



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BLOOMINGDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION SINCE 1980

THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

VOLUME XXXVII 🌿 ISSUE 9 🌿 SEPTEMBER 2017 🌿 www.BloomingtondaleHOA.com



Eclipse Mania: Just in case, you missed it!

Many in the community took part in eclipse festivities on Aug. 21. While some journeyed to better viewing spots out of state, others stayed put. Tom Leech captured this eclipse photo from his lanai in Bloomingdale. Thanks for sharing, Tom! See eclipse fun facts on p. 9.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Don't tell people how to do things; tell them what to do and let them surprise you with their results." *George S. Patton*

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PLEASE RECYCLE

Photo: Tom Leech



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THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

YOUR INSIDE CONNECTIONS

Bloomington Homeowners Association, Inc.

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

Email: Bloomington.Homeowners@gmail.com

Website: www.BloomingtonHOA.com

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

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Vice President: *Suzy Watts*

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Bobbi Ferraro

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Billy Hightower

Grace Lewis

Beth Smedley

Charlie Woodcock

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER



JOY BOISSELLE

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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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Yard of the Month



Photo: Susan DeDeLuca



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

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

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 **DON'T FORGET TO LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!**

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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, September 11, 6:30 p.m. / BHA Monthly Board Meeting, Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road. Residents always welcome. Call 813-681-2051 for information.

Monday, September 12, 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, September 21, 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.

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 volunteer opportunities.




The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association is proud to present

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- Local small business tables
- Face painting and games

Visit us at the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association web page, Facebook page or check your Bloomingdale Gazette for updates and additional information. Contact the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association at (813) 252-0252 or email BHAFallFest@gmail.com.
BHA Board of Directors IRC 501(C)(4)
Distribution of this information does not imply endorsement of this activity or event by Hillsborough County Public Schools

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

Bloomington Real Estate Update

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

Review Your Home Insurance Policy At Least Annually

Have you check your home insurance policy lately? I did and our homeowners insurance just increased \$500 a year!

A majority of homeowners do not think about the cost of home insurance because, in most cases, this insurance is paid along with their mortgage payment. It is not a bill that is paid separately each month.

Look at your home insurance policy annually and make sure that you have proper coverage for dwelling, which is the replacement of the actual structure of your home. Insurance agencies have a replacement cost estimator for this, but you know your house and your neighborhood best and should have an idea of what it would cost to rebuild the structure of your home. Also check the loss of use, which would cover costs of a rental or hotel during any displacement.

Look around your home to make sure you are not being overcharged for personal property. How much would it cost to replace your clothes, furniture and appliances? For example, personal property coverage does not cover your jewelry, china, or grandma's antiques.

"Check in with us yearly to make sure that you're receiving the credits that you qualify for," advised Shelly Boyette, a Briggs Family Insurance agent. Credits can



By Ronnie McLaughlin

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include a wind mitigation report, installing an alarm system and senior discounts. Shelly mentioned that some carriers offer a senior discount at age 50! Another way to lower your bill is to inform your insurance agent about any second lien or equity loan pay-offs.

With a little bit of effort and a couple of phone conversations, we were able to lower our annual payment back to the amount that we've been paying for the past 7 years. Check your policy!

Neighborhood Snapshot - Eagle Point

The gated community of Eagle Point is a mandatory HOA neighborhood located off Erindale, just west of Lithia Pincrest. The 38 homes built between 2000-04 are located on Centennial Falcon Drive and average 3,062 square feet, four bedrooms and 4 bathrooms. Most of the homes have pools. One house sold over the past 365 days at \$395,000 with a \$5,000 credit to the buyer and two houses are currently for sale at \$489,000 and \$299,000. There are one and two story homes in this neighborhood.

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18th Annual Casino Night / Sept. 8 / 6:30-11p.m. / The Regent / 6437 Watson Rd., Riverview / Leadership Brandon invites you to a Casino Party! Food, open bar, and casino money included in this all-inclusive ticket event. Tickets are \$65 per person. For information, call 813-689-1221.

AARP of Brandon Meeting / Sept. 11 / 11:30 a.m. / Brandon Rec Center / 502 Sadie St. / All over 55 welcome. Speaker Ann Ferrell will discuss hospice services and the thrift shop. For information, call Jean at 813-689-6590.

Protect Yourself from "Scams, Schemes and Scoundrels" / Sept. 14 / 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. / The Bridges Assisted Living Community / 11350 Bloomingdale Ave., Riverview / Learn how to avoid being a victim when you attend the "Scams, Schemes and Scoundrels" program. Debbie Brown, Hillsborough County Consumer Protection Agency investigator, will present the latest information on recent scams, home solicitations, hiring a contractor, tax return fraud, data breaches and ID theft. Brown will provide numerous take-home materials to help you avoid losing your hard-earned money to these schemes. The workshop is free and includes lunch. Space is limited. Call Janet at 813-413-8900 to reserve your seat.



Bedtime with Books / Sept. 15 / 7-10 p.m. / The Village Early Learning Center / 3741 Canoga Park Drive, Brandon / It's a "Bedtime with Books" Pajama Party! Join us for this free family event! Open to the public. Bedtime with Books is a night of storytelling, a craft, and a snack. The first 50 children in attendance will receive a free book! Appropriate for children ages 7 and under. Children come dressed in PJs. Call 813-651-0779 for information.

Recruiting the Community / Sept. 17 / 12-4 p.m. / The Barn at Winthrop / 11349 Bloomingdale Avenue, Riverview / Join us for a free community event for the entire family. We will have kid friendly activities and vendors. This event is supporting Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts as they work to create new troops in the area. Share with your friends and family. For information, contact jeanne@birthdaystobanquets.com or check out our FB event page, <https://www.facebook.com/events/111371862837705/>.

Practically Perfect ~ The Music of Julie Andrews / Sept. 22, 8 p.m.; Sept. 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 / Sept. 23 / 10 a.m.- noon / Center Place Fine Arts and Civic Association / 619 Vonderburg Drive, 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 / Sept. 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.

Fall Community Service Forum / Sept. 28 / 6-8 p.m. / Brandon High School / 1101 Victoria Street, Brandon / The Community Roundtable is hosting the Fall Community Service Forum at Brandon High School. Last year, 400 students, most with parents in tow, visited the Forum to learn about the Brandon charities seeking volunteers. Bright Futures scholarships require service hours. For information, contact Janine Nickerson at thecomunityroundtable.org or call 813-661-4350.

Charity Golf Event / Sept. 30 / 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m. / River Hills Country Club / 3943 New River Hills Parkway, Valrico / Registration includes lunch and dinner, bounce back for another round at Riverhills, golfer goodie bags, range balls, green fees, golf cart, and on-course beverages. Prizes and 50/50. Sponsorship opportunities available. For information, please contact Kavita Marballi at kavita.marballi@tampaymca.org or 813-684-1371.



UPCOMING

10th Annual Cards for Troops / Oct. 7 / 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. / Center Place Fine Arts & Civic Association and The Community Roundtable / 619 Vonderburg Drive, Brandon / Make handmade holiday cards for our service men and women at our FREE community event. The decorated cards (blank inside) are sent to deployed and hospitalized service members, who will be able to write a sentiment inside each card and send to their loved ones. Ages 16 and up. No childcare provided. Purchase raffle tickets for great prizes! Donations accepted at the door to help offset the cost of supplies and postage. For information, call 813-685-8888.

Save the Date: Oct. 7, 11 a.m.

Join Gold Star Families and friends in dedicating the new Afghanistan War Memorial with special guest Gen. Joseph Votel, CENTCOM Commander. The event is at the Hillsborough County Veterans Memorial Park & LeRoy Collins Jr. Veterans Museum on 3602 U.S. Highway 301 North in Tampa. Proudly presented by the Veterans Council of Hillsborough County, Inc. (501c3), Facebook @ Tampa.Afghanistan.Memorial.



Document Shredding / Sept. 23 / 10 a.m.-2 p.m. / Bloomingdale Library / 1906 Bloomingdale Avenue, Valrico / Securely destroying documents is a critical step in preventing identity theft. In partnership with Legal Shred, a NAID AAA Certified shredding service, the library is hosting a FREE paper-shredding event to help keep your personal information secure! Bring up to three boxes of paper materials for shredding by Legal Shred's mobile truck on the east side of the Bloomingdale parking lot.

- Bring documents in bags, boxes, or any other type of container, which will be emptied and returned to you.
- PAPER ONLY: Please make sure that there are NO plastics, CDs, DVDs, x-rays, hard drives, 3 ring binders, binder clips, or anything else mixed in.
- Staples, paper clips, and even file folders with a metal strip through them are acceptable.



For information, call 813-273-3652.

The Bloomingdale Special Taxing District:

The Community's Common Area Connection

By Miriam Leech, BSTD Staff

(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.)

District Maintenance

Routine maintenance by Bloomingdale Special Taxing District (BSTD) contractors is what keeps our community beautiful. Our landscape maintenance company, Buccaneer Landscape Management, recently completed trimming the creeping fig that grows on the walls throughout the District.



Additionally, plans are underway for more fig to be planted in blank wall spaces along all the main thoroughfares throughout Bloomingdale East and West – planting will take place in four designated sections, one section at a time. The benefits of the creeping fig include reducing graffiti, maintenance, and noise; traffic calming; and enhanced aesthetics for the community.

Overall landscape replacements of plants such as holly, knockout roses, gold mound, jasmine, and viburnum will be occurring in the coming weeks to take advantage of the Florida rainy season.

Also a part of the annual maintenance of the District is pressure washing. The BSTD Board of Trustees recently voted to award a contract to Awnclean, who will commence the cleaning of 55,000 square feet of wall surface in Bloomingdale.

You are invited!

Bloomingdale residents, as always, are invited to attend the next meeting of the BSTD on Sept. 11 at 6:30 p.m. at the Bloomingdale Community Offices, 3509 Bell Shoals Road. If you would like to speak at the meeting, members of the public are allotted 3 minutes to make comment or ask questions per Hillsborough County policy. Hope to see you there!



BLOOMINGDALE SPECIAL TAXING DISTRICT

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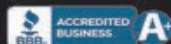


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(Editor's Note: Brian Bokor is a Certified Residential Appraiser with more than 15 years' experience. One particular area of expertise is researching development plans around our area. This column will tap in to that talent, as Brian will share new 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 question? Contact Brian directly or through inbloomingdalenews@gmail.com.)

Real Estate Appraising - Behind the Scenes

In its truest form, an appraisal is simply one's opinion of value...and we all know the old saying about opinions. Sellers, Buyers, Real Estate Agents, and Lenders all may have different opinions about a home's current market value based on their knowledge of the property and surrounding area, but whose opinion is "right?"

The Appraiser's job is to provide an independent opinion of a home's current market value by gathering as much information as necessary about the home and surrounding area and accurately determining the value of the home based on this information.

If a Seller is to have an appraisal, an itemized list of improvements/upgrades (new A/C, Roof, Cabinetry, etc.) is beneficial to the Appraiser. An Appraiser IS NOT a "Home Inspector," although a home inspection is typically the first step of the appraisal. Providing Comparable Sales to the Appraiser can be useful, but only if those sales fit within specific guidelines. Just because the house across the street just sold for \$300,000 does not necessarily make it a Comparable Sale for your home.

At inspection, an Appraiser will measure your home and take interior/exterior pictures along with documenting any notable features that could contribute or detract from market value. This would include standard vs upgraded Kitchen/ Baths/ Floors and general overall property condition. First impressions do matter to the Appraiser and can have an impact on value, so cleaning the home inside and out prior to inspection is advised.

If defects are found, dollar adjustments may be made to accommodate for the impact on market value. If we see it, we have to take note of it, so correct these deficiencies before the inspection. Telling the Appraiser "it will get fixed" will not help your cause and may create a situation where the Lender requires additional inspections as part of the loan process to ensure the defect has been remedied - or may cancel the loan altogether if damage found is significant.

Appraisers then search databases for similar size homes (within 15% of living area - Garages/ Porches not included) with similar amenities (Pool, #Beds/Baths) in similar neighborhoods within a general radius (1-3 miles) in order to find Comparable Sales (3-6 Sold sales within past 6 months along with Active and Pending listings).

Once Comparable Sales are selected, dollar adjustments are made to compensate for differences. For example, if model/match homes are found, one with Pool and one without, a dollar adjustment would be required to accommodate for the impact on market value of the Pool...same for differences in Living Area, Interior Upgrades, # Baths, etc.

In most cases, the Buyer's Lender will be responsible for ordering the appraisal with the Buyer responsible for the appraisal cost. Sellers CAN have an appraisal done to assist in pricing their property, but another appraisal will be ordered by the Lender if financing is required. Cash deals typically do not require appraisals.

Lenders require appraisals on financed deals because it is their money at risk (less any down payment) if the borrower defaults on the loan. The appraisal is the instrument that determines the amount of value. Banks must follow particular loan-to-value ratios when issuing mortgages.

It takes anywhere from a day to several days to complete an appraisal. Once done, the Lender should provide the Buyer a copy of the appraisal. It will have the fair market value of the house and hopefully, should be very similar to the selling price. The Seller will not have access to the appraisal unless granted by the Buyer.

If the appraised value is lower than the Sales Contract price, some aspect of the contract may be renegotiated to accommodate this difference, another appraisal may be required, the deal may be accepted as-is, or the deal may be rejected. If the appraised value is at or higher than the Contract price, the loan will proceed.

Still have questions? Contact me via phone or email.



BEFORE



AFTER



Photos: Brian Bokor

Kitchens and Master Bathrooms would be the two areas in your home where major renovations would give you the greatest return on your investment. A typical "major" renovation would include replacement of all Kitchen and Bath cabinetry, flooring, counter-tops, sinks & faucets, lighting, and appliances (kitchen) as well as shower stall tiles and commodes in Bathrooms. Exterior upgrades include Roof replacement; Paint, Landscaping, Lighting and tree-trimming.

The Great American Eclipse: What You May Not Have Known

1. Some have called this "A Once-In-A-Lifetime Event"— The last time a total solar eclipse was visible from coast to coast was almost 100 years ago on June 8, 1918! Making this extra special is that it is the first time since the total solar eclipse of January 11, 1880 that a total solar eclipse occurred exclusively over the continental United States. And, no other country will see totality, though many countries will see a partial eclipse of the Sun. Because of these reasons, the eclipse was also called the Great American Eclipse.
2. This eclipse was visible as a partial eclipse from all 50 states and as a total eclipse from a 70-mile-wide sliver of 14 states.
3. A CNN poll indicated that about half of the US population (323.1 million in 2016) planned to watch the eclipse.
4. About 12 million people live in the solar eclipse's 70-mile-wide path of totality.
5. NASA reported that at the midpoint of its live stream, 4.4 million people were watching, making the eclipse the most viewed event in the agency's history.
6. The average retail price per pair of eclipse glasses sold was \$7.15.
7. This was the 1st Total Solar Eclipse in 38 Years for those in contiguous United States (excluding Alaska and Hawaii). The last time anyone in mainland US saw a total eclipse of the Sun was on February 26, 1979.
8. Parts of 14 American States went dark for the 2 minutes of totality. The Yaquina Head Lighthouse in Newport, Oregon was the first location on continental US soil to see totality.
9. Totality is the only time when one can see the corona, the Sun's atmosphere.
10. Strange things happened – shadows appeared sharper, stars came out, birds stopped singing and insects were quiet, and many noticed a temperature drop.
11. If you live in the US and missed this event, you'll have to wait 7 more years, until April 8, 2024, to see a total solar eclipse from a location in the contiguous United States.

(Sources: www.timeanddate.com, www.astronimate.com, www.space.com)



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BLOOMINGDALE COMMUNITY STATION NOTES

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

AREA LAW AND ORDER

Between July 19 and Aug. 14, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office conducted 46 traffic stops in Bloomingdale East and West. Those traffic stops resulted in 11 verbal warnings, 28 written warnings and 7 citations.

The Bloomingdale area is still experiencing traffic crashes at community entrances and within subdivisions. We have had five crashes without injuries and gratefully none with injuries. Remember, slow down, stop at all stop signs and above all be a courteous driver.

There were nine vehicle burglaries; all with unlocked doors. Let's be more diligent in protecting our property. The good news is that no firearms were stolen out of those unlocked vehicles. Rounding out the month, there were three residential burglaries and three criminal mischief incidents.

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.

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.

FRAUD ISSUES

There has been an increase in scam phone calls from 813 area codes to both home and cellular phones. You are more likely to answer because it is a local area code versus an out of state area code and that is what scammers are counting on!

Now scammers are using a new technology called neighborhood spoofing. These fraudsters/telemarketers use VOIP technology to hide the true phone number they are using. If you receive a call from a number you do not recognize, just let it go to voicemail. If it is a real call, they will leave a message. The good news is with this type of spoofing the scammers make a few calls and then their computer program rotates to another number.

I recently received a call on my cell phone from an 813 area code. The man called to ask why I called him twice. I advised that I did not call and asked what the caller said. He advised the call was an offer to lower his credit card interest. I asked what name was listed on his caller ID – It was my last name! So the scammers were able to spoof the call with my cellular phone number and my name.

Not all fraudsters call your cell phone. They can send an email or a text message. The text messages that I have received advised me to contact "bank XYZ" reference my debit card.

Hoping that you have an account with the bank they reference, they provide a phone number for you to call and then ask you to enter your debit card number! **NEVER** contact your bank with the phone number provided to you via text, phone message or email. Look on your debit/credit card or on your monthly statement for a contact phone number. Call the bank to report the fraudulent message.

UPCOMING: OPERATION MEDICINE CABINET

The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office and Hawthorne Village are teaming up again this year to help you get rid of expired and unwanted medications. These items should never be flushed down the toilet or drain, which can cause contamination of the Florida aquifer and wastewater treatment system. The event is Friday, Oct. 6 from 9 a.m. to noon at Hawthorne Village located at 859 W. Lumsden Rd.

Don't forget! Throughout the year, the Sheriff's office offers medication drop off at any of the District offices.



School is back in session and the Sheriff's Office has an enhanced presence/enforcement at many school locations throughout the county. We would like to share the below School Zone Driving Safety Tips.

- Be on the lookout for school zone signals and ALWAYS obey the speed limits.
- When entering a school zone, be sure to slow down and obey all traffic laws.
- Always stop for school buses that are loading or unloading children.
- Watch out for school crossing guards and obey their signals.
- Be aware of and watch out for children near schools, bus stops, sidewalks, in the streets, in school parking lots, etc.
- Never pass other vehicles while driving in a school zone.
- Never change lanes while driving in a school zone.
- Never make U-Turns while driving in a school zone.
- Never text while driving in a school zone.
- While driving in a school zone, avoid using a cell phone, unless it is completely hands-free.
- Unless licensed to do so, never use handicap or emergency vehicle lanes or spaces to drop off or pick up children at school.

To learn more about tip 411, go to www.hcso.tampa.fl.us/Articles/Articles/TIP-411.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.



A Children's Birthday Party Primer

Our youngest granddaughter will soon be 4, so, naturally, conversations have turned to the upcoming celebration. Children's birthday parties are really something, aren't they? They give the kids an opportunity to exercise their newly acquired social skills and parents a chance to hide their basic sadism under the guise of "fun."

First there are the party games. How I love them! Especially "Pin the Tail on the Donkey." Innocuous enough, you say? Let's play right now! Gather a bunch of pre-schoolers and stuff them full of cake, ice cream, candy and punch. Select one and blindfold him. Then spin the little tyke around like he was a whirly gig. Now he is full, probably sick, blind and has lost all equilibrium. Wheee! Now place a "tail" and sharp straight pin in his hand and watch the other guests squeal and scatter as Jim Carrey, Jr., here tries to impale the donkey, but invariably skewers his fellow guests. What fun! Yeah, I know some people are using Velcro these days, but where's the fun in that?

Another personal favorite is the seemingly benign "Musical Chairs." You get a dozen kids, see, but only 11 chairs. Already the fun begins! You place the chairs in a circle and play some bouncy kid's tune to which the partiers march around the circle. They scope out the chairs, mentally jockeying for position, knowing that when the music stops, someone is



going to be "Out." Just when the kids are convinced that you are probably a narcoleptic and have nodded off, you stop the music and watch the little beggars scramble for a chair. Oh, it's great! They shove and push each other, yell "Unfair!" pick on the weaker kids and just generally act like a pack of wolves fighting over a kill. To be fair, it does prepare them for "Black Friday."

And party favors! Cone-shaped, garish hats affixed to the head via a tight rubber band snapped under the chin! By the end of the party, every kid there looks like he just narrowly escaped being garroted. And balloons! Probably the most useless toy ever invented, it just floats around, filled with hot air and looking down on everyone. Kind of like a politician. And noise-makers! Rolled-up paper with a plastic mouthpiece you blow into and unroll into your best friend's eye, all accompanied by a shrill, ear-piercing whistle. Yowza!

Actually, the best part of kids' birthday parties is gift opening. While the youthful competitive spirit still rages ("My present was bigger!" "Oh, yeah? Well, he/she liked mine better!"), it's probably one of the few times during the entire event when most attending adults can retreat to the relative quiet of the kitchen and conduct an in-depth meeting with Messr. Sam Adams. Now, *that's* a party favor.



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First Day of School! Thank you to all who

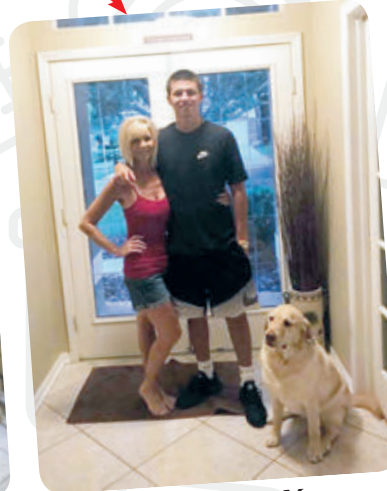
Learning is a treasure that will follow it



Laura, Jayden (3rd grade), Autumn and Chris Latocki
Photo: Laura Latocki



Rhonda and Connor Moran with Bella on the "first" first day of school.
Photo: Moran Family



Rhonda and Connor Moran with Tebow on the "last" first day of school. Connor attends Bloomingdale High School.
Photo: Moran Family



Shane Carlisle, grandson of Billy Hightower, Cork Elementary School, 5th grade
Photo: Billy Hightower



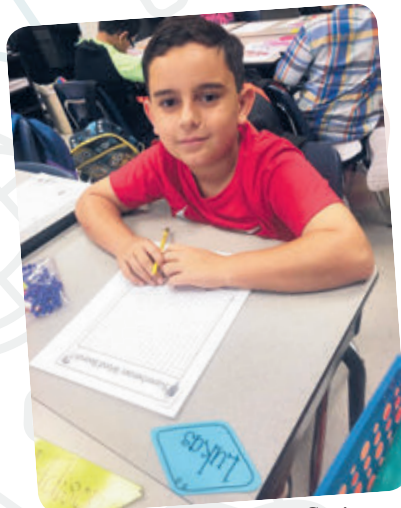
Timothy (4th grade), Matthew (VPK), and Steven (2nd grade) Burnett are ready for a great school year at Cimino Elementary and VPK at the Village Early Learning Center.
Photo: Patricia Burnett



Kristian Walker, 4th grade, Valrico Lake Advantage Academy
Photo: Agnese Walker



Colton DiMaio, Alafia Elementary, Kindergarten
Photo: DiMaio Family



Lukas Turcios, 4th grade, Cimino
Photo: Turcio Family



Eryn Turcios, 1st grade, Cimino
Photo: Turcio Family



Cletus, the hound, and Zane Hygrade, Burns Middle.
Photo: Jennifer Hydock

submitted back-to-school photos! Enjoy!

is owner everywhere. *Chinese Proverb*



Ajani Ortiz, 6th grade, Burns Middle and Ja'Nalys, 3rd grade, Cimino Elementary
Photo: Edith Ortiz



Erin and Maggie Elliott, Bloomingdale High School.
Photo: Holly Elliott



Michaela Walker, 6th grade, Bell Creek Academy
Photo: Agnese Walker



Cimino Elementary School students are ready for school! From left to right, Gavin White, Jason Knipp, John Montague and Jason McGinnis.
Photo: Wendy Knipp



Cletus with Bloomingdale Bulls Trey (9th grade) and Evan Hydock (11th grade).
Photo: Jennifer Hydock



Kyra Knapp gets a good luck kiss from her dog Brodie before she heads off to 7th grade at Burns.
Photo: Dea Knapp



Kyra Knapp and Josh Goodwin – two of Burns newest 7th graders.
Photo: Dea Knapp

First Day of School (continued)



Sophia Buckles, Pre-School/VPK
Photo: Miriam Buckles



Corbin Dihel, Kindergarten, Cimino
Photo: Andrea Dihel



Bella Buckles, 3rd Grade
Photo: Miriam Buckles



Back to school routines include waiting for the bus.
Photo: Wendy Knipp



Cimino Elementary 5th graders Skyler, Braden & Daylin Alvarez... a triple threat!
Photo: Miriam Buckles



Katherine Dixon and Ella Luz, 4th grade, Cimino
Photo: Erin Dixon



Kole Daino, 1st grade, Cimino
Photo: Rory Daino



Cimino-bound! Left to right: Hayes Hudson, Katherine Dixon, Jacob Castro, Harrison Hudson and Michael Castro
Photo: Erin Dixon



Ethan Holderness, Kindergarten, Cimino
Photo: Nicole Dunbar



It takes a family! Left to Right: Tina Spruill (Mom), Rob Spruill (Dad), Alexandra Spruill (sister), Ava Spruill (excited Cimino kindergartner), Travis Kelley (cousin) and Michael Kelly (cousin).
Photo: Spruill Family



Kaylee Daino, 4th grade, Cimino
Photo: Rory Daino

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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 enthusiast Gwen Graverson. Have a gardening question? Contact Gwen at inbloomingdaleneews@gmail.com.)

FLORIDA INVASIVE PLANTS: PART 1 - SHOULD WE CARE?

By Gwen Graverson

Defining whether a plant is invasive is not easy even with thorough research. Plants and trees might be invasive in one area, but not in others. Sometimes, the definition may depend on whom you ask. What you may believe to be a flower, someone else will say is a weed.

Knowing what species are considered invasive in our area will help guide you to selecting the right plant or the right tree for your property. A good starting point in the selection process is the local nursery/landscaping company. Today, there is much more emphasis on providing Florida native plants to buyers and the removal and replacement of invasive exotic plants.

The U.S. National Arboretum, a U.S. Department of Agriculture research and education facility and a living museum, is a great resource for researching invasive species. Information includes: What is an Invasive Plant? Where are they a problem? Why are they a problem? Where do they come from? And, What Can You Do? Access the website at <http://www.usna.usda.gov/>.

Why are invasive plants a problem? Here's one answer: *"It's a matter of ecology. In many cases, plants from other parts of the world are welcomed, manageable additions to our gardens. However, in some situations these non-native species cause serious ecological disturbances. In the worst cases, invasive plants like mile-a-minute, purple loosestrife, and kudzu ruthlessly choke out other plant life. This puts extreme pressure on native plants and animals, and threatened species may succumb to this pressure. Ultimately, invasive plants alter habitats and reduce biodiversity."*

And, for those who may say So What? *"Over \$100 million a year is spent in the U.S. combating invasive plants in wetlands alone. Rich, diverse plant communities can become barren, inhospitable expanses of invasive plants with little value to wildlife. Invasive plants may even deplete groundwater resources. Plants introduced to North America from other parts of the world have come to dominate millions of acres of forest, desert, prairie, and wetlands. Choosing plants wisely and controlling potentially invasive plants in your garden and on your property, are the best ways to preserve healthy native plant habitats. Garden responsibly and control invasive plants while they are still in your garden."*

One example of an invasive plant as mentioned above, is the kudzu vine. It's very noticeable while driving on U.S. Interstates throughout most of the east coast. Kudzu was introduced to the U.S. from Japan during the 1870's initially as an ornamental bush. By the 1900's the fast-growing vines were popular on trellises/porches throughout the south. During the 1930's - 1940's it was planted through the south, first as livestock feed, then as erosion control along highways.

There's a reference to kudzu in a novel by J.D. Wilkes titled, "The Vine That Ate the South." One book review mentions, "If you ever want to make a group of Southerners groan, just ask them how they feel about Kudzu."

Then, there's an article written for the Smithsonian.com titled: "The True Story of Kudzu, the Vine That Never Truly Ate the South," by Bill Finch, September 2015. In the article, Finch cuts through the myths surrounding the invasive plant. You can find the article at <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/true-story-kudzu-vine-ate-south-180956325/>.

So, is kudzu a misunderstood plant or an invasive weed? Well, that's for you to decide. More to follow next month on invasive plants and trees in Florida and in our local community.

For information about invasive species, visit <http://www.usna.usda.gov/Gardens/invasives.html>.



Kudzu
Pueraria montana
Photo by Ann Marcusy
© 2009 University of Florida

UF/IFAS EXTENSION (HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY) SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR LIFE

2017 COUNTY RECYCLED YARD ART CONTEST

Join us at the Hillsborough County Fair Oct. 19-22 and Oct. 26-29 for the 2017 Recycled Yard Art Contest! Accepting two and three-dimensional art created from items already used for their original purpose. Winners will be chosen in one of four categories: Elementary School, Middle School, High School, and Adult consisting of individual and group submissions. Links are provided on the UF/IFAS Extension website for the flyer, rules, and the entry form: <http://hillsborough.ifas.ufl.edu/>. Or stop by the extension office, 5339 County Road 579, Seffner, phone: 813-744-5519.



WITH WET SUMMERS, A RAIN GAUGE SAVES MONEY

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

Remember to turn your irrigation system off if you get more than three-quarters of an inch of rain before your next watering day. With our wet summers, we shouldn't need to irrigate much, if at all.

A rain gauge is an inexpensive measuring tool that can save you money over the course of a year. Manually operate the off/on activity of your irrigation controller. If your rain gauge receives three-quarters of an inch of rain, turn off your irrigation system for the next watering day. After the watering day has passed, turn your irrigation system back on. Save sprinkler water for the days you really need it.

If you feel your irrigation system is wasting water, call me at 813-744-5519 Ext. 54142 to see if a free irrigation system evaluation can help you conserve water.



Making More Putts with Better Aiming...

By J.D. Carino (Bloomingdale CC campus)

Most missed putts from short range, 4-6 feet, are often a result of incorrect alignment of your body during the putting set up. We make similar mistakes of incorrect alignment during our full swing set up.

Here are a few guidelines for better aiming to make more putts:



1. Red Line- The line the ball travels on is your target line.
2. Yellow Lines - The other line we call the body line; consisting of your feet, knees, hips and shoulders. They need to all be square or even.
3. Both red and yellow lines are aimed parallel to each other like a railroad track.

If you aim your body incorrectly (right at the hole); you'll compensate by rotating your body or putter face to get the ball back to the left and get it in the hole.

Compensating is the main reason why your score varies from round to round. Aim better...putt better...no compensation.

Next lesson: Ball on the sidewalk; which way do I go? Any questions or for lessons, visit CochraneGolfSchools.com or call J.D. 813-957-3205.



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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.)

Plot your Course to Circles for Fine Dining

Brief and Photos by Wendy Knipp

It's not easy to find, parking can be difficult, and it's a 30-minute drive to Apollo Beach. But don't let that stop you. It's called Circles Waterfront Restaurant and if you don't mind jumping through a few hoops to get there, it's well-worth the trip.

Circles is an award-winning fine dining restaurant located in Apollo Beach overlooking Lands In Marina. It's tucked away in a quiet residential neighborhood and although it's been busy and serving since 1998, most people discover it through a friend or by reading an article. Judging by how busy it can get, that seems to work for them.

At Circles, you've got choices. Patrons wanting a more formal dining experience can sit inside the restaurant which is spacious and decorated with beautiful wood and enormous windows allowing for plenty of natural light and a view of the patio.

For a more casual experience, diners can venture outside to eat on the patio or tiki bar overlooking the marina. Live music performances take place on Friday through Sunday nights on the outside stage and there's even a dance area to burn off the delicious calories. There's also a cozy outdoor garden with fireplace which is available for special events.

The menu consists of award-winning seafood, steaks and pasta. Food is prepared fresh-to-order so you may have to wait a bit longer, but it's delightful. The kitchen proudly states that their nothing in their food inventory ever stays for more than 3 days and many of the recipes are made from scratch. Their bar is stocked with everything from beer to reserve wines and signature cocktails.

So, pull out the smartphone and head to Circles at 1212 Apollo Beach Boulevard. For information including making online reservations, visit www.circleswaterfront.com.



The food is fresh and recipes are from scratch at Circles.



Circles provides live entertainment and a fun dance floor Friday-Sunday nights.



Beautiful views of the Lands In Marina at sunset.



The outside patio area is perfect to relax and visit with friends.

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

September 4 - Labor Day Holiday / Non-Student Day



ALAFIA ALLIGATOR ALLEY

The Alafia Palette

The Alafia Palette is a quarterly newsletter with information about the world of art! Included in publications will be information about ongoing art activities in class, biographies about artists, art resources, as well as a "Classifieds" section; which lists donations that the art room is looking for. The newsletter is a new idea from Art Teacher Justin Terrill. There will also be an ongoing Art fundraiser for the year. Learn more about this exciting new program at www.square1art.com.



Spirit Day

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



BLOOMINGDALE HIGH BULL BUSINESS

- Sept. 5 - PTSA Meeting - 6 p.m.
Sept. 7 - Fall Pictures
Sept. 7 - Booster Club Meeting, 6 p.m.
Sept. 7 - JV/Varsity Volleyball vs TBT, 6:15 p.m.
Sept. 7 - Swim vs. East Bay/Spoto, 6:30 p.m. @ BSAC
Sept. 7 - JV Football @ Plant City, 7 p.m.
Sept. 8 - Football @ Middleton, 7:30 p.m.
Sept. 11-15 & 18-22 - FSA Writing/Reading/EOC's
Sept. 12 - Jr. Class Ring Information Meeting, 9:30 a.m. in the Auditorium
Sept. 12 - JV/Varsity Volleyball @ East Bay, 6:15 p.m.
Sept. 13 - JV Football vs. Armwood, 7 p.m.
Sept. 14 - Swim @ Plant, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 15 - AVID Field Trip, 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at Camp Christina YMCA
Sept. 15 - Technology Field Trip, 9:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m., Microsoft Store, International Plaza
Sept. 18 - JV/Varsity Volleyball vs. Durant, 6:15 p.m.
Sept. 19 & 20 - Jr. Class Ring Ordering, 10a.m.
Sept. 19 - Jr Class Ring Parent Meeting, 4 p.m.
Sept. 19 - JV/Varsity Volleyball vs. Strawberry Crest, 6:15 p.m.
Sept. 19 - JV Football @ Strawberry Crest, 7 p.m.
Sept. 20 - Swim @ Newsome, 4 p.m.
Sept. 22 - Homecoming Football vs. Lennard, 7:30 p.m.
Sept. 23 - Homecoming Dance, 7-11 p.m.
Sept. 26 - JV/Varsity Volleyball @ Newsome, 6:15 p.m.
Sept. 26 - Swim AHN/Jesuit, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 27 - JV Football @ Newsome, 7 p.m.
Sept. 28 - Senior Big Picture, 7:45 a.m.
Sept. 28 - Football vs East Bay, 7 p.m.
Oct. 2 - JV/Varsity Volleyball vs. Steinbrenner, 6:15 p.m.
Oct. 3 - Burns Chorus Fall Concert, 7 p.m.
Oct. 4 - JV/Varsity Volleyball @ Lennard, 6:15 p.m.
Oct. 5 - Burns Band Fall Concert, 6:30 p.m.
Oct. 6 - Football @ Strawberry Crest, 7:30 p.m.



CIMINO COUGAR CENTRAL

- Sept. 13 - Fall Picture Day
Sept. 15 - All Pro Dads, 7 a.m. in the Multipurpose Room
Sept. 26 - Cougar Cool Cats-RESPECT, 8 a.m. in the Multipurpose Room



Cougar Cool Cat

October Character Trait
RESPONSIBILITY & PATRIOTISM

Volunteers

All on-campus volunteers are required by the school district to complete a SERVE volunteer application each school year. A copy of this form was included in your child's first day folder. You can access it online at http://serve.mysdhc.org, click on the green APPLY button on the left. Even if you have volunteered in the past, please complete a new form for the 2017-2018 school year. You may not volunteer in any capacity on campus or on field trips without this form.



BURNS BRUINS BANTER

- Sept. 4 - Girls Basketball practice, 3:30 p.m.
Sept. 5 - Basketball vs. Eisenhower, 6 p.m.
Sept. 8 - Fall Pictures
Sept. 8 - Grandparent's Day Breakfast, 7:45 a.m. in the Cafeteria
Sept. 11 - Basketball vs. Rodgers, 5:30 p.m.
Sept. 13 - Progress Reports
Sept. 13 - Basketball vs. Shields, 6 p.m.
Sept. 15 - PTSA Board Meeting, 8 a.m.
Sept. 18 - Basketball vs. Barrington, 5:30 p.m.
Sept. 25 & 26 - Conference Night, 4:30-7:30 p.m.
Oct. 3 - Burns Chorus Fall Concert, 7 p.m.
Oct. 5 - Burns Band Fall Concert, 6:30 p.m.



BULL BRIEFS

Boys' Soccer Conditioning

Boys' soccer conditioning will take place through Oct. 12. For schedule or questions see Coach Lankford in room 176 or e-mail him at michael.lankford@sdhc.k12.fl.us.



TeachaBULL Moments

Introducing a new program through the PTSA! TeachaBULL Moments will give parents and students an opportunity to acknowledge a teacher that goes above and beyond. You can email to TeachaBULLmoments@gmail.com or drop a note in the front office of how a teacher has gone the extra mile for a Bloomingdale student or students. We want to take time to acknowledge our teachers for the great work they do. Each month one teacher will be chosen from letters that have been turned in and will receive a gift card. PTSA wants to give Bloomingdale families an opportunity to let our teachers know what great work they do!



Yearbooks

You can also order yearbooks online at www.yearbookordercenter.com. You will be asked for Burns' order number which is 443. The final opportunity to purchase a yearbook will be no later than mid-January. Purchases may be made online, by cash or check made payable to Burns Middle School.

School News! 



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Meet the Bulls Event is a Great Start to the New School Year Brief and Photos by Deidre Morgan

The annual Meet the Bulls event held Aug. 11 introduced this year's football team, the ever-popular Rajun Bull Band and other fall sports teams to fans. The Red & White football game was cancelled this year due to weather, but the pregame activities continued.



Volleyball members from left, Peyton Carter, Kenzie Crouse, Alison Cornelius, Emilee Runnels and bottom, Camryn Huett displayed signs for sign up activities and merchandise.



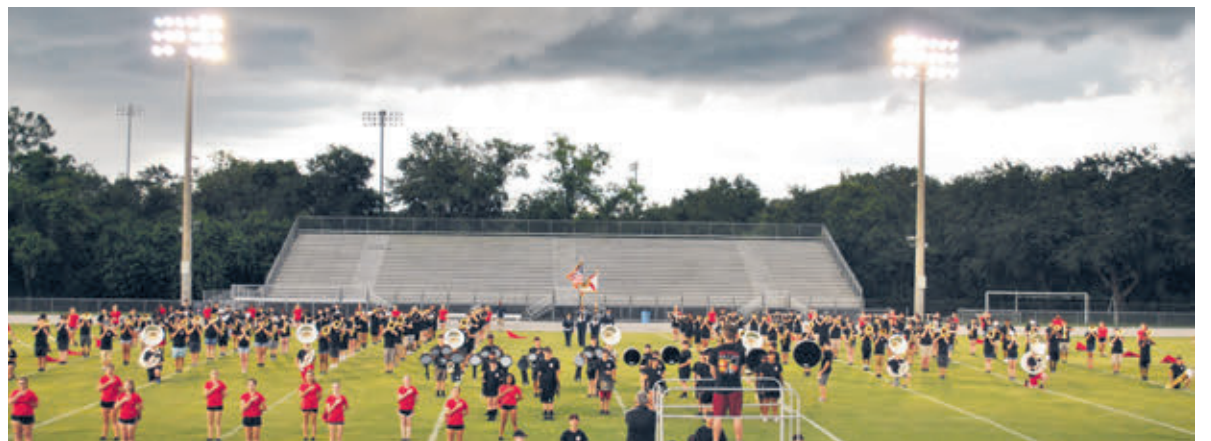
Cheer moms Nikki Monroe (left) and Cheri Meirose were on hand to show off great raffle prizes.



Some players got in a few practice reps before the game was eventually called due to bad weather.



The Rajun' Bull Band took the field to play the National Anthem while dark clouds loomed over head.





Bloomington Coach Brings Lacrosse to Burns Middle School

By Wendy Knipp

Lacrosse has been played for over 300 years and encompasses the speed of basketball, the endurance of soccer, and the precision of football. High schools across the country have been competing for years and it's finally popping up in our local schools.

But how do you grow a successful high school team when most of the kids are new to the sport and have never even watched a game? One local man has the answer.

Coach Matt Borowski is an algebra teacher and lacrosse coach at Bloomington High School (BSHS). Their lacrosse program has been up and running for 4 years and each year, the team gets better. However, because there is limited opportunity for students to play prior to high school, he has decided to bring lacrosse to middle school.

According to Borowski, "While other high schools are working on strategies and advanced stuff, I've got a group of kids that have never touched a stick before or watched a game before. If I can get a stick in their hands, I can get enough kids to field a team per age group; the trickle effect will ready them for high school."

Beginning in September, students at Burns Middle School will have an opportunity to join a new after school instructional lacrosse club, which will, over the course of 7 weeks, build skills and teach the foundations of the game. The cost will be minimal and is open to all students.

Coach Borowski lives in Bloomington with his wife Heather and newborn daughter Juliet. He is passionate about lacrosse, played competitively from middle school through college and coached for one year with the Fishhawk Coyotes U15.

Better yet, he is ready to pass his passion and experience on to a new group of "Attackers." Want to learn how to "dip and dunk," perform a "bull dodge" or an "ankle breaker," contact Coach Matt Borowski at CoachBorowski@gmail.com.

"I thought lacrosse was what you find in la church."

Robin Williams



Coaches Borowski and Owens look on during a BSHS lacrosse game.



BSHS varsity player Brendan Henning rips an outside shot.

Photos: Dea Knapp

Some members of the BSHS Varsity team will help coach Burns Middle School's lacrosse club in a new training program spearheaded by Bulls Lacrosse Coach Matt Borowski.



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Cimino & Burns Open Houses

Photos by Wendy Knipp



Principal Matthew DiPrima answers questions from parents during Burns Middle School's Open House.



At the request of Cimino Elementary School's new Principal Ms. Joanne Griffiths and the PTA Green Team, parents donated plants from their gardens for a "Grow Together" theme.



Parents and students are excited to purchase spirit items and Agendas at Cimino Elementary School's Open House.



Go, Fight, Win!



Courtesy: https://twitter.com/Bdale_Football

The Bloomington High School Cheerleaders show off their skills during the Fox 13 News Pep Rally on Aug. 25. The Bulls beat out the Dixie Hollins Rebels in an online voting contest that ran from Aug. 18-23. What a great way to get pumped up to take on crosstown rivals, the Newsome Wolves for the first regular football game of the year. Go Bulls!



Are You Ready For Some Football?!

Brief and Photo by Deidre Morgan

The Bloomington High School football team pre-season opener was Aug. 18 on the home field of the Riverview Sharks. The Bulls came away with a 43-22 win in a game that kept the crowd on the edges of their seats!

After leading the Bulls to a 6-4 record last year, second year head coach Max Warner hopes to lead the Bulls to an even better record this year. The offensive line is poised to be a force to be reckoned with protecting QB Tyler Hunter, along with senior wide receiver Ed Amos and running backs Charles Montgomery, Levi Williams and Jalen Jackson. This is sure to be a winning combination. On the defensive side, linebackers Landon Moody and Jon Locklear will also be ones to watch. Go Bulls!



Friday Night Lights are back with the Bloomington Bulls taking on the Riverview Sharks in pre-season action. The Bulls won 43-22.



On Aug. 8, Bloomingdale High School held its Open House for the 2017-2018 school year. Friends gathered to catch up, new students and parents navigated their way into new territory, teachers were excited to fill student brains with knowledge and organizations were eager to sign up new recruits to school activities and clubs. Principal Sue Baricko (formerly Burkett) gave incoming freshman parents an orientation in the auditorium on what to expect this year, while students attended a pep rally in the gym put on by the Student Government Association. Good Luck to all the students on a successful year and Go Bulls!



Bloomingdale Football Team Moms from left Melanie Skinner, Michele Becker and Cheri Pignataro were on hand to sell team gear.



Junior Tate Gordon, Senior Madison Bertaut along with Girls Lacrosse Coach Sarah Hayes and Boys Lacrosse Coach Matt Borowski are ready to sign up Lacrosse players for the upcoming season.



A constant to the Bloomingdale Rajun Bull Band are band moms from left Susan Maley and Lori Brown ready to sign up volunteers for another great year to assist the best band in the land!



The class of 2021 gathered in the gym for a mini pep rally put on by SGA.



Incoming freshman parents get information on procedures and curriculum in the Auditorium.



The Bloomingdale Cross Country team under Coach Jennifer Beach held a car wash fundraiser at Beef O' Brady's on Bell Shoals on Aug. 19. The team is raising money for The Disney Cross Country Classic in Orlando on Oct. 6 and 7. This is the 21st year for the event and it will be held at the Wide World of Sports complex. The high school portion of the race will take place on Oct. 7. Beef O' Brady's donated a portion of all food and drink sales that day to the team. Good luck to the Cross Country team and remember – it's not how fast you run, but how long you run fast!



Cross Country members putting in work for a good cause.



Michael Schroeder (#9) and Tori Robertson (#7) made sure the cars were clean.



While the kids raised money outside, the parents did their part inside supporting the cause with food and drinks. Seated left are John Terrell, Scott Robertson, Morgan Robertson, Michelle Terrell, Dawn Robertson and Cheri and John Meirose.



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