let's keep it that way! Do not get behind the wheel if you have been drinking as the results can be devastating to more than just you!

Remember, slow down, stop at all stop signs and above all be a courteous driver. And, wear your seat belts at all times.

There were 11 vehicle burglaries, only two were locked. Let's be more diligent in protecting our property. The bad news is that one of those vehicles had firearms that were stolen. There were two residential burglaries. There were also two drug law violations and nine arrests for various crimes in the area.

BE ON THE LOOKOUT!

Remember to watch out for what is happening in your neighborhoods. If you see something, make sure to call Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Non-Emergency number at 813-247-8200.

Remember to lock the doors to your home, secure your garage doors, secure your guns and lock up your vehicles. This will significantly reduce the opportunity for you to become a victim.



**HAVE A GREAT AND SAFE HOLIDAY SEASON FROM
YOUR FRIENDS AT THE BLOOMINGDALE STATION!
CLIFF AND SANDY**

The Bloomingdale Special Taxing District:

The Community's Common Area Connection

By Miriam Leech, BSTD Staff

(Editor's Note: The Bloomingdale Special Taxing District's (BSTD) monthly column will inform readers about the BSTD, its mission and ongoing and new initiatives. The BSTD meets at 6:30 p.m. on the second Monday of the month at the Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Rd. Questions? Call 813-684-6667 or email bstd@verizon.net.)

District-Wide Landscape Improvements

At the direction of the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District (BSTD) Trustees, landscape maintenance contractor Buccaneer has undertaken several large projects throughout the District during the fall months.

- The fall annuals rotation has been completed, bringing fall color to community entranceways.
- Mulching has been completed.
- Oak trees and palm trees have been trimmed.
- Creeping fig on the walls that line the thoroughfares has been trimmed.
- Roses have been hard-pruned to re-establish full blooming.
- Landscape modifications to remove old plants and install new ones to fill in medians and other beds are in the planning stages.

While most of the items fall under the landscape maintenance contract, additional landscape modifications will cost approximately \$6,000. This investment is in addition to the \$26,000 invested in fig planting, and \$11,000 invested in landscape replacements that took place in August and September.

Bloomingdale residents, as always, are invited to attend the next BSTD meeting on Dec. 11 at 6:30 p.m. at the Bloomingdale Community Offices, 3509 Bell Shoals Road. If you would like to speak at the meeting, members of the public are allotted three minutes to make comment or ask questions per Hillsborough County policy. Hope to see you there!



Buccaneer account manager Eddy Zuniga and property manager Rick Pitrowski meet weekly at the Bloomingdale Community Offices to discuss irrigation and landscaping maintenance and repairs in the District.

BLOOMINGDALE
SPECIAL TAXING DISTRICT

BLOOMINGDALE

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

www.bloomingdaletaxingdistrict.org

Hours: 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

David P. West, President
Tom Leech, Vice President
Mark Horst, Treasurer
Dann Berkowitz, Trustee
Russell Jones, Trustee
Mark Vargo, Trustee
Jay Kittle, Trustee





BRIDGES DENTAL

LAURA COYLE BRIDGES, D.M.D.

We want to be your local dentist

Located just a few miles away



25% OFF
— ANY —
ONE PROCEDURE

Coupon can not be combined with insurance benefits. Invisalign excluded.

BRIDGES DENTAL
813-654-3399

With this coupon. Not valid with other offers or prior services. Expires 12-31-17

NEW PATIENT SPECIAL

\$79

Includes exam, x-rays and healthy mouth cleaning (0150, 0210, 1110)

BRIDGES DENTAL
813-654-3399

With this coupon. Not valid with other offers or prior services. Expires 12-31-17

CROWN SPECIAL

Includes Crown and Buildup (if necessary)

CROWNS \$899 (D2750 and D2950)

BRIDGES DENTAL
813-654-3399

With this coupon. Not valid with other offers or prior services. Expires 12-31-17

Proudly in network with the following dental insurance providers:

- Aetna
- Ameritas
- Assurant PPO
- Cigna
- Delta Dental PPO
- Blue Cross Blue Shield
- BlueDental Choice
- GEHA/ Connection Dental
- Guardian
- Metlife
- Principal
- United Healthcare
- Delta Dental Premier
- Premier
- Humana PPO

DR. LAURA COYLE BRIDGES

Local Brandon Resident since 1987

3646 LITHIA PINECREST RD • ERINDALE PLAZA • VALRICO

Mon-Thurs: 8am-5pm 813-654-3399 www.bridgesdental.com

The patient and any other person responsible for payment has a right to refuse to pay, cancel payment, or reimburse for payment for any other service, examination, or treatment that is performed as a result of and within 72 hours of responding to the advertisement for the free, discounted fee, or reduced fee service, examination, or treatment.

560882-1

BOOK YOUR APPOINTMENT ONLINE | www.MassageGreenSpa.com



Massage Green SPA

SPREAD HOLIDAY Cheer

BUY ONE MASSAGE GIFT CARD, GET ONE INFRARED THERAPY GIFT CARD




Regency Center | 2526 W. Brandon Blvd. Brandon, FL 33511 | (813) 856-1350

560885-1

VOTED BRANDON'S #1 ROOFING COMPANY 8 CONSECUTIVE YEARS!

SAVE MONEY ON HOMEOWNERS INSURANCE



Tampa Bay's leading family-owned and operated roofing company, **Shingle Masters** provides every re-roof customer with a wind mitigation inspection to measure hurricane protection, saving most homeowners hundreds of dollars each year on insurance.

Shingle Masters also maximizes roof ventilation to lower cooling costs and extend the life of the shingles.

Financing Available. Lifetime Workmanship Warranty Available.

Shingle Masters Roofing & Construction (813) 661-4600

www.Shingle-Masters.com

Licensed Certified General Contractor // CGC 1513621
Licensed Certified General Contractor // CCC 1328724

560896-1

iFLY Will Blow You Away

By Wendy Knipp

With air soaring through a vertical chamber and speeds averaging 100 mph, you fall from a doorway and drop into a tunnel only to be propelled back up and into your first flight. The wind pushes your body upward as you attempt to correct yourself into the perfect flying position. You watch for the hand signals from your Instructor who is in the tunnel with you. Straighten the legs, chin up, and finally, thumbs up! You're flying!

iFLY is an indoor skydiving experience for ages 3 – 103. On check-in, you receive flight training, suit up and then you wait for your moment. Your group takes turns "falling" into the chamber to fly.

Customer Service Representative Kylie Rhoads said, "It [iFly] is not to be missed. You get to experience the thrill of flight, something that most of us have wanted to do since childhood."

A typical package consists of two separate one-minute sessions and an option of a "high flight" which is well-worth it because your instructor flies you to the top of the tunnel and back down again. Flight photos and videos are also available for purchase. Packages vary but average \$60 for 2 one-minute sessions. Discounts are available at some retailers like Costco.

The indoor skydiving experience is not only a great time for family and friends, but it also helps those with fears of flying. Flight Instructor Drew Hansen said, "My favorite experience as a Flight Instructor is seeing someone who may be timid or slightly apprehensive about flying, confront their fear and realize the bliss that exists outside of one's comfort zone. They light up!"

iFLY Tampa is located at 10654 Palm River Rd, Tampa (www.iflyworld.com).



The high flight experience soars you to the top of a wind tunnel with help from an instructor.

Photo: Wendy Knipp



iFLY employees are enthusiastic and ready to answer any questions – l. to r. are Flight Instructor Drew Hansen, and customer service reps Kylie Rhoads and Colin McClusky.

Photo: Wendy Knipp

Michael Knipp, age 14, enjoyed his experience so much that he now wants to join the Flight School.

Photo: iFLY Tampa



Best Game of the Year!

In a thrill-a-minute game, #15 Central Florida outlasted South Florida 49-42 clinching victory, an undefeated season and the American Athletic Conference's East Division Championship in the War on I-4. The game will be remembered for the ping pong scoring, USF quarterback Quinton Flowers' unbelievable performance, frenzied fans and a stunning 95 yard kick-off return by UCF safety Mike Hughes.

We include this in this month's Gazette not so much for the game, but for the post-game. The actions of players and coaches following the game are what collegiate sports are all about – fierce competition followed by displays of mutual respect, congratulation, consolation, character and class.



Source: https://twitter.com/UCF_Football/

No Bake - Ready to Eat

GRAB-N-GOs available at:

- **YOYO Juice**
1044 Bloomingdale Ave.
Valrico, FL 33596
(813) 653-4300
- **Homage Liquors**
4350 Lithia Pinecrest Rd.
Valrico, FL 33596
(813) 359-1976

- **Big Red Barn**
10070 Fern Hill Dr.,
Riverview, FL 33578
(813) 672-8888
- **East Coast Pizza**
13340 Lincoln Rd.,
Riverview, FL 33578
(813) 234-1700

• **Get your Sundaes, Cakes and Shakes at Eddie Bull's!**

Hours:

Monday	11AM-8PM
Tuesday	11AM-8PM
Wednesday	11AM-8PM
Thursday	11AM-8PM
Friday	11AM-9PM
Saturday	11AM-9PM
Sunday	11AM-8PM

BOGO COOKIE DOUGH SUNDAE

EDDIE BULL'S COOKIE DOUGH

\$3 OFF ALL-OCCASION CAKE

EDDIE BULL'S COOKIE DOUGH

GRAB-N-GOs 2/\$7

EDDIE BULL'S COOKIE DOUGH

EDDIE BULL'S COOKIE DOUGH
Located at Collins Produce Market
2810 FL-60, Valrico, FL 33594
(813) 331-7171

Like us on Facebook@EddieBullsCookieDough for specials and giveaways!

From Natures Way to 'Raceway:' Residents Worry About Speeding on Neighborhood Boulevard

By Crystal Owens, Times Correspondent
Courtesy Reprint from The Tampa Bay Times



A car passes by a flashing speed sign on Natures Way Boulevard near Elba Road. Residents who live along the busy road have complained for years about speeding motorists at night.

Photo: Crystal Owens/Times Correspondent

It's a sound that many residents living along Natures Way Boulevard say is all too familiar.

Engines revving and then the sound of motorcycles and cars flooring the gas pedal on a 30-mile-per-hour roadway often wake up residents in the middle of the night.

The theory, according to some residents and homeowner association presidents, is the practice is an attempt to light up the road's flashing signs with the highest speed possible, although a Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office spokeswoman said deputies had never heard of the situation or any other complaints about speeders.

The two flashing speed signs are located at each end of Natures Way Boulevard.

"It's a game with the kids. It's been going on for years," said Kit Werremeyer, president of the Bloomingdale Village Homeowner's Association.

But for the people who live in the neighborhoods along the 3-mile road that loops off of Culbreath Road, there's no game.

"Almost every night, between 9:30 and 11 p.m., some people (are) on racing motorcycles with loud exhaust, speed and race up and down the road at very dangerously high speeds. It wakes us up, is annoying and dangerous," said Cheryl Hill of Cypress Reserve.

Since 2012, there have been 90 crashes, two fatal, on Natures Way Boulevard, according to Debbie Carter, the sheriff's office community relations coordinator. Twelve of those crashes happened this year.

One of the most memorable crashes among residents happened in 2010 when Nicole Petracci was killed on Nov. 10 after the 2007 Chevrolet HD 3500 pickup truck in which she was a passenger left the road and slammed into a tree on Natures Way Boulevard, north of Havenstone Way. In 2011, law enforcement charged a 20-year-old Brandon man with vehicular manslaughter in the case, saying speed was a factor in the crash.

But it's not just at night that the engines start revving.

"There's also a problem during the day as well," said Teresa Capps of River Crossing. "I'm a daily runner and on most occasions feel pretty certain that they are not doing 30 mph. There's also a large number of walls, trees and property damage that seems to reoccur due to the crashes. I have seen some patrolling of the area but not enough to contribute to a possible solution."

One of the two biggest complaints the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association receives each week concerns speeding on the road, according to George May, president of the association.

"We've been working on it for months," May said. "We've had a proposal into the county to try and solve the problem, but it would be something that would be a tremendous change for Natures Way Boulevard."

Proposals have included constructing traffic circles at the intersections of Greenhaven Drive and Greenhollow Lane and taking the small section of road that converts into two-lanes down to one lane and install bike lanes.

"The whole point is how do you slow down the traffic?" May said. "If the road is a one-lane road and the person in front of you is going 30 mph, there's nowhere to pass. You'll have to do 30 mph."

Other residents suggested simply taking the "game" for motorists out of the equation.

"They should just change the signs from displaying numeric speed to flash 'reduce speed' only when over limit," said Ryan O'Laughlin, who lives in The Greens community.

May said he has noticed there's been a lot more wrecks on the road since Hillsborough County Public Schools started the new school year. Two elementary schools, Cimino and Alafia, sit on each end of the road.

"Take a walk down the road and you'll notice the nicks and the bark missing off many of the trees," May said.

Rosemarie Hope, of the Augusta Village/Stratford Trace community, said she called the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office as early as two weeks ago to complain about the speeders. She said she was told there are not enough deputies to patrol the area.

Werremeyer said he's also spoken to deputies on several occasions about the problem, but received the same answer.

"The cops told me they could sit out there and write tickets 24 hours a day," he said.

Dennice Vogel, who's lived in the Spring Lake community since 2013, said she also has noticed that the speeding is getting worse.

"Sadly, the vast majority of drivers around Natures Way are not responsible drivers and I even get tailgated, honked at or shown the middle finger if I drive the speed limit," Vogel said.

May said he expects the problem to get worse as construction work begins early next year on nearby Bell Shoals Road and build-out into the area continues.

"We've got a problem coming. A big one. And, we've got to do something about it," he said.

Contact Crystal Owens at hillsnews@tampabay.com.

Car-Sized Hole from Broken Water Pipe Closes Road in Valrico

By Anastasia Dawson, Times Staff Writer
Courtesy Reprint from The Tampa Bay Times

A large hole that opened in Valrico's Bloomingdale neighborhood on Thanksgiving Day was caused by a broken water pipe, not a sinkhole, county officials said.

The hole swallowed a Mini Cooper-sized chunk of Natures Way Boulevard, at the Elm Grove Lane entrance to the Spring Lake neighborhood, just before 7 p.m. on Thursday.

Hillsborough County spokeswoman Ana Mendez said the break was the result of a "system failure." No homes or sewer lines were affected, and no boil-water advisories have been issued, she said. Hillsborough County Road Maintenance crews evaluated the hole Thursday night and, as of this afternoon, there are no signs it could grow larger, Mendez said.

Maintenance workers are working to repair the hole, which has blocked most of the heavily traveled thoroughfare. Until then, Natures Way Boulevard will remain closed from Eastridge Drive to Moondale Court.

Local motorists driving through the neighborhood should be mindful of additional barricades, directional signs and detour roads, Mendez said.

Hillsborough County has contracted an outside agency to handle the large repair. An evaluation is ongoing. It is unknown at this time if the new repair is related to an April repair at this same location. The April repair was caused by an 8" gravity main collapse. The gravity main was about 12 ft. deep. Pavement was removed and well points were installed to dewater the dig site. Repairs took approximately two weeks. This time, it will take 3-7 days just to clear the hole of mud and water and for the area to dry. Once dry, a camera will be inserted to find the break location. Worst case scenario- the manhole could be involved which would cause a longer repair time, possibly through December. The area water supply is not affected as this is a wastewater system failure. Monitor the BHA Facebook page for updates.)

(Editor's Note: Thank you to the many residents who reported this emergency before anyone was hurt. For your information: on April 21, an emergency repair was begun at this same location due to an 8" gravity main collapse. The gravity main was about 12 ft. deep. Pavement was removed and well points were installed to dewater the dig site. Repairs took approximately two weeks. Monitor the BHA Facebook page for updates on the current situation.)



A sharp-eyed resident reported a depression occurring on Natures Way at approximately 4:30 p.m. on Thanksgiving Day. Many more reports to 9-1-1 followed.
Courtesy Photo



Less than an hour later, the depression was a spreading hole. Deputies responded and took action to close off the area. Emergency crews from Hillsborough County followed.
Courtesy Photo



During the evening, the hole expanded to vehicle size.
Courtesy Photo



A broken water pipe created a car-sized hole at the intersection of Natures Way Boulevard and Elm Grove Lane in Valrico's Bloomingdale neighborhood on Thanksgiving Day.
Photo: Alexander Dawson, special to the Times

From Hillsborough County

TRAFFIC ADVISORY:
Emergency Lane Closure
Natures Way Boulevard

Natures Way Boulevard will be closed from Eastridge Drive to Moondale Court while workers repair a depression in the roadway. The road will remain closed until further notice.

This closure will impact traffic. Motorists are encouraged to seek other routes. Local motorists who must drive through the area should observe all barricades, directional signs, and detour routes.

Normal traffic patterns will resume following completion of the work.



Bloomington Veteran Receives Operation Code Vet Assistance

The words “Thank you for your service” really meant something on Nov. 11 as Operation Code Vet volunteers put words into action in support of Vietnam era veteran Arthur Gardner, a Bloomington resident. After a car accident and ongoing dialysis, Gardner became physically and financially unable to keep up with property maintenance.

Enter Operation Code Vet, a Hillsborough County program spearheaded by Code Officer Christine Zien-McCombs. More than 20 volunteers and sponsors including BHA board members Sean Donahue, and Dann Berkowitz and wife, Kate descended on Gardner’s property removed debris, trimmed landscape, and cleaned and pressure-washed Gardner’s home.

Operation Code Vet will be in Bloomington again this month. Anyone interested in helping can call 813-743-8420 or go to hcf.gov.net/operationcodevet. Code Enforcement has a similar program to help seniors who are not Veterans but have difficulty keeping their properties in acceptable condition.

Source: Operation Code Vet



Ellen Bess has been writing for nearly as long as she can remember. Her humor columns have appeared in newspapers and periodicals in North Carolina, Georgia and central Florida. She lives with her husband, Frazier, a retired high school Chemistry teacher, in Bloomington West.



Deck the Halls

Well, folks, it’s almost Christmas. Time to revive all those special holiday traditions unique to every family.

Personally, I love traditions. They’re the wonderful private customs families pass down as a legacy of love. When I was a kid, my family’s tradition was to not trim the tree until Christmas Eve. We’d all gather together, go through the boxes of decorations, play Christmas carols and adorn the evergreen. It was our way of being close. Our special tradition. Also, each day the tree remained untrimmed was one more day we’d gotten through unscathed.

Holiday television commercials baffle me. The entire family enters into the tree-trimming spirit. Dad, Brother and Grandpa handle the strands of lights while Mom passes around the cocoa and Grandma and Sister pop and string the corn. Music plays softly as Family Dog curls up before the crackling fire with Family Cat nestled at his benevolent side. Gag.

In our house, we’d start out like “Ward and June Cleaver Deck the Halls” and end up like “Ralph and Alice Kramden Deck Each Other.” And it began the same way every year: with the lights. My dad would be in the living room opening the box of twinkles. There would be a heartfelt sigh followed by a mumble quickly succeeded by a colorful oath. Then a crash would resound, signifying that the official opening of our Christmas Tradition had begun as Dad hurled the box across the room. He would then glare at us and growl, “I know darned good and well that last year I took each string of lights and carefully wrapped them individually around heavy cardboard. Now, apparently, the Light Fairy – or SOMEONE – has come and knotted them all up!” Right, Dad.

And the lights were only the beginning. Once they were finally affixed to the tree, it would be time for the multi-colored balls and other seasonal ornaments to take their respective places among the boughs. Dad, his work done, now became the Poor Man’s Rembrandt. From the depths of his Lazy Boy, nursing a hot buttered rum, he would direct: “You have three red ones too close together... Spread the wooden soldiers out more. The way you’ve got them, it looks like the Battle of Bunker Hill... Hang those

crystal things closer to the tips of the branches. They’re icicles, not stalactites... Just how much egg nog did you feed the angel? At that angle, she looks like a candidate for rehab.”

Then came the piece de resistance. The final touch. Some call it “tinsel.” Others “icicles.” My mom called it “Divorce Foil.” Unless draped strand by single strand, our artistic endeavors were generally greeted with, “Oh, great. Very pretty. I especially like that clump at the top. It reminds me of an aluminum tumbleweed.” Or, “Nice. Really nice. Why don’t you just roll it all into a ball, hang it from the ceiling and we’ll tell everyone it’s the moon?”

Ah, well. Christmas memories. Somewhere in The Great Beyond, I feel confident that Dad is directing angels in the trimming of a towering celestial fir while my mom refills his glass. After all, traditions aren’t really meant to end, are they? At least, I hope not.

Merry Christmas.



Cooler Weather is the Time to Calibrate Your Sprinkler System

Paula Staples, UF/IFAS Extension Hillsborough County
Public Education Program Coordinator

The catch-can test is the best calibration method to check that your irrigation controller/time clock is applying the correct amount of water, uniformly, to your turfgrass. Your sprinkler system should be calibrated yearly to apply $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ " of water on turfgrass during each watering event.

Pick a great fall day to get motivated and do the catch can test for each zone. At the very least, do the front yard zone. Follow the catch can directions from this link http://miami-dade.ifas.ufl.edu/pdfs/fyn/Catch_Can_Test_for_Irrigation.pdf.

Remember, your calibration is not complete until the minutes for each zone are adjusted to apply $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch of water.

An irrigation system evaluation can reduce high water bills if an inefficient sprinkler system is watering your yard. To see if you qualify for a free evaluation that could save you money, call 813-744-5519 Ext. 54142. Go to <http://hillsborough.ifas.ufl.edu/fyn/community.shtml> to find out what a free evaluation includes.



Kids R Kids

Learning Academy

6 Weeks thru 12 Years

- Nutritious Meals & Snacks: Low Salt & Sugar
- Spanish & Music
- Brainwaves Curriculum
- ABC Mouse Computer Technology
- STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Mathematics)
- Extracurricular Programs
- Outdoor Playgrounds with Water Park
- Trained Professional Staff, Certified in First Aid & CPR
- Security Code Access Entry
- FREE Internet Viewing of Your Child's Day



- Pre-School
- Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten
- Before- and After-School Care
- Summer and Holiday Camps

Now
Enrolling
for Holiday Camp
12/26-1/5

- Curriculum
- Field Trips
- Meals



Florida Association
For Child Care Management
FACCM
Florida's Voice for Early Learning

Happy
Holidays
from our
family to
yours!



Serving
Stowers, Valrico
Academy,
Bevis, FishHawk Creek,
Lithia Springs,
Foundation Christian,
Alafia and Cimino.

813-657-6200
www.krkvallrico.com
4321 Lynx Paw Trail
Located across from Lithia Springs Elementary

813-654-7000
www.krkcirca.com
5815 Kids Crossing Drive
Located between Stowers Elementary & Mosaic

BLOOMING IN BLOOMINGDALE

Photo Provided By: Peter and Eileen Kadzielewski

...HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

Editor's Note: A column for our green and brown thumb gardeners penned by local garden experts and amateurs from the Valrico Garden Club (VGC). To learn about the VGC, contact Mary Kay McMahan at 813-684-6323, email danmcmahan@aol.com or visit Facebook/Valrico Garden Club.

FLORIDA INVASIVE PLANTS: PART 2 - PLANTS IN OUR COMMUNITY

By Gwen Graverson

In a previous column, I discussed invasive plants in general and whether or not it is a problem we should be worried about. This article takes a look at three plants in our community considered invasive – the Chinese Tallow tree, Brazilian Pepper and mistletoe.

If you spot a tree that has seeds that look like popcorn, you have just discovered the invasive Chinese Tallow tree. Other common names include popcorn tree, chicken tree and Florida aspen. First introduced into the US from China as an ornamental tree in the 1700's, this tree ranges throughout the south and as far away as California.

The tree matures within 3 to 5 years, remains productive for 100 years and produces up to 100,000 seeds annually, which spread by wind, water, and birds. The US Department of Agriculture has an on-line plant guide that reads in part, *"The ability of this species to drastically modify natural landscapes has earned it a spot on The Nature Conservancy's list of 'America's Least Wanted - The Dirty Dozen.'"* In addition, this plant has toxic properties. Contact with the milky sap can cause dermatitis, and ingestion causes gastrointestinal side effects.

In our community, the prolific grower has been spotted on Bell Grande in Fairway Park.

Another invasive plant, this one spotted on the Bloomingdale Golf course, is a scrub-like tree with red berries known to many as the Brazilian Pepper. Other common names include the Florida Holly, Christmas Berry and Pepper tree. According to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission website: MyFWC.com, *"possession of said plants with the intent to sell, transport or plant is illegal in Florida."* You would need a special permit to grow a Brazilian pepper plant here in Florida.

A native plant of South America, it was introduced into the US in the 1800's as an ornamental. It readily invades residential and urban landscapes, roadsides, ditches, fallow farmland; and also hardwood hammocks, mangrove forests, and pinelands. The Brazilian Pepper is a relative of poison ivy and poison sumac. The sap may irritate skin and pollen may cause respiratory irritation. Since other shrubs may look similar, you can identify it by crushing several leaves...if they smell like turpentine, the plant is a Brazilian pepper.

Finally, mistletoe. Look up in your trees, particularly laurel oaks. If you see large clumps, different in color from the host tree, most likely it is an invasive weed known as mistletoe. It is a parasite, which starts off as a small seedling, roots into the bark/wood of a tree and absorbs both water and mineral nutrients from the host tree. Poison Control states on its website, *"American mistletoe doesn't deserve its highly toxic reputation...but, as with any plant, keep it out of reach of curious children and pets! If you think someone might have swallowed mistletoe, call Poison Control right away at 1-800-222-1222."* Mistletoe has been spotted throughout our community.

For information on invasive exotic plants, including links to related web pages, visit www.fleppc.org. Or, contact the Extension Office at 5339 County Rd 579 in Seffner, 813-744-5519.



Brazilian Pepper Plant
Source: wildlifeofhawaii.com



Chinese Tallow tree
Source: imgarcade.com



Mistletoe
Source: www.statesymbolsusa.org

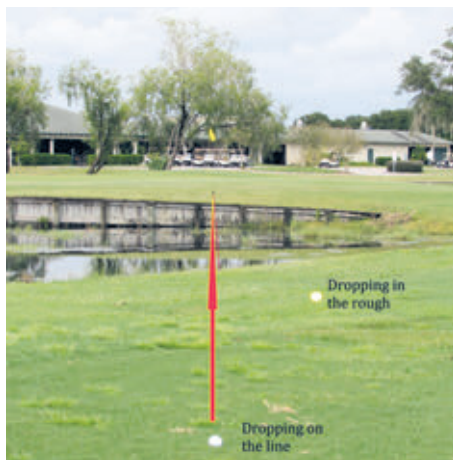
MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Wreaths across America at the Florida National Cemetery is Saturday, Dec. 16. The cemetery is located at 6502 SW 102nd Ave. in Bushnell. If you want to take part and place a wreath on a grave marker, arrive NLT 9:45 a.m., as they do go quickly. The official program follows at 11a.m. For information, contact Randy Lewer, e-mail: waab.info@gmail.com or Havard Jones, 813-478-2028.



Lateral Water Hazards - Go Back as Far as You Want

By J.D. Carino (Bloomington CC campus)



When most of us lose a ball in a lateral water hazard, we simply drop another ball within two club lengths of where the ball last crossed the hazard margin. Most of the time when you drop the ball that way; it will end up on a bad lie - **in the rough or a side hill lie**. Both of these shots require you to make adjustments in set-up and club selection.

There are two additional options added to a ball lost in a lateral water hazard. The one I'm writing about is the option of dropping the ball on a line, going as far back as you want.

Simply, keep the point of where the ball last crossed the hazard and the flag and imagine a straight line between the two points. Your goal is to find a spot along the extended line which gives you a flat area of the fairway and a yardage you are comfortable with.

Any questions or for lessons, please visit CochraneGolfSchools.com or call J.D. 813-957-3205.



John E.S. Cochrane
GOLF SCHOOLS

Michigan

Comic strip artist Will Leech is a Florida State University sophomore. Through his creation "Michigan," he shares his view of the world around us.

Michigan by Will Leech



GET 3 FOR FREE!



If you'd like to sell your watch or your PC, just place an ad in the *Times* for free. From surfboards to scanners and your old jewelry, the *Times'* Classifieds sells your stuff without fee.

Tampa Bay Times
tampabay.com/freeads

Get three lines in the *Times* for free, visit tampabay.com/freeads and see!

557972-1

IS THERE A NEW SPA OR HOT TUB ON YOUR CHRISTMAS LIST?



**0%
INTEREST
90-DAYS
SAME AS
CASH**
WITH APPROVED
CREDIT

Biggest Selection—Best Quality—Guaranteed Lowest Price
CHOOSE FROM AMERICA'S TOP BRANDS LIKE BULLFROG, DREAM MAKER, SUNRISE, SIGNATURE AND MORE

RIGHT NOW GET ACRYLIC SPAS FROM \$2695

509 West Brandon Boulevard
(Corner of 60 and Kings)
BRANDON

RECREATIONAL
POOLS • SPAS • MORE

813.324.8824

recreationalpoolsspasandmore.com

560912-1



Courtesy Photo

Joanne Griffiths is proud to be the new Principal of Cimino Elementary School. Coming into a successful school, she asked herself what she could bring to Cimino. "Here's this wonderful community with a great reputation in the district and what can I bring to this environment?"

For 10 years previously, Griffiths was the principal of Cahoon Elementary Magnet School where she learned to "think outside the box." She decided to bring that mindset to Cimino as district schools are being encouraged to be more creative in meeting Florida's Standards.

Over the summer, Griffiths met with teachers and found "pockets of excellence" in classrooms that were not known about by other classrooms. To improve communication, she rearranged weekly agendas to give more time back to teachers to collaborate with each other, a kind of "meeting of the minds."

Griffith's spirit of creativity and partnership extends to working with other schools. She has arranged for 5th grade teachers at Cimino and Pride Elementary Schools to collaborate and share teaching techniques.

She also attends a monthly meeting of area principals to share successes and brainstorm what they can do better. According to Griffiths, Area 5 has been gaining a reputation of meeting Florida's Standards "with a level excellence that has been achieving results." Dr. Michelle Fitzgerald, Area 5 Superintendent, facilitates those meetings. "The principals come together in small groups to go over the latest findings and determine what's working best in education. Everything they go over can be brought back to their schools and shared with their teachers," she explained.

Griffiths is looking forward to an exciting year at Cimino and said, "I couldn't feel more blessed to be here."



Cimino's new principal Dr. Joanne Fitzgerald (center) brainstorms with other Principals to find new and creative ways to improve their schools at monthly principal meetings.

Photo: Wendy Knipp

TAMPA TRIBUNE

Inside Tampa Bay Times

Fridays and Sundays

To subscribe, call 800-888-7012 or go to tampabay.com/subscribe

Tampa Bay Times

Authentic Italian Feast of the 7 Fishes with Chef Cinzia

Saturday, December 23 • 6PM

Prepaid registration required at MyTastyVenues.com

Shop One-of-a-Kind Gifts & Decor

Beautiful serving ware, cooking classes, cookbooks, oils, spices, specialty food items and local art

MyTastyVenues.com

Weekday Gourmet Lunches \$11.95

Whether Intimate Gathering or Elegant Affair, HOLIDAY CATERING is available.

951 E. Brandon Blvd. | Brandon, FL | 813.381.4999

Located on the south side of SR60, between Bryan Rd. and Mt. Carmel Rd.



The Bloomingdale High School Football team played their last regular game of the season on Nov. 3 against Robinson High School. It was an emotional night for players, cheerleaders, band members, parents and coaches as it was senior night and the last time the seniors would experience Friday Night Lights. Bloomingdale won the game over Robinson 42-35 and clinched a first round play-off berth. Good luck to all the seniors on their future endeavors!



Senior Cheer Captain Tessa Monroe escorted by her parents, Mike and Nikki.



Offensive Lineman Joe Pignataro with dad Paul, sister Gabrielle and mom Cheri.



Senior Drum Line Leader of the Rajun' Bull Band, Bennett Brown with parents, Tim and Lori.



The senior cheerleaders gather one last time for a photo op. Pictured left to right are Lorin Lazzara, Julia Odiorne, Haley Lazzara, Tessa Monroe, Emily Ashman and Emily Rulli.



The Bulls take the field at Charley Harris Stadium for the last time during the 2017 season.

BLOOMINGDALE PAINTING

"A Brush Of Quality" **Since 1989**

INTERIOR/EXTERIOR
PRESSURE WASHING
RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL

Bloomingdale Resident-Tod Howard
FREE ESTIMATES, EXPERIENCED and RELIABLE

(813)654-5646 | (813)966-3601
www.BloomingdalePainting.com
License#PA3694 Bonded & Insured





813-677-9494
6919 Providence Road,
Riverview, FL 33578

HELPING FAMILIES SINCE 1998 CREMATORY ON SITE
www.serenitymeadows.com





December 25-January 8, 2018 - Winter Break

January 9, 2018 - Students Return to School

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



ALAFIA ALLIGATOR ALLEY

Alafia Mint – Every Wednesday in Room 208 from 7:30 to 7:55 a.m. Come in and do a book swap and visit the Spirit Store.

Spirit Day – Remember to wear your Alafia shirts every Friday to show your school spirit!

Reading Challenge! Read Your Way to a DANCE PARTY!

2nd 9 weeks Media Center Reading Challenge

Meet your grade level's goal by December 22:

KG – Complete Teacher's Reading Logs

1st – 10 Reading Counts pts or 300 myOn minutes

2nd – 15 Reading Counts pts or 300 myOn minutes

3rd – 25 Reading Counts pts or 300 myOn minutes

4th – 35 Reading Counts pts or 300 myOn minutes

5th – 45 Reading Counts pts or 300 myOn minutes

Check Reading Counts Book Expert Online to see if a book has a quiz.

Meet the challenge
and YOU
can come to the
MEDIA CENTER
DANCE PARTY
in January!



CIMINO COUGAR CENTRAL


Dec. 4-8 Wild West Book Fair, 8 a.m.-3 p.m.

Dec. 7 Family Reading Night, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Dec. 15 All Pro Dad's, 7 a.m.in the Multi-Purpose Room

Dec. 19 Cougar Cool Cats Caring Ceremony, 8:15 a.m., Multi-Purpose Room

Family Reading Night Activities!



Cimino Elementary

FAMILY READING NIGHT

Come in your pajamas and join us for a night of fun and excitement!

Thursday, December 7th
5:30pm – 7:30pm

Schedule of Events
5:30-6:30 Storytime
 Come listen to your favorite teachers read their favorite story.
6:00 -7:00 Pictures with Santa
 Please bring your own camera
 One picture per family
6:45 Tropicana speeches
7:00 Music entertainment
 Orff, Recorders, Handbells, and Chorus

Ongoing throughout the Night
3:00-7:00 Book Fair in Media Center
5:30-6:30 STEM Fair Projects in Music Room
5:30-6:30 Create a Card to send to the Troops (location TBA)



BURNS BRUINS BANTER

Dec. 4 Principal Honor Roll Ice Cream Celebration, 2:35 p.m. in the Cafeteria

Dec. 6 Chorus Winter Concert, 7 p.m. at Bloomingdale High School

Dec. 7 Band Winter Concert, 6:30 p.m. at Bloomingdale High School

Dec. 11 Fall Pictures Retakes, 9-11a.m.

Dec. 18-22 Semester 1 Exams

Dec. 18 Orchestra Winter Concert, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Bloomingdale High School

Yearbooks – You can also order yearbooks online at www.yearbookordercenter.com. You will be asked for Burns' order number, which is 443. The final opportunity to purchase a yearbook will be no later than mid-January. Purchases may be made online, by cash or check made payable to Burns Middle School.



BLOOMINGDALE HIGH BULL BUSINESS

Dec. 4-8 Winter End of Course Exams

Dec. 5 Boys & Girls Soccer vs Brandon, 6 p.m.

Dec. 5 Boys & Girls Basketball @ Plant City, 6:30 p.m.

Dec. 5 Chorus Winter Concert, 7-9 p.m., Auditorium

Dec. 6 Cheer Competition @ Leto, 6 p.m.

Dec. 6 Boys & Girls Basketball vs TBT, 6:30 p.m.

Dec. 8 Boys & Girls Soccer vs King, 6 p.m.

Dec. 8 Boys & Girls Basketball @ East Bay, 6:30 p.m.

Dec. 9 Girls JV Basketball @ Plant City, 9a.m.

Dec. 9 Boys JV Basketball @ Durant, 9a.m.

Dec. 9 Band Holiday Parade, Ybor City, 4 p.m.

Dec. 11 Orchestra Winter Concert, 7-9 p.m., Auditorium

Dec. 12 Cheer Competition @ Riverview, 6 p.m.

Dec. 12 Boys & Girls Soccer @ Armwood, 6 p.m.

Dec. 12 Boys & Girls Basketball vs Durant, 6:30 p.m.

Dec. 13 Boys & Girls Basketball vs Strawberry Crest, 6:30 p.m.

Dec. 14 Boys & Girls Soccer vs TBT, 6 p.m.

Dec. 14 Band Winter Concert, 7-9 p.m., Auditorium

Dec. 15 Boys & Girls Basketball @ Robinson, 6:30 p.m.

Dec. 16 Girls JV Basketball @ Riverview, 9a.m.

Dec. 16 Boys JV Basketball vs Armwood, 9a.m.

Dec. 18-22 Exam Week

Dec. 22 Boys & Girls Soccer @ Strawberry Crest, 6 p.m.



BULL BRIEFS

Financial Aid Nights, 6-8 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 5

Gaither High School, 813-975-7340

16200 North Dale Mabry Highway

Tampa, FL 33618

Thursday, Dec. 7

Plant City High School, 813-757-9370

One Raider Place

Plant City, FL 33563

Continued on Next Page →



December School News Continued

Compiled by Deidre Morgan



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



TeachaBULL Moments

Introducing a new program through the PTSA! TeachaBULL Moments will give parents and students an opportunity to acknowledge a teacher that goes above and beyond. You can email to TeachaBULLmoments@gmail.com or drop a note in the front office of how a teacher has gone the extra mile for a Bloomingdale student or students. We want to take time to acknowledge our teachers for the great work they do. Each month one teacher will be chosen from letters that have been turned in and will receive a gift card. PTSA wants to give Bloomingdale families an opportunity to let our teachers know what great work they do!



Start Your Year Right at the Running of the Bulls 5k

Date: Saturday, Jan. 27, 2018, 8 a.m., Bloomingdale Senior High School. Come out for the Running of the Bulls 5k! The Running of the Bulls 5k is a community race that takes place on the Bloomingdale High School campus. All proceeds go to the Bloomingdale High School Rajun' Bull Band! Be a part of this fantastic community event and help the band raise money for instrument upgrades and maintenance. The race starts and finishes on the track. Runners and walkers are welcome. To sign up, visit: <https://fitniche.com/event/running-bulls-5k/> OR www.facebook.com/bloomingdalebulls5k/.



Bloomingdale Students Walk Out Over Teacher Pay Raises

On-the-Scene Report By Deidre Morgan

On Friday, Nov. 17, the last day before Thanksgiving Break, students at Bloomingdale High School staged a student led walk out to show their support for the teachers at the school and their disappointment that the teachers are not receiving well-earned pay raises. Students peacefully walked out of their classes at 10:30 a.m and gathered around the school's flagpole.

Principal Sue Burkett Baricko announced prior to the walk out that while she appreciated how strongly students felt about the issue, it was her wish that they remain in class. She further added that emailing or writing a letter to the School Board was a better way to demonstrate support.

Burkett Baricko also asked students that if they chose to walk out to do so peacefully, respect those who do not participate and not to disrupt classes as they left. She did not encourage the walk out. Students exited the school and returned to classrooms within 15 minutes. Some students that did not walk out took the time to write letters to the School Board.

We live in a great country where students and young adults can show their support for a cause and try to make a difference without fear of punishment, Kudos to Principal Sue Burkett Baricko for being a great leader and to the students who took a stand for their beliefs.

Want to show your support for teachers who enrich students' lives? Send a letter to 901 E Kennedy Blvd, Tampa, FL 33602 or visit www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/contact/?type=board&contact=1 post a message.



On Nov. 17 at Bloomingdale High School, students staged a peaceful walk out in support of teacher pay raises.





Great American Teach-In Inspires

Brief and Photo by Wendy Knipp

The Great American Teach-In is an annual event where parents and volunteers come to area schools and speak to students about their professions or hobbies. This year's teach-in was on Nov. 16. Dr. Stephanie Hannett, Cimino's Counselor, said, "The Great American Teach-In is a wonderful opportunity for our students to learn about the many different careers of our families and community members. The excitement of the day is not only seen in our students, but the speakers as well! I often hear back from our speakers about the terrific experience they had in the classroom and how impressed they were with the insightful questions the students ask." Patricia Hoyt, pictured, educated students at Cimino about being an ER Nurse at St. Joseph's Hospital.



Bloomingdale Student Athletes Sign National Letters of Intent

Brief and Photo by Deidre Morgan

Three Bloomingdale High School Softball players signed National Letters of Intent to play at the collegiate level in the school's Media Center on Nov. 8 in front of family, friends and coaches. Alexys Lawson (Florida International University), Lexie Chevalier (University of Tampa) and Amanda Beinborn (Hillsborough Community College) will be displaying their talents in front of college crowds all over the state of Florida. Congratulations to each of these awesome young women as they pursue furthering their education and playing the sport that they love. Good Luck!



Bloomingdale Football Earns 1st Round Play Off Berth

Brief by Deidre Morgan

Congratulations to Coach Warner and the entire Bloomingdale High School Football team on an awesome year!



Photo: Deidre Morgan

For the third time in Bloomingdale High School's 30-year history, the Bulls football team made it to the playoffs. As the 7th seed, Bloomingdale played the #2 seed, Tampa Bay Tech. The Bulls jumped out to an early lead going into half time but came up short in a 42-22 loss to the Titans. The Bulls ended the season with an overall record of 7-4 and a district record of 5-1.

Photo: BSHS Twitter



Putting the "cherry on top" of an exciting season was Coach Max Warner's selection for Week 11 Tampa Bay Buccaneers Coach of the Week. Coach Warner, girlfriend Kaitlyn Beach, Athletic Director Donnie Peek and BSHS Principal Sue Burkett Baricko accept the \$2,000 prize, which will go towards the school's football program.



Let the "Gains" Begin

Brief and Photos by Deidre Morgan

Bloomington High School was the place to be on Nov. 14 to learn your ABC's – Abs, Biceps and Competition. 24 students competed for the honor of being named Mr. and Ms. Bloomington. Judging the competition were Joey Didona, Anthony Gibson, Courtney Safko (Miss Bloomington 2013), Dasha Hamilton (Miss Bloomington 2015 & 2016) and Scott Johnson (the first ever Mr. Bloomington in the 1989 graduating class). The winners were Lorin Lazzara and Dylan Ottens.



Dylan Ottens aka "Ottens The Beast" was crowned as Mr. Bloomington. Dylan competed in the middleweight division.



The judges for the evening had a tough job picking just two winners (pictured left to right), Courtney Safko, Anthony Gibson, Joey Didona and Dasha Hamilton. Not pictured Scott Johnson.



Ms. Bloomington honors went to Lorin Lazzara who went by the stage name "Hollywood". Lorin was also named the People's Choice winner for her routine and bubbly personality.



The Bulls are Superior for 31 Years and Counting

By Amy Fluty, Rajun Bull Band Publicity

On Nov. 4, the Florida Bandmaster Association (FBA) Marching Music Performance Assessments (MPA) for District 7 was held at Gaither High School. At this event, the Bloomington High School Rajun' Bull Band and Crimson Guard received a superior rating for the 31st year in a row! Hours of hard work by students, directors, and volunteers resulted in this great accomplishment.

This year's show, titled "Tales of Kings and Castles," featured music selections from "Robin Hood Prince of Thieves," "Gladiator" and "Game of Thrones." The Rajun' Bull band is under the direction of Jon Sever with Billy Sullivan and Coleen Petree directing the Crimson Guard.

Sever said, "The kids did a great job with the diversity of all of the storms and cancellations and for that reason I am particularly proud of this program."

Now that marching season is over, the band is busy preparing for upcoming events in December. On Dec. 9, they will participate in the Snow on 7th parade in Ybor City. This is a fun family event sure to put you in the holiday spirit. On Dec. 14, the band will perform their winter concert at the school. Donations of new unwrapped toys for Toys for Tots will be collected. The concert will put a smile on your face and your donation of a toy will bring one to someone else.

Finally, the band will hold the "Running of the Bulls" 5K run on Jan. 28. For information, go to <https://www.facebook.com/bloomingtonbulls5k/>. Registration is \$30 at <https://fitniche.com/event/running-bulls-5k/>. All proceeds benefit the Rajun' Bull Band. Thank you for supporting this great organization.



Photos: Kristin Witt



Precision makes for superior ratings for the Rajun' Bull Band.

Rajun' Bull Band Director Jon Sever with drum majors Aaron Pendino (l.), Joel Papineau and Hailey Murphy after receiving their 31st Superior Rating at the Florida Bandmaster Association (FBA) Marching Music Performance Assessments (MPA).



We Wish You A Merry Christmas

At Christmas my heart is so full! I'm reflecting on blessings of family, friends and people I love. I hope you enjoy the season and have someone to share your joy with!

Merry Christmas!

- Brenda



direct 813-924-8677
office 813-655-5333
Brenda@BrendaWade.com
BrendaWade.com

