



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BLOOMINGDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION SINCE 1980

THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

HAPPY SAINT PATRICK'S DAY!



VOLUME XXXVII 🍀 ISSUE 3 🍀 MARCH 2017 🍀 www.BloomingtondaleHOA.com

TODAY! TODAY! TODAY!

BHA ANNUAL COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP IS TODAY!

SEE DETAILS ON P. 5!



Photo: Gazette File Photo

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Luck is believing you're lucky." *Tennessee Williams*

This Month



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YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

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 Offices of Bloomingdale Special Taxing District:

3509 Bell Shoals Road

Valrico, Florida 33596

Directors at Large:

Mary Galin

Billy Hightower

Bobbi Ferraro

Beth Smedley

Joanie Wilson

Charlie Woodcock

President: *George T. May IV*

Vice President: *Daniel Berkowitz*

Secretary: *Suzy Watts*

Treasurer: *Sean Donahue*



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Yard of the Month



Photo: Susan DeDeLuca

Frank Sanns

4515 Oak River Circle, Valrico, FL 33596 (River Crossing)



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



Bloomingdale Real Estate Update

(Editor's Note: Real estate columnist Ronnie McLaughlin's moves from Michigan, New Jersey, Dubai, and eventually to Valrico, helped her find her niche in residential real estate. She has lived in Bloomingdale for six years with her husband and two children, a son attending University of Florida and daughter at Bloomingdale High School. A productive Realtor, she is also active in the Bloomingdale High School PTSA and Girl Scouts.)

Howdy, Neighbor!

For the first 50 days of 2017, 27 homes sold in Bloomingdale at an average of \$110.81 per square foot or \$220,000. These homes were built between 1979 and 2003. Four were bank-owned, cash sales under \$160,000 and the remaining sold homes were purchased with mostly Conventional and FHA loans with an average sales price of \$235,000.

Our new neighbors most likely chose Bloomingdale for the schools, the quick commute to Tampa, the golf course and parks, or just because Bloomingdale is a beautiful place to live. Let's welcome them to our neighborhood.

Here are five ways to welcome your new neighbor.

1. Bake them a treat or grab a dessert from the wonderful selections of bakeries or our local Publix or Fresh Market bakery departments.
2. It's strawberry season! Stop by with a flat of Plant City strawberries!
3. Grab extra take out menus from your favorite local restaurants, place them in a file folder, and drop them by.



By Ronnie McLaughlin

The Chadderton Real Estate Group
Keller Williams Realty

813-601-5659

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www.chaddertongroup.com

4. Invite your new neighbor to your neighborhood Bunco, book club or work out class.

5. Stop by and simply say, "Welcome to the neighborhood."

Neighborhood Snapshot - Heritage Park

Heritage Park located along Culbreath Road, located less than a mile from Lithia Crossing Shoppes at Lithia and our new Crest Pointe Towne Center, is a mandatory HOA neighborhood comprised of 108 homes on Clareside Drive and Siena Way. These homes were built between 1996-2000 with an average square footage of 1,659. A majority of the homes have three bedrooms, two bathrooms, with thirty of the homes having four bedrooms and two baths. Most of the homes are one story. Three homes sold over the past year at an average sales price of \$184,000 or \$97.59 per square foot, all three were non-pool homes.

**MLS statistics were based on rough property lines for individual neighborhoods. Sales not entered into MLS did not count in these statistics.*



BHA COMMUNITY CORNER



DON'T FORGET TO LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!

Membership Benefits Include Community Garage Sale and Today's Annual Clean-up

The BHA board appeals to all residents to join the Association for the 2017 year. Last weekend's garage sale and today's annual clean-up are just two of many benefits your membership helps fund. Please consider joining and strengthening the one organization that advocates for the entire community of nearly 5,000 homes and 23,000 residents. Your membership funds are returned 100 percent to the community. So far, resident response has been strong.

Every member and dollar matter. Your membership funds all special programs and services including this newspaper, a part-time staff, the annual Santa visit, the annual community yard sale, the community clean-up, which will be expanded to spring and fall, and the fall festival. The BHA is an IRC 501(c) (4) non-profit organization, run entirely by volunteers who live in your neighborhoods.

To help with planning and budgeting, join today or at least within the next 30 days. 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.

ALL membership funds go back to our community, and all residents are welcome at our monthly board meetings on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Bell Shoals office.

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

Bloomingdale Homeowners Association Inc. 3509 Bell Shoals Rd. • Valrico, FL 33596 • bloomingdalehoa.com <small>Please correct name below if different. BHA Membership Notices are mailed to the owner on file with the Hillsborough County Tax Collector. Recent changes may not be reflected here.</small>	2017 BHA MEMBERSHIP \$35.00 to Join or Renew! Return This Card With Payment
YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS	
	2017 Membership \$35.00
	Community Scholarship Donation \$
	Total Enclosed \$
	Check Number #

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, March 13, 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, March 14, 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, March 16, 7 p.m. / Bloomingdale Area Community Council chaired by Hillsborough County Deputy Jim Brodie, Bloomingdale Community Station, 3622 Erindale Drive, 813-635-8040. Learn about safety and security issues affecting our community.

BHA BRIEFS

FEBRUARY BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS AND OTHER BOARD NEWS

The board received a briefing from BSTD president Dave West about plans for community entryways affected by the soon-to-begin Bell Shoals widening. See the BSTD report on p. 10 of this issue for more BSTD initiatives..

The Neighborhood Standards Committee delivered an overview of a code enforcement sweep, which took place in the community on Feb. 16, see p. 7 for the story. Plans were discussed for this year's October fall festival and a possible second clean-up in the September. New venues, which include Bloomingdale HS, are being discussed for this year's Fall Festival.

Board members continued to discuss transportation and development issues affecting the community, and attended the most recent Board of County Commissioners meeting on March 1. Residents are encouraged to attend meetings and take county surveys which will be posted on the HOA FB page at [Facebook/BloomingdaleHOA.com](https://www.facebook.com/BloomingdaleHOA.com).



Daylight Savings Time Begins March 12! Spring Forward!

Attention Bloomingdale Seniors!

IMPORTANT DATES

January 15 - April 1
Applications accepted.

April 1
Application deadline (firm).

May 9
BHA Board meeting and announcement of scholarship winner.



The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association is proud to sponsor the

Bloomingdale High School \$2,000 Community Education Scholarship

REQUIREMENTS:

Candidate

- **Must be a resident** of the Bloomingdale community.
- Must be a graduating senior accepted at a 2 or 4-year college or university. Proof of acceptance is required.
- Weighted 3.2 GPA

Candidate's Parent/Guardian

- **Must be a resident** of the Bloomingdale community.
- Bloomingdale Homeowners Association 2017 membership **dues must be paid prior** to the scholarship application deadline. Membership drive begins January 2017. **Deadline is April 1, 2017.**
- Proof of residency is required.

Selection Criteria

- Community service
- Extra-curricular activities
- Well-written essay
- Academic Standing
- Reference letters

Scholarship information will be available January 15, 2017 online at BloomingdaleHOA.com, at Bloomingdale High School and at the Bloomingdale Community Office.



BHA Community Office: 3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, FL 33596 • Monday-Thursday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
(813) 681-2051 • Email: bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com • BloomingdaleHOA.com



BloomingdaleHOA



BHA ANNUAL COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP IS TODAY!

NEW: SHREDDER ONSITE! BHA ASKS FOR \$5 DONATION

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association (BHA) Community Clean-up Day is today from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. (*or until trash bins are full*) at the Hillsborough County Parks and Recreation facility, 1626 Natures Way Blvd. This event is for Bloomingdale residents only, no businesses or contractors. Ten commercial trash bins will be available as well as the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Operation Medicine Cabinet, UrbanErecycling, AMVETS and new this year, Legal Shred.

This event is made possible in part by a grant from the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners.

Clean-up Accepted Items List

UrbanErecycling: computer keyboards, laptops, desktop computers, tower computers and servers, scrap computers, telecom equipment, rack servers, cell phones, laser printers, flat screen monitors and flat screen TVs, battery backups, ion lithium batteries, circuit boards, and computer cables.



HCSO's "Operation Medicine Cabinet": Pill bottles, Boxes and/or packaged drug items, Patches, Powders, Liquids (properly sealed), Inhalers, and Veterinarian Prescription Drugs.



AMVETS: any serviceable donations for veterans in need.

Legal Shred: Limited to 2-3 banker's boxes for document shredding.



Hillsborough County Roll-offs accepted items: Refrigerators, ovens, water heaters, Steel and other metals, Furniture (such as couches, chairs, tables and mattresses) and Construction debris (such as concrete, bricks, glass and roofing materials), and tires.

Not accepted in roll-offs: televisions, microwaves, computers or radios (*UrbanErecycling will take flat screen TVs and computers as noted above*), yard waste, regular household trash, hazardous materials including paint, batteries, propane tanks, household chemicals and waste from commercials activities.

NOTE: NO old-style box televisions accepted by either UrbanErecycling or Hillsborough County! **Do Not** bring them, you will be turned away!

When it comes to your to-do list, put your future first.

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

NOW THROUGH MARCH 12!

Florida Strawberry Festival / Festival Grounds at Alexander and Reynolds Streets, Plant City / Each spring the Florida Strawberry Festival rolls out the red carpet to welcome visitors from all over. Guests enjoy agriculture, commerce, industry, livestock, fine arts, horticulture exhibits, and crafts. And, it's the perfect time to enjoy eating ripe strawberries. Open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Admission: Adults (ages 13+), \$10; Children (ages 6-12, \$5; Children (ages 5 and under) FREE. Discount tickets are available at Publix: Adults (ages 13+), \$8; Children (ages 6-12), \$4. For information, visit www.flstrawberryfestival.com.

EVERY SUNDAY!

T Marie's Valrico Sunday Market / 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. / 3407 Lithia Pinecrest Rd., Valrico / Our market under the Grandfather Oaks is a weekly event that offers fun in the sun, fresh shopping, and serves as a gathering place for families and friends to bond, mingle, and buy local. We will have live entertainment, and tons of unique vendors ranging from fresh produce, homemade foods, jewelry, home decor, woodworking, gift items, kid and pet friendly products, and so much more. Make sure to come visit our market and stop into T Marie's Fashion & Gifts Boutique as well. For information, call 813-530-0922.

provided books, educational activities, food, clothing and shoes for Title I elementary school children.

Courtyard Movie: Trolls / March 10 / 6-8 p.m. / Campo Family YMCA / 3414 Culbreath Road, Valrico / Gather your family, blankets, and refreshments and join us for our March Courtyard Movie: Trolls! For information, call 813-684-1371.



Winthrop Arts Festival & Artisan Market / March 25 and 26 / 10 a.m.-5 p.m. / Winthrop Common, Riverview / Enjoy a fun-filled two-day event with something for everyone at the Winthrop Arts Festival and Artisan Market. Find beautiful one-of-a-kind pieces of art for purchase, as well as handcrafted items from our artisans, food from local Winthrop restaurants and live entertainment, including music and games for the kids. Just for kids is the Art Factory booth where kids can make something artistic to take home.

Spring Concert / March 30 / 7 p.m. / Logan Hall at New Hope United Methodist Church / 115 Knights Avenue, Brandon / The Eastern Hillsborough Community Band will present a spring concert free to the community, with a \$5 suggested donation at the door. Reservations are not required for any concerts. EHCB is a full-sized concert band that has been entertaining the Tampa Bay area since 2009. For information, email info@ehcb.org, visit www.ehcb.org, or call 813-569-1771.



Hillsborough County Department of Aging Services is making this training available to caregivers, the community, and staff. For information, call 813-272-5250.

Easter Egg Hunt / April 15 / 10 a.m. SHARP! / Kerby's Nursery / 2311 S. Parsons Avenue, Seffner / Bring your Easter basket and get ready for a whole lot of fun ... it's the 8th annual Easter Egg Hunt at Kerby's. Be ready to hunt and see how many Easter Eggs you can find hidden among the beautiful flowers. For information, call 813-685-3265.

Golf for Kids Charity Golf Classic / April 28 / Registration, 11:30 a.m.; Call to Start, 12:45 p.m.; Shotgun Start, 1 p.m.; Dinner, 5 p.m. / Bloomingdale Golfers Club / 4113 Great Golfers Place, Valrico / For the past twenty-eight years, the National Association of Insurance & Financial Advisors-Tampa have organized the Golf For Kids Classic. Following the original mission "to give back to the community where we work and live," the organization has raised over \$500,000 for local charities. The Epilepsy Services Foundation, Inc. has benefited from the Classic from its inception. The Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to creating a better future and environment for persons affected by epilepsy living in West Central Florida.

Entry fees are \$100/golfer or \$360/foursome. Fees include lunch, dinner, prizes, and one complimentary greens fee at one of seven championship courses. For expedited check-in, submit payments and registration to: ESF, 4628 North Armenia Avenue, Tampa, FL, 33603-2706, or online at <http://epilepsysf.org/golf-for-kids/>.

Free Tax Help from AARP Tax-Aide Foundation / Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday beginning March 7 / 10 a.m. / Bloomingdale Library / 1906 Bloomingdale Avenue, Valrico / AARP Foundation Tax-Aide is available free to taxpayers with low and moderate income, with special attention to those 60 and older. The AARP Tax-Aide Foundation provides assistance on a first-come, first-served basis in cooperation with the Free Tax Preparation Program of Hillsborough County. Visit aarp.org for a list of recommended documents to bring to work with tax prep volunteers. For information, call 813-272-3652.

John E. S. Cochrane Golf Schools Spring Session Junior Golf Programs / Bloomingdale Golfers Club, 4113 Great Golfers Place, Valrico / March 9 and following Thursdays, 5-6:30 p.m.—After School Program, ages 7-12, 10 weeks, \$350. Call J.D. at 813-957-3205 for information. Insert Golf Club graphic

Puttin' on the Ritz Bunco / March 7 / 6 p.m. / Center Place Fine Arts & Civic Association / 619 Vonderburg Drive, Brandon / The G.F.C.W. Valrico Service League invites you to a night of fun, food, and prizes at their Puttin' on the Ritz Bunco. Social time from 6-7 p.m. with dinner and Bunco starting at 7 p.m. Tickets cost \$20 and include light dinner, drinks, and prizes. Purchase tickets at Center Place or contact Claudia Yake at 813-685-7998. Proceeds help support local schoolchildren and families in need in our community. The group has supported A Kids Place, Brandon Outreach, Campo YMCA, Cards for the Troops, Center Place, Apostles Village, and Family Promise, and

UPCOMING

Paint the Town 5K Color Run / April 1 / 7 a.m. Registration; 8 a.m. Race / Hillsborough County Fairgrounds / 215 Sydney Washer Road, Dover / Join Center Place for its 33rd Annual Patron Event and Membership Drive. A chipped, timed event for the entire family. Ribbons and prizes awarded to the three fastest times for Men, Women, and Children. Register NOW and help support the arts in your neighborhood. 5K early race packet pickup, Thurs., March 30, noon-7 p.m., at Center Place, with Buy-it-Now gift baskets available. For information, call 813-685-8888.

International Festival / April 8 / 10 a.m.-2 p.m. / The Village Early Learning Center / 3741 Canoga Park Drive, Brandon / Experience international food, crafts, and live cultural entertainment at this annual event. Held both inside and outside the center, classrooms are decorated to represent a particular country. Outside on Festival Day displays of history, customs, fun facts, and crafts delight attendees. We are seeking country-specific entertainment. This is a free community event. For information, call Marlena Beamer at 813-786-2848.



"Feeling Secure: Creating a Safety Net for Caregivers" / April 13 / 3-5 p.m. / Bloomingdale Adult Day Service Center / 3940 Canoga Park Drive, Brandon / The

Veterans Affairs

Veterans Memorial Park & Museum, 3602 Hwy. 301 North in Tampa.

Vietnam Veteran Veterans of America Chapter 787 Annual Car Show, Sat. March 11, 9 a.m. / Cost for participants \$15 through Mar 4, then \$20 through date of the event. Admission (spectators): free. Info and Registration at <http://www.vva787.com/> or call Herman Rainey at 813-777-9450.

Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans & U.S. War Dogs Salute, Sat., March 25, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. / Free and open to the public. Refreshments provided by VFW Post 8108. Info at 813-622-1495 or greenirish@hotmail.com.

Quarterly Field of Honor Ceremony, Sat., April 1, 11 a.m. / Honors all military members lost in the line of duty during Jan., Feb. and March.



Neighborhood Standards Update

Staff Report

Code Enforcement Sweeps Through Bloomingdale

The county code enforcement department at the request of the BHA performed a sweep of the community’s non-mandated neighborhoods on Feb. 16. The goal of the event was to inform, educate, warn and/or cite residents found to be violating county code ordinances and reinforce new enforceable neighborhood standards based strictly on those ordinances.

Neighborhood Standards Committee member Charles Woodcock said, “The goal of the sweep program is to regain and maintain the quality of life in the Bloomingdale area. By enforcing these standards, property values will improve and continue to keep our community a highly desirable place to live and raise our families.”

To that end, Bloomingdale’s assigned code officer Christine Zien-McCombs and 10 other officers canvassed the community for several hours, spoke with more than 100 residents about the county code enforcement program, issued warnings to several and wrote citations for more serious offenses. BHA board members rode with the officers and provided administrative support during the event.

One of the program goals was to establish a positive rapport with residents. “Programs like this give residents a clearer understanding of the Code Enforcement mission,” said Code Officer Zien-McCombs. “We are not the enemy but rather an entity that wants to see Bloomingdale thrive.” To that end, officers will recheck violators this month and additional “sweeps” will continue throughout the year.

The partnership between the BHA and the code enforcement department is a strong one. When asked to take on this project by the BHA, Code Enforcement Supervisor David Cansler readily agreed. “This tactic allows us to serve the community as a whole and better educate residents on a large-scale in a relatively short amount of time,” Cansler explained. “Working together with the BHA, we can help the community maintain the quality of the life that the Association and its members want and expect.”

The Neighborhood Standards List is available on the HOA website at www.bloomingdalehoa.com. For questions, call 813-681-2051 or email bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com.



Photo: Miriam Leech

Thank you, Hillsborough County Code Officers! On Feb.16, officers performed a community-wide sweep of Bloomingdale’s non-mandated neighborhoods. Pictured are Officers Greg Williams, Christine Zien-McCombs, Derrick Grace, Steve Saucier, Paul Rowen, Laura George, Kirk Bowling, Dennis Sweeney, Darrell Brown, Brian Lantz and Code Enforcement Supervisor David Cansler.



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RIVERVIEW

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BLOOMINGDALE COMMUNITY STATION NOTES

By Community Resource Deputy James Brodie
and C.S.O. Sandy Capitano

AREA LAW AND ORDER

Between Jan. 21 and Feb. 22, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office conducted 127 traffic stops in the Bloomingdale and surrounding area known as J04 Zone. This large area includes the Bloomingdale area down to Lithia area. In Bloomingdale, there were two traffic crashes without injuries and one fatality involving a motorcycle, all preventable. Slow down, be a courteous driver and always watch out for motorcycles.

There was also one residential burglary. While this is great news, there is always room for improvement since the one burglary was due to a garage door left open! Two auto burglaries were reported. Of the two burglaries, one actually occurred outside our area, but was reported here and the other was due to another unlocked door.



BE ON THE LOOKOUT!

We are still seeing a very large number of vehicle burglaries in the local area. In most cases, we find that the burglarized vehicles were left unlocked. Be vigilant, remember to lock your vehicles and report any suspicious persons walking around late at night with no purpose.

SOME THINGS ARE GREENER IN BLOOMINGDALE...

Some of our friends in nearby communities weren't so lucky over the past month. A few Armed Robberies occurred at local convenience stores. HCSO identified and arrested a local Valrico resident for a couple of these crimes. Remember to always lock your car doors even if you are just running into the store for a "minute." And, don't leave your car running!

This could have easily been our Bloomingdale community. You can help by looking at alerts on the HCSO website located at www.hcso.tampa.fl.us. Finally, report, report, report. Report suspicious activity to the Sheriff's Office immediately at 247-8200. If possible, try to get a vehicle description and tag number as well as descriptions of individuals involved.

GETTING INVOLVED

We at the Bloomingdale Community Sub-Station would like to invite someone from each community to attend our monthly Bloomingdale Area Community Council Meeting as a representative for your neighborhood. Our meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month; this month's meeting is March 16 at 7 p.m.

This group works directly with the HCSO to identify community concerns and to find solutions to all types of problems. Interested residents can call the Bloomingdale Community Station at 635-8040, or come by the station located at 3622 Erindale Drive.

MISSING GIRL FOUND SAFE

Lastly, we would like to thank everyone who directly or indirectly helped with the search of our missing girl, Jenna Irmeler. As our local community deputy, I immediately contacted Joy Boisselle, Bloomingdale Gazette editor, who jumped into action to assist us by posting a flier and photo of the missing girl on the Bloomingdale Facebook page. The page received over 80,000 views and 2,000 shares! This is a great communications tool for our community!

Jenna was found unharmed and was returned to her family in good spirits. Thank you all!



TODAY! TODAY! TODAY!

Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Operation Medicine Cabinet

The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, in conjunction with Home Instead Senior Care of Brandon, will be providing area residents a way of properly disposing of dangerous, outdated, unwanted prescription medicines and drugs. Protect your family and your environment! Do not flush medications or put them in the trash! Collect your old medications and drop them off for proper disposal.

This special event will be held with the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association's Annual Clean-up event on March 4 from 9 a.m. to noon. Collection boxes will be set-up at the Parks on Recreation Maintenance Facility, 1626 Natures Way.



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MobileMeals

429850-1

The Bloomingdale Special Taxing District: The Community's Common Area Connection

(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.)

By Miriam Leech, BSTD Staff

A BRIGHTER, SHINIER BLOOMINGDALE

With aging wells as the source of Bloomingdale's water supply for irrigation, rust stains are a constant concern. Walls, sidewalks, utility boxes, and neighborhood entrances are the most obvious areas and can diminish the appearance of the community if not maintained.

In January, the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District (BSTD) contracted Florida Rust LLC to handle rust removal in the community. They are a highly trained, professional irrigation iron stain removal and prevention company that specially formulates its products for the specific needs of each of their customers.

Not only does Florida Rust bring specialized experience, but under their contract, rust removal and maintenance costs have been lowered. The Trustees continue to look for ways to decrease District costs in conjunction with property manager Rick Pitrowski of Merit, Inc.

These before and after photos of a Frontier FIOS utility box on Springvale Drive show the difference Florida Rust LLC, the new rust maintenance contractor, has made in the Bloomingdale community.



PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTED TO FIXING BLOOMINGDALE SIDEWALKS!

As previously reported in the February Bloomingdale Gazette, Hillsborough County Commissioner Stacy White attended the Jan. 9 meeting of the BSTD Board of Trustees. At that meeting, Commissioner White committed to get right to work on the issue of unsafe sidewalks in Bloomingdale, and explore creative options for finding funding to fix the most critical areas. White further committed to working with the Risk Management department immediately to find a way to correct those areas that pose the greatest safety issues.

On Feb. 1, the Board of County Commissioners passed Option 3 of the County Transportation Work Plan that includes **\$1,000,000 for the Public Works Department to repair the sidewalks over a 3-year period beginning in Fiscal Year 2018**. A workshop to discuss the plan was held on Feb. 22, and a public hearing was held March 1. Commissioner White has requested that our sidewalks be put at the top of the repair list!

Look for continued updates here in the BSTD column.

RESIDENT SURVEY

To date, the BSTD has received 253 responses to its resident survey. The survey will be available until March 15 at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BSTD2017Survey>. As good stewards of your tax monies, the Trustees would like to hear from the residents as to what you see as priorities for our Bloomingdale community. The results of the survey will help guide the Trustees as they plan for 2018.

Survey Questions: Provide your input at:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BSTD2017Survey>.

1. Within Bloomingdale, which of these general areas do you see most in need of attention?
2. What do you believe should be the BSTD's top priority?
3. The current property assessment to support community maintenance is \$130 per year per household and has remained steady since 2006. If a special election were held where Bloomingdale residents were given an opportunity to consider an increase in the property assessment, would you be more inclined to support or not support an increase?
4. If you are inclined to support an increase, please indicate the level of increase you would support:
5. If you do not support an increase please indicate the reason most closely associated with your decision:

BLOOMINGDALE SPECIAL TAXING DISTRICT

BLOOMINGDALE

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(813) 684-2358 Fax
BSTD@verizon.net

www.bloomingdaletaxingdistrict.org

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

David P. West, President
Mark Horst, Treasurer
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Tom Leech, Trustee
Jay Kittle, Trustee

Community Water Wise Awards Program

Deadline is June 30

By Lynn Barber, Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ agent

The 2017 Community Water Wise Awards, sponsored by Tampa Bay Water, recognize individuals and businesses committed to conserving our water resources and protecting the environment by using Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ (FFL) principles. There are nine FFL principles, which include: right plant right place, water efficiently, fertilize appropriately, mulch, attract wildlife, manage yard pests responsibly, recycle, reduce stormwater runoff and protect the waterfront.

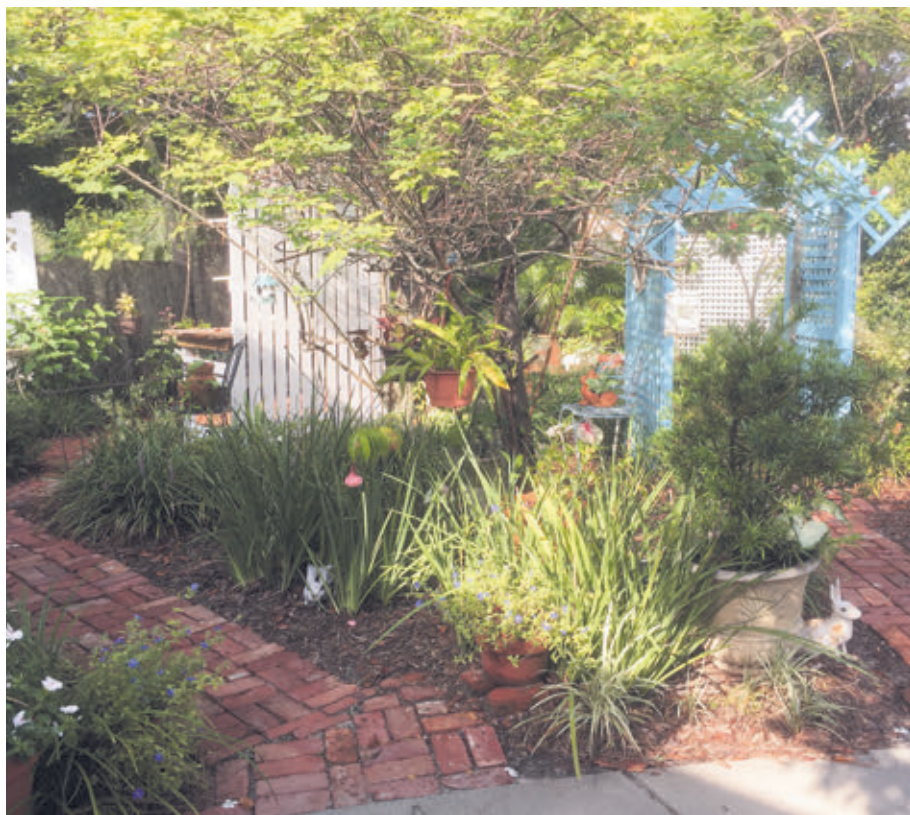


Many of these principles are used as part of the landscape evaluation process for this award program. Winning landscapes balance attractive designs with plants, landscape elements and water efficient irrigation techniques that have a positive impact on our environment.

You can view photographs of past winners at <http://tampabaywaterwise.org> and watch a short video. The deadline for entries is June 30. It takes approximately ten minutes to complete the application and submit online to tampabaywaterwise.org. Attaching a photo or two is helpful. Onsite landscape evaluations will be scheduled and conducted in May and early June with homeowners and business owners present.

Winning entries will receive a handmade mosaic stepping-stone for homeowners or a plaque option for businesses. If you have questions regarding the Community Water Wise Award program, contact me at 744-5519 x 54105.

For information about the nine principles of the Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program or for assistance with gardening-related questions, contact the UF/IFAS Extension Hillsborough County at 813-744-5519 or visit our website at <http://hillsborough.ifas.ufl.edu> for upcoming workshops.



MARCH 2017

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428636-1



Beta Sigma Phi Service Sorority used the garage sale to raise funds for local charities. From left to right are Janet Molen, Diane Wray, Sue Scharns, Barbara Kanach, Tracy Sherwin and Peggy Frantz.

Bloomingtondale Embraces Garage Sale Mania

With over 200 residents participating in the 2nd annual Bloomingtondale Community Garage Sale, buyers from all over the county enjoyed a true buyer's market. Held last weekend, the weather was cool and inviting with several sellers reporting sales even before the event's 8 a.m. official start.

Local children joined the fun having their own sales to earn extra pocket money. Several had extra toys to sell, while others were selling baked goods to save for college. Some neighbors combined their efforts to create mega sales. In all cases, residents reported great attendance numbers and were appreciative of the Bloomingtondale Homeowners Association's efforts to set up the popular event.

Sellers also included charities, service organizations and student clubs taking advantage of the many buyers who stalked neighborhood streets looking for treasures. Two with large sales were the Crimson Guard from Bloomingtondale High School and Beta Sigma Phi, a service sorority. The 80-year-old sorority raises money each year for local charities like A Kids' Place and Campo YMCA.

Sponsored by the Bloomingtondale Homeowners Association, which provides the signage and advertising for the community, the committee thanks all buyers and sellers for making this event an overwhelming success. The BHA asks that participants provide constructive feedback to bloomingtondale.homeowners@gmail.com.



Waving in welcome, Vicky Visca laughed and said, "Please stop, buy my stuff. I've got to get rid of it!"



One of the more unusual items for sale was a large sailfish. Pointing to the fish, resident Keith Fredriksen said, "I caught this myself."



"I want to save up for college and a mission when I grow up. And I want to go to girl's camp this year," said Emma Skousen of her garage sale goals. She sold baked goods and potholders.



Signs, like this one, by residents drew in the curious and amused buyer.



Bloomingtondale High School's Crimson Guard gathered to raise money for their school. Guard members: Alyssa Bratz, Bethany Gallagher, Kayla McDermott, Jordyn Fisher, and Yulanda Minnifield.



Michael Schroeder, a BSHS junior, offered donuts and drinks to help support Relay for Life while his parents and friends had their own garage sale.



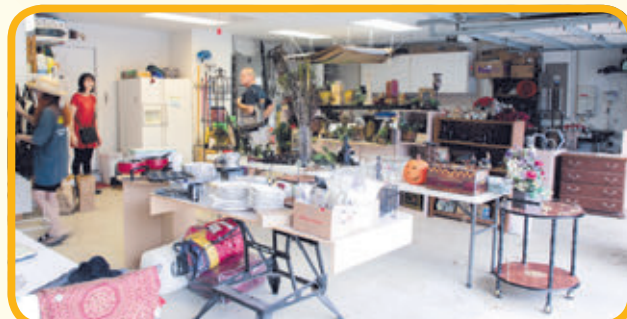
SOLD! This is what every seller was hoping to see during the community garage sale held Feb. 25. Seller Marietta Eakle said, "I found that appliances are a big seller at sales. Plus, when people come to look at them, they buy other things." Eakle sold multiple appliances within the first hour of the sale.



Budding entrepreneur Ian Hales shows off his loot from selling his extra toys. Mom Michelle Hales noted that just about everyone who stopped at their sale bought something.



Hungry buyers were in for a treat at Terance and Angela Harvey's sale. Daughter, Bryce, sold 28 boxes of Girl Scout cookies by 10 a.m. Shopping is "hungry" business.



People wanting to hold a successful garage sale could take a few pointers from Lori Fredriksen. A neat, orderly and well-organized garage sale results in higher sales. "Everything goes," said Lori, and "whatever is leftover goes to Goodwill."



Mega sales, where several homeowners sold together, were highly successful at last weekend's community garage sale. Large sales attracted more buyers and were a good way to spend time with friends. This mega sale was held at the home of Scott Potvin in Bloomingtondale East.



Aaron and Jody McIntosh decided it was time to part with their kid's Jump-O-Lene complete with about 100 balls to chase all over the new owner's house.



Daniel and Christina Brennick's children helped sell their toys at the garage sale. Pictured are smiling JV, shy Catie, pretty in pink Danielle, and skateboarding Audrey.



Heather and Edward Maggio, in Bloomingtondale West, enjoyed a steady stream of buyers at their sale.

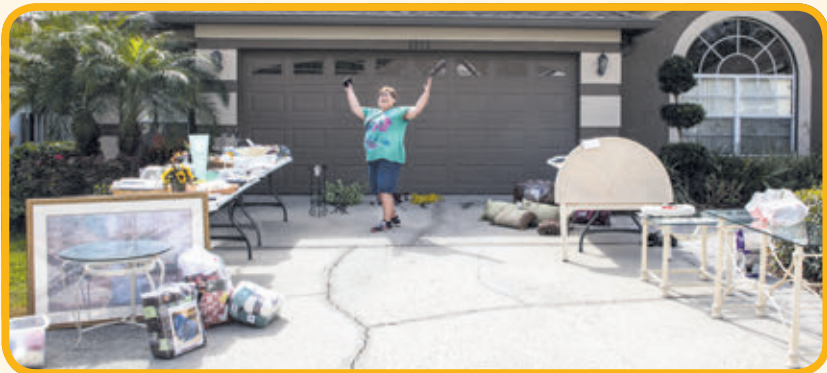
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Golf for Kids Classic Comes to Bloomingdale

By Wendy Knipp

The Bloomingdale Golfers Club will host the 2017 Golf for Kids Classic fundraiser on Friday, April 28 from 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Presented by The Epilepsy Services Foundation (ESF) and the National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors (NAIFA), the event assists over 16,000 children in the Tampa Bay area suffering from epilepsy.

ESF, a non-profit, helps children with epilepsy and their families lead more normal lives. NAIFA, also a non-profit association, represents insurance professionals and is dedicated to charitable causes. For 29 years, NAIFA and ESF have worked together to raise approximately \$10-15,000 annually.

This year's fundraising effort will fund 25 scholarships for children to attend Camp Boggy Creek in Eustis, FL. This is a medically supervised camp cofounded by General H. Norman Schwarzkopf and Paul Newman.

Thomas Orth is the Executive Director of ESF and he says, "You want to give these kids an opportunity that any other kid could have, but it has to be a medically supervised situation so that we can keep the kids safe and they can have a good time." Money raised will also fund family retreats at The Rotary's Camp Florida in Brandon, Deliver the Dream in Haines City, and Camp Boggy Creek.



Boggy Creek allows children with epilepsy to have a normal camp experience. Photo: Epilepsy Services Foundation, Inc.

NAIFA and ESF are excited to have this annual event here in Bloomingdale. Thomas Brophy is a local resident and the Vice President of NAIFA Tampa. He says, "It's our first time at Bloomingdale and we'd really like to make it a success so people will want to come back next year and the year after."

Golfers, Sponsors, and Donors who are interested can visit <http://epilepsysf.org/golf-for-kids>. You may also contact Thomas Orth at 813-374-8907. Bloomingdale Golfers Club is located at 4113 Great Golfers Place, Valrico, FL 33596.



Each year, NAIFA Tampa and ESF host a golf charity event to raise money for children with epilepsy. Photo: NAIFA Tampa

Happenings Around Our Community

Campo YMCA Offers Free "Safety Around Water" Lessons Provided By Tampa YMCA

Campo YMCA is offering free "Safety Around Water" lessons to coincide with Hillsborough County Public Schools spring break. This annual program comes on the heels of new data showing the drowning rate among county children, up to age 6, was reduced by 50 percent in 2016.



"71 percent of the world is water and kids are 100 percent curious," says Association Aquatics Experience Executive Amanda Walker. "The Tampa YMCA believes a child's safety in and around water should never be left to chance. We're committed to providing the free "Safety Around Water" program annually in the spring to help keep kids stay safe at the beach, pool, lake and while boating."

"Safety Around Water" is open to beginners and non-swimmers, ages 3-12 years. During the free 4-day course, certified instructors teach children a sequenced set of skills that will reduce the risk of drowning and give them confidence in and around water.

YMCA membership is NOT required; however, pre-registration is required due to limited space. Participants must be present on the first day of class and bring their own swimsuit and towel. Classes take place Mon., March 13 – Thurs., March 16. For information, contact Campo Family YMCA at 813-684-1371.

Natures Way is not Just for Joggers, Walkers and Dogs!



Photo: Susan DeLuca

This bench on Nature's Way provides Bloomingdale couple Exiquio Rodriguez and Isabel Armeira with the perfect spot to talk, rest and read THE newspaper – The Bloomingdale Gazette, of course.

Michigan

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



Bending from the hips...

By J.D. Carino (Bloomington CC campus)

When we say you need to bend over to two o'clock or 45 degrees, how you bend over is critical to an efficient swing. By efficient, I mean a consistent and pain free swing getting your club head back to the ball.

Most amateurs bend from the waist (stomach-blue line) which causes your back to round out. Bending from your hips (shown by the red line) will cause your belt line to angle upwards (45 degrees) and enable you to have a straight or flat back (yellow line).

When your posture is aligned correctly, this allows your body to rotate around your spine more efficiently and pain free. This will help you play through 18 holes of golf without popping Aleve on the back nine.



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



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Four-year-old Gracie the Chihuahua looks forward to Wednesdays. That is the day Gracie’s owner and Bloomingdale resident Nancy Sain takes her to visit the Bloomingdale Adult Day Service Center. At the center, the pint-size pup provides cuddles and wet kisses to seniors.

Gracie is a tail-wagging member of Project PUP, Pets Uplifting People. The group is a nonprofit organization of approximately 400 volunteers in the Tampa Bay area. They have been providing pet visits to health-care facilities since 1984. Most of the visiting pets are dogs, but there are a few friendly cats and even a bunny.

Last October, Sain and Gracie went through the screening process to make sure the Chihuahua was a fit based on her temperament and behavior. Dogs must also be examined by a veterinarian and have an updated health certificate on file.

For 105-year-old Iva Bell, Gracie is a dear friend. Said Bell, “I love Gracie, and Gracie loves me.” Bell is just one of a group of seniors who attend the Adult Service Center, located at the Bloomingdale West Recreation Center. The center offers health, social, supportive, and therapeutic services for functionally-impaired senior adults.

Center Manager Ester Calimag described Gracie as the “best medicine” for the seniors who attend on Wednesdays. “You can see the warmth they feel for her,” said Calimag.

For Sain, it is also a heartwarming experience to provide comfort to the seniors. She adds, “Gracie gets so excited to see them!”

The Bloomingdale Adult Day Service Center is run by the Hillsborough County Department of Aging Services, and is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., except for holidays. If interested in volunteering, call 813-272-5250.

If interested in volunteering with Project PUP, visit www.projectpup.net or call 727-497-3005.



At 105 years young, dog lover Iva Bell looks forward to her visits with Gracie every Wednesday at the Bloomingdale Adult Day Service Center located at the Bloomingdale West Recreation Center.



Gracie is a 4-year-old Chihuahua who, along with her person, Nancy Sain, loves cuddling with seniors as a volunteer with Project PUP, Pets Uplifting People. Gracie and Sain are Bloomingdale residents.



Bloomingdale resident Nancy Sain and her Chihuahua Gracie are partners in bringing comfort and joy to senior citizens through Project PUP, Pets Uplifting People.

The Florida Aquarium: Take a Splash on the Wild Side

By Natalia Langone, Student Reporter

The Florida Aquarium is a great place to visit for people of all ages. There are over 20,000 creatures there including seahorses, otters, sea turtles, and penguins. The aquarium's mission statement is "to entertain, educate and inspire stewardships about the natural environment."

There are many programs for kids and schools often take educational field trips to the aquarium. Maggie Mootispaw, a student on a field trip from West Elementary School, visited the Florida Aquarium for the first time. She said, "The sea turtles are my favorite animal here."

At the Aquarium, attractions are not just water-focused. There are wetlands trails and a journey to Madagascar. The wetland trails consist of animals such as alligators, river otters, and pythons. The Madagascar exhibition has lovely ring-tailed Lemurs and hissing cockroaches!

Water lovers will enjoy the coral reef gallery, stingray beach and ocean commotion. In the coral reef gallery, you will find many amazing fish and the always crowd-pleasing shark residents. Stingray beach is one of the most popular attractions as visitors can have the unique experience of touching rays in the tank.

Looking for the unusual? Eric Hovland, an associate animal curator, said, "In addition to the Leafy Sea Dragon, Polka-Dot Bat Fish are one of the most exotic fish there. They walk about the sea floor using their modified fins as feet."

Shows are ongoing throughout the day in different locales. Shark feeding time is a show not to be missed. And finally, if it's a hot summer day, younger kids can enjoy a "splash pad" outside.

The aquarium is located at 701 Channelside Dr. in Tampa. For information, call 813-273-4000 or visit the website at <http://www.flaquarium.org/>.



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Photos Courtesy of the Florida Aquarium

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...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.

Garden in a Terrarium...Small Wonders

By Ramona Pettigrew and Gwen Graverson



Get a fresh view of nature with a terrarium. Terrarium gardening simply means growing plants in a glass container either closed or open. Terrariums create a snug self-containing environment for small plants such as ferns, strawberry begonias, pilea and mosses. Best of all, the plants flourish under glass with little care.

These charming plantscapes will be the smallest and simplest garden you will ever care for. When a garden is enclosed in glass, condensation forms, water droplets flow down into the soil, reducing the need to water. With- When a garden is enclosed in glass, condensation forms and water droplets flow down into the soil reducing the need to water.

Choose dwarf plants that will tolerate high moisture, and low light. Glass container styles range from closed (as mentioned above, or one with a lid) to open; from small fish bowls to large fish tanks. Note: The opening should be large enough to put your hand in to plant your garden. One such terrarium is a glass cloche (enclosed terrarium).

First, select a container and decide if it will be open or closed. Then, look for plants at your local nursery or even in your backyard. A few great choices are ferns, aloe vera, snake plants (also known as mother-in-law's tongue) or possibly spineless prickly pear cactus.

Second, prepare your container for planting. Add an inch of rocks or gravel at the bottom, and then add a thin layer of charcoal to help keep your garden fresh and free from mold. Next, add potting soil and, depending on the garden theme, you may need specific soil, such as cactus potting soil for cacti or succulent plants. You can also find potting soil recipes online. Ferns and mosses do well in regular potting soil.

After adding the soil, the glass container should be about a third full. Start putting the plants in with the largest one first for positioning and providing room for others. Don't fret about empty spaces, add a small piece of driftwood or branch to your glass garden.

Finally, step back and enjoy your small wonder.

There are pros and cons regarding all phases of terrarium gardening from choosing the right plants to watering. Here's where experimenting and trial and error comes into play. Pinterest.com has quite a few "how-to" examples for air plant terrariums, and the VGC has posted an interesting article on a nearly 60-year-old terrarium as well as a "how to" video on their FB page.



Workshop: Growing Great Fruit Trees / March 18 / 8 a.m. / Kerby's Nursery / 2311 S. Parsons Avenue, Seffner / There are so many amazing fruit trees that can be grown in central Florida. At this workshop, we'll give you our best tips and tricks for growing and caring for fruit trees. We'll also talk about all the amazing varieties available in our area. For information, call 813-685-3265.



UF/IFAS Extension

The Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Plant Guide will help you find the right plant for the right place anytime, anywhere. Features: Over 400 Florida-Friendly plants, with detailed information on light, soil, and water requirements. You will also find information on disease and pest problems as well as Florida native status. Plant characteristics such as shape, color, and size are included to help you design an attractive garden. This database has over 400 beautiful color photographs of Florida-Friendly trees, shrubs, palms, groundcovers, vines, ferns, annuals, perennials, and ornamental grasses. Developed by Horticultural Experts, for up-to-date, science-based information from a database developed by the UF/IFAS horticulture and landscape design experts.

Available for mobile and web...this mobile web application works on any device that has a web-enabled browser: iPhone, Android, and Windows phones, tablet devices, and Window or Mac computers. To register: <https://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/Account/Register>. Note: There is a yearly subscription fee of \$1.99.



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 Bloomingdale West.



Why Do I Listen to Other People?

Why is it that my attention span and obedience rise in direct proportion to how stupid I look following other people's advice? Suggest I go back to school for a few refresher courses and I'm deaf. Hint I might do well to lose a few pounds and I'm in a coma. But drop a whisper that I should shave my head and paint my scalp purple and I will probably not only give it serious consideration, but make inquiries into the type of razor needed to accomplish the task.

I know for a fact that this personality quirk began many years ago. I started college as a well-scrubbed, fresh-faced innocent attired in conservative sweaters, skirts and loafers. A week later, at the insistence of my more cosmopolitan friends, I was shuffling around barefoot, in torn jeans, fatigue shirts, rows of wooden beads and a moth-eaten pea coat. I looked like a Caribbean Army-Navy Surplus Store had thrown up on me.

During this same ill-fated period, my advisors informed me that, while my wardrobe was passing muster, I still looked much too healthy. The makeup had to go, except, of course, for black eyeliner, artfully applied with a trowel, navy blue mascara and white lipstick. This "look" would be highlighted by bangs, ideally bangs whose length would be determined by a vision test: if I could pass one, they were too short. The total effect was that of a myopic Shih Tzu zombie. Charming. Just charming.

A few years later, I got forcibly swept away in new-found political fervor. Caught up in

my associates' zealotism, my not-insignificant energies were poured into campaigning for our favorite presidential candidate. Armed with pamphlets, placards and youthful steam, my cohorts and I collared complete strangers and ranted about "honesty, integrity and peace in our time." We awaited election results in breathless anticipation and, as they rolled in, our excitement rose to biblical proportions. And then, HOT DOG! Our boy was in! Of course, at the time, Watergate was a building no one had ever heard of and "illegal tapping" was stealing beer from kegs at the local pub. Nice to know my luck was still holding.

I lived fairly quietly after that one and thought I'd overcome this self-destructive tendency to give my undivided attention to idiots. Until about a month ago when a little voice, which happened to be attached to my daughter's mouth, whispered, "You know, Mom, you'd look much younger if you did something with your hair."

"Really? Younger, you say?"

"Really. You need something with some body. Personality. Curl and life."

Personality! Body! Curl and life! That's the ticket! So I had my hair chopped, permed, treated, colored and tortured back to life. How does it look, you ask? Leapin' Lizards and Arf. The legend lives on.



Wanted: A Forever Home and Family

Hillsborough County's Pet Resource Center has the Right Pet for You

Hillsborough County's Pet Resource Center (PRC), the county's animal shelter has many cats and dogs looking for their "forever" homes. At your county shelter, dogs and cats are surprisingly affordable – at one location – open seven days a week. Each comes fully vetted with a complement of services (adding up to a savings of hundreds of dollars). While some fees may apply, PRC adoption packages can save "prospective parents" anywhere from \$250 - \$400.

The PRC, located at 440 N. Falkenburg Rd., is open daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. View adoptable pets online at HCFLGov.net/Adopt.

Precious



This 3-year-old boy is hoping to get lucky this St. Patrick's Day by finding his fur-ever home (1712555).

Pinkie Pie



This 1-year-old girl wants to find a fur-ever home at the end of the rainbow! (1713729)

Pumpkin

This 10-month-old boy might be named Pumpkin, but St. Patrick's Day is still one of his favorite holidays! (1713525)



Provided By The Pet Resource Center



The PRC's First Saturday Celebration is today from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. This month, the Hillsborough County Pet Resource Center is celebrating St. Patrick's Day by encouraging pet lovers to "take home a new friend worth more than a pot of gold!" All ready-to-go pets will be available for a \$20 adoption fee throughout the month of March, and today's First Saturday Celebration will feature vendors, live music and adoptable pets. The \$20 adoption fee includes spaying/neutering, microchipping, vaccination against rabies, and a Hillsborough County license.

For information, call (813) 744-5660 or visit HillsboroughCounty.org/Pets



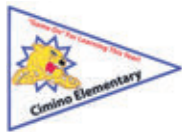


MARCH 13-17 - SPRING BREAK



ALAFIA ALLIGATOR ALLEY

March 10 – End of 3rd Grading Period
March 22 – Chili's Spirit Night
March 31 – All Pro Dad's, 7 a.m., Media Center



CIMINO COUGAR CENTRAL

March 10 – End of 3rd Grading Period
March 10 – Field Day, All day event of fun and games
March 24 – All Pro Dad's, 7 a.m., Multi-Purpose Room



BURNS BRUINS BANTER

March 10 – End of 3rd Grading Period
March 20 – Try outs for Volleyball (girls) and Flag Football (boys) begin. All athletic documentation is due in its entirety no later than Friday, March 10. For information, contact Steve Quiggle, Game Manager at Steven.Quiggle@sdhc.k12.fl.us.

Put Your Name in Lights!

Celebrate your special occasion or achievement with a personal "Name in Lights" message on the Burns electronic marquee. Price is \$15 and limited to five messages per day. For information, contact Larissa Bursa at ladybugbursa@yahoo.com or 813-653-9165.



BLOOMINGDALE HIGH BULL BUSINESS

March 6 – Boys/Girls Lacrosse @ Freedom, 5 p.m.
March 7 – Baseball/Softball @ Plant City, 7 p.m.
March 8 – Boys/Girls Lacrosse vs Durant, 5 p.m.
March 9 – Boys/Girls Lacrosse vs Alonso, 5 p.m.
March 9 – Baseball/Softball vs Riverview, 7 p.m.
March 10 – End of 3rd Grading Period
March 21 – Flag Football @ Alonso, 7 p.m.
March 21 – Baseball/Softball @ Plant, 7 p.m.
March 22 – Boys Lacrosse @ Tampa Prep, 7 p.m.
March 23 – Boys/Girls Lacrosse @ TBT, 5 p.m.
March 23 – Flag Football vs Riverview, 6:15 p.m.
March 23 – Baseball/Softball vs East Bay, 7 p.m.
March 24 – Flag Football Tournament, 4 p.m.
March 24 – Dodge Ball, Humane Society, 4 p.m. in the Gym

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

March 24 – Improv Show, 7 p.m. in the Auditorium
March 25 – Flag Football Tournament, 9:30 a.m.
March 26 – Flag Football @ Strawberry Crest, 6:15 p.m.
March 28 – Girls Lacrosse @ Berkley Prep, 6 p.m.
March 28 – Baseball/Softball @ Durant, 7 p.m.
March 29 – Bloomingdale's Got Talent, 6:30 p.m.
March 30 – Boys/Girls Lacrosse @ Robinson, 5 p.m.
March 30 – Melissa Snively Meeting, 6 p.m., Media Center
March 31 – Baseball/Softball vs Gaither, 7 p.m.

BULL BRIEFS



University of Florida Summer Programs

The University of Florida is currently accepting applications for their summer programs for high school students. Summer programs cover an array of topics from biomedical research to humanities. Costs range from \$350 to \$2,000 depending on the program, and need based scholarships are available. Applications for the summer program are due March 17. For information, visit www.cpet.ufl.edu.



HCC Career Quest 2017

Hillsborough Community College's Career Quest is Friday, March 24. This field trip is open to seniors who are interested in pursuing a career program (A.S. Degree) at HCC in the fall. Interested students should stop by the College and Career office to pick up a permission slip. Space is limited, so don't delay!



Bloomingdale Cal Ripken Babe Ruth Baseball and Softball Spring Break Camp / Bloomingdale Sports Complex / Culbreath Rd / March 13-17, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. / The camp will consist of skill training, fun drills and instructional games. Some areas of concentration are speed enhancement, arm strengthening and fundamental hitting. Kids will also receive a Pro Evaluation Sheet. Costs: \$150 for the week or \$40 per day. Ages: 5-12.

Bring gear, drinks, snacks and lunch. Register by calling 561-951-6141.

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Photos: Deidre Morgan

Special Olympics Motto: "Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

Bloomingtondale's Charley Harris Stadium was the backdrop for a day of fun and games as Bloomingtondale High School hosted the second Annual IncrediBull Games on Feb. 17. Spearheaded by Donna Hart, the ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) teacher, Hart pushed to have the games moved to BSHS last year when she noted that many Bloomingtondale athletes faced difficulties attending the event formerly held at Gaither High School.

This year's Special Olympic Field Day featured over 200 athletes, more than doubling last year's total. From the opening to closing ceremonies, competition was fierce as athletes lived up to the Special Olympics motto, "Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

An event like this takes the full support of school and community partners. Each partner walked student athletes to each field event and to the various activities around the stadium. Partners included: ten High Schools (Bloomingtondale, Burns, Durant, East Bay, Guinta, Lennard, Newsome, Plant City, Randall and Willis Peters) and several school clubs Student Government, National Honor Society, Beta Club, Best Buddies, AVID, girls softball and soccer, Freshman and Sophomore Steering, Bakers of Bloomingtondale and GSA (Gay-Straight Alliance).

The Knights of Columbus sent volunteers and made a significant donation, while TECO provided T-shirts for every athlete. The BSHS Culinary Department provided box lunches and various businesses in the area donated water. Rounding out the volunteer roster was a large contingent of BSHS teachers, students and staff. If the smiles and happy faces of athletes and volunteers were any indication, it was truly an IncrediBull day.



Bloomingtondale alumni, Class of 2014, Tres Whitlock (right) kept the crowd pumped up with his music and DJ skills. His buddy for the day was 2016 Strawberry Crest graduate Tyler Harmon.



Devin Amerson of Durant HS crosses the finish line in the 100-meter dash.



Bloomingtondale's William Moses is ready to run as he waits his turn to take the track.

BSHS Principal Sue Burkett shares a Special Olympics moment with Thalia Arbelaez, a 23-year-old with Downs Syndrome. Arbelaez teaches Zumba twice a week for the Special Olympics Florida Healthy Community. Also pictured are her parents Alicia and Arbey Arbelaez and Donna Hart, a BSHS Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) teacher.





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Boys and Girls Lacrosse Teams “Scoop” Doubleheader

Brief: Deidre Morgan

Photos: Dea Knapp

Bloomington High’s Boys and Girls Lacrosse teams took on Tampa Bay Tech on Feb. 21 and both teams came out convincingly on top. The boys won 18-1 while the girls came away with a 19 -5 win. Coaches Matt Borowski (boys) and Sarah Ginn (girls) are looking forward to an awesome season. Next at home, the Bulls face off against Durant on March 8.



Senior Captain Evan Knapp takes on a TBT defender with support from #18 Sam Skinner, #27 Evan Hydock and #17 Joel Papineau.



Junior Goalie Madison Bertaut makes the save with help from #27 Nicole Valencia and #19 Claire Wendt.



BSHS NHS Inducts New members

Submitted By Debra Brant, NHS Adviser



The National Honor Society of Bloomington High School inducted 120 new members during their annual Candlelight Induction ceremony on Jan. 19. Members were selected based on evidence of exemplary scholarship, leadership, service and character. The induction brings the chapter membership to 204 members.

Inducting officers: President Sam Steck, Vice-President Alexis Shepard, Secretary Katarina Safko, Treasurer Jacob Harding, Public Relations Abigail Hernandez, and Sargent-at-Arms Ryan Pena, officiated. Also assisting were junior officers Claire Eberhart and Alysea Jackson. Faculty Advisor is Mrs. Debra Brant.



Photo: BSHS NHS



USS Alafia Serves Military Families

By Wendy Knipp

Photo: Wendy Knipp



Alafia Elementary School is bursting at the seams with military pride. Not only do they have an exclusive club, USS Alafia, for students of military families, but they also educate their students about our local heroes. This year, the school and USS Alafia have chosen to support Homes for Our Troops, a non-profit, that builds custom adaptive homes for veterans with life-altering injuries.

The driving force behind USS Alafia is Andrea Carver, the school's guidance counselor. 15 years ago, she noticed an influx of students with one or both parents in the military. These students have challenges that are unique to military families – frequent moves, adjusting to new schools, and the deployments of one or both parents. Carver saw an opportunity to form a club that could meet those needs and thus USS Alafia was born. Today, USS Alafia has 60 members.

Addison Moore, a USS Alafia member, has a deeply personal connection to this year's fundraising effort. Her dad, Army Sgt. Carl W. Moore, III, was injured in Afghanistan and is partially paralyzed and wheelchair bound.

Their family is in the process of having a home built through Homes for Our Troops. The home will be adapted to meet the needs of Sgt. Moore including wider doorframes, bigger rooms, safety rails, and lower cabinets and cooking surfaces in the kitchen.

Addison is very excited to have a modified kitchen for her dad because, "He makes the best scrambled eggs."

Multiple fundraisers will be held to help with the cost of this home. One of the first fundraisers was yesterday at Alafia Elementary School's Spring Fling where the goal was to raise \$2,500.

To learn more or to make a donation, visit www.hfotusa.org/Moore or contact Andrea Carver at 813-744-8190.



These members of USS Alafia are on the front lines raising money for Homes for Our Troops. Back row, left to right - Andrea Carver and Heather Moore. Front row, left to right - Ramiyah Patton, Owen West, and Addison Moore.



Money is being raised for local resident Army Sgt. Carl Moore, III to receive a new home through Homes For Our Troops. Photo: Homes for Our Troops



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