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THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

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Off and On the Beaten Path...

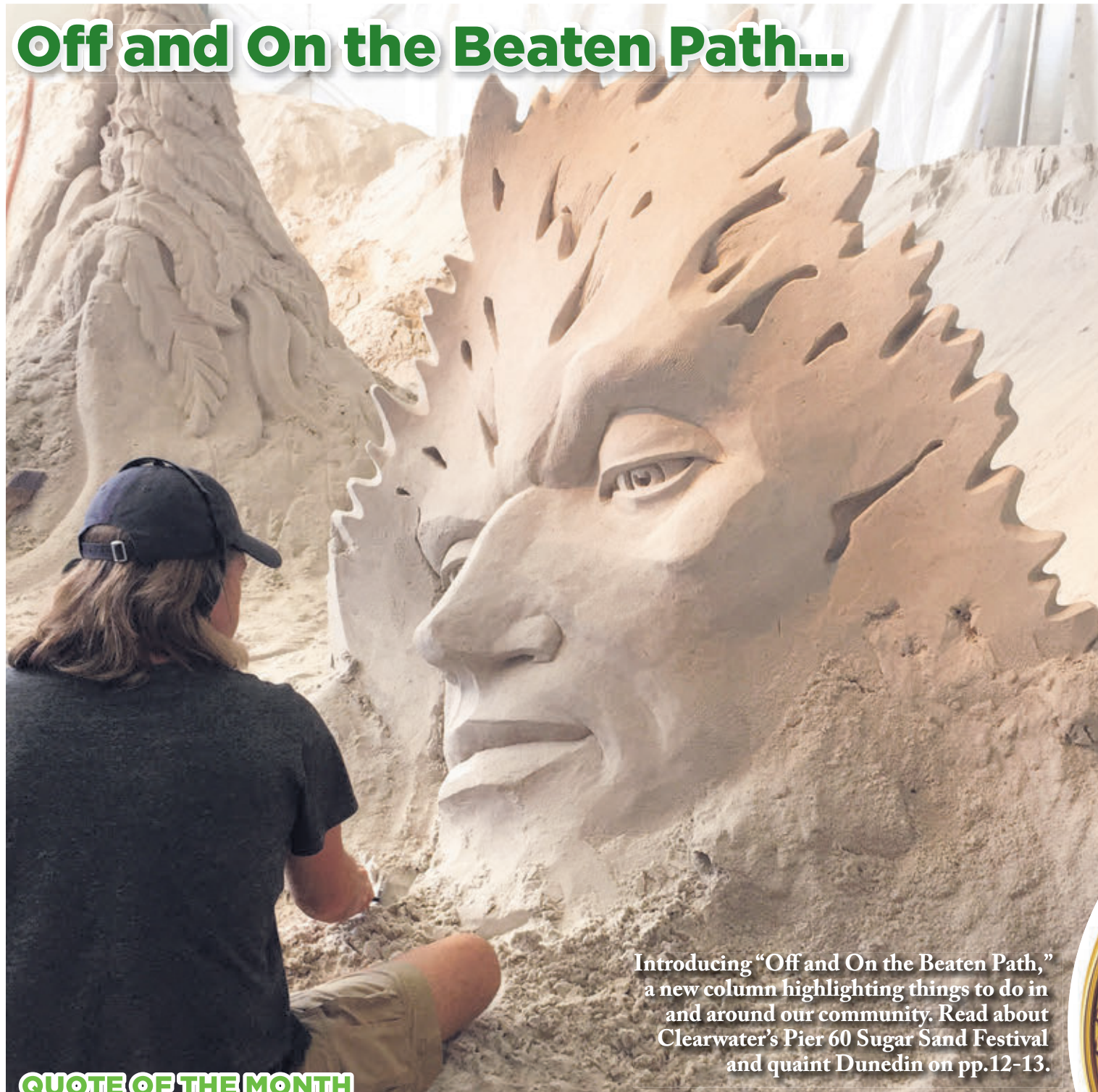


Photo: Miriam Leech

Introducing "Off and On the Beaten Path," a new column highlighting things to do in and around our community. Read about Clearwater's Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival and quaint Dunedin on pp.12-13.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Wherever you go, there you are." "Professor" Irwin Corey

This Month



BHA COMMUNITY CORNER
Page 4

NATURES WAY ROAD REPAIR
Page 5

COMMUNITY CALENDAR
Page 6

HCSO'S DISTRICT V
READY TO ROLL
Page 8

OFF AND ON THE BEATEN PATH
Pages 12-13
Dunedin
Sugar Sand Festival

UNIQUE SUMMER CAMPS
Page 16

SCHOOL NEWS
Pages 18-23
Chef Rene Marquis - 20
Cimino HOST - 21

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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:

3509 Bell Shoals Road

Valrico, Florida 33596

President: *George T. May IV*

Vice President: *Suzy Watts*

Secretary: *Joanie Wilson*

Treasurer: *Sean Donahue*

Directors at Large:

Daniel Berkowitz

Bobbi Ferraro

Mary Galin

Carl Hallinan

Billy Hightower

Beth Smedley

Charlie Woodcock

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER



JOY BOISSELLE

Editor - The Bloomington Gazette

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

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Yard of the Month



Photo: Susan DeLuca



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



Thomas & Melissa Crespo 2210 Lodgeview Way Valrico, FL 33596 (Somerset)

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.)

Pets are a factor in home selection and renovation

Our Cocker Spaniel, Princess, is named after a red Cocker Spaniel mix that my parents, brothers and I found at the animal shelter thirty some years ago. That special dog, that at times acted human, meant a lot to me and when we stumbled upon our new Princess, she just had to have the same name.

Since she has joined us in our Bloomingdale home, we have made changes to the home to accommodate her. We had a doggie door added into our pool door and we changed most of our carpet out for hard surface floors. In a survey by National Association of REALTORS, 52 percent of respondents indicated that they had completed a home renovation project specifically to accommodate their animal. Of those who undertook projects, 23 percent built a fence around their yard, 12 percent added a dog door and 10 percent installed laminate flooring.

Are you thinking of selling this year? Keep in mind that families come in all shapes and sizes and with all kinds of members. According to a new report from the National Association of REALTORS, 81 percent of Americans consider their pets when deciding on their next living situation. In fact, 89 percent of those surveyed said they would not give up their pet because of a housing restriction or limitation. And if a home is not ideal for their pets, one-third of pet owners would not even put in an offer on a home.

Neighborhood Snapshot – The Cove

The Cove, located off Culbreath Road, is a Bloomingdale neighborhood boasting 14 single-story homes averaging 3094 square feet all built between 1990- 1993. Eleven of the homes have three-car garages and three of the homes have four-car garages. Three homes sold over the past year at an average of \$114.91 per square.



By Ronnie McLaughlin
The Chadderton Real Estate Group
Keller Williams Realty
813-601-5659
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www.chaddertongroup.com



Homebuyers consider their pets' needs when selecting a new home. Pictured are Ray Chadderton with Otis and Ronnie McLaughlin with Princess. Photo: Ryan Chadderton



BHA COMMUNITY CORNER



DON'T FORGET TO LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!

Membership Drive Impacts BHA Services

Membership numbers continue to lag and will directly affect services and programs of the BHA. Already, a second fall clean-up tentatively planned for September has been shelved until next year. The board appeals to all residents to join the Association now to keep other programs in place.

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

Programs like this newspaper, clean-up, garage sale and fall festival would not be possible without your support. 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.

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.

Bloomingdale Homeowners Association Inc.
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Please correct name below if different. BHA Membership Notices are mailed to the member per file with the Hillsborough County Tax Collector. Recent changes may not be reflected here.

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AND ADDRESS**

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BLOOMINGDALE

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Community Scholarship Donation \$
Total Enclosed \$
Check Number

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

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

BHA EVENT CALENDAR

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

Monday, May 8, 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, May 9, 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, May 11, 6:30 p.m. / Hillsborough County Open House Public Meeting, Bloomingdale High School Cafeteria, Meeting to discuss Road Improvements on Lithia-Pinecrest, Lumsden, Durant and Bell Shoals Roads. For information, call 813-272-5275. →

Thursday, May 18, 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

APRIL BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS AND OTHER BOARD NEWS

At the board meeting, secretary Suzy Watts received unanimous approval to become the Association Vice-president. Director Joanie Wilson filled Watts' secretary position, also by unanimous vote. Carl Hallinan, a Chadd's Ford resident, joined the board as its newest director taking one of two available slots on the 12-member volunteer board.

A new expansion committee was formed to implement strategies to increase membership through honorary business memberships and the addition of outlying neighborhoods to the Association.

The scholarship committee met April 19 to select the 2017 community scholarship winner. The winner will be announced at the May 9 monthly meeting.

FALL FESTIVAL UPDATE

It's official! The BHA's Fall Festival will move to the Bloomingdale High School Stadium. Activities are expanding and sponsors are needed. The Fall Fest is an

excellent marketing tool and business owners may use this event to introduce their business to the 5000+ homeowners in the Bloomingdale Community. It is a great way to build business awareness and community influence.

Volunteers are also needed and community service hours are offered. As a community effort, the Fest is an exciting event to participate in on every level.

In addition to the area businesses, there will be games, exhibitions, entertainment, food, music and more! To contact the committee, email bhafallfest@gmail.com.



Wanted: A Forever Home and Family

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

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

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

Provided By The Pet Resource Center

FIRST SATURDAY
Celebration

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

The PRC's First Saturday Celebration is today from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Throughout May, all ready-to-go pets are available for a \$20 adoption fee, which includes spaying/neutering, microchipping, vaccinations against rabies, and a Hillsborough County license.



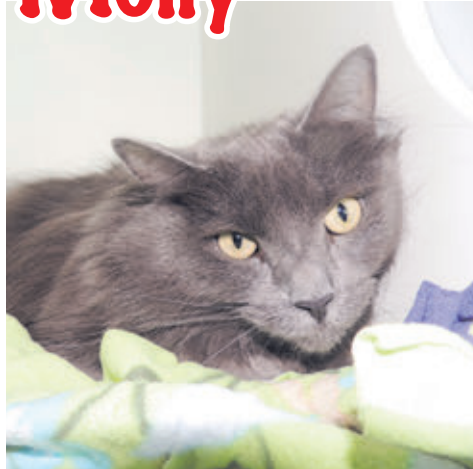
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PLEASE CHECK THE BHA COMMUNITY CORNER FOR ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS RIGHT HERE IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

TODAY AND EVERY SUNDAY!

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

Senior Health and Wellness Day / May 10 / 10 a.m. / Brandon Community Center / 502 E. Sadie Street, Brandon / Come join us for this free community event, featuring local business, agencies, and community partners to receive information ranging from health, to wealth, to better living, food, and entertainment. Also, enjoy refreshments and giveaways. For information, 813-635-8179.

Make a Muffin for Mom / May 11 / 11 a.m.-12 p.m. / Bloomingdale Library / 1906 Bloomingdale Avenue, Valrico / Join a pre-celebration for moms, grandmothers and women caregivers for Mother's Day. Share a story, make and take a small craft, and have a muffin. For children and their parent/caregivers. For information, call 813-273-3652.

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. If cancer has touched your life, participating in a Relay For Life event is a way to take action and help finish the fight. 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 accepted until the day of the event. For information, visit www.relayforlife/bloomingdalefl.



Health Fair / May 13 / 10 a.m.-2 p.m. / Westfield Brandon Mall / 459 Brandon Town Center, Brandon / The Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce, Brandon Regional Hospital, Jersey College and Westfield Brandon present the 2017 Health Fair. The Health Fair is an opportunity for Chamber members in the health and wellness industry to showcase their products and services. This fair is free to the public! For information, call 813-689-1221.

Mini-Triathlon & Celebration / May 20 / 2-8 p.m. / Campo Family YMCA / 3414 Culbreath Road, Valrico / Join us for our mini-triathlon! Participate as an individual or team! There will be a 20-minute treadmill walk/run, a 20-minute bike ride in the

spin studio, and 20 minutes of lap swim in the pool! Multiple times to choose from: 2 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 5 p.m., or 6:30 p.m.! \$45 minimum donation suggested to participate in the triathlon and registration is now open!



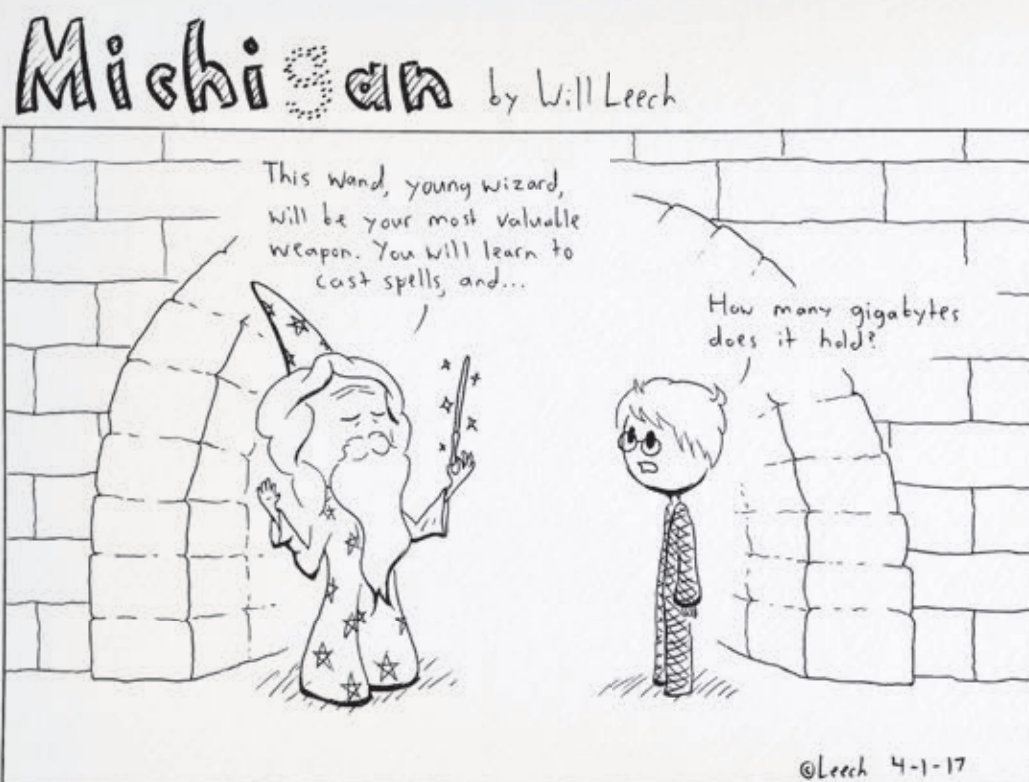
Not just for adults! We have races for kids of all ages—from crawlers to age 9. There is a \$15 suggested donation for kids. We'll have some poolside fun, splash pad games, music, and a Hot Dog Party for a Cause! Contact the Welcome Center or visit our web page for information at <https://www.tampaymca.org/try-for-the-y/>.

Memorial Day Celebration / May 28 / 11 a.m. / Veterans Memorial Park / 3602 Highway 301, Tampa / This celebration includes a presentation of colors, a performance of the National Anthem, drill demonstrations, a rifle salute, and more. For information, call 813-744-5502.



Michigan

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



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.



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

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.

Next lesson: What does hinging mean? Any questions or for lessons, visit CochraneGolfSchools.com or call J.D. at 813-957-3205.



**John E.S. Cochrane
GOLF SCHOOLS**

The Village ELC Celebrates Cultural Diversity

By Wendy Knipp

The Village Early Learning Center (The Village) is a forward-thinking childcare center that goes above and beyond to educate their students about cultural diversity. Each year The Village, along with The Village Family Foundation and generous sponsors, holds an International Festival. This year's event was April 8.

The festival is free, open to the public and showcases many different countries. In the days leading to the cultural celebration, each class chooses a country to study. Students decorate their classrooms and immerse themselves in the chosen country's arts, crafts, daily life, language and more. Making the festival even more special, countries chosen represent the backgrounds of current students and staff.

Tami Howell, The Village Coordinator of Community Life, loves the festival. "It's an opportunity to reach out and help students and families to get to know each other so they can better understand each other."

This year marked the festival's 6th year. On festival day, families visited each classroom and were greeted by teachers and/or parents dressed in native dress. Children were given "passports" to be stamped by each country. There were also arts and crafts, international food/drink tastings, and live entertainment including drummers, dancers, and cloggers.

The Village owners Joe and Susan Miller feel more than ever, it is important to acknowledge cultural differences and to celebrate them. According to Susan, "The most important thing about the festival is exposing the children to other countries and cultures that are different and they learn that different is okay."

Children at The Village range from infants through 5th graders and they come from many nationalities and backgrounds. The center is NAYEC accredited and located at 3741 Canoga Park Dr., Brandon, FL 33511. For information, visit the website or Facebook page at www.VillageELC.com or www.facebook.com/IHeartTheVillage.



Dancers from Gran na Rince Academy of Irish Dance delighted festival-goers.

Photos: Wendy Knipp



Victoria Padron, a teacher at The Village, educated everyone on the customs of Poland.



Erika Garcia, VPK teacher, is proud to enlighten the public about Greenland.



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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 March 22 and April 24, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office conducted 214 traffic stops and wrote 83 citations in the Bloomingdale and surrounding area known as J04 Zone. Our District IV deputies who work in the J04 zone have a very large area to cover. This area includes the Bloomingdale area down to Lithia area.

In the Bloomingdale area, there were two auto burglaries and one Grand Theft Auto (stolen vehicle). The stolen vehicle was taken from the YMCA parking lot. There was one residential burglary as well. There was one attempt to steal a boat so make sure all of your valuables are secure including anything parked in your driveway. There was only one criminal mischief this month, no change from last month.

Remember to watch out for what is happening in your neighborhoods. If you see something, make sure you call the HCSO Non-Emergency number at 813-247-8200. Please 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 residents victimized in fraudulent scams. Whether the scams are in person or on the phone, be careful. A number of telephone scams have been reported.

Residents have been asked to pay outstanding debts with gift cards from Walmart or even iTunes. Remember if it doesn't seem right, it probably isn't. If you are not sure, wait until you contact them back the next day and/or contact a family member before paying off any debt. Remember you can always help out by occasionally looking at the alerts on the HCSO website at www.hcso.tampa.fl.us.

SOME THINGS ARE GREENER IN BLOOMINGDALE...

May 8 will mark the first official day of our Bloomingdale community's being under the direction of Major Kyle Robinson and Captain Darren Barlow in the newly added District V. They are both committed to keeping our neighborhood crime rates down, just as Major Rob Bullara did when he took over as the District IV commander. Welcome to all the District V personnel who will be keeping our neighborhoods safe.

GETTING INVOLVED

We 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 May 18 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.

HCSO District V is Ready to Roll Out

By Miriam Leech

Plans for the new Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) District V under its Department of Patrol Services are about to come to fruition. On May 8, the new district—the first since 1997—will roll out for duty, and Bloomingdale will fall within its boundaries.

At the monthly Bloomingdale Area Community Council meeting held at the Bloomingdale Community Substation on April 20, District V Commander Major Kyle Robinson, along with Deputy Commander Captain Darren Barlow, were introduced by Community Resource Deputy Jim Brodie.

Robinson defines the mission of the new district as “deputies and citizens working together to improve neighborhoods.” He stated that he will encourage his deputies to go the extra mile in community policing of our neighborhoods.

Bounded by Dr. Martin Luther King Boulevard to the north, Kingsway Road to the east, the Alafia River to the south, and the City of Tampa to the west, the new district will be the smallest of the patrol districts—just 69 square miles. However, with estimates of 1,000 new people moving into Hillsborough County each month the new district was deemed necessary to get ahead of the growth.

According to Robinson, a lot of thought was put into the planning of District V since first being considered by Sheriff David Gee in 2015. The new district is a way for the HCSO to provide better customer service to its residents, as well as provide a more equitable workload for deputies assigned there. District V will roll out with over 90 patrol deputies.

As for the Bloomingdale Community Substation, it will remain open and a vital resource for the residents in the new district. Deputy Brodie will remain in place, and will report to Robinson and Barlow. Bloomingdale residents will not see a reduction in services, and the transition will be seamless.

The new District V office will be located across from the HCSO's District II building on Falkenburg Road. The Bloomingdale Community Substation is located at 3622 Erindale Drive, and continues its open-door policy any time between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, for residents with concerns or questions.



Taking command of the new Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) District V is Major Kyle Robinson (r.) and deputy commander Captain Darren Barlow.

Photo: Miriam Leech

Resident Report Results in Emergency Road Repair

Staff Report

Over the past several months, residents may have noted a slight dipping in the roadway at Natures Way Blvd and Elm Grove Lane in Bloomingdale East. One resident not only noticed, but also observed an alarmingly quick increase in the dip's size and depth over just a few days last month. The resident contacted the BHA and county on April 21. County responded with an inspection crew and declared an emergency repair due to an 8-inch gravity sewer main collapse. Excavation of the site began April 24 on the pipe located 11 feet under the roadway. Permanent pavement was restored on May 1. Thank you to county for the speedy repairs and to our sharp-eyed resident for reporting the issue.



Photos: Norbert Gobin, Bloomingdale Resident



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

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

SPRINGTIME IN BLOOMINGDALE BY MIRIAM LEECH, BSTD STAFF

It's Springtime in Bloomingdale, and with that comes all the beautiful colors of the annuals planted by our landscape maintenance company, Buccaneer. However, this year, it also means a lack of rainfall and drought conditions are stressing our turf and causing brown areas.

Turf replacement projects are underway, as is an extensive effort to ensure irrigation systems and pumps are working at full capacity. The Bloomingdale Special Taxing District (BSTD) recently invested approximately \$3,000 in electrical work at irrigation timers and ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlets. More work is being proposed at the well pumps. The recent community survey indicated that irrigation maintenance is a priority, and the BSTD Board of Trustees listened.

New Trustee

The BSTD is happy to welcome new Trustee Dann Berkowitz, who stepped up to fill the seat left vacant by Chris Papp. Berkowitz has been a resident of Bloomingdale since 2008, and has spent over 20 years working in higher education. Most recently, Berkowitz served as Vice President of the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association (BHA), and will continue to serve as a BHA Board member in addition to his duties with the BSTD.

Sidewalks

Hillsborough County has recently begun addressing some of the unsafe conditions of the sidewalk along Culbreath Road near Cimino Elementary School. White reflective tape marks the worst areas of uneven pavement, and some areas have been shaved and smoothed into an even surface. Be on the lookout for more improvements as Fiscal Year 2018 begins in the fall.

The next meeting of the BSTD Board of Trustees is Monday, May 8, at 6:30 p.m., at the Bloomingdale Community Offices, 3509 Bell Shoals Road. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend.



Photos: Miriam Leech

White reflective tape marks the worst of the uneven areas of sidewalk along Culbreath Road near Cimino Elementary. Hillsborough County Public Works also has shaved down portions of sidewalk in this same area to create an even surface.

BLOOMINGDALE SPECIAL TAXING DISTRICT

BLOOMINGDALE

3509 Bell Shoals Road

Valrico, Florida 33596

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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.



Where Have All the Humans Gone?

I think I've discovered the major reason behind the slump in our national economy. It's because nobody works anywhere anymore. Haven't you noticed? Of course you have.

We can wander around a department store for hours like one of the Lost Tribes of Israel trying to find someone who will allow us the singular honor of purchasing an item which, naturally, is lacking a price tag.

"Excuse me, but do you work here?"

"Uh-huh."

"Great! I've been trying to find someone since dawn. I'd like to buy this lamp, but..."

"Oh, I don't work in this department."

"You don't?"

"Nope."

Then comes the most heinous lie of all: "But I'll have Customer Service send someone to help you." You bet. **YOU** know and **I** know and **THEY** know that you will never...ever...see anyone remotely attached to that department for the duration of this millennium.

Calling a nice, healthy monopoly like the power company is equally futile:

"Good morning, Eclectic Electric..."

"My power is out and..."



"...all of our customer service representatives are currently busy. Please stay on the line and your call will be ignored...we mean, 'answered'...in the order in which it was received. Thank you for calling Eclectic Electric."

Sigh And when you do finally get through, inevitably you'll hear, "Oh, this is the wrong department. I'm New Connections. You want Service Interruptions. Let me transfer you."

There are few phrases that will strike terror into my heart like, "Let me transfer you." Literally translated, it means, "Let me cut you off so you can start this lunacy all over again."

And, oh, those teller windows at the bank. Apparently, there is something about my face that just begs to have a "Next Window Please" sign hastily flung in front of it. I can walk into a bank and, by the mere act of turning my back to fill out a deposit slip, send everyone in the building out to lunch.

I'm waiting for all of this to infiltrate my church. I can just see it now: I'll go into the confessional, kneel down and hear: **Click...** Father Thomas is out of the confessional right now, but if you'll leave the date of your last Confession, a description of your sins and say a quick Act of Contrition, he'll be happy to forward your Absolution. Say 3 Hail Marys and 3 Our Fathers and have a nice day" ... **Click.**

I tell you, it's only a matter of time. The whole world is on auto-pilot.

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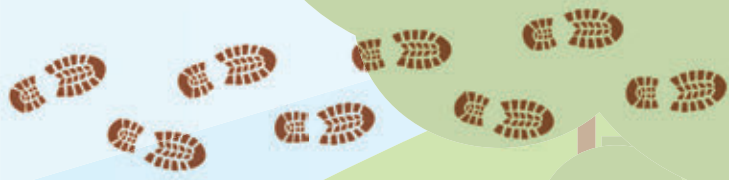
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On and Off the

(Editor's Note: Periodically, our new column will feature things to do around or be places or events that could be an "add" to your personal "bucket list." Should y

Dunedin, a Charming Place for Food, Art & Craft Breweries

By Wendy Knipp

Are you looking for a place to park your car and wander through unique art galleries and specialty shops? What about a place that has stunning views of the sunset on the water, delightful restaurants, and more craft breweries than you can possibly visit in one night? If this sounds good, downtown Dunedin is the place for you and it's just an hour away.

Located just north of Clearwater, downtown Dunedin offers an abundant mix of free and paid parking with easy to use electronic pay stations (www.parkdunedin.com). Once parked, you can go in just about any direction and find food, shops, and breweries. The Pinellas Trail runs right through the center of the area and it's a safe and fun alternative to sidewalks.

Restaurants are everywhere and local craft breweries not only offer tasty samples of their best brews, but also friendly and relaxing atmospheres that make it easy to kick back and enjoy the evening. In downtown Dunedin, it's easy for an afternoon of shopping to turn into dinner topped with a beautiful sunset, followed by an evening of bar hopping and meeting new people.

For dog lovers, "Dogedin" welcomes four-legged visitors too. There are many dog friendly parks, walking areas and outdoor dining locales. For even more ideas, visit the city's website at <http://visitdunedinfl.com/>.



You get the best of both worlds at The Dunedin Woodwright. It's both a fine woodworking shop and a craft brewery. Some nights, they also provide outside musical entertainment.



Many local breweries are within walking distance of each other. Tours are available or you can just kick back and sample their craft beers.



Enjoy breathtaking sunsets while dining at Olde Bay Cafe & Dunedin Fish Market.

Photos: Wendy Knipp

2 Beaten Path...

*ur area. Some will be well-known, while others less so. All, in our opinion, will
you know of an interesting attraction, let us know. We welcome resident input.)*

Clearwater's 2017 Sugar Sand Festival features FantaSEA Sculptures

Most Floridians know that Clearwater sand is one-of-a-kind, silky, soft and even better, cool to the touch. What some may not know is that every year renowned sand sculptors take to the beach to create sugar sand masterpieces for all to enjoy. Spanning ten days, this year's event took place April 14-23 at Clearwater's Pier 60.

The Sugar Sand Walk exhibit's theme "FantaSEA" promised and delivered "a magical adventure above and below the sea." Reporter Miriam Leech supplied photos of the event for your enjoyment.

Make sure to add this to your "must do" list for 2018. For information about this event and other activities and entertainment during the festival, visit <http://sugarsandfestival.com/>.

Photos: Miriam Leech



BLOOMING IN BLOOMINGDALE

Photo Provided By: Peter and Eileen Kadzielewski

...HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

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

For the Love of Gardening: Research, Talk to Experts and Know Your Zone

By Patti Phillipsen, Valrico Garden Club Historian

When I arrived in Thonotosassa from Brooklyn, N.Y., I came with a great deal of gardening knowledge. But it was all wrong. I brought a lot of my favorite plants from my garden in Brooklyn. Every plant I brought with me would give up - oh, some lingered but eventually they all died. Everything I tried ended in failure. I lost a lot of plants my first year. Why?

Since I could not grow what did well for me in Brooklyn, I needed to find plants that would. I started my research at our neighborhood library where there are great collections of books on gardening. First, I had to make sure the books I was reading were on Southern Gardening, since I had moved to a southern climate.

According to the National Gardening Association, Thonotosassa and surrounding areas are in the Coastal and Tropical South region. Surrounded by large bodies of water - the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico, our growing zone is typically defined by long humid summers, brief winters and one of the highest rainfall amounts around.

The American Horticultural Society further defined our region based on heat. "Called The Heat Map, this 12-zone map indicates the average number of days each year when given regions experience temperatures of 86F or higher." (<https://garden.org>) Our region is identified as zone 9 with some areas bordering zone 10. Just knowing my zone was a beginning as this number is on all plant tags at local growers and nurseries.

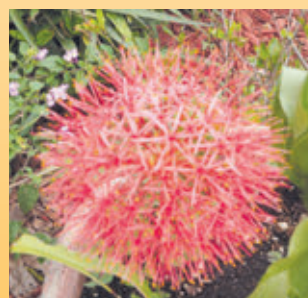
One of my favorite things, which I still do, is visit neighborhood nurseries. I go whenever I can and I don't always purchase. I just love walking around looking at all the different plants and getting ideas. I stop and read plant labels, but for me, that information was never enough.

So, I would ask nursery owners and employees questions - lots of them. "Where to place the plant, why does sun or shade really make a difference, what plants bring songbirds, hummingbirds, and butterflies?" I had so many questions. A good nursery will have all the answers; just don't be afraid to ask them.

A few years ago, I joined the Valrico Garden Club, a group of gardening enthusiasts who meet the third Wednesday of each month between September and May. The next meeting is April 19 at 200 Kingsway Rd., Brandon from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. While some members have large to modest gardens and a great deal of experience, others are new to gardening. One thing we all share is a love of and thirst for knowledge of all things gardening.

Despite my many obstacles, I have some words of advice for anyone moving to Florida or someone gardening for a first time: Don't give up, your rewards will be many.

Perhaps Leon Golsberry, better known as "Doctor Dirt" said it best, "In the beginning, God put us in a garden. That's where we come from." ...So, that's where you will find me...somewhere in a garden.



Long-time VGC member Amanda Martinez shared photos from her successful Florida flower garden.

Tips to Help Your Lawn Weather Drought Conditions

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

El Nino and La Nina are not defined in an irrigation manual. Yet, it's important to consider weather terms when caring for turfgrass. El Nino is an ocean temperature variation that can produce wetter-than-average conditions over Florida. La Nina can produce winter temperatures that are warmer than normal.

According to the Climate Prediction Center, the southeast has been warmer than normal. The United States Drought Monitor (USDM) data considers southern Florida to be in a moderate drought. "Much of Florida's peninsula has received less than 50 percent of its normal precipitation during the past 90 days with above-normal temperatures for much of the winter." (www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/expert_assessment/sdo_discussion.php)

Normal conditions are expected to return when the summer rains begin. This lifts the La Nina Advisory.

Follow these suggestions to help turfgrass weather these predicted dry conditions.

- 1. Turfgrass species have different mowing heights. Mow the leaf blade the correct height or longer during dry conditions. And, never remove more than 1/3 of the blade. This allows for a larger root mass to develop. See the table below.
- 2. Never mow when turfgrass is wet. This open cut is an opportunity for disease.
- 3. Mow in the morning or evening. Water loss will be less.
- 4. Keep mower blades sharpened. Dull blades allow more water loss than a straight, clean cut.
- 5. Reduce nitrogen, which encourages blade growth. Without sufficient water, fertilizer washes away.
- 6. Prevent thatch build-up. Excessive watering/fertilizing and improper mowing can cause thatch. Thatch feels spongy when walked on. Thatch absorbs heat, increasing evaporation and impedes water flow into the root-zone.
- 7. Check your irrigation system more often. Turn it on and visually check for clogs or misdirected sprays. Look for broken fittings or sprayheads. You may operate irrigation systems during restricted days or hours for cleaning and maintenance purposes. Most counties limit the time to 10 minutes per zone per week and someone must be visible on site during the entire operation. Check county water restrictions to be sure.
- 8. Calibrate your zones. Turfgrass needs 1/2" to 3/4" of water twice a week if there has been no rain. During drought/dry conditions, calibration ensures accurate and even water application.

Staying ahead of drought makes for a healthier turf. Taking the time to adjust, maintain and calibrate your equipment will help your lawn survive drought and then recover quicker when normal conditions return.



Courtesy Photo: <https://turf.purdue.edu/tips>

TURFGRASS SPECIES	OPTIMAL MOWING HEIGHT (INCHES)	PREFERRED MOWER TYPE
Bahiagrass	3.0–4.0	Rotary
Bermudagrass	0.5–1.5	Reel/Rotary
Centipedegrass	1.5–2.0	Rotary
St. Augustinegrass	2.5–4.0*	Rotary
Zoysiagrass (Coarse types)	2.0–2.5	Rotary

*Dwarf and semi-dwarf cultivars of St. Augustinegrass (Captiva, Delmar, Seville) are the only cultivars of this species that should be mowed at 2.5" Other cultivars should be mowed at 3.5–4".

Suggested mowing heights and mower types for Florida home lawns. Frequency of cut will vary based on species and time of year. (L. E. Trenholm, J. B. Unruh, and J. L. Cisar2 2015)



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MAJIK TOUCH CLEANERS

School is almost out and summer vacation is right around the corner. After the initial excitement dies down, many parents are sure to hear the dreaded words, "I'm bored." Be ready.

There are many summer camps in our area. The following is a small sample of camps and activities available for all ages and interests. And, don't forget to check out the offerings at the Bloomingdale Library and Campo YMCA.

TECHNOLOGY

TechPlayzone / view all camp details and offerings at www.techplayzone.com – offers STEM inspired camps for ages 7-17.

TECHPLAYZONE®



Valrico Lake Advantage Academy / 13306 Boyette Road, Riverview, FL 33569 June 5 - 9, 2017 from 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. / Camp Invention / www.ValricoAcademy.com – Fun hands-on challenges that spark creative problem solving for ages K-6th grade.

The Village Early Learning Center / 3741 Canoga Park Dr. / www.villageelc.com – STEAM Adventure camp (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) for ages 5-11. Ten unique weeks are planned for participants beginning on May 30, and ending Aug. 4. Call The Village at 813-651-0779 for details.



ATHLETICS

We Rock the Spectrum Kids Gym / 1076 E Brandon Blvd. / www.werockthespectrum.com – a full inclusion sensory gym geared toward children with special needs and autism for ages 5-13. Contact us: 813-571-1600 or info@werockthespectrumtampa.com.

We Rock The Spectrum KID'S GYM
For All Kids - Tampa

Golden City Gymnastics / 930 Lithia Pinecrest Road / www.goldencitygymnastics.com – full service gymnastics facility teaching to all skill levels ages 5 and up. Half- and full-day camps available. Call 813-657-0321 for information.

SUMMER CAMP
@ Golden City GYMNASTICS 2017

Topgolf KidZone Summer Academy / 10690 Palm River Road / www.topgolf.com/us/play/kidzone – A half-day golf clinic to teach all the basics of playing golf for ages 6-16. Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 12 noon. Dates available through August. Call 813-298-1811 to sign-up or register online.



Brandon Sports and Aquatic Center / 405 Beverly Blvd. / www.mybsac.org/youth-programs/summer-camps – Old-fashioned camp experience combined with modern technology for ages 3-14. Per day or week – we can fit any family's needs! Contact member services at 813-689-0908 for details.

CULINARY

Rolling Pin / 2080 Badlands Drive / www.rollingpinonline.com – Offers cooking classes for aspiring chefs ages 6-15. For information, call 813-653-2418.



Junior Chefs of America / Ybor City / www.juniorchefsofamerica.org/our-programs/ – July 10-21, Cooking Classes for children ages 4-17 with Professional Chefs & Educational Tutors!

ARTS

Center Place Fine Arts & Civic Association / 619 Vonderburg Drive / www.CenterPlaceBrandon.org – Drawing, painting, theater and more for ages 7-15. Call 813-685-8888 or visit www.CenterPlaceBrandon.org.



Drama Kids International / 3315 Bryan Rd. / www.DramaKids.com/FL6 – Acting workshops and performances for ages 4-11. 813-489-5899

The Florida Academy of Performing Arts (FAOPA) / Music Showcase, 402 Oakfield Dr. / www.faopa.org/camps – Music and More camps for ages 5 and up. For information, call 813-490-2787.





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: FATE OF THE FURIOUS

Fate of the Furious – I feel like I’ve seen seven movies just like it. Wait a second, I have; all of the movies in the Furious franchise end up being the exact same every time...there are dumb fun characters in really fast cars that all really seem to care about family. F8 follows the same formula.

Fate of the Furious, directed by F. Gary Gray, is the newest installment of the *Fast and Furious* franchise that features Vin Diesel’s character Dom turning on his team or “family.” When the movie first takes off, there is a sense of fun, and then all of a sudden, we take this rapid turn to urgency.

And, this is where the film loses focus. The editing of the different relationships between the characters, critical scenes, and just pure plot, often had me confused to say the least.

The story was simplistic, the characters were fun and the action was incredible. The cars were moving at such a high speed and looked fantastic on the silver screen. In AMC Dolby Theater, the car chases were on another level. For me, they take the cake. Another highpoint for me was Tyrese Gibson’s performance as Roman.

Despite the lack of focus, the new box-office hit *Fate of the Furious* was genuinely a lot of fun and a good time at the theaters. I give *Fate of the Furious* 3 out of 5 cars.



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MAY 25 - BSHS GRADUATION! MAY 26 - LAST DAY OF SCHOOL!



ALAFIA ALLIGATOR ALLEY

May 10 - Little Greek Spirit Night
May 19 - Jeremiah's Spirit Night
May 26 - Early Release Day



CIMINO COUGAR CENTRAL

May 19 - PTA General Assembly & Spring Dance
May 25 - Variety Show
May 26 - Early Release Day



BURNS BRUINS BANTER

May 9 - Spring Orchestra Concert, 6:30 p.m. at Bloomingdale HS
May 11 - Spring Band Concert - 7 p.m. in the Burns Courtyard
May 16 - Seventh and Eighth Grade Awards Night, 7 p.m.
May 17 - Sixth Grade Awards, 9:15 a.m.
May 19 - Eight Grade Field Day
May 22-26 - Exams
May 26 - Early Release Day
May 30 - Football meeting for incoming freshman and new students, 7 p.m., Bloomingdale HS media center



BLOOMINGDALE HIGH BULL BUSINESS

May 8-9 - FSA Algebra 2 EOC
May 9-12 - FSA Algebra 1 EOC
May 15-18 - Biology EOC
May 21 - Graduation Rehearsal, Fairgrounds, 9 a.m.
May 25 - Graduation, 4 p.m.
May 30 - Football meeting for incoming freshman and new students, 7 p.m., Bloomingdale HS media center



BULL BRIEFS

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Gigi Rivera, state winner of the Fresh from Florida Student Chef Cook Off! Her citrus chicken tacos with watermelon salsa will be in all cafeterias across the state next school year! See story on p. 22.

Driver's Ed Summer Registration

Bloomingdale is offering three summer two-weeklong sessions of driver's education. For information and to register visit bloomingdale.mysdhc.org. Summer Session One starts June 5.



Basketball Summer Camp

Do you have a child entering 4th-9th grade? Register them now for our annual Basketball Summer Day Camp! Boys and girls are welcome, and the camp is led by girls coach Joel Bower and boys coach Jeff Shotwell. For information, contact Joel Bower at joel.bower@sdhc.k12.fl.us or 813-299-5072.



ATTENTION: 2017 Graduating Seniors, Parents and Friends! We want your graduation photos!



The Gazette wants to help you celebrate your upcoming graduation. Send your graduation photos or selfies to inbloomingalenews@gmail.com by May 28. Identify from left to right those pictured and a brief explanation of what is happening in the photo. For example John Smith, graduate and parents Bob and Mary Smith; taken after graduation at a family celebration. Or, Mary Smith receives her diploma. She will attend ABC University in the fall. Send only high-resolution photos. Don't forget to provide contact information just in case there are questions.



Bloomington Bulls Basketball Day Camps

Held at Bloomingdale High School
For Boys and Girls of All Skill Levels

June 5-8 & June 12-15

Campers entering grades 4-9 are invited to attend.

9:00-12:00 Grades 4-6 (entering)

1:00-4:00 Grades 7-9 (entering)

*Exceptions can be made with prior approval.

- All camps will be held at Bloomingdale HS.
- Camp sessions are Monday-Thursday.
- Each camper will receive a premium camp t-shirt.
- Boys and girls, beginner to advanced are welcome.
- Instruction is directed by Bloomingdale head girls coach Joel Bower, Bloomingdale head boys coach Jeff Shotwell, and the Bloomingdale Basketball players.
- Emphasis will be on the improvement of fundamental skills and sportsmanship.
- The priority is for each camper to have fun, and learn in a safe environment.
- Campers are placed in groups according to age, size, and ability.
- All campers participate in daily skills instruction and drills.
- All campers play in 3-on-3 games and contests each day.
- All campers play in 5 on 5 games each day.

Daily Schedule

8:00	Gym Opens
9:15-9:30	Welcome & Warm-Up
9:30-10:30	Instruction & Drills
10:30-10:45	Break & Lecture
10:45-11:15	Contests
11:15-12:00	3-on-3 Games/5-on-5 Games
12:00	Gym Opens
1:15-1:30	Welcome & Warm-Up
1:30-2:30	Instruction & Drills
2:30-2:45	Break & Lecture
2:45-3:15	Contests
3:15-4:00	3-on-3 Games/5-on-5 Games

\$75.00 per session

Each Session is Limited to 40 Campers.

Registration may be mailed and check-in begins at 8:15 am & 12:15 pm each Monday. Please RSVP to hold space.

For Information: Joel Bower, Head Coach, joel.bower@sdhc.k12.fl.us Phone 813-299-5072

Make Checks Payable to: Bloomingdale High School Mail to: Joel Bower, Bloomingdale High School, 1700 E. Bloomingdale Ave., Valrico, FL 33596

Bloomington Bulls Basketball Day Camps Registration Form

June 5-8 ☐ Morning Session ☐ Afternoon Session June 12-15 ☐ Morning Session ☐ Afternoon Session

Camper Name Home Phone: ()

Address Cell Phone: ()

City ST ZIP T-Shirt Size YS YM YL S M L XL

Parent/Guardian E-Mail:

16/17 Grade School

The undersigned parent or guardian understands that the applicant will be engaging in physical activity during this camp, which contains a risk of physical injury. The undersigned assumes the risk, and releases Hillsborough County School, its directors and employees from any and all liability for personal injury arising out of applicant's participation in this camp program.

I further grant permission for my son to attend School District of Hillsborough County basketball camp(s). I further agree to pay through my insurance company or otherwise for any medical treatment that might be necessary for injury due to participation in this camp.

Parent's Signature: Date Insurance Co.

Policy # Emergency Contact and Phone #

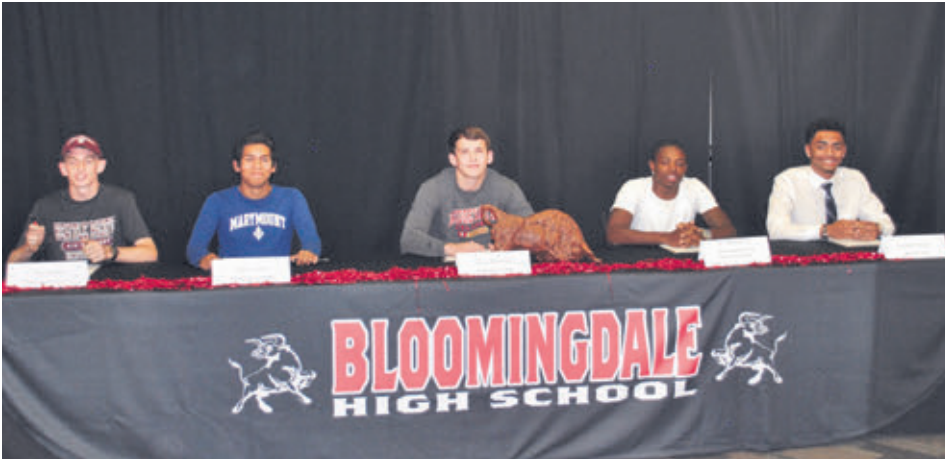


Bloomington Athletes Sign To Compete At College Level

Brief and Photo by Deidre Morgan

On April 12, five Bloomington High School student athletes signed their National Letters of Intent to play sports in college. The media center was overflowing with family, friends, teammates and coaches. Athletic Director Donny Peek said he would “look forward to the day when they would outgrow having signings in the media center and move to the gymnasium.” And, from the looks of the latest signing, that time has come.

Signing their letters at the ceremony were (l. to r.) Drew Bethoney – Bridgewater College (Basketball), Noel Lopez – Marymount University (Swim), Colin Boutin – Seattle Pacific University (Track & Field), Dauda Presley Jr. – Carthage College (Football) and DJ Williams Jr. – Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (Football). Congratulations and Good Luck to all the athletes!



Bloomington Lacrosse Players Honored

Brief by Deidre Morgan

BHS senior lacrosse player Evan Knapp (Attack position) was selected to represent Bloomington High School on the Western Conference Boys First Team. Knapp is the first lacrosse player, boy or girl, selected for First Team honors. In addition to this achievement, Knapp was also honored at the school's awards banquet with Team Most Valuable Player, Offensive Player of the Year and Scholar Athlete with the highest GPA.

Coach Matt Borowski also chose Knapp and teammate Andrew Mellon-Lynn to represent Bloomington in the 1st Annual Prep School vs Public School Senior All Star Game scheduled for today. The Boys Lacrosse team finished their 3rd season with their best record yet, 7-7 overall and 3-3 in the district. Congrats to Knapp, Mellon-Lynn and the Lacrosse Team, Go Bulls!



Evan Knapp



Andrew Mellon-Lynn

Photos: Dea Knapp



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At BSHS, Just Follow Your Nose to Culinary Excellence

By Deidre Morgan



Bloomington's Chef Rene starts each cooking class by handing out the recipes of the day.

Walking the halls of Bloomington High School, you can't help but notice delightful aromas tantalizing your senses. And, if the mouth-watering smells don't get your attention, the booming voice of the one responsible – Chef Rene Marquis – certainly will. "Chef" as he likes to be called, is the school's new culinary arts teacher who has everyone's taste buds doing somersaults.

Marquis brings a level of experience and excellence to the school's culinary arts program not often seen at the high school level. A graduate of the prestigious Culinary Institute of America, he was recruited by an Army general to serve as his personal chef. 22 years later, the now retired combat veteran established a much-envied record of accomplishments, both in and out of the kitchen.

Throughout his military career, Chef served thousands of soldiers daily, but also enjoyed competing for his country and pitting military chefs against their civilian peers. He was the Team Captain of The United

States Army Culinary Arts Team and attended the Culinary Olympics in Erfurt, Germany in 2004, 2006 and 2008. In 2004, the team brought home 16 Gold and 17 Silver medals, the highest medal count for any one team from any one country. He has also competed in the Culinary World Cup in 2002, 2006 and 2010.

After hanging up his Army greens and putting away his M-16, Marquis kept one weapon in his arsenal – a chef's knife. Setting his sights on TV and other media, the ambitious chef appeared on 2012's Café Mom Studios "Dinner Boot Camp," which helped mothers prepare healthy and quick dinners for families on the go. Episodes are available on YouTube.

Adding to his "win" column, Chef Rene, in 2013, dodged culinary sabotage from other contestants on Alton Brown's Food Network show, "Cutthroat Kitchen" – which, no surprise here, he won. Chef finished as the Season 1, Episode 7 winner in a battle titled, "Tiny Tools, Big Problems." Further adding to his awards, he was named Tampa's 2015 Chapter Chef of the Year and was presented with the American Culinary Federation President's Medallion.

But with all of these awards and accolades, he says his biggest achievement is "helping young chefs learn the art of cooking and preparing meals." Under his tutelage, students prepare meals and sell them to teachers. The money received from selling the meals goes back into the culinary arts program to help offset expenses.

He also couldn't be prouder his students, particularly Fresh From Florida State Cook Off winner Gianna Rivera, see her story on p. 22.

Welcome to Bloomington, Chef! The students, staff and faculty thank you for making the hallways of Bloomington smell "oh so good!"



Photos: Deidre Morgan

Zachary Kochendorfer gets eggs ready to be a part of a delicious salad.



Chef Rene Marquis shows Jaylen Roberts-Lawson the proper way to chop celery.

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Dr. Seuss is on the Loose at HOST

By Wendy Knipp

Photos: Wendy Knipp

"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." – Dr. Seuss

Dr. Seuss believed that children should be excited about learning and knowledge. That feeling should begin in Kindergarten and continue through college.

His inspiration is felt across the country from here to there. Now it's time for HOST (Hillsborough County Public Schools Out of School Time program) to add their own flare.

HOST is a childcare program for students in elementary and middle school. It's a safe environment where literacy is very cool.

Kids pass the time with snacks, crafts, and outside fun. But reading is where real tales are spun.

Kids read in groups or by themselves. Any book they can borrow from the library shelves.

Armani Clites is an Educational major at USF. She oversees HOST at Cimino and has a wonderful staff.

She loves the Dr. Seuss philosophy and believes that reading should be fun. On March 22, Cimino's HOST program threw a party that was second to none.

They opened their doors to the public for Family Involvement Night. It was a chance to show parents they were doing it right.

According to Clites, "Cimino Family Involvement night promotes HOST and literacy and shows people what we're doing in our program." Could it also be a chance to read "Green Eggs and Ham?"

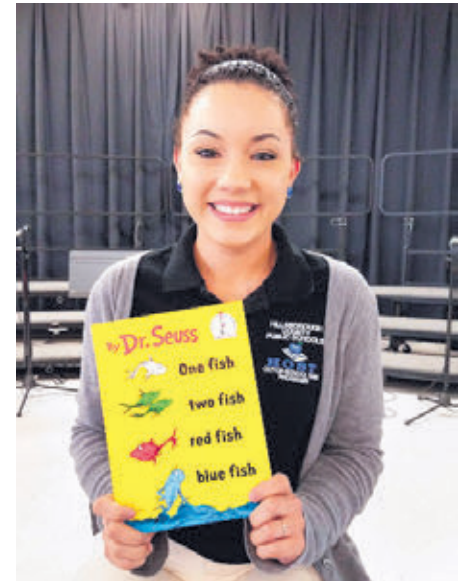
Parents and students were delighted with face painting, refreshments, and Dr. Seuss. But which book will be read, maybe "The Lorax" or "On The Loose?"

Deputy James Brodie did the honors of reading "One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish." At the end, the students clapped and asked the deputy all questions they wished.

For information on the HOST program, visit www.sdhc.k12.fl.us and search keyword HOST. And everyone everywhere should enjoy Dr. Seuss, yes, all from coast to coast.



Sophie Hornsby enjoyed face painting at the HOST Family Involvement Night on March 22.



Armani Clites oversees Cimino Elementary's HOST program and believes reading should be fun.



Community Resource Deputy Jim Brodie came out to read to the kids and answer questions about being a police officer.



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Bloomingdale's Gianna Rivera Wins "Fresh From Florida" Student Chef Cook-Off



Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Press Release

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services announced that Gianna Rivera of Bloomingdale High School in Hillsborough County is the 2017 "Fresh From Florida" Student Chef Cook-Off champion. Rivera competed against four other regional finalists from across the state.

Rivera and the other finalists prepared original dishes featuring at least one Florida-grown fruit or vegetable for a panel of judges. Her winning Citrus Chicken Taco with Watermelon Salsa will be served in a school cafeteria, and the recipes of all five finalists will be converted into school meal service portions and accessible to sponsors throughout the state.

"A healthy diet is the foundation of academic

success, and this competition is a fun way for students to learn how to incorporate wholesome ingredients into their daily lives," said Commissioner of Agriculture Adam H. Putnam.

Photo courtesy of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Gianna Rivera Bloomingdale High School Central West Regional Winner

Citrus Chicken Taco with Watermelon Salsa



INGREDIENTS

- 1lb boneless, skinless, chicken breast cubed
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 orange, juiced
- 1 lime, juiced
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 2 green onions, chopped
- 2 tablespoons garlic, minced

- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 tomato, diced
- 6 (6 inch) corn tortillas
- 1 cup cabbage, shredded
- 1/2 cup Monterey Jack cheese, shredded

INGREDIENTS (SALSA)

- 1 cup seedless watermelon, diced
- 1/2 teaspoon jalapeno, grated
- 2 tablespoons cilantro, chopped
- 1/4 cup green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 teaspoon garlic, minced
- 1 orange, juiced
- 1 lime, juiced

1. Mix the salsa ingredients together in a bowl and set aside.
2. Add 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil to a medium saucepan. Sauté chicken over medium heat for about 20 minutes.
3. Add vinegar, orange and lime juice, green onion, tomato, garlic and oregano. Simmer for 10 minutes.
4. Heat tortillas.
5. Place chicken mixture on a warm tortilla and top with cabbage, cheese and salsa.
6. Mix mayonnaise and sriracha to taste and serve on the side along with lime wedges.



BSHS Student Crosses the Line - the Drumline, that is

By Dann Berkowitz

Bloomingdale Senior High School Sophomore Nick Berkowitz is a proud member of the Rajun' Bull Band percussion battery and snare line. Nevertheless, he spent this past winter and spring crossing the Alafia River to become a member of Newsome High School Indoor Percussion (NIP).

The NIP consists of more than 40 students hailing mostly from Newsome, but also representing Durant, Riverview, and Bloomingdale High Schools. The percussion ensemble competes statewide in the Florida Federation of Colorguards Circuit (FFCC) during the winter months.

Nick was one of four members of the Flub section. A Flub is a marching tenor drum that provides midrange between the marching snares and the bass drums. The group practiced two to three evenings weekly and 8-12 hours on Saturdays, building the show from a blueprint provided by Synched Up Designs.

This season's show, called "Seeing Red" uses Spanish style music, dance routines, and visuals to evoke a sense of coming of age in the bullfighting ring. Step-by-step, the performance was arranged, rearranged, modified, tweaked and practiced, practiced, practiced until the students and staff could see it in their sleep.

Parent volunteers provided support from transportation to staging to costuming and building performance props to keeping the team fed and happy. Additionally, more than a dozen professional staff provided individualized attention in musicianship, movement, choreography, theatrics, and physical preparedness. Among the staff was Bloomingdale's Percussion Technician Kevin Sayers.

The hard work and support paid off. On April 1, the NIP took top honors in the Scholastic Marching Open Division at the FFCC State championships in Daytona Beach. Later that month, the team journeyed to Dayton, Ohio where they were put to the test against nearly three dozen other schools in the Open Scholarship division of the WGI World Championships. This was merely one division within a week of competition that saw more than 225 units from across the globe compete in eight separate WGI divisions at varying levels of competitiveness.

In 2015, Newsome scored eighth place, and they bettered that this year by achieving fourth. But, more importantly than the ranking is the sense of individual and group achievement as well as the bonding that takes place within the group. Nick admits that he worked harder at this activity than any he has ever been involved with before ... and he enjoyed every minute of it.



Nick Berkowitz shows his Game Face in rehearsal for the 2017 WGI Championships in Dayton, Ohio.

Photo: Carol Grullon, NIP Parent



Newsome High School Director of Bands Michael Miller makes the 'Seeing Red' Matador sign behind the unsuspecting Newsome High School Indoor Percussion (NIP) Flub Line of Newsome students (l. to r.): Logan Graham, Xander Ritter, Elijah McKinley and Bloomingdale's own Nick Berkowitz.

Photo: Sebrett Graham, NIP Parent





USS Members Alafia raised \$208 at Alafia's recent Spring Fling fundraiser. Photo: Jessica Hinson



The money will go toward Homes for Our Troops and building a house for local resident Sgt. Carl Moore, III. For information on how you can help or donate, visit www.hfotusa.org/Moore. Photo: Laura Latocki

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