



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BLOOMINGDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION SINCE 1980

THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

VOLUME XXXVII 🌿 ISSUE 8 🌿 AUGUST 2017 🌿 www.BloomingtondaleHOA.com



Congratulations, BSHS Principal and now, Honorary Mayor of Brandon Sue Burkett!

See pp. 12-13 for details.

At the Brandon Fourth of July Parade, Bloomingdale residents and fans surround newly titled Honorary Mayor of Brandon Sue Burkett (center). From left, Will Morgan, Melanie Crouse, Terry Morgan, Chip Bertaut and Terry Crouse. Pictured front is Steve Baricko, Burkett's then fiancé and now, spouse.

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2013, 2014 & 2016

Hillsborough County
Neighborhood
Recognition Award

Best Communications
Newsletter Category

Photo: Deidre Morgan

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." *Nelson Mandela*

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: *Sean Donahue*



Directors at Large:

Daniel Berkowitz

Bobbi Ferraro

Mary Galin

Carl Hallinan

Billy Hightower

Grace Lewis

Beth Smedley

Charlie Woodcock

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER



JOY BOISSELLE

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3509 Bell Shoals Rd.

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The official publication of the BHA since 1980

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



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Lithia Springs, Foundation Christian,
Alafia and Cimino.

Yard of the Month



Photo: Susan DeDeLuca

Dan & Laura Grucza

3728 Greenford Street Valrico, FL 33596 (Bloomingdale Pointe)



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

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



Bloomingdale Real Estate Update

(Editor's Note: 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.)



By Ronnie McLaughlin

The Chadderton Real Estate Group
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Simple Updates Help Older Homes Sell

I was at a Tampa Bay Builders Association meeting last week. The focus was on the benefits of new construction. Benefits include new roof, air-conditioning unit and appliances. In addition, LOW E windows and a high Seer rating HVAC mean lower energy bills than a pre-owned home.

Builders also offer down payment assistance and/or free upgrades. Many mentioned that the average year of a pre-owned home is 1990, a good generalization for Bloomingdale's homes. However, Bloomingdale offers important benefits that most new construction does not offer, like established neighborhoods, highly rated schools, no CDD fees, a beautiful public golf course and our own YMCA, just to mention a few!

Keep in mind; while buyers are looking at homes in Bloomingdale, they are most likely looking at new construction homes as well. Updated paint colors, clean newly painted baseboards and other small updates will go a long way when competing with new construction in our area.

One very inexpensive way to update your 1980-1990 home is to replace your out-of-date light switches, add USB outlets and replace the discolored or oddly shaped switch covers. White and uniform colors are usually your best options. For do-it-yourself homeowners, remember to trip the breaker! Better yet, hire an electrician.

Neighborhood Snapshot - Chadd's Ford

Chadd's Ford is a non-mandated neighborhood boasting 48 homes, averaging 2,300 square feet located on Moondale Court, Turnbury Street and Rainbrook Circle. Most homes have private pools, some are two-stories and four of the homes, located on Rainbrook Circle boast views of a pond and the golf course. All of these homes were built in 1985-89 and boast two-car garages, except for one home on Moondale that was built in 1994 and has a three-car garage. Three houses sold over the past year at \$113.74, \$84.41 and \$119.92 a square foot.



Photo: Ronnie McLaughlin

At our local Ace Hardware store, employee Jake located several inexpensive update options. From left to right, he holds a USB outlet at \$27.99, a crisp white switch cover at under a dollar and an updated light switch at under \$6.



BHA COMMUNITY CORNER



DON'T FORGET TO LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!

Membership Drive Slows, BHA Needs Your Support

With the Fall Festival right around the corner followed closely by the community's annual Santa visit, your membership in the Association is needed now more than ever. 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.

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.

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.

Tuesday, August 8, 6:30 p.m. / BHA Monthly Board Meeting, Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road. Residents always welcome. Call 813-681-2051 for information.

Monday, August 14, 6:30 p.m. / Bloomingdale Special Taxing District Monthly Trustee Meeting, Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road. Call 813-684-6667 for information.

Thursday, August 17, 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

JULY BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS AND OTHER BOARD NEWS

The board welcomed new Community Resource Deputy Clifford Fletcher to Bloomingdale. Fletcher reported that law enforcement will be out in force when school resumes. Also attending were County Code Officers Christine Zien-McCombs and Donald Bowling. Bowling is replacing Zien-McCombs as Bloomingdale's primary contact for code enforcement issues.

BL East and West Parks Renovations

The July 11 County Public Meeting to discuss Bloomingdale East and West Park Renovations was postponed due to construction at the meeting location. The meeting, according to park officials, will be rescheduled in 1-2 months. The BHA has asked that the Bloomingdale Library be considered as a potential site for the rescheduled gathering. New meeting details will be published as soon as they are known.

SAVE THE DATE! SAVE THE DATE! SAVE THE DATE!

Fall Festival is Oct. 28 at our new venue – the BSHS Football Stadium! Planning continues for the biggest event of the year. Activities for kids, a Trick or Treat Street, costume contest for kids and pets, local business booths and crafts round out this community-building event. Email bhafallfest@gmail.com or call 813-252-0252 for sponsorship and volunteer opportunities.



The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association is proud to present our

Annual Fall Festival

Saturday, October 28, 2017 • 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Bloomingdale High School Stadium
1700 E Bloomingdale Ave.

This event has become so popular it has moved to the Bloomingdale High School Stadium to accommodate growing attendance, greater event visibility and more convenient parking.

Bloomingdale boasts over 5,000 homes and 23,000 residents. The Fall Festival is a great opportunity to market your business and build local awareness. Limited booth space is available.

SPONSORSHIP LEVELS:

Platinum \$500

- Premium booth space
- Business info and profile in the Bloomingdale Gazette
- Your business will be the only business of its kind at the event
- Business info and link on the BHA website through 2017
- Ability to place item in 300 guest goody bags
- Business name and logo on banner at event entrance

Gold \$250

- Booth space
- Business info in the Bloomingdale Gazette
- Business info and link on the BHA website through 2017
- Ability to place item in 300 guest goody bags
- Business name on banner at event entrance

Silver \$100

- Booth space
- Business info in the Bloomingdale Gazette

Sponsors will need to provide: Table, chairs and canopy; Candy, treat or activity for kid's "Trick or Treat Street".

For more information, contact the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association at (813) 252-0252 or email BHAFallFest@gmail.com.

BloomingdaleHOA.com



[BloomingdaleHOA](https://www.facebook.com/BloomingdaleHOA)

BHA Board of Directors IRC 501(C)(4)

This event is made possible, in part, through a grant from the Hillsborough County BOCC.

Meet Your BHA Board: Grace Lewis

By Wendy Knipp

Grace Lewis proudly serves our community as a Bloomingdale Homeowner Association Director-At-Large. She has been a member of the BHA board since June and was previously Treasurer in 1990. Since 1987 she has lived with her husband Al in the Fairway Park subdivision. Her children, Kristen and Alex, grew up here and all have made life-long friends.

"I have loved the feeling of living in a small community even though we are surrounded by such a large city. I love the schools, the parks, and the people," Grace acknowledged.

Grace is a Certified Public Accountant and owns her own firm, Grace C. Lewis, CPA, PA specializing in taxes and accounting for small businesses and individuals. She and her husband are University of South Florida alumni so when she's not tackling tax issues, she enjoys tailgating and watching USF football games. Grace also supports the arts as a season ticket holder at the Straz Center but her favorite hobby is spending time with her 6-month-old grandson, Jacob.

Grace believes Bloomingdale is a community that cares about its people and watches out for them. "When people care about each other, everyone benefits," she said.

Grace admits that our community has always had challenges but residents just need to come together. She said, "It's how we handle it [challenges] that sets us apart from the others. We need to be our own advocates, our neighbors' advocate. We need to be there for our children and our neighbors' children. We cannot ask the police to do all the work to ensure our safety. There are not enough resources to do that."

Grace is looking forward to giving back to our community and ensuring the success of our BHA. Welcome, Grace!



Courtesy Photos: Grace Lewis

Grace and her husband Al have lived in Bloomingdale for 30 years and enjoy sharing our community with grandson, Jacob.



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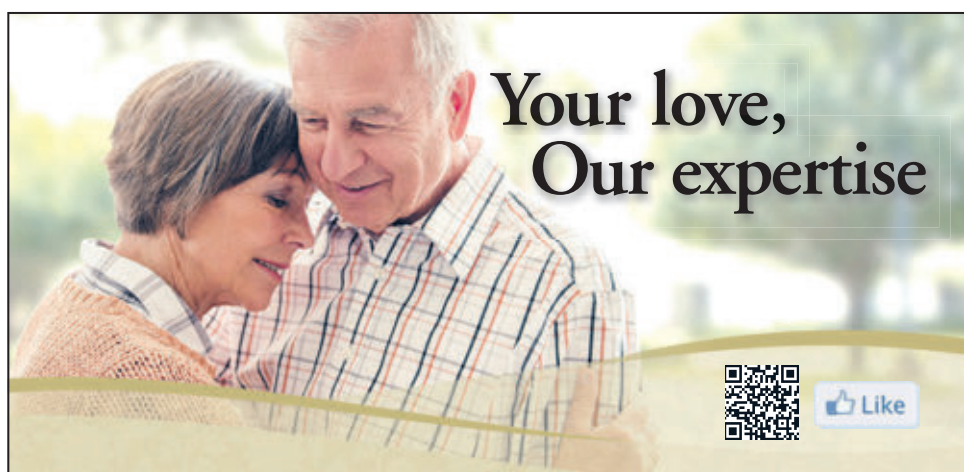
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(Editor's Note: Brian Bokor is a Certified Residential Appraiser with more than 15 years' experience. One particular area of expertise is researching development plans around our area. This column will tap in to that talent, as Brian will share new information he uncovers with our readers. He and wife, Sharon own their own real estate brokerage and property investment firm that assists clients buying, rehabbing, then reselling investment properties as well as working with developers on land assemblage and acquisition. Have a development question? Contact Brian directly or through inbloomingtonnews@gmail.com.)

PGM Store has the Answer

Have you ever looked at a construction site and wondered what was going on? No need to wonder any longer. Hillsborough County maintains an online document repository called the Plans and Permit Information (PGM) Store and it is open to the public.

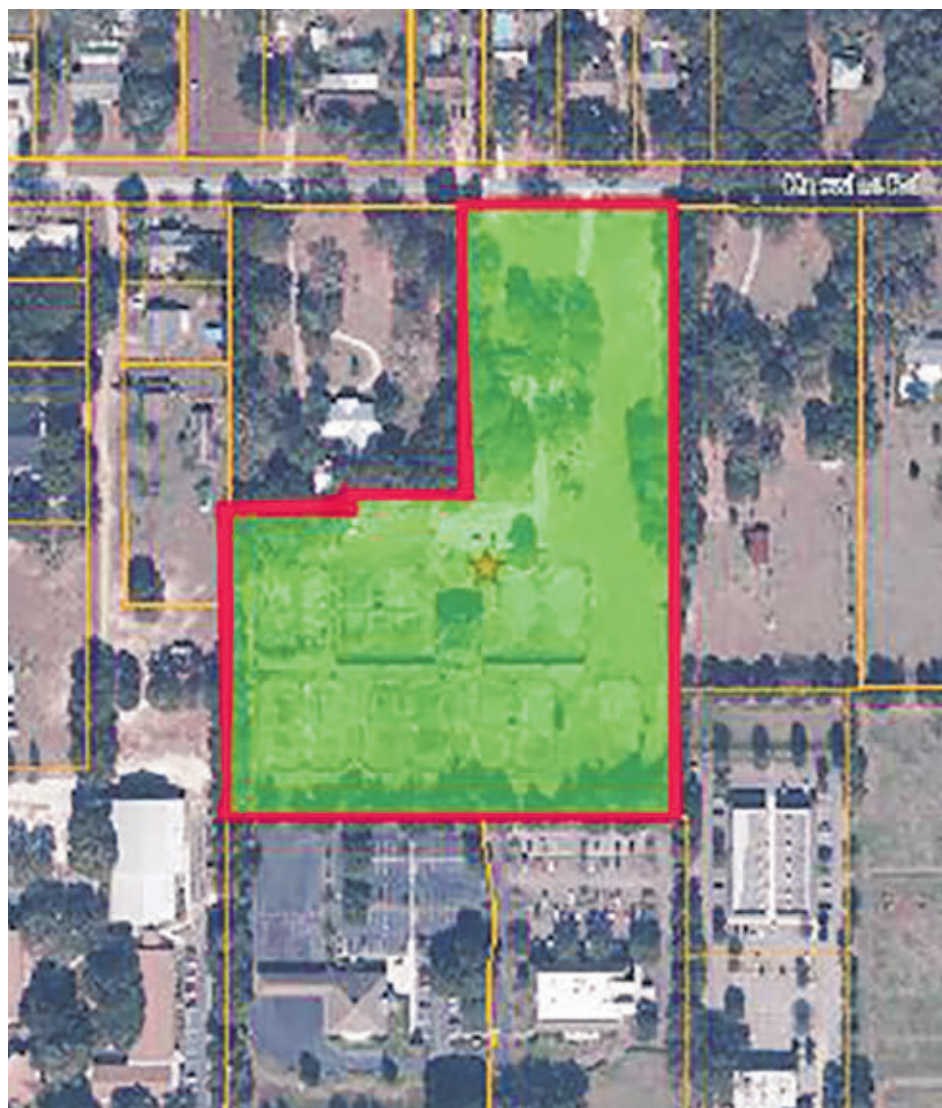
On the site, you can search for plans, applications and permit files. County requires developers and others to submit Plans (blueprints) prior to any construction beginning for commercial and residential projects, while Permits are required to legally complete these (and other) projects

The main purpose of construction plans is to show what is to be built, where it is being built, and underlying zone restrictions. Zone restrictions include Commercial, Retail, Office and Residential; and restrictions that are more specific relating to size, height, density, setbacks and more.

Developers must submit site plans and blueprints for approval before any work may begin. And, if a building plan was submitted, it will be in the PGM store. Once a request is submitted, an application number is assigned which allows the county's development department to track ongoing work and enforce development-related code ordinances.

If you have ever had to replace your A/C, Roof, Garage Door, Exterior Doors / Windows, Water Heater, etc., a permit most likely was required. Either you or your contractor was responsible for submitting the application documents. Again, if a permit was submitted, you'll be able to find it in the PGM store.

There is an enormous amount of information on this site; it is eye-opening and a great way to know what is happening in and around our community. I look forward to sharing "what's new" in Bloomingdale and the surrounding area in future columns.



How to Access the PGM Store and Be "In the Know":

There is an online tutorial available at on the County's web site: www.hillsboroughcounty.org. Search "PGM" and follow the links. However, I have provided step-by-step instructions below.

First, turn off pop-up blockers before entering the PGM store. You will not be able to access any documents without taking this step. Then,

Step 1 Go to <http://pgm.hillsboroughcounty.org:8080/optix-web-8/#>. Input username: public and password: public, then click on the "Login" button.

Step 2 On the next screen, Highlight "Document Library" and then then click the "Query" box.

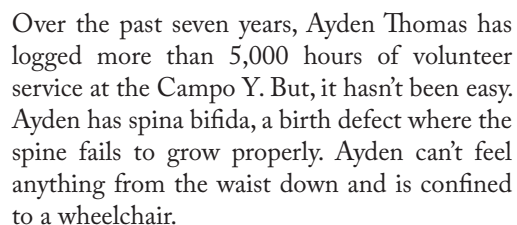
If you have the application number:

Step 3 On the next screen, Type the application number "##-####" (1st 2 digits = Year followed by a 4 digit application #) into the "Tracking ID." Then, press "enter."


Step 4 On the next screen, upper left you will see a folder named "##-####." It should match what you typed above in Step 3. Press the "Open" button on the upper left of the screen.

Step 5 You have arrived. All documents associated with this application are available for viewing.

Note: You can also search by inputting address, folio number, applicant name, etc. in the appropriate box rather than using application number. If you want to give it a try, look up Hero's Paradise, 733 Knowles Rd, Application number 17-0791. For one even closer to home, try the former Sweetbay, 1101 E. Bloomingdale Ave., Application number 17-0810.



What she lacks in movement, Ayden makes up for in spirit. She is a happy, outgoing person with a positive attitude. If it weren't for her volunteer work, Ayden would be stuck inside all day while her mother works full-time.

 At the Y, Ayden has learned computer and people skills. She also helps plan special events and gives presentations at board meetings. Staff who oversee Ayden's volunteer work say she has improved her decision-making and time management skills and has gained a lot of self-awareness. Perhaps more importantly, volunteering has given her a way to meet new people in a friendly, welcoming environment.

Ayden's mom, Kim, reports seeing Ayden's self-confidence grow and her willingness to try new things expand. Once disabled children turn 18, often times they don't have anywhere to turn. As kids, they're dependent on their family, school and/or community adaptive programs. But as adults, they sometimes can feel lost and alone with the urge to be independent but no real means to do so.

And, that's where the Y steps in. The Tampa Y is committed to developing strength in spirit, mind and body for all--regardless of physical or mental challenges. The Tampa Y's various adaptive programs help children, teens and adults of all abilities benefit from physical activity and group interaction.



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COUNTY NEWS

Congratulations, BHA and Gazette! Top Honors Awarded at Neighborhood Conference *Hillsborough County Press Release Excerpt*

Thirteen groups and individuals across Hillsborough County, including the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, took top honors in Hillsborough County's annual Neighborhood Recognition Awards program, recognizing those whose efforts go above and beyond to make a difference.

Nominations were received in nine categories, judged by a panel that included representatives from the public sector, nonprofit groups, education, neighborhood associations, and more. The winners were announced at a luncheon during the 14th annual Hillsborough County Neighborhoods Conference on July 15.

The BHA received three of the nine awards, which included:

Neighborhood Improvement:

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association created a new, online community standards list addressing the most common complaints, and worked with the County to initiate a codes sweep program.

Neighborhood Communications:

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association received this award for their monthly community newspaper The Bloomingdale Gazette, providing coverage on HOA issues, community, local school and county news. The association also uses a website and social media to reach residents.

Effective Board:

A new award, the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association representing 23,000 residents in 32 subdivisions, prioritizes communication, problem-solving, inclusion, training, and strong leadership. Frank discussion is encouraged, volunteers are recognized, various committees organize a wide variety of events and initiatives, and members interact regularly with government agencies on behalf of the community.



Winning the first Most Effective Board award is the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association. Pictured l. to r., County Commissioner Victor Crist, Dann Berkowitz, Beth Smedley, BHA President George May, Bloomingdale Gazette editor Joy Boisselle, Suzy Watts Sean Donahue and Carl Hallinan. BHA members not pictured are Charlie Woodcock, Bobbi Ferraro, Joanie Wilson, Grace Lewis, Billy Hightower and Mary Galin.



Photos: Hillsborough County, unless otherwise noted

Hillsborough County Florida



Hillsborough County Code Officer Christine Zien-McComb, BHA Standards Committee members Dann Berkowitz and Carl Hallinan, and Code Enforcement Director Ron Spiller at the 14th Annual Neighborhood Conference held July 15 in Tampa.



Hats off to The Bloomingdale Gazette staff and many contributors for winning their third communications award in four years. Seated l. to r. Graphic Designer Chris Pascucci of NTZ Studios, Editor Joy Boisselle and Senior Staff Writer Miriam Leech. Standing l. to r. are staff writers Deidre Morgan, Wendy Knipp and Susan DeLuca. Not pictured are regular columnists and contributors Ryan Brantley, Ronnie McLaughlin, Ellen Bess, Will Leech, J.D. Carino, Gwen Graverson and the Valrico Garden Club, HCSO's Community Resource Master Deputy Curtis Warren, Deputy Jim Brodie and C.S.O. Sandy Capitano, numerous Hillsborough County agencies and finally student writers Nicole Cluck, Evan DeGraff, Natalia Langone and Abigail Hernandez.

COUNTY NEWS

Hillsborough County Lawn Watering Returns to Twice a Week *Hillsborough County Press Release Excerpt*

As of Aug. 1, Hillsborough County residents have two days a week to water their lawns instead of one. The Southwest Florida Water Management District's Governing Board has voted to allow the Phase III Water Shortage declaration to expire Aug. 1, returning the region to year-round restrictions.

The schedule for watering established lawns and landscaping in unincorporated Hillsborough County, as well as the City of Tampa, is:

- Addresses ending in 0, 1, 2 or 3 - Mondays and Thursdays
- Addresses ending in 4, 5 or 6 - Tuesdays and Fridays
- Addresses ending in 7, 8 or 9 - Wednesdays and Saturdays
- Locations with no address (common areas) and locations with mixed addresses (such as office complexes and shopping centers) - Wednesdays and Saturdays

Watering must be done before 8 a.m. or after 6 p.m., and only once on your designated days. Hand-watering and low-volume irrigation of plant material other than lawns or turfgrass may be done on any day and at any time.

There are no restrictions on decorative fountains, car washing or pressure washing.

The restrictions apply to all residents - not just customers of public utilities - and most water sources. That includes private wells, and ponds or lakes that are used as alternate irrigation supplies. Reclaimed water customers are exempt from the water restrictions, although these customers are encouraged to use only what they need.

For complete information on these and other water rules in unincorporated Hillsborough County, as well as links to information from the cities of Tampa, Plant City and Temple Terrace, visit <http://www.HCFLGov.net/waterrestrictions>. Or call the Water Conservation Team at 813-272-5977, ext. 43991, during regular business hours.



Traffic Advisory: Lithia Pinecrest Road Nightly Closures to Aug. 12 *Hillsborough County Press Release Excerpt*

Lithia Pinecrest Road from Bryan Road to Lumdsen Road will be closed nightly for maintenance from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. Work began on Sunday, July 30 and continues through Saturday, Aug. 12.

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

Normal traffic patterns will resume following completion of the work.



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1025 E. Bloomingdale Ave

BRANDON MALL
684-4499
913 Brandon Blvd.

BRANDON
643-6944
1836 W. Lumdsen Rd.

FISHHAWK
654-7991
16707 FishHawk Blvd.

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BACK TO SCHOOL! THIS WEEKEND!

Tax-Free Holiday Weekend/Today and Tomorrow / Don't miss this back-to-school event! During this period, no Florida sales tax will be collected on:

- Clothing, footwear, and certain accessories selling for \$60 or less per item
- Certain school supplies selling for \$15 or less per item
- Personal computers and certain computer-related accessories, selling for \$750 or less per item, when purchased for noncommercial home or personal use.

For complete details, visit the Florida Department of Revenue website: www.dor.myflorida.com.



Tampa Bay Parenting 10th Annual Back to School Fair / TODAY / 10 a.m. / WestShore Plaza / 250 WestShore Plaza, Tampa / The day will start off bright and early at 10 a.m. with the first 500 kids who arrive receiving a FREE back-to-school book bag! From there, expect the fun to rev up with live entertainment, hands on activities, workshops and speaker sessions. In addition, local exhibitors will be providing back-to-school related information including health and wellness, safety, private and public schools, resources, childcare, after school programs, school supplies, tutors, children's retailers, finances, and much more! And with 60+ retailers, the fair will give families the chance to get all of their back-to-school shopping done at the same time.

First School Day for Students in Hillsborough County / August 10 / Be cautious as vehicle, bus and pedestrian traffic increases on our streets!

Back-to-School Bingo / August 17 / 3-4 p.m. / Bloomingdale Library / 1906 Bloomingdale Avenue, Valrico / Come play bingo at the library with other kids and win great book prizes! Librarian-led. For grades K-5. Call 813-273-3652 for information.

College Funding Workshop / August 17 / 6:30-7:30 p.m. / Bloomingdale Library / 1906 Bloomingdale Avenue, Valrico / Are you the parent of a college bound high school student and would like to learn about your options to pay for college? Join Lori Nadglowski, MBA, CFP® for an overview of the options to pay for college and how to choose a strategy that fits your family budget and doesn't jeopardize your child's financial future. Call 813-273-3652 for information.

Personal Finance for Teens Workshop / August 29 / 6:30-7:30 p.m. / CoWork Landing / 522 Oakfield Drive, Brandon / Bring your teen to learn strategies for savings, identify what money skills your child should know, and how to approach the three most important decisions they'll make about money. Presented by Lori Nadglowski, MBA, CFP®. For information call 813-252-0799 or e-mail lori@laurelwm.com.

FOR FUN!

The Village Players Present Into the Woods / August 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 18, and 19 / The James McCabe Theatre / 506 5th Street, Valrico / James Lapine and Stephen Sondheim take everyone's favorite storybook characters and bring them together for a timeless, yet relevant, piece... and a rare modern classic. The Tony Award-winning story and score are both enchanting and touching. The story follows a baker and his wife, who wish to have a child; Cinderella, who wishes to attend the King's Festival; and Jack, who wishes his cow would give milk. When the baker and his wife learn that they cannot have a child because of a witch's curse, the two set off on a journey to break the curse. Everyone's wish is granted, but the consequences of their actions return to haunt them later with disastrous results. Tickets \$18 for general admission, \$15 for seniors, military, students, and groups. For information visit www.thevillageplayersvalrico.com.

FALL IS COMING!

Practically Perfect ~ The Music of Julie Andrews / September 22, 8 p.m.; September 24, 3 p.m. / Center Place Fine Arts and Civic Association / 619 Vonderburg Drive, Brandon / The national tour of this brand new theatrical event is coming to Brandon, featuring songs from Camelot, Mary Poppins, The Sound of Music, and more! Tickets \$18-\$25; group rates available in advance. Call 813-685-8888 for information and tickets.

Pumpkin Painting Party / September 23 / 10 a.m.-12 noon / Center Place Fine Arts and Civic Association / 619 Vonderburg Dr, Brandon / Paint along with Instructor Jennie, and create a beautiful pumpkin canvas. Ages 6 and up; \$10 per person (all supplies included). Sweet treats and apple cider will be served. Space is limited. Call 813-685-8888 for information.



Humane Society Benefit Event at Val's Home Décor / September 23 / 11 a.m.-2 p.m. / 3920 Gunn Hwy., Tampa / Val's Home Décor is hosting this fun event, including pet adoptions, food trucks, Foto Box, and 50/50 raffle. There will also be a pet-themed Christmas tree for shopping! For information, call 813-907-1600.

6th Annual Gifts & Crafts Fair Vendors Wanted / Oct. 14 / The Bridges Retirement Community / 11350 Bloomingdale Ave / Vendors with unique gifts and crafts are invited to register for the annual Gifts & Crafts Fair to be held on Saturday, Oct. 14. Interested vendors contact Janet Noah at 813-413-8900 or jnoah@thebridgesbvm.com.

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

By Miriam Leech, BSTD Staff

Commissioner White Tours the Community

During a recent meeting with Hillsborough County Commissioner Stacy White, BSTD President Dave West invited the Commissioner to go on a drive through Bloomingdale. During that drive, President West discussed numerous items with White regarding the upcoming Bell Shoals Road widening project impacts, and thanked him for assistance in ensuring that Bloomingdale is made whole again after construction.

Although outside the mission of the BSTD, President West pointed out road surface conditions in the community in desperate need of addressing. Additionally, he discussed with White the need for an increased police presence in Bloomingdale to address speeding drivers on our major thoroughfares.

The Commissioner remains engaged and committed to our Bloomingdale community. The BSTD Trustees will continue to work with White and his staff to improve and maintain the District.

Hillsborough County Mini-Grant Application

The BSTD Trustees are currently filling out an application for a mini-grant from the Hillsborough County Office of Neighborhood Relations to replace the Bloomingdale signs at the entrance to the community on Culbreath Road. Those signs were removed during the construction that took place at the intersection of Bloomingdale Avenue and Culbreath Road in 2016.

The mini-grant, up to \$2,500, would cover the cost of refurbishing the old signs, new sign posts, installation, and small landscaping around the signs. If approved, the work would begin after Oct. 1 of this year.

Property manager Rick Pitrowski, of Merit, Inc., has already secured written approval from the Campo Family YMCA, and has submitted an application to the County for a right-of-way permit. This will allow signs to be installed on property on either side of Culbreath Road.

The Trustees plan a ribbon cutting ceremony for the entire community and County officials upon completion of the sign installation. Keep checking this column for updates on the grant and sign project.



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Bloomington principal Sue Burkett has a new role – 2017 Honorary Mayor of Brandon. After a month-long fund-raising campaign sponsored by The Community Roundtable, Burkett secured the title by raising nearly \$42,000 edging out fellow candidate Linda Chion Kenney who raised more than \$34,000 – all for local charities.

Just prior to the 60th annual Brandon Fourth of July Parade, The Community Roundtable president Janine Nickerson awarded the title to Burkett noting, “The real winners of the mayoral race are the charities.”

Burkett’s campaign slogan “For the Kids” struck a chord with voters. Her selected charities reflect her desire to support and make a difference in the lives of children – The Bloomington High School Academic Foundation, which directly benefits students at the highschool, received nearly \$21,000, the Boys and Girls Club, just over \$4,100, and Center Place Fine Arts and Civic Assoc. Center Place more than \$10,000.

As reported previously in the Gazette, the busy educator, mom of two and bride-to-be took on the mayoral race after a nudge from a group of moms representing the school’s Academic Foundation. “It’s hard to say no when money is being raised to support children,” said Burkett.

Her supporters formed the backbone of her successful campaign organizing a variety of fundraising activities for the candidate. Events included a garage sale, movie night, bingo, casino night, a retro prom and a grand finale at O’Brien’s Irish Pub to celebrate the end of the campaign and thank the many volunteers for their support.

Congratulations, Mayor. The Bloomington community is proud of your accomplishments!



Burkett’s fan base included BSHS students who did their part to raise funds during the Sue for Mayor Campaign.



Sue for Mayor Campaign



Just prior to the start of the Brandon Fourth of July parade, 2017 Honorary Mayor of Brandon SM and BSHS principal Sue Burkett thanks supporters for their efforts on her behalf.
Photo: Stephen B. Nickerson



Boys and Girls Club



Superwoman Sue



Principal Sue Burkett at the Sue for Mayor Yard Sale and Car Wash held at the school.



Center Place Fine Arts and Civic Association



Bloomington High School Academic Foundation



Terry and Deidre Morgan strike a prom pose.



One of the most successful fundraisers during the Sue for Mayor Campaign was the Retro prom held at The Barn at Winthrop on Bloomington Ave. Sue Burkett (center) and her crew (from left) Jeff and Tara McRae and Terry and Deidre Morgan.



With Rosie the Riveter’s iconic “we can do it” image in the background, Melanie Skinner and Melanie Crouse ham it up at Hamburger Mary’s Bingo fundraiser for the Sue for Mayor Campaign.
Courtesy photo: Melanie Skinner

Thousands Celebrate at the Brandon Fourth of July Parade

Photos: Deidre Morgan

More than 100 groups marched in the 60th Annual Fourth of July parade sponsored by The Community Roundtable. Thousands lined the 2-mile parade route to celebrate Independence Day in what is touted as the largest celebration in Florida.

The Community Roundtable mission is “To instill a sense of community and pride for the Greater Brandon area through participation, membership and volunteerism.” The organization meets the second Wednesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. at 619 Vonderburg Dr. in Brandon. Visit www.thecommunityroundtable.org for information.



As her first official duty, 2017 Honorary Mayor of Brandon Sue Burkett walks the parade route. In the foreground is then fiancé Steve Baricko.



Bloomington’s Crimson Dolls strut their stuff.



Bloomington’s Connie White and friend proudly represented the Military Women of Tampa Bay.

Members of the Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Office Color Guard kick off the parade.

Photos: Deidre Morgan, unless otherwise noted



Terry and Deidre Morgan strike a prom pose.



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Staff Report

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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.

MYSTERY FLOWERING PLANT IDENTIFIED

By Gwen Graverson

Two years ago, a Bloomingdale neighbor and friend, Dina Williams, was trying to identify a plant in her back yard. I decided to help by posting a picture of the flowering plant on the Valrico Garden Club's Facebook page, hoping that someone could identify it...to no avail.

However, in recent months, I have seen this flowering plant at both Lowe's and Busch Gardens. It's a Clerodendrum or Quadriloculare, better known as Starburst, Shooting Star, or Glorybower. Starburst is a sub-tropical plant, native to Africa and Asia (Pacific Islands).

The plant is well-suited for our area growing best in Zones: 9 – 11. It is fast growing, likes full sun to partial shade and can grow in bush form to 10 feet or more. Starburst's pink and white blossoms show themselves along with inedible berries beginning in January.

However, think carefully before deciding to add this beautiful species to your landscape. The National Gardening Association and fellow gardeners strongly recommend planting Starburst in pots vs. the ground, due to its invasive nature. One gardener noted, "They [the plants] grow almost overnight and are difficult to dig up. They will travel long distances...suckers were showing up 30 feet away from the mother plant."

For my efforts to identify this plant, I received a Starburst as a gift from Dina. It is in a pot and located in a shaded spot on my lanai. It flowered during the month of March and shed most of its leaves shortly thereafter. New leaves have since replaced the old ones.

Do you have a plant you need to identify? Maybe I can help...Send an email with a photo to inbloomindalenews@gmail.com.

Next month, invasive plants and their impact on Florida's conservation areas and native ecosystem – until then, happy gardening!



Photo from the Garden of Dina Williams: Gwen Graverson



CONGRATULATIONS, VALRICO GARDEN CLUB!

Earlier this year, members of the Valrico Gardening Club received news they had been awarded the Florida Federation of Garden Club's Mary S. Compton Award for Publicity. The award was announced at the 91st Annual Convention held in Kissimmee in April. Six of the club's Blooming in Bloomingdale articles were submitted with the application.

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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.

Michigan by Will Leech



How far away should I stand from the ball?

By J.D. Carino (Bloomington CC campus)

The length of your clubs and your posture should dictate how far away you stand from the ball. There is one constant: the distance between each club and your body is about the same.

Easy measure: The width of your hand is how much space there is between your left thigh and the butt end of your club.



If you stand too close or too far away from the ball at address, your swing will automatically adjust to find a more natural and comfortable swing path and plane.

In either case, it will very often cause you to strike the ball out on the toe (hands too far away) or on the heel (hands too close)...shanks.

Next month: How to let your eyes do the hard work in lag putting (distance control). Any questions or for lessons, call J.D. (813) 957-3205.



John E.S. Cochrane
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BLOOMINGDALE COMMUNITY STATION NOTES

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

SCHOOL STARTS AUGUST 10!

School will be back in session in a few days. Be smart and do your part...or, it could cost you more than you think. Last year, in the first weeks of school, 25 traffic stops were conducted at three schools in our area. Let's obey the law and cut this number to zero.

- Look out for school zone signals and always obey the speed limit.
- Watch out for children near schools, bus stops, sidewalks, in the streets, in school parking lots, etc.
- Watch out for your school crossing guards and obey their direction.
- Always buckle up in the car, and follow the pedestrian rules.
- Be a good role model for our children. Your children are always watching and will mirror behavior they learn from you.
- Be safe out there.

Florida Law. 316.172

Drivers should know this Florida Law. 316.172: Traffic to stop for school bus.

(1)(a) Any person using, operating, or driving a vehicle on or over the roads or highways of this state shall, upon approaching any school bus which displays a stop signal, bring such vehicle to a full stop while the bus is stopped, and the vehicle shall not pass the school bus until the signal has been withdrawn.

(b) Any person using, operating, or driving a vehicle that passes a school bus on the side that children enter and exit when the school bus displays a stop signal commits a moving violation.

(2) The driver of a vehicle upon a divided highway with an unpaved space of at least 5 feet, a raised median, or a physical barrier is not required to stop when traveling in the opposite direction of a school bus, which is stopped in accordance with the provisions of this section.

AREA LAW AND ORDER

Between June 19 and July 19, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office conducted 40 traffic stops in Bloomingdale East and West. Those traffic stops resulted in 26 verbal warnings, 7 written warnings, 5 citations and 1 arrest.

The Bloomingdale area is still experiencing traffic crashes at community entrances and within subdivisions. We have had three crashes without injuries and two with injuries. Remember, slow down, stop at all stop signs and above all be a courteous driver.

There were five vehicle burglaries and again some of these vehicles were unlocked. One of the vehicles burglarized ended with a juvenile arrested in possession of a gun. Rounding out the month were two residential burglaries, seven criminal mischief and five theft reports.

BE ON THE LOOKOUT!

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



Do your part to reduce crime. 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. If you make it easy for criminal, they will take advantage of you and your family.

SCHOOL CROSSING GUARDS WANTED

Fill out an application at <http://www.hcso.tampa.fl.us/A-Z-Directory/S/School-Crossing-Guard-Information.aspx>.





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.



Fly Me to the Moon. Preferably In One Piece

Birds do it. Bees do it. Why the heck shouldn't we do it? Because it's terrifying, that's why. Hey, *I'm* talking about flying. What were you thinking about? Jeez.

Consider this: Why would anyone in complete control of their faculties willingly board a piece of jet-propelled Reynolds Wrap promising to send them hurtling 30,000 feet into the air at several hundred miles an hour? It's just...scary.

Thank heaven, flight attendants instinctively recognize a Marrow-Deep Coward when they see one. On a recent flight, one approached me with the inquiry, "Nervous?"

"NERVOUS? ME? WHYEVER WOULD YOU THINK THAT?"

"Well, I've never seen anyone wrap their seatbelt around their thighs and across their chest prior to fastening it, that's all. May I get you something?"

"LAST RITES WOULD BE NICE."

"Fresh out. How about a scotch?"

Part of my problem is that my seatmate is always someone who, before we're even on the taxiway, chuckles and says, "Boy, makes you wonder what keeps this monster up there, doesn't it? I mean, by all rights, it oughtta just drop like a rock!" Passengers like this should be given a very special seat. On the wing.

Then, of course, there is the "in-case-of-emergency" speech which informs me that "in the event of pressure loss," an oxygen mask will drop on my head. I can also use my seat as a flotation device, which is going to do me a whole lot of good over Arizona.

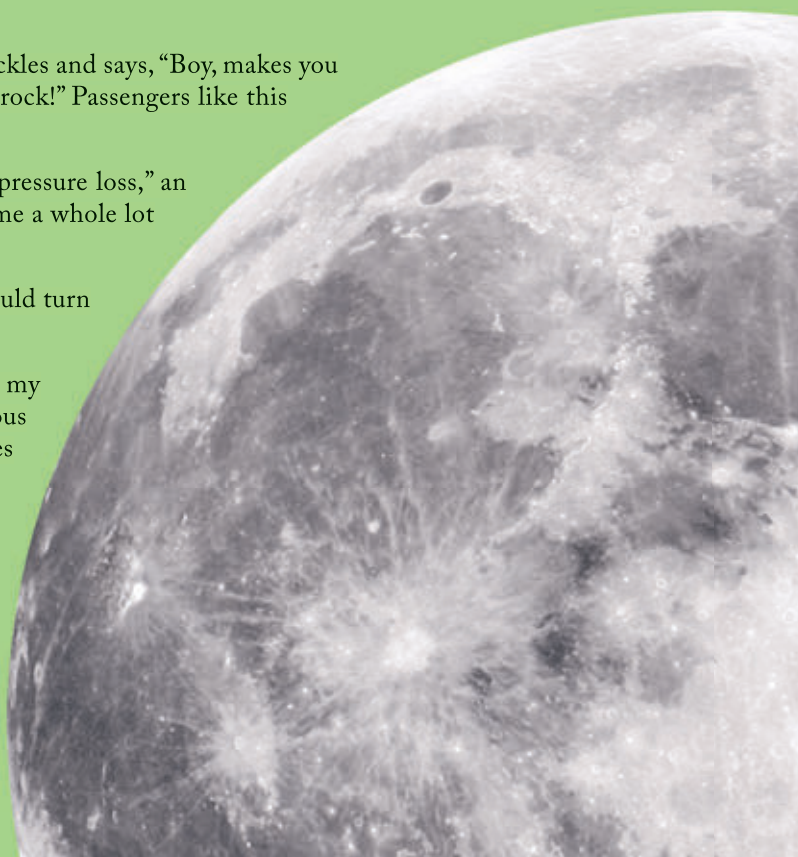
For peace of mind, now that the FAA is cracking down on passenger behavior, it seems to me they could turn their attentions elsewhere. For instance:

No member of the flight crew may present themselves to passengers prior to takeoff. Lately, all my captains look like they should be home playing with their Legos and getting ready for a nap. I'm nervous enough without feeling as though the crew is going to spend the entire flight telling knock-knock jokes and humming the theme to Sesame Street.

Captains may no longer impart such information as, "We've reached our cruising altitude of 35,000 feet and speed of 550 miles per hour." Mr./Ms. Pilot, if that's your idea of "cruising," you must have been a riot during high school.

Finally, any flight lasting over a half hour shall be equipped with a self-service beverage cart.

Yes, yes, I know. I have a lousy attitude about flying. Blame it on my mother. I came from a military family and when I was little; all the other mothers told their children that if they weren't good, the Boogiemans would get them. My mother told me if I didn't behave, Amelia Earhart would get me. Is it any wonder..?





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On and Off the Beaten Path...

(Editor's Note: Periodically, our new column will feature things to do around our area. Some will be well-known, while others less so. All, in our opinion, will be places or events that could be an "add" to your personal "bucket list." Should you know of an interesting attraction, let us know. We welcome resident input.)

Anna Maria Island is the Perfect Getaway!

By Natalia Langone, Student Reporter

Photos: Natalia Langone

Looking for somewhere exciting where everyone can have fun this summer? Or, a day or evening of laughter, beautiful scenery and good food? Then, Anna Maria Island is just the place for you!

There are several beaches on Anna Maria Island to include Holmes and Bradenton Beaches. On Anna Maria Island, there are a variety of places to eat and of course, you have the gorgeous scenery to enjoy.

There are several restaurants such as Beach House, Blue Marlin, and Bridge Street Bistro among many other great eateries with a great view of the waterfront. Additionally, the Blue Marlin and Beach House offer live music on select nights.

So, if you're looking for a fun night with a great view of the sunset and live music, head to Anna Maria Island! The restaurants serve fresh seafood and other local fare. Splurge for an overnight stay at one of the several quaint hotels and vacation homes located along the beach.

There is more to Anna Maria Island than just great food, drinks and music. There are great adventures to be had near the beach. You can dolphin watch on the Palma Sola Bay Sunset Dolphin Cruise (which is just one of several companies that offer dolphin watching). Another great way to spend the day is at the Bradenton Beach city pier which allows fishing from the pier.

Both on and off the beach, you can rent bikes, Segways, jet skis and kayaks to explore the beach and the surrounding inter-coastal areas. If you are looking for a new coastal adventure beyond the St Pete / Clearwater area, Anna Maria is a pleasant nearby getaway.



A view of the white sand beach of Anna Maria Island from the Beach House Restaurant.



Sunsets on the island are breathtaking.

The Talking Pint: "It's A Major Award!"

Story and Photos By Wendy Knipp

The classic leg lamp in the window should be your first clue that The Talking Pint is not your basic bar. The neighborhood gathering place features a fun comfortable atmosphere surpassed only by the upbeat personalities of the staff and owner Matt Brooks. They love what they're doing and it shows.



A nod to A Christmas Story with their leg lamp in the window is part of The Talking Pint's charm.



Brooks is a proud graduate of Bloomingdale High School. In 2013, he opened The Talking Pint at the intersection of Bell Shoals Road and Fishhawk Boulevard. Of the location, he said, "We get to be part of a fantastic neighborhood. We try to be a part of the community and we really enjoy that."

The food and drink menus are unique and include something for everyone. There are countless drink choices prominently displayed on colorful chalkboards (including prices). Customers can choose between regular bar food and healthier options such as soup, salad and vegetarian options. The food grill is located just behind the bar and open for the customers to view.

Live music, trivia night, fundraisers, and food and drink specials, there is always something going on at The Talking Pint. In fact, even with outdoor seating, it's sometimes hard to find a seat on busy nights. And, with success, comes expansion. Pleased that so many people enjoy his bar, Brooks will move to the vacant Buffalo Wild Wings in the same plaza early next year.

The Talking Pint has varying hours opening at lunchtime and closing late. It is currently located at 13428 Boyette Rd, Riverview. For information including menu, weekly events, and specials, visit www.facebook.com/TheTalkingPint.



Owner Matt Brooks loves serving customers and it shows.

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On and Off the Beaten Path...

Ukulele Brand's is Worth the Drive

Story and Photos By Wendy Knipp

Ukulele Brand's (Uke's) is a casual indoor/outdoor restaurant, bar, and live music venue complete with a beautiful lakeside view that calms the senses. The atmosphere is "old Florida" – relaxing and laid back. Whether you're at the bar inside or listening to a band on the patio, it's enjoyable, the food and drinks are good, and the staff is attentive.

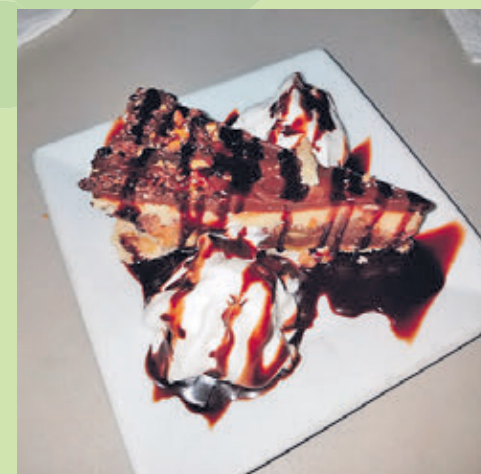
The menu is extensive and includes everything from burgers and seafood, to chowder and jambalaya. This was our first time and all five adults at our table ordered something different. Everything was delicious. The Manager even stopped by to check on us.

On most nights of the week, entertainment includes live music and trivia. Plant City natives, The Double Barrel Band, a classic rock music group, played during our visit. They played all the classics and even had people up and dancing. Although it's almost an hour away in Land O'Lakes, Ukulele's Brands is worth the drive.

Ukulele Brands is located at 4805 Land O' Lakes Blvd, Land O' Lakes, FL. Visit their website at www.UkeleleBrands.com.



Uke's is a great place to go for an evening of delicious food and fun music.



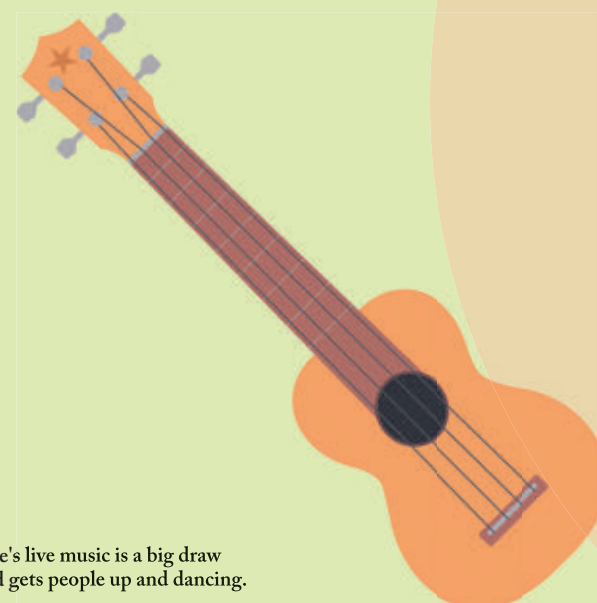
Whether you want their famous Jambalaya or a simple piece of Cheesecake, the food does not disappoint.



Their lakefront location makes it a perfect place to enjoy nature.



Uke's live music is a big draw and gets people up and dancing.



Q: What kind of tree does a math teacher climb?
A: Geometry

Back-to-school and back-to-college spending to reach \$83.6 billion in 2017, an increase of more than 10 percent over last year's \$75.8 billion.

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Alafia Elementary School is proudly celebrating twenty-nine years of educating children in Hillsborough County.

Cimino Elementary opened in 2002. The school received "The State School of Character" in 2009.

Founded in 1635, Boston's Latin School is the oldest public school in the US. Five of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence graduated from this school, Benjamin Franklin, John Hancock, Robert Treat Paine, Samuel Adams and William Hopper.

Last year, the average cost of college tuition was \$33,480 at private colleges, \$9,650 for state residents at public colleges, and \$24,930 for out-of-state residents attending public universities.

Each year, over 78.8 million kids, teens, and adults enroll in school.

67% of kids like school.

At more than 2 billion used each year in the United States, a pencil is the #1 used school supply for students and teachers.

A pencil can write 45,000 words or draw a line 35 miles long and will write in zero gravity, upside down, or under water!

Typical ballpoint pens can draw a line between 4,000 to 7,500 feet long

Crayola produces nearly 3 billion crayons each year – an average of twelve million daily. Blue is the most popular Crayola color.

The average child wears down 720 crayons by their 10th birthday.



Sources: <http://www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/students/>, <http://thepioneerwoman.com/>, <http://www.triangletutors.net/>, <http://www.greatschools.org/>, <http://www.surfnetkids.com/>, <http://www.crayola.com/crayolaexperience/>, <https://nrf.com/resources/consumer-data/back-school-headquarters>

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August 10 - BACK TO SCHOOL!

September 4 - Labor Day Holiday / Non-Student Day



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



ALAFIA ALLIGATOR ALLEY

Aug. 8 - Boo Hoo Breakfast, 8-9 a.m. for ELP, Kindergarten and VPK
Sneak Peak, 2:30-4 p.m. for 1st thru 5th grade

Boo Hoo Breakfast

If you have a Kindergartner, we'd love to see you at our Boo Hoo Breakfast in the cafeteria. Kindergartners will visit their classrooms and meet their teachers while parents stay in the cafeteria to receive information about the first day of school and the upcoming school year. We hope to see you there!

Sneak Peak!

Come join us for a back to school Sneak Peek. Students can visit their classrooms and meet their teachers. The PTA will also have items for sale in the cafeteria including agendas, t-shirts, PTA memberships, etc. We hope to see you there!

New Flashing School Zone Signs

Be aware of the new School Zone signs on Natures Way. Slow down and lookout for our children and one another. Fines are doubled in these areas during posted hours.



CIMINO COUGAR CENTRAL

Aug. 8 - Meet the Teacher, 11 a.m. to noon, Last Names A - L and 1-2 p.m., Last Names M - Z
Aug. 25 - Open House / Curriculum Night, 5:30-6:30 p.m.



BURNS BRUINS BANTER

Aug. 7 - 6th Grade Open House, 1-3 p.m.
Aug. 7 - 7th and 8th Grade Open House, 3:30-5 p.m.
Aug. 31 - Basketball @ Randall, 6 p.m.



BLOOMINGDALE HIGH BULL BUSINESS

Aug. 8 - Open House, 5 p.m., Freshmen and New Student Orientation
7 p.m., Upperclassmen
Aug. 11 - Meet the Bulls, 7 p.m. at the Stadium
Aug. 18 - Football @ Riverview, 7:30 p.m.
Aug. 22 - Volleyball vs. Robinson, 7 p.m.
Aug. 23 - JV/V Volleyball @ Plant, 6:16 p.m.
Aug. 25 - Football vs. Newsome, 7:30 p.m.
Aug. 29 - JV/V Volleyball @ Wharton, 6:15 p.m.
Aug. 31 - JV/V Volleyball @ Plant City, 6:15 p.m.
Aug. 31 - JV Football vs. Durant, 7 p.m.
Sept. 1 - Football @ Chamberlain, 7:30 p.m.



2017-18 School Bell Schedule

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | 8:00am - 2:15pm |
| MIDDLE SCHOOL | 9:00am - 4:15pm |
| HIGH SCHOOL | 7:33am - 3:00pm |
| MAGNET ELEMENTARY | 8:20am - 2:30pm |
| MAGNET MIDDLE | 7:35am - 2:50pm |
| MAGNET HIGH | 7:33am - 3:00pm |
| K-8 | Various |



BULL BRIEFS

Host an Exchange Student

Youth For Understanding (YFU) is one of the oldest and most trusted international exchange organizations in the world. YFU is asking local families and volunteers to help build international and interpersonal friendships by hosting or representing an incoming international exchange student for the 2017-18 academic year. Hosting is all about sharing your version of the American lifestyle with an exchange student while also gaining a new global perspective, many memories and a new family member for life.

Benefits of being a host family:

- Share your story, traditions, and customs while learning about others
- Experience what it's like to have another sibling
- Get exposed to a different culture and country
- Learn a new language
- Expose your school and community to the world
- Appreciate your own family, country and culture
- Become eligible for the YFU Community Grant to participate in your own study abroad experience.

If you or someone you know is interested in hosting, please visit www.yfuusa.org or call Marsha Hurst at 904-881-0068.



YOUTH FOR UNDERSTANDING
Intercultural Exchange Programs



Stay Connected this School Year!

Source: Hillsborough County Public Schools



www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/

Hillsborough County Public Schools has many ways for parents to get involved and stay connected. The list below beginning with the HCPS website is a great start to being “in the know.”



www.youtube.com/user/HCPSTVideoChannel



www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/doc/1733



www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/departments/69



www.facebook.com/HillsboroughSch



www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/doc/1147



www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/doc/1532/volunteer-services/about/about-536/



www.twitter.com/HillsboroughSch



myspot.sdhc.k12.fl.us/public/login/



www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/doc/853/superintendents-office/resources/parentuniversity/



www.instagram.com/hillsboroughsch/



www.sdhc.edsby.com/



www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/doc/list/community-engagement-philanthropy/about/2-2/



School and Community Gardens Make A Difference

By Lynn Barber, Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Agent
UF/IFAS Extension Hillsborough County

Yes, it's back to school time already! Did you know that the Hillsborough County Extension Service has a School and Community Garden program coordinator? Well, we do!

Lisa Meredith fills this role and is the person to contact. She has a list of resources that will help teachers and community garden leaders investigate available grant funding, can meet with you to evaluate your site conditions, make recommendations on what and when to plant, and provide you with materials to make the process easier to manage and navigate. We are an educational institution and don't provide labor, but we can provide the name of other organization(s) that may be able to assist you.

School gardens are great because they help build self-esteem, encourage learning, provide interactive lessons, teach life skills, provide a sense of ownership, allow youth to learn where food comes from, and enhance science and environmental knowledge.

Community gardens are beneficial because they provide access to fresh food, promote exercise and nutrition, work well for people with limited yard space, revitalize neighborhoods, decrease crime and stress, provide an opportunity to connect with others, and control food production.

Lisa has been involved with dozens of school and community gardens. Each one is unique and tailored to the style of the gardeners and serve the purpose of teaching how food is produced. Teachers are very innovative in using plants and gardens as teaching tools. Whether container gardening or utilizing the landscape around the school, these gardens show students how important plants are to butterfly populations and to us as consumers of what we grow.

If your school or community is interested in information about these types of gardens, contact Lisa Meredith, 744-5519 x 54146, or email her at meredithL@hillsboroughcounty.org. For assistance with horticultural questions, call 813-744-5519 or visit us at the Hillsborough County Extension Service, 5339 County Road 579, Seffner, FL 33584. We have several demonstration gardens on site. More gardening information is available at <http://hillsborough.ifas.ufl.edu>, <https://www.facebook.com/HCCFFL/> and <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.



Courtesy Photos: UF/IFAS Extension Hillsborough County

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3 Listings Under Contract in **Bloomingtondale**



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