



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BLOOMINGDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION SINCE 1980

THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

VOLUME XXXVIII 🌿 ISSUE 4 🌿 APRIL 2018 🌿 www.BloomingtondaleHOA.com

Volunteers Clean Up Bloomingdale!

Volunteers were the driving force behind the success of the BHA-sponsored community clean-up held March 3 at the Parks and Recreation Facility off Natures Way. Two volunteers making a difference in our community at this and other events are Fallon Gustafson (l.) and Rachel Santarlas.

See pages 12-13 for the story!



Photo: Joy Boisselle

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Be curious." *Stephen Hawking* RIP, 1942-2018

This Month



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THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

YOUR INSIDE CONNECTIONS

Bloomington Homeowners Association, Inc.

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

Email: Bloomington.Homeowners@gmail.com

Website: www.BloomingtonHOA.com

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

President: *George T. May IV*

Vice President: *Suzy Watts*

Secretary: *Joanie Wilson*

Treasurer: *Grace Lewis*



Directors at Large:

Daniel Berkowitz

Sean Donahue

Bobbi Ferraro

Carl Hallinan

Billy Hightower

Beth Smedley

Charlie Woodcock

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER



JOY BOISSELLE

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Yard of the Month



Photo: Joy Boisselle

Bill & Marie Tuton 3933 Applegate Circle Brandon, FL 33511 (Bloomingdale Estates)

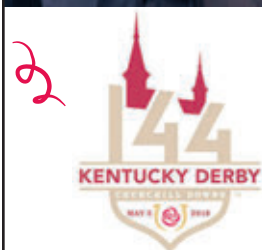


Yard of the Month is sponsored by Ace Hardware of Bloomingdale. Send your Yard of the Month nominations to:
InBloomingdaleNews@gmail.com or call (813) 681-2051

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



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To purchase tickets, sponsorships or for info, please visit www.TheOutreachClinic.com or call 813-654-1388.



BHA COMMUNITY CORNER



DON'T FORGET TO LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!

The BHA Needs YOU! 2018 Membership Drive Slows, Please, Join Today!

WHY JOIN?

You are the backbone of our Association. The programs and services offered are for you! But, these events don't just happen. Hard work, volunteers, time and yes, money make these events happen – Money the BHA receives from you, the resident, during the annual membership drive.

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

WHAT DO YOU RECEIVE FOR \$35 A YEAR?

- Community-Wide Garage Sale
- Annual Clean-Up
- The Fall Festival
- Santa Visit and Charity Food Drive
- Scholarship and Community Service Hour Opportunities
- The Award-Winning Bloomingdale Gazette
- The HOA website, Facebook and Twitter Pages
- An Office and Part-Time Staff to assist with inquiries.
- A Dedicated Board that advocates for community improvements to government officials
- Yard of the Month
- A Neighborhood Standards Program to help maintain our property standards and quality of life. We do not enforce deed restrictions, rather we work with county code officers to report code violations.

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 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.



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 9, 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 10, 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 19, 7 p.m. / Bloomingdale Area Community Council chaired by Hillsborough County Deputy Cliff Fletcher, Bloomingdale Community Station, 3622 Erindale Drive, 813-635-8040. Learn about safety and security issues affecting our community.

BHA BRIEFS

We promised an exciting announcement in this month's Gazette – And, here it is!

County Earmarks Common-Area Sidewalk Repair Money for Bloomingdale

Thanks in part to the efforts of the BHA and Special Taxing District, county has allocated \$1 million for sidewalk repairs over a three-year period. In talks with Commissioner Stacy White, BHA president George May learned the first repairs, totaling approximately \$330k, must be completed by Sept. 30, 2018. The BSTD submitted a common-area sidewalk inspection to county last fall. Details of the ongoing work will be published as known.

Note: Residential sidewalk repairs must still be reported to Hillsborough County customer service by the homeowner. Report online at <https://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/en/residents/property-owners-and-renters/roads-and-sidewalks/action-folder/report-sidewalk-and-roadway-damage> or call 813-635-5400.

Board Meeting Highlights and Other Board News

Board Meeting Highlights and Other Board News

The March meeting centered on garage sale and clean-up feedback and improvements to make next year. The board voted to move the garage sale to April to encourage more participation. Next year's sale will be on April 6, 2019. The clean-up was, again, well-attended. Efforts will be made to have a second clean-up this year in the fall, but this will depend entirely on membership numbers and fund availability.

As if sidewalk repairs are not enough, stay tuned for more exciting news in the May Gazette!

Gazette File Photo

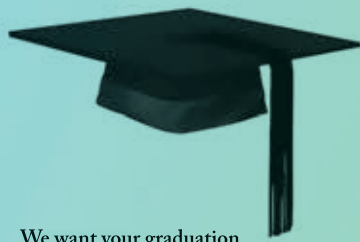


Calling All 2018 Graduates, Parents and Friends!
We want your graduation photos for our July issue!

The Gazette wants to help you celebrate your upcoming graduation moments. These can include pre-kindergarten through college graduations, Alafia and Cimino clap outs, formal pictures, parties, and more! Send your graduation photos or selfies to inbloomngdalenews@gmail.com by June 20. At a minimum, identify those in the photo from left to right, the school graduating from, and the future plans of the graduate. Photos need to be no less than 600x600 resolution, but preferably 1 mb or better for best results. We will do the rest! Don't forget to provide contact information just in case there are questions.



Gazette File Photo



We want your graduation celebration photos to include in our July Gazette. Email inbloomngdalenews@gmail.com or call 813-681-2051 for information. From last year: graduates Jessica Daly, University of South Florida and Justin Daly, BSHS Class of 2017.

Hillsborough County Spotlights Bloomingdale

The BHA thanks Hillsborough County for highlighting our special community!

Source: <http://www.hcflgov.net/en/newsroom/2018/03/30/neighborhood-spotlight-bloomingdale>

Get to know the people and communities that make Hillsborough County a great place to live, work, and play. In this occasional series, we highlight one of 950-plus neighborhoods registered with the Office of Neighborhood Relations.

When was Bloomingdale founded? Construction began in 1979. The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association was established in 1980.

How many homes are in Bloomingdale, and how many people live here? The community has 32 neighborhoods, 5,300-plus homes, and more than 23,000 residents.

Key features: Bloomingdale Golfers Club, Campo Family YMCA, Bloomingdale East and West parks, Bloomingdale Public Library, a sports complex for youth and adult baseball/softball, Bloomingdale Gazette monthly newspaper

Area schools: Cimino and Alafia elementary schools, Burns Middle School, Bloomingdale High School

Signature gatherings: Community-Wide Garage Sale, Annual Clean-Up, Fall Festival, Santa Visit, and Charity Food Drive. There also are opportunities for teens to earn community service hours through volunteer efforts, and a \$2,000 scholarship awarded to a college-bound high school senior.

Honors: Nine awards since 2013 from Hillsborough County Neighborhood Relations for communications, special events, improvements, effective leadership, and more.

What's next? The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association hopes to expand to neighborhoods beyond the community's original boundaries, strengthen its relationship with area businesses, and improve safety on Natures Way.

Resident's comment: "It is a friendly and family-oriented place that truly gets better with age," says George T. May IV, president of the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association.



Gazette File Photo

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April Community Calendar

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

Compiled by Miriam Leech

TODAY!

8th Annual International Festival / April 7 / 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. Food trucks and live cultural entertainment will be onsite. This is a free community event. For information, call 813-651-0779.



Create Workshop / April 14 / 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. / Bloomingdale Library, Rm 8 / 1906 Bloomingdale Avenue / Come to a free Create Workshop demonstrating how to incorporate pen and Ink into your journal, scrapbook, or to illustrate your writing in other media. Bonnie Phillips, a local well-known artist, will present how to use a technical ink pen and a disposable pen in your writing projects. All supplies provided. Register at the library's Ask Desk, or online at HCPLC.org .



8th Annual Crawfish Festival / April 14 / 11 a.m. / Winthrop Town Centre / 11109 Winthrop Market Street, Riverview / The 8th Annual FishHawk Riverview Rotary Crawfish Festival features live music, free children's activities, lots of great vendors and FOOD, FOOD and more FOOD! Crawfish, gumbo, étouffée, jambalaya, hot dogs, hamburgers, and 4-5 different dessert trucks offer all types of yummy goodies! All proceeds go back to the community. Admission is free, but we advise fest-goers to purchase crawfish dinners in advance at www.luvcrawfish.com.



Children's Theater / April 19 / 10:15 a.m. & 11:45 a.m. / Center Place Fine Arts & Civic Association / 619 Vonderburg Drive, Suite B / www.CenterPlaceBrandon.org / Join the Children's Theater for a presentation of "Are You My Mother?" by: ArtsPower. Baby Bird sets out in search of Mother Bird in this musical adventure based on P.D. Eastman's whimsical and well-loved picture book. Pre-k through 3rd Grade. Email cpfinearts@verizon.net for tickets and pricing.



Bloomingdale High School Presents Retro Prom!

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\$35 each/\$50 pair includes Outback dinner & drinks**

Retro PROM

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Imagination Day Brandon / April 21 / 10 a.m.-3 p.m. / Westfield Brandon / 459 Brandon Town Center Dr., Brandon / Imagination Day benefits We Rock the Spectrum Kid's Gym of Clearwater & Tampa. Entry, parking, and all activities are free and the first 100 Children will take home a Superhero Cape. Free activities & entertainment including multiple "Creation Stations" like Dixie Bell Paint Company's Rock Painting activity to our Official Discover Partner, MOSI's Science Lab & a Mad Science feature. Every child will find something that ignites their passion during this event whether it is Art, Music, Dance, Sports, Learning, etc. Also, throughout the day, enjoy Free Raffles. For More Information: Simply Events (727) 674-1464, www.SimplyEventsFL.com.



YMCA Healthy Kids Day / April 21 / Campo Family YMCA / 3414 Culbreath Road / Kids will be inspired to keep their minds and bodies active during the Y's national initiative to improve health and well-being for kids and families. Community members can expect fun games, healthy snacks, crafts and water activities to motivate and teach them how to develop and maintain healthy routines at home throughout the summer months. For information, call Campo Y at 813-684-1371.



Parkinson's Disease Support Group / Beginning April 25 / The Bridges Assisted Living Community will host a support group for those diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease, family members and caregivers. The support group will meet quarterly on the last Wednesday of the month. Guest speakers will present on topics such as mobility, balance, cognition, medication, and nutrition. The purpose is to share information, offer mutual support and gain additional information from area experts. There is no fee to attend. Please RSVP to Janet at 813-413-8900.

FUNDRAISER! 2018 WALK TO END LUPUS NOW, SUPPORT BLOOMINGDALE TEAM - CRUZIN FOR A CURE / May 6 / 4 p.m. Check-in, 5:30 p.m. start, 1 mi or 3 mi walk / AL Lopez Park, 4810 N. Himes Ave., Tampa / Bloomingdale's Cruz family asks for your support to end lupus. For five years, the family has raised money for the Lupus Foundation of America reaching over \$10,000 in donated funds to date. 1.5 million Americans living with the disease are females, including this family's daughter, Olivia. How can you help? Donate, Join the Team, Be a Virtual Walker, and Spread the Word! Your donation to the cause raises money for research, education and increasing awareness. To join the fight and Olivia's team, go to http://support.lupus.org/site/TR/WTELN/General?team_id=5811&pg=team&fr_id=1312. To visit the walk's homepage at http://support.lupus.org/site/TR?pg=entry&fr_id=1312. Or email Carlos Cruz at eboxcruz@gmail.com.



Bloomingdale Real Estate Update

(Editor's Note: Real estate columnist Ronnie has lived in Bloomingdale for seven 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.)

What is your Color Palette?

Picking a color for just one room in a home can be difficult; choosing colors for an entire house can be overwhelming. Figuring out how to coordinate colors in the kitchen with the colors in the living room – not to mention the colors in the bedroom – requires some effort.

Experts recommend when choosing a palette to start with three colors – maintaining a coordinated look. I recommend visiting model homes before choosing the main color for the inside of your home. Drive anywhere in Hillsborough County and you'll find many new construction neighborhoods with professionally decorated model homes just waiting to inspire you with ideas on how to update your Bloomingdale home.



I am in many homes each week and I am still seeing the light greys or shades of beige greys brightening up walls. This Spring I'm seeing many different color accents in throw pillows and fireplace mantel décor. A popular main accent colors is undoubtedly green.

Just remember, color blocking vibrant paint colors is out and coordinating neutral colors are in.

This model home at Dover Ridge reflects a grey palette with white and green accent décor. Featured paint is Agreeable Grey, Sherwin Williams.



By Ronnie McLaughlin

The Chadderton Real Estate Group
Keller Williams Realty

813-601-5659

ronniemclaughlin@kw.com

www.chaddertongroup.com

Neighborhood Snapshot – Somerset

Somerset, located between Culbreath Drive and Natures Way is comprised of 186 homes on Allwood Avenue, Compass Oaks Drive, Crestmont Court, Groveway Drive, Kylepoint Way, Lodgeview Way, Longmore Circle, Morganside Way, and Riverclose Boulevard. This neighborhood was built between 1995-2001. Homes average 2,400 square feet, four bedrooms and three baths. Nine homes sold over the past year averaging \$124 per square foot. Six of the homes that sold had private pools.



**MLS statistics are based on rough property lines for individual neighborhoods and included homes.*



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BLOOMINGDALE Special Taxing District

THE COMMUNITY'S COMMON AREA CONNECTION
By Miriam Leech, BSTD Staff

Spring has Sprung in Bloomingdale

It is officially spring, which means the Bloomingdale community is greening up and blooming!

Oak tree trimming has been completed throughout the District with Buccaneer lifting the canopy and manicuring the trees to look better than ever. The Trustees are working with Buccaneer to improve maintenance of this most-valuable asset, and it is the hope of the Board that a more thorough tree trimming and maintenance plan for the aging oaks can be put into place with approval of the needed tax assessment increase.

Residents also should have noticed the new annuals at major Bloomingdale entranceways – Salvia and Dusty Miller now grace the flower beds for spring.

There was extensive freeze damage to many plants this winter. Property management and Buccaneer continue to inspect and evaluate which plants may come back and which are lost and must be replaced. With the potential for thousands of dollars of plant replacements, the Trustees will need to prioritize replacements given budgetary constraints.

Auto Accidents Cause Property Damage

Two recent auto accidents in Bloomingdale will require both wall and turf replacement – costly expenditures to the District if the drivers are uninsured or in the case of hit-and-run.



A resident submitted a photo and reported damage to turf and a palm tree at the intersection of Culbreath Road and Erindale Drive on March 26. Apparently, the driver left the scene.

Photo: BTSD



At approximately 6:30 p.m. on Sunday, March 25, a car smashed into a wall on Springvale Drive, causing extensive damage but thankfully no injuries to the property owners. The driver was transported to the hospital.



Courtesy Photos: Jeremy Wells

(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.)

BLOOMINGDALE Special Taxing District

3509 Bell Shoals Road
Valrico, Florida 33596
(813) 684-6667 Office
(813) 684-2358 Fax
BSTD@verizon.net
www.bloomingtontaxingdistrict.org
Hours: 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

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

Monthly Meeting

The residents of Bloomingdale, as always, are invited to attend the next meeting of the BSTD on April 9 at 6:30 p.m., at the Bloomingdale Community Offices, 3509 Bell Shoals Rd. If you would like to speak at the meeting, members of the public are allotted 3 minutes to make comment or ask questions per Hillsborough County policy. Hope to see you there!

Correction: Last month the BSTD reported repairs to 100 sq. ft. of walls in the community. The measurement is actually linear feet.

River O' Green Fest



Hundreds attended the 7th Annual Mayor's River O'Green Fest on March 17 at Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park. The Tampa tradition – an Irish party where the Hillsborough River turns shamrock green – brings St. Patty's Day fun to the masses.

Photo: Wendy Knipp

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BLOOMINGDALE COMMUNITY STATION NOTES

By Community Resource Deputy Clifford Fletcher
and CSO Ava Garrett

Area Law and Order

Between Feb.12 and March 12, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office conducted **fifty, that's 5-0**, traffic stops in Bloomingdale East and Bloomingdale West. Those traffic stops resulted in 12 verbal warnings, 27 written warnings and 11 citations.

There were 8 traffic crashes at the entrances coming into Bloomingdale East, West and within subdivisions. We are happy to report no DUT's. This is a wonderful statistic!

There were two vehicle burglaries and three residential burglaries. In addition, there was one drug law violation, which is better than the two we had last month. Finally, there were eleven arrests made for various crimes in the Bloomingdale area between Feb.12 and March 12.



Be on the Lookout!

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 813-247-8200. Don't wait! Call us so we can identify the person(s). 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. Do your part; don't be a victim!

Let's Talk Traffic Delays!

No one likes traffic delays. Whether it's trying to get to work in the morning, going home, or running errands, getting stuck in traffic is not on my list of fun.



So, the big question is what can be done about traffic delays. The short answer is nothing. But, planning for delays is number one for reducing stress and getting where you need to go – on time.

Know where traffic crashes are before you are caught in the traffic. There are phone apps that do a great job of mapping out traffic accidents, delays, construction and more.

Have an alternate path to get to work. If you only know one way to get to work, then it's past time to learn an alternate path.

Be patient, and allow yourself more travel time. Getting anxious and annoyed will not help. Don't be that rude, road-raging driver. Take a deep breath because road rage is just not worth it.

Follow traffic laws. We all took a driver's test and have a license, so, use what you learned. No one likes the driver who takes advantage of others by skirting the traffic laws. **You Know Who You Are!**

Let law enforcement take care of those who violate traffic laws. Their reckless actions will catch up to them. Want to help? Call 247-8200 and provide us with a tag number, description of the vehicle, and travel direction.

Good Advice: Be an Example

Wear your seat belts at all times and remember to slow down, stop at all stop signs and above all be a courteous driver. And, watch out for our children. Remember to be a good example for your kids and other while driving. Your good driving habits just might rub off on someone. Life is so short. Be kind to each other, and have a great year.

Finally, for the safety of all, put your cell phone down. Making a call is currently still legal but texting is not. If your eyes are in your lap looking at your phone, you are placing everyone at risk. Just please stop. If a text is that important, **PULL OVER** and text away!

As always, we are here for you at the Sheriff's Office and at your local Bloomingdale station.



Next Bloomingdale Area Community Council Meeting (BACC)

Get involved; attend our monthly meeting as a neighborhood representative. Our meetings are on the third Thursday of each month – this month's meeting is April 19 at 7 p.m. at 3622 Erindale Drive. The BACC works directly with the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office to identify community concerns and find solutions to all types of problems. For information, call the Bloomingdale Community Station at 635-8040, or come by the station.

Local Arts Festival Delivers the Goods

Brief/Photos by Wendy Knipp

A variety of artists came out for the 10th Annual Winthrop Arts Festival and Artisan Market in Riverview on March 24-25. Not only was there good food and music, but with such eclectic group of local artists, there was something for everyone!



Award-winning artist Glenn Schuele displayed his complex yet beautiful illustrative drawings. Visit www.Glenzenarts.com.



Spencer Watson's booth included timeless postcard-style prints for the home. View his work at www.TheWatsonShop.com.



Jenifer Martinez (pictured) and The Amazing Stan displayed unique steampunk-inspired jewelry. For more designs, see her website at www.steampunkgarage.com.



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Bloomingdale Cleans-Up



Photos: Dan Boisselle, unless otherwise noted



Urban E Recycling's Nick Bugler, Greg Rabinowitz (c.) and Dean Erskine



BSTD Trustee Rusty Jones and Resident Lynn Hughes

Photo: Joy Boisselle



Volunteers



Line up Photo: Joy Boisselle



Urban E Recycling



Lighthouse Ministries Donations



Volunteers Yukari Cabrera and Nick DeSouza



Volunteers

A sunny day with mild temperatures brought many residents to the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association-sponsored community clean-up. Hundreds of vehicles lined Natures Way at the Parks and Recreation facility prior to the opening of the event on March 3.

A large group of motivated volunteers, numbering nearly 35, was ready at five stations to assist residents with drop-offs and unloading. Operation Medicine Cabinet collected outdated and unused medicines, UrbanERecycling accepted recyclable electronics, and Lighthouse Ministries received generous donations of serviceable goods for needy families. And like last year, the BHA secured ten commercial roll-offs which were overflowing by closing time. New this year, the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District joined the event to pass out information regarding the need for a tax assessment increase.

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

CLEAN-UP "BY THE NUMBERS"

- 35 Volunteers, including high school students, adults, and the BHA board, worked non-stop from opening to close
- Nearly 100 lbs. of outdated medications collected through HCSO's Operation Medicine Cabinet
- Nearly 1,000 lbs. of e-waste collected by Urban E Recycling
- A floor-to-ceiling truckload of donations to Lighthouse Ministries
- Ten full 30 cu. ft. commercial roll-off containers provided by Republic Services



Operation Medicine Cabinet- HCSO M. Deputy Jeff Merry and Sabina Raymond

Photo: Joy Boisselle



Residents Benny and Sons Enzo (front) and Roman Ingenito



Residents Joan and Bill Walsh with Gracie



Full to the rim, and then some



Resident Kevin Hayes (r.) and student volunteers

Photo: Joy Boisselle



Volunteer Jake Kehrmeier



Parks and Recreation's Billy Joyce and Mike Kruger



Volunteer Ryan Kehrmeier and BHA president George May

Photo: Joy Boisselle



Lighthouse Ministries' Eric Lisboa



Morning Safety Briefing



**Hillsborough
County Florida**

BLOOMINGDALE
Special Taxing District





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.



You Can Call Her “Mother Nature.” I just called her “Mom.”

Okay, everybody sing: “The flowers that bloom in the Spring (tra-la) turn people into ding-a-lings.” Lord, this time of year brings back memories.

You see, I was brought up by a woman blessed (or cursed, depending upon who you asked) with two “green thumbs.” Given enough Miracle-Gro, sunlight and water, she could grow asphalt. I, however, have the tender, nurturing spirit of Hannibal Lecter. Mom and I had trouble relating on the whole gardening thing.



The long, barren Winter months were punctuated by Mom standing at the window and muttering, “Dead. All dead. I work. I slave. I give you the best months of my year and what do you do? At the first sign of a stupid little cold snap, you turn brown and die. Well, I’ve had it with you.” She would spend from November until April sulking and threatening the plants. “Sure, you’ll be back in the Spring. Just don’t look so surprised if I’m not around to check your water level, sprinkle snail pellets and dust you for aphids.” The woman was unhinged.

Recognizing this derangement for the temporary lunacy it was, none of us was in the least surprised when, at the first inkling of

warmer weather, she would come pounding on our bedroom doors hooting, “Up, up, up! The daffodils are up! Time for you to be up!” This was the initial sign that she was now embarking on her annual “All-Is-Forgiven” campaign. My dad would respond with, “Go away. You are a mental case. I do not allow mental cases near me at 7 a.m. Besides, what happened to the stirring ‘You Won’t Have Old Ellie To Kick Around Anymore’ speech you delivered to the lawn last week? I found it very moving.”

“I was overwrought. What did you do with the marigold seeds I harvested from last year’s flowers?”

“They’re in the basement.”

“You left baby marigolds in the basement all winter long? In the dark?”

“No, dear. I gave them a flashlight and a subscription to Readers’ Digest.”

The entire family would be pressed into service mixing “just the right formula” for potting soil (Dad: “Want me to test this on my wrist before you risk putting a seed into it?”). The next 6 months or so would be spent alternating between complaining about our status as “unpaid field hands” and admiring her various gardens. It never varied until we kids left home.

When I was in my 30’s, Mom went back to school, earning a certification in Horticulture. I recall sending her a congratulatory card along with a note encouraging her to “Go on out there and culture them horts!” She worked with the State developing cross-strains of various flowers and was in her element.

Well, it’s many Springs later and I’d give a lot to have her come pounding on my door. I’m guessing that Mom is tending plants in The Great Beyond and bullying angels into weeding and watering. Now that I think of it...better them than me.

Irrigation in the Spring

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

Spring is the driest season in Central Florida. Having your irrigation system serviced can save you money and conserve water.

In Hillsborough County, a licensed irrigation contractor or plumber is necessary to perform most types of work on your irrigation system. Permits are required for the alteration, replacement or relocation of any standpipe or water supply. If you pull a permit, you will receive a final inspection by the County. Call Development Services at 813-272-5600 for permit or licensing questions.

If you are a high water user and would like to see if you qualify for a free irrigation evaluation, call 813-744-5519 Ext. 54142.



Photo: University of Florida

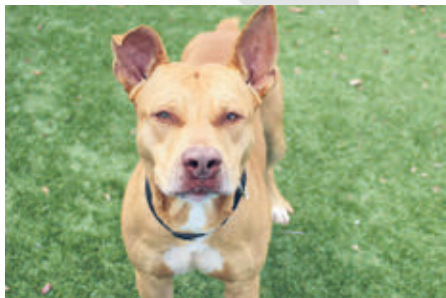
Wanted: A Forever Home and Family

Hillsborough County's Pet Resource Center (PRC) has many cats and dogs looking for their "forever" homes. All pets are spayed/neutered, vaccinated, and microchipped.

The PRC, located at 440 N. Falkenburg Rd., is open daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. For information, call 813-744-5660 or visit www.hcflgov.net/pets.

Here are just a few fabulous faces to choose from:

Rascal



Rascal, A886899, is a mixed stray believed to be about 6 years old. He loves all forms of attention and long walks. He is heartworm positive, which is treatable.

Claire



With beautiful green eyes and a lovely personality, tabby Claire, A1891224, needs a good, adult-only home. She is fearful around children and other pets. A little loving will do wonders for this girl.

Snoopy Survives Parvo Virus at the PRC

Source: Hillsborough County

Hillsborough County's Pet Resource Center has successfully cared for a parvo-infected puppy for the first time since creating a special isolation center to deal with the highly contagious and often fatal disease. Snoopy, a 5-month-old mixed breed puppy, was found as a stray in early March and tested positive for parvovirus, which primarily affects puppies and young dogs. The virus affects a dog's gastrointestinal tract and can lead to dehydration, vomiting, and loss of appetite; most deaths occur within 72 hours after symptoms appear.

Because the virus is so contagious – it is easily transmitted,

resistant to heat and cold, and can survive indoors or outdoors for long periods – most animal shelters are not equipped to deal with parvo-infected animals. The PRC Center, however, has created an isolation unit solely for parvo cases and, using grant money from "Maddie's Fund," recently sent veterinarian Mallory Offner to Austin, Texas, for several days of specialized training.

Snoopy was the first parvo-infected puppy to be treated at the Pet Resource Center. And the great news – Snoopy has since been adopted.



Sweet Success – A healthy Snoopy and Pet Resource Center veterinarian Mallory Offner enjoy time together before Snoopy's adoption. The pup is the first parvo-infected animal to be treated in the PRC's new isolation unit. Photo: PRC

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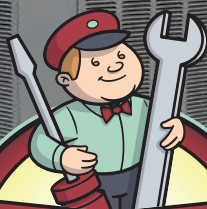
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- ✓ WHOLE HOME GENERATORS



Hillsborough's Fields a U-Pick Paradise

Source: Hillsborough County Newsroom



Hillsborough County has many U-Pick farms. Strawberries, blueberries, and blackberries are plentiful in season and available to pick. Other fruits and vegetables also are marketed for U-Pick, such as tomatoes, sweet corn, and peaches.

Some of the best fruits and vegetables of a growing season await those willing to stoop or stretch for them in local famers' fields. That's because end-of-season crops designated for U-Pick remain on plants longer, absorbing more nutrients that add flavor.

Farmers like Susan and Scot Dumke will be happy to see you roll up to their fields. For almost 10 years the Dumkes have welcomed U-Pick customers at their 20-acre blueberry spread, Blues Berry Farm, in Plant City, for two or three weeks beginning in mid-May.

"I like to share the farm," Susan says. "And there's just so much fruit out in the field."

U-Pick is a win-win situation: Farmers save on labor and shipping costs, and consumers get the freshest produce at low prices. For many participants, U-Pick is their first direct exposure to food production, growing seasons, and the unpredictable nature of farming.

Be prepared when you go. Bring a hat, sunscreen, insect repellent, comfortable shoes, and a bucket if your farm doesn't provide containers. Susan also suggests a cooler to keep your produce in good condition on the ride home. And she says it's a good idea to call the farm to ensure it is open to U-Pickers when you arrive. Many strawberry fields open to the public in mid-March, followed by blueberry U-Pick season in mid-May.

Florida's Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has more information about picking your own fruits and vegetables, including locations of some U-Pick farms in Hillsborough County and throughout the state. Visit www.freshfromflorida.com/U-Pick-Farms.

U-Pick Locations Nearby

Strawberry Passion/ Passion Organics Farms, LLC (Still open for U-pick as of April 1)
11780 Tom Folsom Rd
Thonotosassa, Florida 33592
813-735-6706

Parke HydroFarms
3715 Tanner Road, Dover
927-4049
www.parkehydro.com

Wish Farms: Blueberries are in!
100 Stearns Street, Plant City
752-5111
www.wishfarms.com

Blues Berry Farm LLC
1201 Holloway Rd, Plant City
813-597-4019

Alpha Growers Blueberries
5615 W.O. Griffin Road, Plant City
245-6818

Big Bear Farms, Inc.
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986-1152
www.bigbearfarms.mysite.com

Blueyouth Berries
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215-2237
www.blueyouthberries.com

Church Lake Farms
16321 McGlamery Road, Odessa
www.churchlakefarms.com/Welcome.html

D&K Blueberry Farm
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763-0399

Hollow Creek
1204 Holloway Road, Plant City
478-1253

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Keeping Those U-Pick Berries Fresh

By Wendy Knipp

It's that time of year when juicy strawberries and flavorful blueberries are in season. and just about ready for picking. Strawberry U-Pick Farms are getting ready to close for the season, but a few are still open. Blueberry U-Pick Farms are getting ready to open later this month through May.

After a few hours picking berries, you come home feeling pleased, accomplished, a little tired, and proud of the fruits of your labor. Pun intended.

So now what? How do you clean them? Do you refrigerate or leave them on the counter or freeze them? All are great questions and below is a compilation of online resources to help keep those berries fresh!

Unless you're freezing them, it's important not to wash your berries until you're ready to use them. According to Good Housekeeping, "The trick is to keep berries cold and dry, so they won't mold." You can also reduce the risk of mold and bacteria growth by immediately throwing out any damaged berries.

Strawberries can deteriorate quickly so refrigerate them within a few hours and blueberries within a few days. Place unwashed berries in an airtight container and keep them in a cool dry spot in the refrigerator. Strawberries may last up to a week in the refrigerator and blueberries may last about 2 weeks.

For long-term storage, freeze your berries. Better Homes and Gardens recommends washing (and hulling) berries and drying them completely before freezing. Their advice, "arrange whole berries on a baking sheet and freeze until solid or up to a couple of days. This keeps the berries loose and makes measuring and thawing easier." You can then transfer them to resealable plastic bag for freezer storage. Strawberries may last up to 10 months in the freezer and blueberries up to a year.

Grab a bucket and get picking!

Rita Schuele loves finding the perfect blueberries at a local farm in Riverview. Photo: Dana Caggia



Michigan by Will Leech



COMIC STRIP ARTIST WILL LEECH IS A FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY SOPHOMORE. THROUGH HIS CREATION "MICHIGAN," HE SHARES HIS VIEW OF THE WORLD AROUND US.

You get what you pay for...

By J.D. Carino (Bloomingdale CC campus)

Recently, a parent said our kids' golf camps might be a little pricey compared to other camps in the area. He's absolutely right...but you do get what you pay for.

Make comparison (apples to apples, not apples to oranges) when evaluating area golf camps. Other golf camps have a higher student to instructor ratio; ours is 6 to 1. Some hire teenagers to monitor the kids – our instructors are all highly qualified trained teaching professionals. Finally, our kids get to apply their learning to actual playtime on the golf course.

Visit our website and see the programs available: Summer camps, New Years/Spring Break/Easter camps, After School (Fall/Winter/Spring) and Kid's Night League. We are the golf school for your kids...you get what you pay for.

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



At Cochrane Golf Schools, students benefit from low student to teacher ratios, and personalized instruction from professionals. Contact J.D. Carino, pictured far right, to sign your child up for summer golf camps and lessons. Photo: J.D. Carino



John E.S. Cochrane
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Golf for Kids Classic Returns to Bloomingdale

By Wendy Knipp

The Bloomingdale Golfers Club will host the 2018 Golf for Kids Classic on Friday, April 27, from 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. This fundraiser is presented by The Epilepsy Services Foundation (ESF) and the National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors (NAIFA-Tampa) to assist the over 16,000 children in the Tampa Bay area suffering from epilepsy.

ESF is a non-profit organization that helps children with epilepsy and their families lead more normal lives. With over 300 members, NAIFA-Tampa is a professional organization dedicated to charitable causes. This is the 30th year that ESF and NAIFA-Tampa have worked together, and they expect to raise over \$15,000.

Proceeds will fund family retreat weekends to Deliver the Dream in Haines City and Camp Boggy Creek in Eustis. In addition, 25 children will be given scholarships for Camp Boggy Creek which is a medically supervised camp cofounded by General H. Norman Schwarzkopf and Paul Newman. Thomas Orth is the Executive Director of ESF and he overheard a camper say, "For the first time, I was able to be a regular kid, a real part of the group – to feel like I really belonged." Orth says, "For many children this is a normal statement. For a child with a serious chronic illness, this is an awesome statement."



NAIFA and ESF are excited to have this annual event here in Bloomingdale. Thomas Brophy is a local resident and President of NAIFA-Tampa and he says, "Thanks to local community support, last year's tournament was a great success and we are pleased to be returning to Bloomingdale for our 30-year anniversary event."



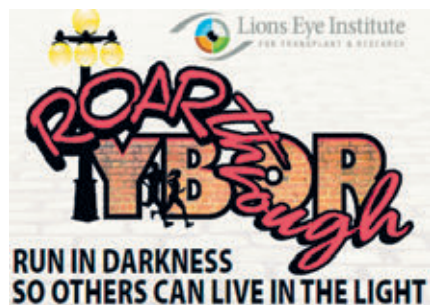
Golfers, Sponsors, and Donors who are interested can visit <http://epilepsysf.org/golf-for-kids> or contact Thomas Orth at 813-374- 8907. Bloomingdale Golfers Club is located at 4113 Great Golfers Place, Valrico, FL 33596.

Camp Boggy Creek allows children with epilepsy to enjoy regular activities.

Photo: Epilepsy Services Foundation, Inc.

Runners, Get Ready to Roar Through Ybor

By Wendy Knipp



On April 20 at 6 p.m., Ybor City streets will close and local runners will have the unique opportunity to pound the pavement while helping out a worthy cause. It's time for the 17th annual Roar Through Ybor - 5K Night Race for Sight presented by The Lions Eye Institute for Transplant and Research (Lions Eye).

Located in Ybor City, Lions Eye is a non-profit organization world-renowned for being the only combined eye bank and ocular research center in the world. Not only does Lions Eye conduct cutting edge research in eye disease, but they also recover ocular tissue and assist those needing corneal transplants. They are dedicated to improve the lives of the blind and visually impaired.

Foundation Donor Coordinator/Race Director Jamie Lynn Farrell said, "I am excited to host the new and improved Roar Through Ybor where we will run in darkness, so others can live in the light. This event will feature a brand-new food and beverage area (including wine and beer), a Family Zone and much more. We can't wait to see you all there!"

This family-friendly event begins at 6 p.m. in Centennial Park and includes both a 5K and a 1-mile Fun Run. Participants will enjoy live music and receive a shirt, a medal, food and drinks. Local runner Kim Harris, is signed up with her team Running for Brews-Brandon. "We are excited to do this race as a group. Since it's for charity and it's something we all take for granted that we can see, we are excited to be a part of it!"

To sign up for the race, visit <https://runsignup.com/roarthroughybor>. For information about Lions Eye, visit <https://lionseyeinstitute.org>.



Running for charity through Ybor City is fun for the entire family. Photo: Lions Eye

Everything Old is New Again

By Gwen Graverson

Are you ready to hunt for treasures from the past? If so, Sweet Memories Antiques & Collectibles is a great place to start! The proprietor, Rick Bennett, has owned the business for over 10 years. The white two-story 113-year-old Victorian-style home in Brandon is one of the oldest homes still standing in Eastern Hillsborough County.



There are 18 rooms, three porches and a garden area, where guests can freely roam and browse. You will find just about anything from antiques, vintage, primitives, mid-century modern, and collectibles. There's always something new and different added each day, with eight independent dealers (including Rick).

Everyone is greeted warmly, and Rick is more than willing to help and share his knowledge with guests. Rick is knowledgeable on the difference between antique and vintage goods; crystal vs. glass;

sterling silver vs. silver-plated, as well as collectibles, no matter the age.

Looking for something for an Afternoon Tea? There's an exceptional assortment of teapots, tea cups/saucers, sugar bowls, creamers, and flatware – everything that you will need to host an elegant event. There's even a rolling tea cart. And, don't forget about tablecloths and napkins from linen to lace to embroidered that will really complete your event.

Sweet Memories is an excellent place to shop for the novice to seasoned antique lover. Unique finds are countless, from picture frames, artwork, lamps, assorted furniture (end tables, kitchen/dining room tables, wooden desks, chairs, and china curio cabinets) to kitchen dishware and heirloom glassware. Or, how about a special gift for a loved one... possibly Art Deco jewels designed during the 1920's to 1930's or some of the most finely crafted vintage jewelry from the 1940's to the 1980's. These jewels are a touch of class from the past, just right for today.

Don't overlook the porches and garden area. You will come across finds such as: collectible pottery and stoneware (McCoy pottery as one example), window frames, vintage wicker furniture, metal tables/chairs, garden tools, plant stands/containers and assorted yard, porch and garden decor. If you are looking for something rustic, you will find it here. This is certainly the one place to look for items needed for making yard art which will be featured in a future article.

As for me, I only started collecting antique furniture a few years ago and Rick was the one who helped me select two oak dressers. First-time visitors to my home now go on a tour (willingly, I hope) to see my vintage décor in the laundry room along with one guest room that displays the grandfather of beds; an oak Murphy's bed from the late 1890's, vintage oak dressers, a wooden student desk, vintage trunk/luggage, along with other collectibles outside. Thanks to Rick, I have a new hobby, and I love it.

If you haven't visited this unique antique store recently, come on by, keep up-to-date on the latest finds at www.facebook.com/SweetMemoriesAntiquesCollectibles or call Rick at 813-685-3728. Located at 608 N Parsons Ave, store hours are 10 a.m. till 5 p.m., Mon – Sat and Noon to 5 p.m. on Sundays.

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April School News: A Look at What's Happening

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

Compiled by Deidre Morgan



ALAFIA ALLIGATOR ALLEY

Character Topic for April – Honesty

Alafia Mint and Spirit Sticks – New Spirit Sticks are available for \$1 while supplies last. Every Wednesday in Room 208 from 7:30 to 7:55 a.m. Come in, do a book swap, and visit the Spirit Store.

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



CIMINO COUGAR CENTRAL

April 20 – All Pro Dads, 7 a.m. in the Multi-Purpose room

BURNS BRUINS BANTER

April 12 – Burns Got Talent, 6:30 p.m. at Bloomingdale High School

April 16-20 – FSA Reading Test

April 20 – PTSA Board Meeting, 8 a.m.

April 23-27 – Algebra EOC & FSA Math

April 30-May 4 – Spring EOC's Civics & Science

May 1 – 8th Grade State Science Assessment Testing

May 3 – Incoming 6th Grade Preview Night, 6 p.m.

May 4 – 8th Grade Dance, 6 p.m. in the Gym



BLOOMINGDALE HIGH BULL BUSINESS

April 9 – Boys Lacrosse vs Tampa Prep, 4 p.m.

April 9 – JV & Varsity Flag Football vs Plant City, 6:15 p.m.

April 10 – Girls Lacrosse @ Academy of Holy Names, 6 p.m.

April 10 – Bloomingdales Got Talent, 7 p.m. in the Auditorium

April 10 – Baseball & Softball @ Plant City, 7 p.m.

April 11 – Boys & Girls Lacrosse @ Wiregrass Ranch, 7 p.m.

April 13 – Boys & Girls Lacrosse @ Bartow, 7 p.m.

April 13 – Baseball & Softball vs Riverview, 7 p.m.

April 14 – PROM, A Night with Sinatra at the Regent, 8 p.m.

April 16-30 – FSA Reading and Spring EOC's

April 17 – Boys Lacrosse District Semi-Finals @ Newsome, 5 p.m.

April 17 – Girls Lacrosse District Semi-Finals @ Home, 5 p.m.

April 17 – Baseball & Softball vs Strawberry Crest, 7 p.m.

April 18 – Girls Lacrosse District Finals @ Home, 7 p.m.

April 19 – Senior Cap and Gown Distribution, 8 a.m.

April 19 – Baseball & Softball vs Jefferson, 7 p.m.

April 19 – Boys Lacrosse District Finals @ Newsome, 7 p.m.

April 19 – Varsity Flag Football vs Lennard, 7 p.m.

April 20 – Dodge Ball in the Gym, 5 p.m.

April 20 – Baseball @ Newsome, 7 p.m.

April 20 – Retro Prom, The Barn at Winthrop, 6:30 p.m.

April 23 – District Flag Football @ Home, 5 p.m.

April 23 – District Softball @ Plant City, 7 p.m.

April 24 – District Softball @ Plant City, 4 p.m.

April 24 – Baseball @ Robinson, 7 p.m.

April 25 – District Flag Football Finals @ Home, 6 p.m.

April 26 – Baseball vs Alonso, 7 p.m.

April 26 – District Softball @ Plant City, 7 p.m.

April 27 – Grad Bash, Universal Studios, 4 p.m.-Midnight

April 28 – Band Prisms Concert, Auditorium at 7 p.m.

April 30 – District Baseball @ Durant, 6 p.m.

April 30 – Orchestra Spring Concert, Auditorium at 7 p.m.

May 1-11 – FSA Reading & Spring EOC's

May 1 – District Baseball @ Durant, 4 p.m.

May 3 – Cheer Informational Meeting, Cafeteria, 6:30pm

May 3 – District Baseball @ Durant, 7 p.m.

May 7 - 11 – AP Exams



BULL BRIEFS

Duke Summer Programs

Apply by April 16 to take advantage of Summer College, Summer Academy, STEM and other great camps. For information, visit the Bloomingdale High School Guidance website @ www.bloomingdaleguidance.org.

Athletic Hall of Fame

We are currently taking nominations for our Athletic Hall of Fame. Do you know of a former Bloomingdale athlete who graduated at least 10 years ago, or a coach who deserves this honor? Nominations due by May 1. Visit <http://bloomingdale.mysdhc.org/> for information or call the school at 813-744-8018.



SAT Reading Boot Camp

The next class is April 14 from 9 to 10:30 a.m. in the Media Center.

AP Mock Exams

AP English and Language Composition mock exams are on Saturday, April 28 from 8 a.m. to noon in the cafeteria.



Community Service Forum

Community Service Forum

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6 to 8 PM

Bloomingdale High School

1700 E. Bloomingdale Avenue



For Approved Events, Check the Community Calendar at

TheCommunityRoundtable.org

Students Dodge Ball For Dough

Brief/Photos by Wendy Knipp

On March 29, the Burns Middle School PTSA brought in Dodgeball2You, a mobile dodgeball organizer, for a school fundraiser. During the event, students played the classic game of dodgeball in a very new way. The updated game features a soft foam ball tossed at opponents in an enclosed dodgeball arena. The playing area provides a safe environment and cuts out the endless ball chase after wayward shots. The PTSA met their fundraising goal and students had a great time in five arenas of non-stop play. For information about this exciting take on an old favorite, visit <https://dodgeball2you.com/>.



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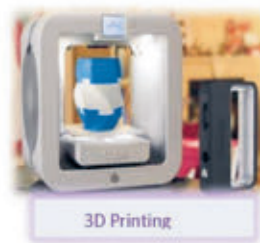
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Bulls Hit the Links at 2nd Annual Golf Classic

Brief/Photos By Deidre Morgan

The Bloomingdale High School Football Team held its 2nd Annual Golf Tournament on March 3 at the Bloomingdale Golfers Club. The fundraiser helps purchase new equipment, make improvements to the team weight and locker rooms and fund other needs.

Head Football Coach, Max Warner said that last year's successful event helped make repairs and provide for new equipment in the weight room. This year's fundraiser netted \$10,000.

Sponsors included Stanley Steemer, Apollo Pools, JF Kicks Bar & Grill, Biggers Family Medicine, Beef O' Brady's, C Whimsy Décor, Stein & Vine and Bawl Hogs Sports Memorabilia. Thank you to the community, parents and players for supporting this annual event. Go Bulls!



Tony Fiorita, Coach Max Warner, Melanie Crouse and Sara Mounce are ready for a fun day on the greens.



Team Mom's and event organizers, Melanie Skinner (l) and Cheri Pignataro prepare to greet golfers.



From left, Annie Fiorita, Rena McCoy and Tracey Biggers staff the Bulls merchandise table.



Burns Choral Groups Rate Superior

By Wendy Knipp

On March 23, the Burns Middle School Choral Program competed in the annual Music Performance Assessments. Each choir performed two pieces, one in English and one in a foreign language. Then, groups performed melodic and rhythmic sight-reading of music they had never seen before. All choirs – Legacy (Intermediate Ladies' Chorus), Symphonium (Men's Chorus), Bravura (Advanced Ladies' Chorus) and Ovation (Show Choir/Chamber Choir) received Superior designations – the highest rating possible.

Congratulations to Choral Director Andrea Peacock and the entire Choral Group at Burns Middle School!



Burns Middle School's Bravura choir performed with the Burns Band Percussion team and received the highest possible rating. Photo: Lenny Soto

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