



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BLOOMINGDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION SINCE 1980

THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

VOLUME XXXVII 🌿 ISSUE 4 🌿 APRIL 2017 🌿 www.BloomingtondaleHOA.com

Duckling Rescue!

Good News Stories are Important, Too!
Read all about it on p. 9.

Michael and Isabella Wright spearheaded a duckling rescue effort last month along Natures Way.



Photo: Natalia Langone

This Month



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Recognition Award

Best Communications
Newsletter Category

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me." *Chinese Proverb*



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

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Billy Hightower

Bobbi Ferraro

Beth Smedley

Joanie Wilson

Charlie Woodcock

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Vice President: *Daniel Berkowitz*

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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



Robert & Andrea Mason 405 Bayfield Drive, Brandon, FL 33511 (Bloomingdale Estates)

Bloomingdale Real Estate Update

(Editor's Note: Realtor Ronnie McLaughlin has lived in Bloomingdale for six years with her husband and two children. She is also active in the Bloomingdale High School PTSA and Girl Scouts.)

How to make your neighbors' yards look better

I remember pulling into our driveway on closing day of our new Bloomingdale home. The grass was sparse and the big flower gardens filled with Birds of Paradise and Dracaemus plants had been long forgotten. The previous owners kept a beautiful home, but the lawn was not a priority for them or for some of our neighbors.

When the seasons were right, we hired a company to install sod and started to experiment with which plants worked well in our Florida gardens. And guess what! At least five of our amazing neighbors laid sod and mulched their gardens soon after! Our pretty tree-lined street became even prettier. I've read about this "phenomenon" and have seen this work many times in other neighborhoods. Put effort into your own curb appeal and some of your neighbors will follow suit.



By Ronnie McLaughlin

The Chadderton Real Estate Group
Keller Williams Realty

813-601-5659

ronniemclaughlin@kw.com
www.chaddertongroup.com

Another local expert is Rolando, the owner of Kiwi Tropical Plants and Nursery on the corner of Erindale and Lithia Pinecrest Roads. Right now, he has a fantastic selection of Geraniums, colorful, leafy Coleus plants, hanging baskets, Palm trees, Birds of Paradise and more.

So while improving your own landscape, your neighbors may do the same. Not only will we improve our curb appeal, but also we will increase our home values at the same time!

Neighborhood Snapshot - Bloomingdale Trace

Bloomingdale Trace located along Natures Way across from the Bloomingdale Golf Club is comprised of 128 homes built between 1986 and 1989. One additional property was completed in 1994. There is a mix of mostly three and four bedroom homes located on Carrie Wood Drive, Ellenville Place, Havenstone Way, Lorenwood Drive and a section on Monte Lake Drive. Twenty-five of the homes have a pond view. The average sales price over the past year was \$235,000 or \$105.22 per square foot. Of the five homes sold last year, all had four bedrooms and four of the five had pools. There is currently one active listing priced at \$220,000 or \$111.68 per square foot.

**MLS statistics were based on rough property lines for individual neighborhoods and included homes sold March 19, 2016 – March 19, 2017. Sales not entered into MLS did not count in these statistics.*



Photo: Ronnie McLaughlin

A rainbow of Geraniums are available at Kiwi Tropical Plants and Nursery.

Another good reason to work on your landscape this spring – a Virginia Tech study found home values can increase 5.5 - 12.7 percent with better landscaping. The study also found that larger plants and a diversity of plant types work best.

Overwhelmed by your options? There are many great local resources where you can talk to experts about plants. Stop in to see Julia at the Fresh Market floral department. Julia has been in the floral business for 37 years and is passionate about plants. This month, she will have lots of tulips, daffodils, and Kalanchoes from which to choose.



BHA COMMUNITY CORNER



DON'T FORGET TO LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!

Membership Drive Slows; BHA Asks for Support

Following the best-ever community clean-up (see pp.12-13), the BHA expected an upswing in resident membership – this did not happen. For the first time ever, membership totals are behind previous years. The board appeals to all residents to join the Association now.

Your membership helps the BHA to provide services and programs that benefit residents and help keep the community a great place to live. The Association attends monthly county meetings and advocates on behalf of the entire community. In addition, they work weekly with county code enforcement to improve neighborhood standards and keep property values from slipping.

Programs like the clean-up, this newspaper, garage sale and fall festival would not be possible without your support. Should membership continue to lag, a planned second clean-up tentatively planned for September may not happen.

Your \$35 membership fees are returned 100 percent to the community. And, every member and dollar matter.

Join today; help the Association help the community. 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, 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, April 10, 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, April 11, 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, April 20, 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

MARCH BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS AND OTHER BOARD NEWS

March was a busy month for the Association. On March 4, the community clean-up (see pp.12-13) took place followed by the March 13 board meeting and March 18 board retreat. In addition, board members attended two county meetings about development and transportation issues affecting the community and the HCSO Bloomingdale Area Community Council Meeting.

At the board meeting, an Oakcrest resident attended to discuss parking and deed restrictions in non-mandated neighborhoods. After providing background information to the resident, the board voted to add a link to the Florida statutes governing HOAs on the website. Committee chairs provided updates on recent and upcoming events specifically, the garage sale, clean-up and upcoming scholarship selection.

At the five-hour Saturday retreat, the board updated and made amendments to the 2015 By-Laws and voted to update the circa 1980 Articles of Incorporation to reflect current changes. Discussion to include several outlying neighborhoods in the Association met with positive response. The initiative requires study and fact-finding. Information will be released when known. The Fall Festival Chair and Co-chair Suzy Watts and Bobbi Ferraro delivered a planning update and preliminary budget. To contact the committee, email bhafallfest@gmail.com.

THE SCHOLARSHIP SELECTION PROCESS HAS BEGUN!

At the May board meeting, the winner of the \$2,000 scholarship will be announced. Stay tuned!

CORRECTION!

PHOTOS FROM LAST MONTH'S GAZETTE ATTRIBUTED TO THE FLORIDA AQUARIUM WERE ACTUALLY THOSE OF STUDENT REPORTER NATALIA LANGONE. WE REGRET THE ERROR.



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

TODAY!

Paint the Town 5K Color Run / April 1 / 7 a.m. Registration; 8 a.m. Race / Hillsborough County Fairgrounds / 215 Sydney Washer Road, Dover / Center Place's 33rd Annual Patron Event and Membership Drive is a chipped, timed event and fun for the entire family. Ribbons and prizes awarded to the three fastest time for Men, Women, and Children.

Field of Honor Ceremony / April 1 / 11 a.m. / Veterans Memorial Park / 3602 U.S. Highway 301 N., Tampa / The quarterly event honors those who made the supreme sacrifice in January, February, and March of 2017 while engaged in our nation's current War on Terror. Several Gold Star family members will attend. Also included: Missing Man Formation flyover, Rifle salute and taps, and the Sickles High School Air Force JROTC Color Guard. For information, call 813-744-5502, or Hillsborough County's Veterans Services at 813-246-3170.



Pet Health Awareness Month

April 1
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Hillsborough County's Pet Resource Center
440 N. Falkenburg Road in Tampa

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Little Rookies Start! / Mondays, April 3-May 8 / 10-10:45 a.m. / Campo Family YMCA / 3414 Culbreath Road, Valrico / A 6-week parent-child program designed to give your child (ages 2-4) a head start into the world of sports. Your child will learn the basics of baseball, basketball, and soccer in a non-competitive environment. Sign up at the Welcome Center or online at <https://apm.activecommunities.com/tampaymca>. Parent participation required. Everywhere members: \$30; Here members: \$45; \$65 for non-members.



The Lighthouse Center for Creative Learning Cocktails & Country Fundraiser / April 7 / 6:30-10 p.m. / Bloomingdale Golfers Club / 4113 Great Golfers Place, Valrico / The Lighthouse Center for Creative Learning presents Cocktails & Country, a fundraiser benefitting the school. Enjoy an evening of food, 50/50 raffles and silent auction. Pre-sale tickets are \$30 and \$40 at the door. Dress is casual. For information, call 813-655-6505.

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 displays of history, customs, fun facts, and crafts delight attendees. Seeking country-specific entertainment at this free community event. For information, call Marlena Beamer at 813-786-2848.



40th Brandon Area Community Picnic and Grand Reunion / April 8 / 11 a.m. / Brandon Elks Lodge, 800 Centennial Lodge Drive, Brandon / Celebrating long-time (20 years or more) local area residents and any Brandon High School alumni and faculty, with great home-made food and fellowship, presentation of Hall of Fame awards, and live music. This event is free, but attendees are asked to bring a covered dish to share for the buffet; paper goods and drinks provided.

"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 Hillsborough County Department of Aging Services is making this training available to caregivers, the community, and staff. For information or to sign up, 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 at Kerby's 8th annual Easter Egg Hunt. Starting right at 10 a.m., be ready to hunt and see how many Easter Eggs you can find hidden among the beautiful flowers. For information, call 813-685-3265.

Community Service Forum / April 19 / 6-8 p.m. / Newsome High School/ 16550 FishHawk Blvd., Lithia / Area middle and high school students in need of community service hours have the opportunity to meet over 25 local charities at this free event sponsored by The Community Roundtable. For information, call 813-661-4350.

Taste of Brandon / April 22 / Noon-6 p.m. / Hillsborough County Fairgrounds / Highway 60 East of Dover Road, Brandon / Join the Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce for their annual music, food and drink festival. FREE admission and parking is only \$5.

Spring Book Sale / April 22 / 10 a.m.-3 p.m. / Bloomingdale Library / 1906 Bloomingdale Avenue, Valrico / All bookstore items will be marked down and specially priced for inventory reduction on this day only. There is a wide assortment of books (hard cover and paperback), CDs and DVDs at unbelievably low prices. There is a large selection of popular authors like Clancy, Nora Roberts, Grisham, Steele, Macomber and more. All proceeds benefit library programs. For information, call the library at 813-273-3652.



Brandon Ballet Presents Aladdin / April 22 / 7:30 p.m. / USF Theatre 1 / 4202 E. Fowler Avenue, Tampa / Join Brandon Ballet on a magic carpet ride! This rags-to-riches story has something

to offer all ages. Purchase tickets online at www.tututix.com/brandonballet, www.ticketmaster.com or at the door 1-hour prior to the performance. For information, call 813-684-4282.

Declutter and Organize Your Closets on a Budget / April 24 / 6:30-8:30 p.m. / Bloomingdale Library / 1906 Bloomingdale Avenue, Valrico / Kick off Money Smart Week at the Bloomingdale Library with Pam Hopener, professional organizer, as she shares organizational and time management tips on how to become more structured on a tight budget. For information, call 813-273-3652.

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. 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/>.



UPCOMING

Bloomingdale Relay for Life / May 12 to 13 / 6 p.m. / Bloomingdale High School / 1700 Bloomingdale Avenue, Valrico / The American Cancer Society Relay For Life movement symbolizes hope and our shared goal to end a disease that threatens the lives of so many people we love. This is your opportunity to honor cancer survivors, remember those you have lost, and raise funds and awareness to fight back and help end cancer forever. Highlights of the Bloomingdale event include a Survivors Lap, Caretakers Lap, and Luminaria ceremony honoring cancer survivors and those who have been lost. Teams are accepted until the day of the event. For information, visit www.relayforlife/bloomingdalefl.



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The Commissioner's News

By Commissioner Stacy White
Board of County Commissioners, District 4

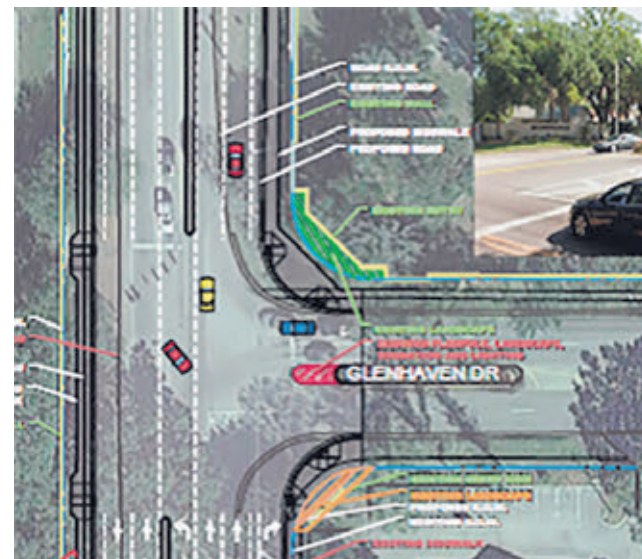


Sidewalk Repairs and More for Bloomingdale

Greetings, Bloomingdale residents. It is my honor to serve as your County Commissioner, and I have some good news to report to you today.

The last time I spoke to you through this forum, I mentioned a meeting that I had participated in with the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District. From this meeting, I was able to direct county staff to look into prioritizing much needed sidewalk repair within the Bloomingdale community. I am excited to announce to you today that this particular project was indeed reprioritized to a higher level, and we are now anticipating the repairs to be complete within a three-year period that would be divided into three phases.

At our March 1 County Commission meeting, the board approved a \$812 million transportation plan. The proposal appropriates \$276 million for road and bridge maintenance, \$127 million for safety related projects, and \$346 million for road congestion relief. Congestion relief includes the widening of Bell Shoals Road. Bell Shoals will be widened to four lanes from just south of the Alafia River to north of Bloomingdale Avenue. This design will also include widening the existing bridge over the Alafia River and improving the traffic signals at Glenhaven Drive, Rosemead Lane, and Bloomingdale Avenue.



Glenhaven Road is the first of four Bloomingdale entryways affected by the widening of Bell Shoals. The project should begin in 2018 with a three-year completion timeline.

Graphic:
Hillsborough County

The construction for the Bell Shoals Widening project will cost \$65 million and is being funded by Newland Communities and Hillsborough County. Construction for this project is expected to begin during the middle of this year, and is anticipated to be completed within thirty-six months from that point.

I am very pleased with the board's approval of these much-needed projects. Please continue to stay tuned as many exciting new projects begin in around the Bloomingdale community, and as always, please feel free to reach out to me at my office anytime you have questions or concerns.

(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 and Chairman of the Board in November 2016. 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.)

Hero Residents Rescue Ducklings

A “Good News” Story

By Natalia Langone, Student Reporter

“In the right place at the right time” – that’s just what Michael Wright and daughter Isabella were as they walked along Nature’s Way last month. While enjoying the day, they became aware of a frantic and very vocal mother duck. When they went to check out her distress, they discovered eight baby ducklings trapped in a sewer – with no way out.

From rescuing wayward turtles to injured baby squirrels, Bloomingdale residents love their wildlife and this situation called for immediate action. They reported the plight of the ducklings and others quickly joined the rescue effort. The good Samaritans included several residents and Hillsborough County worker Justin Adam.

A group rescue effort was quickly underway to bring mother duck and ducklings back together. The harrowing situation involved much coaxing, trapping the ducklings in a bucket one by one, and lifting them to safety. Once rescued, they were covered and kept warm and calm until all were safe. After about two hours of hard work and clever thinking, all ducklings were returned to Mom safe and sound. A happy, but noisy reunion followed.

This “good news” story shows that Bloomingdale is a community of good and caring residents. During the ordeal, many offered support. Thank you to the core group, including county employee Justin Adam, who stopped, got involved and made a difference. And, if these ducks could talk, many grateful “quacked” thanks would be the first word out of their bills.



HC employee Justin Adam helped rescue trapped ducklings in Bloomingdale last month.



Photos: Natalia Langone



Resident efforts reunited eight ducklings with their Mom.

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

By Miriam Leech, BSTD Staff

BELL SHOALS ROAD WIDENING UPDATE

Although construction on the Bell Shoals Road widening project is several months away, and the roadway is not projected to be complete for another 3 years, the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District (BSTD) is working closely with Hillsborough County now to ensure that our Bloomingdale community maintains its signature look and aesthetics.

Board of Trustees President Dave West, along with property manager Rick Pitrowski, have been attending bi-weekly meetings with County officials to discuss the project and give input on decisions affecting Bloomingdale.

Construction will impact all four entranceways to Bloomingdale along Bell Shoals Road, with the Greenhollow Lane entrance experiencing the most change. Plans are in place to replace current entrance landscaping with low-maintenance perennials; no entrance signs will be lost.

Most recently, the County presented options to the BSTD for the medians that will be installed on Bell Shoals as part of the widening. These options include varying levels of maintenance on the part of the BSTD. The Board of Trustees is currently gathering cost estimates for the more decorative median options to determine the best selection for the Bloomingdale community—balancing both budget constraints and the need to protect the appearance of our roadways.

RESIDENT SURVEY

The Bloomingdale Special Taxing District recently completed a survey of the community to sample opinions about community priorities and gain insight into residents’ understanding about the failed increase in property assessment. Overall, 258 residents responded.

BSTD Vice President Tom Leech updated the Board of Trustees at the March 13 Board meeting. Trustees plan to use the survey results to guide the annual budget process, which began March 27. The board also plans a follow-up survey for the fall. See complete survey results at the BSTD website at bloomingdaletaxingdistrict.org.

Here are the results:

- 1. Within Bloomingdale, which of these general areas do you see most in need of attention?
Majority answer: Repair and replacement of failing irrigation systems.
- 2. What do you believe should be the BSTD’s top priority?
Majority answer: Repair and replacement of failing irrigation systems.
- 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?
Majority answer: Support
- 4. If you are inclined to support an increase, please indicate the level of increase you would support.
Majority answer: Increase current level to \$150 per year per household.
- 5. If you do not support an increase, please indicate the reason most closely associated with your decision.
Majority answer: I do not understand how the additional revenue would be used.
- 6. In which Bloomingdale section or subdivision do you reside?
Majority answer: Somerset.

BOARD VACANCY

The BSTD Board of Trustees currently has a vacancy. Anyone interested in becoming a Trustee must be a resident of District, must be a registered voter in Hillsborough County, must attend meetings of the Board of Trustees the second Monday of every month, must maintain high moral and ethical standards in the performance of their duties, and must serve as the official liaison to the homeowners of the District.

If interested, please come to this month’s Board meeting scheduled for Monday, April 10, at 6:30 p.m., at the Bloomingdale Community Offices, 3509 Bell Shoals Road. Call 813-684-6667 if you have any questions or would like more information.

Property management company Merit, Inc., installed brand new American flags throughout the District in March. Old flags were given to Boy Scout Troop 61 for proper disposal.



Photo: Danielle Knight

BLOOMINGDALE
SPECIAL TAXING DISTRICT



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
Russell Jones, Trustee
Mark Vargo, Trustee
Jay Kittle, Trustee

Tax Identity Theft – Protect and Minimize

By Wendy Knipp

In 1789, Benjamin Franklin wrote, "...in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes." Unfortunately, in 2017, it is also certain that you or someone you know has become a victim of tax identity theft.

According to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), identity theft is America's fastest growing crime and in 2014, 2.7 million taxpayers became victims. Tax identity theft occurs when someone uses someone else's social security number (SSN) to file a fraudulent tax return to obtain a refund.

Taxpayers must first protect themselves and then perform damage control.

Protect yourself

Rachid Zahidi, President and CEO of Sentinel Background Checks, has dedicated his career to detecting fraudulent crimes such as money laundering and identity theft. According to Zahidi, there are five simple ways to protect yourself.

First, secure your incoming/outgoing physical mail. Second, shred or lock up any documents that have your personal information on it. Third, file your taxes early. Fourth, when online, make sure your passwords are strong and your anti-virus software is up to date. And finally, if you receive an email or phone call from someone requesting your personal information, don't give it out unless you've verified their identity.

Minimize damages

Victims of tax identity theft should immediately call the IRS at 1-800-908-4490. Specialists will help victims get their return filed and protect their SSN in the future. For victims of any type of identity theft, the Federal Trade Commission has created an easy online resource center at www.identitytheft.gov that creates a customized recovery plan.

For more information on Rachid Zahidi or the services offered by Sentinel Background Checks, (888) 725-2535 or visit www.sbchecks.com.



Photo: Sentinel Screening

Rachid Zahidi of Sentinel Background Checks has some advice on how to keep your private information safe during tax season and year-round.



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654-9292

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For Residents, Spring Cleaning Starts Here



Empty... at 9 a.m.



Resident Sasi Harrigan and Brudy



Volunteer Jeremy (Jones) Santana, BHA board member Mary Galin, and AMVETS representative Clifton Daniels



Volunteers Fallon Gustafson, Rachel Santarlas and BHA Secretary Suzy Watts



Urban E's Justin Howard, Volunteer Mom Michelle Anthony and daughter Leela Walvott



Greg Rabinowitz and Justin Howard are all smiles after a successful e-waste collection.



UrbanErecycling destroyed 47 hard drives onsite.
Photo: Susan DeLuca



Resident Susie McMillan observes the destruction of her computer hard drive by Urban E's Howard.
Photo: Susan DeLuca

At a true “one-stop” shop, hundreds of residents took advantage of the BHA-sponsored community clean-up to begin their spring cleaning efforts. The event was held March 4 at the Parks and Recreation facility off Natures Way.

Calling the event “well-organized and efficient,” residents donated serviceable goods to AMVETS, disposed of medications through Operation Medicine Cabinet (see p. 16), cleared their garages and properties of bulk junk and trash, shredded accumulated household paper and rid themselves of recyclable electronics.

The event, made possible by a grant from the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners and Office of Neighborhood Relations, is a service the BHA has provided to residents for over 12 years. If for this reason alone, support the Association and join. Your support helps the Association keep events like these coming.



Thank you is never enough, but the BHA sincerely thanks all residents and those who made the event possible: volunteers, Urban E Recycling, AMVETS, Legal Shred, Hillsborough County Parks and Recreation, HCSO's Operation Medicine Cabinet Deputies, HC BOCC and Office of Neighborhood Relations, And Republic Services.



Residents Dan and Paula Heaberlin
Photo: Susan DeLuca

Events at Annual Community Clean-Up

Photos, unless otherwise noted: Joy Boisselle

Clean-Up “By the Numbers”

- 27 Volunteers, including high school students, adults, vendors, and the BHA board, worked non-stop from opening to close
- Nearly 100 lbs. of outdated medications collected through HCSO’s Operation Medicine Cabinet
- 47 computers and a total of 2341 lbs. of e-waste collected by Urban E Recycling
- 1,140 lbs paper shredded by Legal Shred
- A floor-to-ceiling truckload of donations to AMVETS
- 10 overflowing commercial roll-off containers provided by Republic Services

The Best Part of our Event... Our Vendors, Volunteers and Residents!



Volunteers Ryan Walvott, Jordan White, Davis Walvott and BHA president George May are ready to off-load a resident’s remodeling debris.



A Resident with volunteers Carl Hallinan, Griffin Hayes, Nick Harris and Jack Bales



Resident Jim Sliepen and Legal Shred’s George Hines



Without Hillsborough County Parks and Recreation’s front-load driver Clayton Weaver’s assistance, this event would simply not happen.



HSCO Deputies Jim Brodie and Jeff Merry with BHA Board Member Billie Hightower at Operation Medicine Cabinet.



Volunteers and Father-Son Dynamic Duo Lonnie (r.) and Jared (Jones) Santana

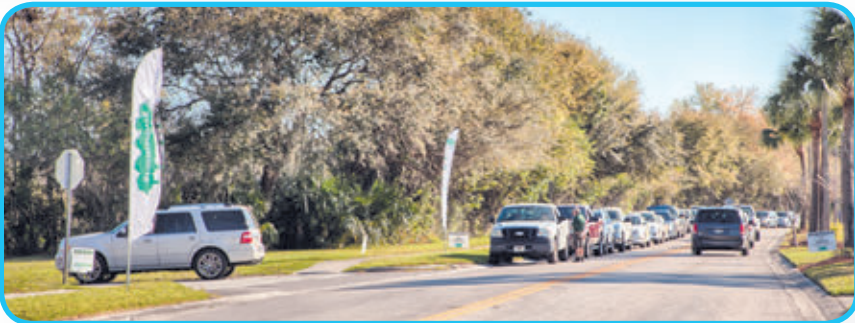


Volunteer Debbie Sandberg



And full... at 1 p.m.

the up begins early
community clean-
y. Many residents
de multiple trips.
oto: Susan DeLuca





Evan DeGraff is a Bloomingdale High School student and Bloomingdale resident with a passion for movies. Each month, he will review a current movie release. He hopes one day to follow in the footsteps of acclaimed movie critics the likes of Siskel and Ebert.

THIS MONTH: BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

The live-action remake of the tale as old as time, both added and kept some of the magic from the story told in 1991. The animated Beauty and the Beast is recognized as one of the best animated films of all time. For many, doing an updated live-action version of a beloved classic would be near impossible. However, Disney has kept its track record of solid movie making with this latest blockbuster. During the movie's opening weekend, box offices receipts totaled over \$170M, a record for March movie releases.

Director Bill Condon of Twilight fame found a way to keep the magic and strong storytelling of the first movie. Although the directing was well done, hands down the best part of this film were standouts Emma Watson as Belle, Dan Stevens as the Beast, Ewan McGregor as Lumière. However, all the performances in my view were absolutely fantastic. My favorite performance was Luke Evans as the villain, Gaston. The original character was more of a chauvinistic fool. Evans', Gaston is more menacing, sinister and definitely crueler.

This film, while not as great as the first, is still a good film that captured the storytelling and magic of the first one. Don't go expecting an exact original or you will be disappointed. With fantastic performances and solid directing, Beauty and the Beast is the family film of the year. I give it 4 out of 5 Roses.





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Boy Scouts Visit Community Sub-Station

Photos: Co-Den Leader Heather Alagood



According to new Community Resource Deputy Jim Brodie, interacting with residents is one of the best parts of the job. Boy Scouts from Pack 61, Den 2, Valrico toured the station last month. Pictured l. to r.: Jacob Ballans, Gaige Ballans, Alec Williamson, Vance Brown, Trent Vietor, Colton Stewart, Jaxson Christiansen, Annalise Ballans and den leader Jacqueline Brown.



Deputy Jim Brodie teaches the fine art of fingerprinting to boy scouts Vance Brown and Jaxson Christiansen.

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SUMMER AND FALL
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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 Feb. 23 and March 21, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office conducted 102 traffic stops in the Bloomingdale and surrounding area known as J04 Zone. This large area includes the Bloomingdale area down to Lithia area.

In the Bloomingdale area, there were six auto burglaries at the Bloomingdale Little League field all on the same date. There was another vehicle burglary at a Bloomingdale residence. There were three residential burglaries in the Bloomingdale area as well. There was one attempt to steal a boat so make sure all of your valuables are secure including anything that is parked in your driveway. There was only one report of criminal mischief this month so this is an improvement.

Remember to watch out for what is happening in your neighborhoods and 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.



BE ON THE LOOKOUT!

We are seeing an increase in vehicle burglaries in the area of the little league baseball fields as well as areas where many vehicles park. Report suspicious activity in these areas.

Don't forget to do your part by not leaving your valuables like wallets and purses in plain sight. This will help keep the thieves at bay. You can also help by occasionally looking at the alerts on the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office website located at www.hcso.tampa.fl.us.

SOME THINGS ARE GREENER IN BLOOMINGDALE...

On March 4, we provided an HCSO Operation Medicine Cabinet as part of a very successful community clean-up. We collected over 100 lbs. of unwanted medicine that will be properly disposed of. Thank you to all who brought your medicine in ensuring that meds didn't end up in the wrong hands, landfills or our waterways.

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 April 20 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.

Crimestoppers Reward Offered for Information about Shooting into Occupied Valrico Residences

Provided via the Public Information Office of Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office - **Information Current at Press Deadline**

Suspects:

Suspect # 1 - tall thin male unknown height wearing hoodie with face covered unknown race

Suspect # 2 - shorter unknown height white male wearing hoodie with face covered.

Details:

On March 24, 2017 at approximately 3:30 a.m., two suspects wearing hoodies with their faces covered knocked on the door of 1107 Mallory Point Dr., Valrico claiming they were the police. The victim observed the suspects and advised she was calling the police. As the suspects were walking away from the residence, the suspects fired multiple gunshots with one round passing through the front window of the residence. The suspects fled the scene in a dark colored smaller four door unknown make vehicle. No one inside the residence was injured.

At approximately 3:36 a.m., a similar incident occurred at 1329 Big Pine Dr. in Valrico with no one injured at that residence.

Detectives believe these incidents are related and are not random acts. Detectives are following up leads.

Anyone with any information is asked to call the HCSO at 247-8200. Anyone with any information regarding the identity and whereabouts of these suspects and who wants to be eligible for a cash reward is asked to call **Crime Stoppers at 1-800-873-TIPS (8477)**, report anonymously online at www.crimestopperstb.com or send a mobile tip using our **P3 Tips Mobile application**, a free download for iPhones, iPads and Droids. You must call Crime Stoppers first to be eligible for a reward.



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Bloomingdale’s Deputy Brodie Enjoys New “Good Guy” Role

By Miriam Leech

Intense – that’s what Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Office (HCSO) Deputy James Brodie may call the last seven years of his law enforcement career. Part of a Street Crimes Unit known as “The Green Team,” his job was anything, but routine. Now, as the new Bloomingdale Community Resource Deputy (CRD), Brodie gets to enjoy a "good guy" role where interacting with residents in a positive, constructive manner is a major part of his day-to-day duties.

Brodie became the new resource deputy on Jan. 2. As part of his transition, he went from no one in the community knowing who he was, to everyone in the community knowing who he is. At the end of the day, though, “I am a people person, and it is great to be back into this phase of law enforcement. I treat everyone with respect,” says the deputy.

After graduating from Armwood High School, Brodie, 47, served four years in the U.S. Navy aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt. He joined the HCSO afterwards and has spent over 23 years serving the county’s citizens. During his time with the County, he has held several positions, including seven years as a resource deputy at Eisenhower Middle School in Apollo Beach.

Says Brodie, “I am very impressed with the members of the community, and their involvement and passion for ensuring the safety and security of their neighborhood.”

The new CRD is focused on promoting vigilance on the part of every Bloomingdale member. As according to Brodie, one of the largest issues this community faces is crime of opportunity.

To contact Deputy Brodie or the Bloomingdale Community Substation, located at 3622 Erindale Drive, call 813-242-5501.



Photo: Miriam Leech

New full-time Community Resource Deputy (CRD) James Brodie is becoming a familiar face around Bloomingdale since taking over the role on Jan. 2.

6th Annual



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APRIL 14 - GOOD FRIDAY - NON-STUDENT DAY MAY 1 - 5 - TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK

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



ALAFIA ALLIGATOR ALLEY

April 12 – Chipotle Spirit Night
April 26 – Ciccio Cali Spirit Night



CIMINO COUGAR CENTRAL

April 25 – Spring Concert



BURNS BRUINS BANTER

April 19 – Flag Football & Volleyball @ Burns, 6 p.m.
April 20 – Burns Got Talent @ Bloomingdale High School, 7 p.m.
April 21 – PTSA Board Meeting, 8 a.m.
April 28 – PTSA Dance, 4:30 p.m.
May 2 – 6th Grade Busch Gardens Chaperone Meeting, 6 p.m.
May 3 – Flag Football & Volleyball @ Burns, 6 p.m.
May 5 – 6th Grade Field Trip at Busch Gardens, 9 a.m.
May 5 – NJHS Induction, 7 p.m.

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.



BULL BRIEFS

Senior Red Envelopes – Deadline May 1st

Do you know a senior who is graduating? It's time to write your notes/ letters for their Red Envelopes! Graduates will receive their Red Envelope during Senior Breakfast. This is your opportunity to make each senior feel special! Send all notes, cards, or letters to the school at 1700 E. Bloomingdale Ave, Valrico, FL 33596, c/o the senior's name, or they can be put in the Red Envelope box in the front office. AND- Nothing larger than 8x10, ONLY Letter/cards/ notes, NO PACKAGES. The school and PTSA are not responsible for valuables. Questions? Call Karen Chastain at 813-679-8544.

College Admission Workshop / BSHS Auditorium / April 11, 6 p.m. / Workshop is for 9th, 10th and 11th graders and their parents. Learn about the ins and outs pf college applications, financial aid, and more.



BLOOMINGDALE HIGH BULL BUSINESS

April 4 – District Girls Lacrosse @ Newsome, 6 p.m.
April 6 – Flag Football vs Newsome, 6:15 p.m.
April 7 – Baseball & Softball vs Plant City, 7 p.m.
April 8 – Prom, 8-11 p.m.
April 10 – 25 - FSA ELA 9th & 10th Grade Reading Exam
April 13 – Baseball & Softball vs Armwood, 7 p.m.
April 18 – Baseball & Softball vs Newsome, 7 p.m.
April 19 – 24 - US History EOC



Soccer Standout Signs with Warner University

BSHS senior Nick Diaz will take his soccer talents to the next level after signing a letter of intent to play for Warner University in the fall. Diaz finishes his high school soccer career as team captain, Most Valuable Player, Western All-Conference First team and the Bull's top scorer. Outside of school, he spent six years as a member of the West Florida Flames, a Florida state premier team. Of his commitment, Diaz said, “I chose Warner University because it was a good fit for me academically, spiritually, and athletically. I am very honored to be given this opportunity to show my greatest potential on and off the field.” Congratulations to Nick and the Diaz family.



Photo: The Diaz Family



BSHS Student Chef Takes Top Cooking Honors

Brief by Deidre Morgan

Gianna Rivera represented Bloomingdale High School at the Fresh from Florida Regional Cooking Competition at the HCC Dale Mabry campus on March 4 – And she won! She's headed to Disney on April 22 with her award-winning citrus chicken tacos with watermelon salsa to compete against four other regional winners for state honors. Congratulations and Good Luck, Gianna!



Photo: Fresh from Florida



The Lady Bulls Junior Varsity and Varsity Flag Football teams held their first district games at Bloomingdale’s Charley Harris Stadium on March 23 against Riverview High School. Both squads came away with convincing shutout victories – the JV team posting a 19-0 win followed by the Varsity team with a 13-0 win over the Sharks. Both are 1-1 early in the season.

Four returning players, sophomores Hannah Wiseman, Julia Dempsey and Taylor Thompson and junior Jocelyn Belltran, lead this year’s JV team. First year Coach Cristina Coca said, “These four players not only possess athletic ability, but are leaders on and off the field.” Coach Chris Peters added, “[We] coaches put a lot on these young ladies shoulders, but know that they can handle the load and keep the team motivated.”

Keep up the great work, Lady Bulls!

Photos: Deidre Morgan



Coach Chris Peters gives instructions to his daughter and team center Allison.



While waiting for their turn on the field, members of the Varsity Flag Football team support the JV squad from the stands during the March 23 battle against the Riverview Sharks.



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Alafia Spring Carnival, A Fun Time for All

Brief and Photos by Deidre Morgan

On March 3, Alafia Elementary School held its annual Spring Carnival on the school grounds. Booths, games, bounce houses and vendors were set up to provide hours of entertainment and food.



5th graders Lorin, Karis, Bella, Lucy and Ella get ready to take a ride on the giant slide.



Bloomington's 9th grade volunteer Lucas Dolan waits for 2-year-old Asher Gregg to get to the bottom of the big slide.

Bella McAniff shows off her hula hoop skills.

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Bloomington's Sophomore Class Holds First Lip Sync Battle

Brief by Deidre Morgan

On March 1, Bloomington High School was the place to be to witness the first Lip Sync Battle put on by the Sophomore Steering Committee. Amanda LaFoe, a 10th grade World History and AP Comparative Government teacher, as well as the Sophomore Steering sponsor was proud of all the hard work the students put into the event.

Maddie Pena, the Sophomore Class President, spearheaded the program. Proceeds from the event will be gifted back to the sophomores for their Senior Class gift. Seven individual students and groups performed for the large crowd in the school auditorium. Congratulations to the performers and winners!

Photos: BSHS Sophomore Steering Committee, unless otherwise noted



Voted Crowd Favorite were seniors James Stephenson, Taylor Fluty, Elijah Roby and Raeann Pitts performing "You Can't Stop The Beat" from Hairspray.



Taking first place honors at the BSHS first Lip Synch Battle was freshman Samuel Hernandez for his Michael Jackson "Beat It" routine.



Channeling her inner diva, freshman Aliyah Sharks belted out Beyoncé's Diva and took home second place award.



Breana Jenkins and Tessa Pignataro are ready to sell tickets for the show.
Photo: Deidre Morgan

Third place winner, Senior Colin Boutin wowed the crowd with a Bon Jovi tribute. His rousing rendition of "Livin' on a Prayer" turned back the clock for some older audience members.



Happy 30th Birthday, Burns Middle School!

By Wendy Knipp

Picture it – Brandon, 1986. A new McDonald's opens at Bloomingdale Square and rumors of a new mall by I-75 are confirmed as true. Penny loafers are all the rage, CDB's is the place to eat, and local schools are busting at the seams.

To help with the overcrowding school conditions, Guy O. Burns Junior High School opened its doors on August 25, 1986 for grades 7-9. Ten years later, it was renamed Burns Middle School and changed to grade levels 6-8.

This year marks thirty years of excellence at the school, but from day one, Burns' pride was strong. Just one month into the school year, the marching band played at the I-75 Dedication Ceremony. Walt Shaffner was the music/band teacher at the time. "The band had no uniforms and no budget at that point, but were committed to address both within weeks." Everyone came together and the event was a resounding success.

Photos, unless otherwise noted: Wendy Knipp

Today, Burns' pride remains strong. Laura Hanson has taught science at Burns since 1996 noting that what stays the same is the love and dedication of the teachers, parents, and students. "Burns is a very special place and it feels like a part of my family. I couldn't imagine working any place else!"

Matthew DiPrima is the current principal and he enjoys seeing the reaction of former students returning to Burns with their kids. "It's kind of neat when you have that nostalgia and you come back and have that feeling of pride in your school."

To celebrate the school's birthday, the Student Government and Dr. Martin Harrigan, a civics teacher organized a party on March 3 to celebrate. Over 300 people enjoyed the event, which included carnival games, prizes, music, refreshments, a silent auction, and a mock jail. Alumni received special recognition and money raised will go toward a similar party next year.



Burns Middle School opened in 1986 as Burns Junior High School. The school is located at 615 Brooker Road in Brandon.
Photo: Burns Middle School 1986-1987 Yearbook



7th graders Alyssa Santana (left) and Natalie Nunez (right) enjoyed handing out prizes at the 30th Anniversary Party for Burns Middle School.



Peyton Carter (left) and Ivelisse Rodriguez (right) are talented art students at Burns. They provided face painting services for the school's birthday party on March 3.



Student government students Amylyn Miller (left, 7th grade), Hannah Nixon (middle, 8th grade), and Jayden Ramos (right, 6th grade) enjoyed making arrests and running the mock jail at the party.

Burns Student Wins Robotics Award

Dariya Bagley, a Burns 6th grader, recently won 2nd place at the 2016-2017 Regional STEM Fair (Science, Technology Engineering Mathematics) Competition in the area of Intelligent Machines, Robotics, and System Software. Dariya's topic was Reliable Robot-to-Robot Communication Using Sensors.



Photos: Desh Bagley

Burns Bands are Top-Notch!

By Wendy Knipp

Recently, school bands from across the county were evaluated at the highly anticipated Music Performance Assessments. Three groups from Burns Middle School participated at the annual event held last month.

Results were as expected for this high-performing school music program. Burns' 7th and 8th grade Jazz Band received an Excellent rating from all three judges and received high marks on their overall performance. In addition, the Concert Band received an Excellent rating for their stage performance and a Superior rating on their sight-reading skills.

Rounding out the outstanding performances was the Symphonic Band, which received Superior ratings for both stage performance and sight-reading. Of 56 bands competing, only seven other bands received all Superior ratings.

Congratulations to all the band members at Burns and to the Director of Bands, Kevin Lewis, for making our community proud!

Burns Symphonic Band was one of seven bands out of 56 to earn straight Superior ratings at last month's Music Performance. Congratulations, Bruins!

Photo: Kevin Lewis, Burns Middle School Director of Bands



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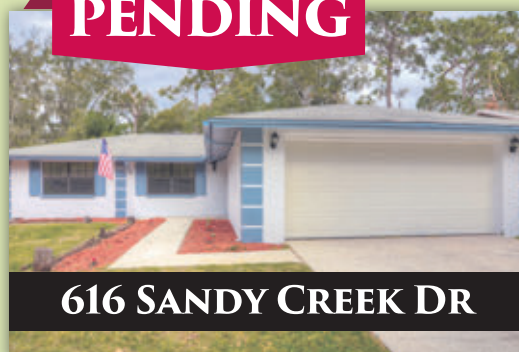
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