



THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BLOOMINGDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION SINCE 1980

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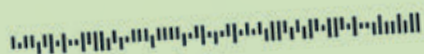
Happy 2019!

See the Community Year in Review on pp. 12-13!

Bloomingtondale Homeowners Association Inc.
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QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Champions keep playing until they get it right." *Billie Jean King*

This Month



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THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

YOUR INSIDE CONNECTIONS

Bloomington Homeowners Association, Inc.

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

Email: Bloomington.Homeowners@gmail.com

Website: www.BloomingtonHOA.com

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

Directors at Large:

President: *Suzy Watts*

Vice President: *Sean Donahue*

Secretary: *Daniel Berkowitz*

Treasurer: *Grace Lewis*

Bobbi Ferraro

Carl Hallinan

Billy Hightower

George T. May IV

Beth Smedley

Charlie Woodcock



YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER



JOY BOISSELLE

Editor - The Bloomington Gazette

3509 Bell Shoals Rd.

Valrico, FL 33596 - (813) 681-2051

Email: InBloomingtonNews@gmail.com

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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.



ANDREA DALY

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Program Manager, Advertising

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Yard of the Month



Photo: Wendy Knipp



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

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BHA COMMUNITY CORNER



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Another Membership Drive Begins; Look for your invitation in the mail!

Thank you to our many residents who supported the BHA and its many programs and services in 2018. Be on the lookout for your green membership card and return envelope arriving in your mailbox this week!

Your \$35 annual membership fee supports The Fall Festival, Annual Clean-Up Days, Advocacy for community improvements to county officials, The Award-Winning Bloomingdale Gazette, The HOA website, Facebook and Twitter Pages, Community-Wide Garage Sale, Santa Visit and Charity Food Drive, Yard of the Month and a Scholarship and Community Service Hour Program. Board members also attend county meetings regarding issues affecting our 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 payment. An easier method is to use our PayPal option. Go to www.bloomingdalehoa.com, look for the PayPal link and follow the simple instructions.

The BHA is an IRC 501(c) (4) non-profit organization, run entirely by unpaid volunteers who live in your neighborhoods. All residents are welcome at our monthly board meetings on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Bell Shoals office.



BHA EVENT CALENDAR

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

Jan. 1/ 2019 Membership drive starts! Look for your membership invitation! We need your support!

Tuesday, Jan. 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, Jan. 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, Jan. 17, NEW TIME: 6 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

Passing the BHA Gavel!

After five years, BHA President George May has passed the leadership gavel to 2019 president Suzy Watts. May will remain on the board lending his talent and experience to the organization. The 2019 board includes Secretary Dann Berkowitz, Vice-President Sean Donahue, Treasurer Grace Lewis, Beth Smedley, Barbara Ferraro, Carl Hallinan, Billy Hightower, and Charlie Woodcock. Thank you to this dedicated group of volunteers for their countless hours of selfless service to the community.



BHA Seeks New Board Members, Two Seats Available

Do you care about our Bloomingdale Community, and want to take an active role in its future? Then, the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association (BHA) wants you to become part of "Team Bloomingdale." Meetings are on the second Tuesday of each month at the Bloomingdale Community Office at 6:30 p.m.

Not sure you have the time? The BHA encourages all interested residents to attend a few board meetings to see if joining the Board is a good "fit." The current board members are residents, like you, who have the betterment of the community as their number one goal.

Call 813-681-2051 or email bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com.

2019 BHA EVENTS

Community Clean-Up - March 2

Scholarship Deadline - April 1

2019 Community Scholarship Applications Available!

Don't let the opportunity for \$2,000 in college scholarship money slip through your fingers. Applications are available online at www.bloomingdalehoa.com, the BHA office, and via email at bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com. The deadline is April 1. Mail completed applications to BHA, 3509 Bell Shoals Rd, Valrico, FL, 33596. Or, drop off the application at the office. Good luck, seniors!

Garage Sale - April 6

Fall Festival - October or November, TBD

Santa - December 7

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January Community Calendar

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

Jan. 10, 3:30 p.m. / Emote Dance Party / Bloomingdale Library, 1906 Bloomindale Ave // Get out of your gaming chair and onto your feet! Do the "Floss," "Best Mates," and something new! Then, join in a "Best Mates" conga line. For children in grades 3-5.

Jan. 14, 4 p.m. / Free Educational Concert/ Village Early Learning Center, 3741 Canoga Park Drive // Jack is back! Join us at The Village Early Learning Center for a free concert with Jack Hartmann (singer, songwriter, educator, and entertainer). Bring your own blanket or lawn chair! Admission is free, and the community is invited! Contact us at 813-651-0779 for more information. To learn more about Jack Hartmann, visit www.jackhartmann.com.



Jan. 17, 10-11 a.m. / FREE Veterans Assistance Seminar / The Bridges Retirement Community / The Bridges, 11350 Bloomingdale Ave., Riverview // This seminar will educate wartime Veterans and their survivors about a benefit through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs "Improved Pension with Aid and Attendance." This benefit can help offset the cost of living in a retirement community for a wartime Veteran or his/her surviving spouse. Veterans of any branch of the armed services who served 90 consecutive days on active duty, including one day during a wartime period, may be eligible to receive up to \$1,794 per month for assisted living expenses if they served during World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam Era or other more recent conflicts (duration of service required may vary). Edwin Ortiz, Manager of Hillsborough County Veterans Services, will provide information and answer questions about this benefit. Seating is limited and lunch is provided. Please reserve a seat by calling 813.413.8900.

Jan. 19, 11 a.m. - 7:30 p.m. / Children's Gasparilla / Bayshore Boulevard, Tampa / For more information: www.ChildrensGasparilla.com



Jan. 26, 11 a.m. - 10 p.m. / Gasparilla Parade / Bayshore Boulevard, Tampa / For information: <https://www.facebook.com/GasparillaPirateFest/>



Life Story Writing Classes / Bloomingdale Library, 1906 Bloomindale Ave // The popular, award winning Life Story Writing Classes are scheduled to begin in January 2019. The ten-week program will be offered on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays as follows: Wednesdays, Jan. 30 - April 3, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Fridays, Feb. 1 - April 5, 1:30-4:30 p.m. and Saturdays, Feb. 2 - April 6, 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. A brochure about the program is available in the library lobby. Students should plan to attend all ten classes, which are provided free to the public. Register at the library's Ask Desk, or by emailing Val Perry at Lifewritersbloom@msn.com.

Feb. 23, 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. or until sold out / 2019 Plant and Rummage Sale / Hosted by Riverview Garden Club of Florida / Riverview Civic Center, 11020 Park Dr, Riverview // Free parking and admission! Cash only for plants, seeds, clothing, toys, jewelry, household items, baked goods and more!



Award Winning Program Offered at The Bridges Presented at The Bridges Retirement Community

"A Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns About Falls" will be offered at The Bridges Retirement Community in partnership with Senior Connection Center, Inc. This free four-week program emphasizes practical strategies to manage falls. Participants will learn to view falls as controllable. They will set goals for increasing activity, make changes to reduce fall risks, and exercise to increase strength and balance. Anyone interested in improving their balance, flexibility and strength or that have restricted activities because of falling concerns are encouraged to attend.



Classes will be held every Tuesday and Thursday from Feb 5-28 from 9 to 11 a.m. in the Clubhouse at The Bridges, 11350 Bloomingdale Ave. Space is limited. Call Janet at 813.413.8900 for information.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>1</p> <p>Pickup at the Curb</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remove decorations - Cut tree into sections - Place curbside on yard waste day | <p>2</p> <p>Drop it Off</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remove decorations - Drop off at three County locations |
| <p>3</p> <p>Repurpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use in yard to feed birds - Grind tree for mulch | |

As you begin to pack up your holiday decorations, you may be wondering what to do with your live Christmas tree after the holiday. Several free options are available to Hillsborough County solid waste customers, including free curbside pickup, free disposal at County yard waste facility, or recycling and reusing the tree in their landscapes. For details, go to www.hillsboroughcounty.org/en/newsroom.

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Bloomingdale Real Estate Update

(Editor's Note: Real estate columnist Ronnie has lived in Bloomingdale for eight years with her husband and two children, a son attending University of Florida and daughter at Bloomingdale High School. A productive Realtor, she is also active in the Girl Scouts.)



By Ronnie McLaughlin

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Adding Value in 2019

I asked a group of local real estate professionals how they are planning to add value to their homes in 2019. Here is a list of the top five answers:

1. Updating their kitchens!
2. Investing in their backyard space with new screens, new lanai, and updated pool deck.
3. Buying a new front door.
4. Installing lots of new tile flooring!
5. Updating paint colors inside and out.

So, what is your New Year's Resolution for your home?
Any of the above will add value!

Neighborhood Snapshot - Fairway Park

Fairway Park is a voluntary HOA neighborhood located on Bell Grande Drive, Braun Way, Callista Avenue, Dunaire Drive, Haney Court, 1301 to 1313 Holleman Drive, Kristin Place, Letona Lane, Santee Way and 3905 Turnbury Street, nestled between Bloomingdale East Park and the Bloomingdale Golf Course. Approximately 17 homes line the golf course and another 19 homes have pond views. This neighborhood was built between 1984-1986 with homes averaging 2,117 square feet accommodating three or four bedrooms and two or three bathrooms. Eight homes sold over the past 365 days at an average of 1,955 square feet and \$112 per square foot. Six of the eight homes were pool homes. There is currently one home actively for sale and three homes pending that are due to close in January and February.



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Hillsborough's New Online System Makes Pet Adoption Simpler, More Convenient and More Transparent

HC Press Release



Hillsborough
County Florida



Hillsborough County has made major improvements to the way people look for adoptable pets.

The Hillsborough County Pet Resource Center unveiled its online kennel, a new system that substantially increases the amount of information available to prospective adopters. The online system, called ADOPT, features individualized pet profiles, real-time updates on which dogs and cats are

available for adoption, and detailed search options for those looking for specific characteristics in a pet such as breed, sex, or age. A resident can now filter search results to find, for example, only female dogs less than 2 years old, or look online to see if their lost cat has been taken to the shelter.

ADOPT pet profiles also include all the information the staff and volunteers have gathered when observing pets while at the shelter, giving those considering adoption a look into the dog or cat's personality and how it could fit within their life.

The ADOPT online kennel system can be accessed by desktop computer or mobile devices at HCFLGov.net/Adopt. An instructional video also is available.

Dozens of dogs and cats are adopted every day from the Hillsborough County Pet Resource Center, and the ADOPT system is designed to make the process even easier and more convenient. The PRC is Hillsborough's only open-admissions shelter, meaning it accepts dogs and cats regardless of size, breed, age, or medical condition.

Check out Bentley online at www.hillsboroughcounty.org/en/residents/animals-and-pets/pet-adoption/adopt-a-dog-or-cat.



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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.)

Let's Be Careful Out There

By Tom Leech, President

In November, your trustees began the planning necessary to incorporate new resources into our community. Community safety and security became the first focus area. The intent is to provide an increased police presence through the engagement of off-duty Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) deputies who will conduct active and passive policing activities within Bloomingdale. This type of program has succeeded for several years in communities such as Northdale Special Taxing District.



We have already begun a pilot program that will run through the end of this month. The trustees developed the pilot after consulting with the deputy in charge of the Northdale program and with Community Resource Deputy Clifford Fletcher at the HCSO Erindale Community Substation. The purpose of the pilot program is to gauge effectiveness before committing to the cost of a dedicated community policing effort. Pilot program results will shape the program that would begin in Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19) (October 2019).

Please be aware that the pilot program does not mean constant police presence throughout the community. Deputies will work 4-hour shifts on different days. Most of the shifts will be weekdays with a few weekend shifts. Deputies will perform all law enforcement tasks normally associated with HCSO--patrolling subdivisions, thoroughfares, and enclaves as well as performing traffic control, traffic monitoring, and security services.

Based on the success of the pilot, the trustees will build out the FY19 program. Key drivers include the community's reaction and receptiveness; perceived effectiveness of the program; deputies' interest in participating; and the projected cost. Your input is important. Let us know what you think about the program and any ways we might improve future implementation.

One last note--off-duty deputies can issue citations and, where appropriate, make arrests. So, let's be careful out there!

Vacancy

The BSTD Board is looking for a Bloomingdale resident and registered voter who is interested in serving the community as a new trustee! If interested, please attend the next monthly meeting of the BSTD on January 14 at 6:30 p.m. at the Bloomingdale Community Offices, 3509 Bell Shoals Road, Valrico, Florida.

The Board would like to thank departing Trustee Dave West for his 18 years of service to the community.

BLOOMINGDALE

Special Taxing District

3509 Bell Shoals Road
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Tom Leech, President

Bob Meginnis, Vice President

Charlie Woodcock, Treasurer

Jay Kittle, Secretary

Russell Jones, Trustee

Ryan Kehrmeyer, Trustee

Monthly Meeting

The residents of Bloomingdale are invited to attend the next meeting of the BSTD on January 14 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!

New Year's Resolutions, Did You Make One?

By Joe Harless

New Year's Resolutions actually started with the Babylonians, who had a practice of promising to pay off old debts from the past year, partly to fulfill their financial obligations but also because the gods might bestow good fortune on them for keeping their promises. These days, the New Year allows people the chance to take stock of the past year and, in theory, make plans for the coming year.

Plus, most of us get the day off.

Popular New Year's Resolutions include getting healthy (i.e. losing weight), traveling, getting organized, and learning a new hobby or

skill. Fully 40 percent of Americans make resolutions like this every year and 80 percent will fail in the second week of February.

Resolutions allow a chance at self-improvement. There are the short-term benefits of creating and starting a new resolution, and the long-term benefits of the disciplinary tools and mindset used to achieve the resolution.

Whatever you decide to try, experts recommend picking something practical, realistic and attainable. Happy New Year and good luck with that resolution.



HC Press Release

Hillsborough County's Hiking with a Viking features park rangers and members from a volunteer historical re-enactment group focusing on the Viking era. Together, the rangers and costumed marauders lead hikers through Edward Medard Conservation Park's Singing Bluffs Trail. On the journey, the Viking guides teach hikers about their lifestyle, skills and crafts, weapons and combat, and their appreciation and dependence on nature.

A man dressed as a medieval knight, wearing a yellow tunic, brown vest, and red hose, holding a long spear with a white flag, standing in a forest.



Registration is required for Hiking with a Viking, and entry is limited to those who have registered for the Hiking Spree. Go to [Hillsboroughcounty.org](https://hillsboroughcounty.org) to register.

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Happy New Year

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association wishes every resident a Happy New Year. We need your support now more than ever. Every membership received goes toward sustaining and improving our programs and services for you, the resident.

2018 was a year of expansion. The BHA offered membership to five neighborhoods, while new features were added to programs and services. And, area development continued at a frenzied pace.

Community Pride

The Bloomingdale Gazette supported fundraising causes, spotlighted school programs and athletics, and promoted resident involvement and recognition. In June, our graduates took center stage. Making many residents smile, the new and long-awaited dog park at Saladino Park opened in the spring. And even closer to home, renovations began at BL East and West Parks. Finally, the community welcomed new Bloomingdale Golfers Club general manager Tim McLaughlin. The Bloomingdale resident has made significant improvements at the community course.



g, Bloomingdale!

Gazette File Photos, unless otherwise noted.

ighbors looking out for each other, the BHA made their programs bigger and better. Students hours.. The Community Garage Sale continued to grow. Held in February last year, this year's

always was a well-attended event. Ten commercial trash containers were filled to the brim. recycling station, a prescription drug drop-off point and a serviceable goods donation truck. ch, Hillsborough County spotlighted our special community at <http://www.hcflgov.net/en/at-bloomingdale>.

ent. Residents made numerous yard of the month recommendations, provided resident photos and BHA meetings in larger numbers than ever before. Scholarship applications doubled and this year's scholarship application is available now, deadline to submit is April 1...NO Foolin'. sands! The new venue at the HS stadium continues to be a crowd pleaser.



Photo: Billy Hightower



Safety and Quality of Life!

A three-year sidewalk repair program began in the summer and will continue in many areas throughout Bloomingdale. The BHA and the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District worked together to make these repairs a reality. Other improvements included manhole repairs along Natures Way and Bell Shoals Road paving in advance of widening to 4-lanes. This roadwork will begin in earnest this year. The Bloomingdale Square facelift began with the old Walmart demolition and the arrival of new stores.



Tax Referendum Passes

The BSTD lobbied successfully for a tax referendum increase to \$170 annually beginning in FY 2019. The trustees have already made improvements ahead of schedule.



2019 will see even more development. The BHA will continue to work with county officials to make improvements in these areas. Let's work together to make our community the best it can be. With your involvement, we can and will!

Santa's Annual Visit Delights the Community

By Wendy Knipp

HO! HO! HO! Another successful event as The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association is proud to have partnered with The Village Early Learning Center (The Village) and the North Pole to host a holly jolly visit from Santa Claus and his elves while also collecting donations for charity!

This year, Santa's sleigh landed at The Village on Dec. 1, attracting hundreds of visitors. Families were welcomed by Santa's elves, wonderful volunteers, eager to spread holiday cheer. Fallon Gustafson is an 11th grader at Bloomingdale High School and her favorite part of this event is "...watching the community come together and helping to bring joy to the kids and the parents."

Upon entering decked out halls, children were escorted to a magical room where they each received a whimsical balloon creation and their choice of a holiday craft project. One by one, each child was called to meet the legend himself, Santa Claus!

Parents delighted in taking pictures while Santa carefully listened to each child's wishes and even got to answer some of their questions. Many of them asked Santa what kind of cookies he liked best. Santa said, "My favorite is chocolate chip cookies with milk and of course a carrot for Rudolph!"

This was also a pet-friendly event and owners were happy to bring their furry friends to sit for a pic with Santa. The magic didn't end there. As families exited The Village, Santa's sleigh, complete with reindeer, was open for kids to sit in and take pictures.

The canned food drive was a success and cash donations went toward purchasing 325 pounds of rice to benefit Wholesome Ministries in Wimauma. Tami Howell, Coordinator of Community Life at The Village, says, "Events like this give us the opportunity to get to know our neighbors better and to wish everyone a very happy holiday season. We want to extend a special thank you to all who donated food items to benefit hungry children and families during this season of giving."

See the complete Santa Album on [www.Facebook/BloomingdaleHOA](https://www.facebook.com/BloomingdaleHOA).



Arya Shaffer (3)



Ahat Cruz



Mindy and her daughter Emily Woolheater (4)
Photo: Wendy Knipp



Naughty and Nice! BHA board members (l. to r.): Dann Berkowitz, Beth Smedley, George May, Suzy Watts, Sean Donahue, Grace Lewis and Billy Hightower.



Nathon (5) and Olivia (10mo) Anton



Elf volunteers earned community service hours towards Bright Futures Scholarships.
Photo: Joy Boisselle



Ginger loves Santa!



Lilyana (8) and Everly (2) Anderson



Bella Roberto (3)



Photos: Dan Boisselle, unless otherwise noted

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Caroling Groups Bring Christmas Cheer to Bloomingdale

By Wendy Knipp

Ever wanted to go “a wassailing among the leaves so green?” Well, some of your neighbors are doing just that, “so fair to be seen.” (THE WASSAIL SONG, ca 1871)

Bloomingdale resident Carl Waters and his family moved into River Crossing a few years ago and last year, he came up with a way to meet more neighbors and spread some Christmas cheer. About six families got together and formed a caroling group and he found as the night went on, the group got bigger and bigger.

There's no rehearsal and lyrics are handed out for about six songs so everyone is on the same page. After the group sings, they yell "Merry Christmas!" and the homeowner is then offered a drink to come out and share with the group. It usually takes a few hours just to get around the block and the group can easily double in size in that time.

This year, Carl posted a caroling heads up on the Bloomingdale Neighborhood Community Facebook page. Many people from other neighborhoods showed an interest in forming a caroling group for their subdivision.

So don't be surprised to see one in your area next year or better yet, start your own! What a wonderful way to meet your neighbors and have a fun holiday celebration!



The group started with about 25 people (above) and grew to almost 40 carolers by 9pm (below).

Photos: Wendy Knipp



OPA! Truly Greek is Open and Tasty!

Brief By Wendy Knipp

Truly Greek is a new Mediterranean restaurant where the atmosphere is comfortable, prices are reasonable and the food is phenomenal. Customers can choose from traditional favorites such as falafels, specialty gyros, salads and kebabs to delicious burgers, chicken strips and fries. There's something for everyone. Truly Greek is open 11am - 9pm and located at 887 E. Bloomingdale Ave in the Bloomingdale Square Shopping Center near Publix.



Photo: Wendy Knipp



Courtesy: Truly Greek

Lean Left, Head Left... Great for Chipping

By J.D. Carino (Bloomingdale CC campus)

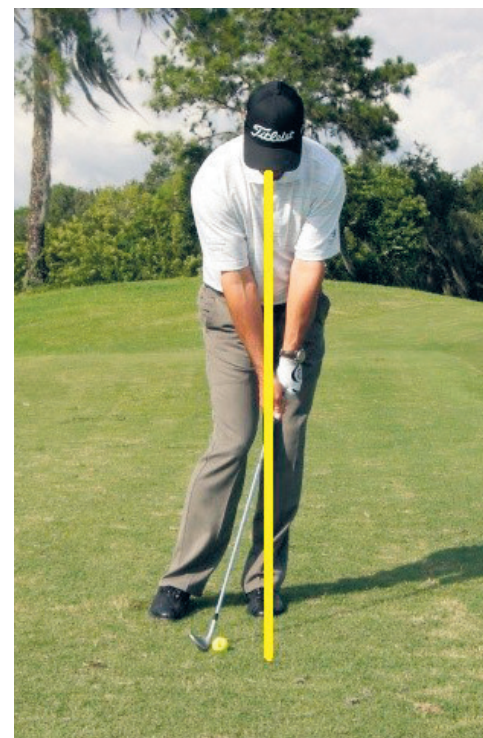
Has your golfing buddy told you to hit down on the ball so it'll go up? Or, has he told you to quit trying to help the ball get up in the air? Lots of advice, but no course of action.

A few simple adjustments to your chipping setup and both of the previous issues will be resolved – **Lean left, head left.** The great thing about this setup is it's so close to how you look like when you strike the ball in a full swing.

The goal is for your total weight to be more on your left side (80 percent). Having your left leg straight and right knee bent forward at address puts the center of your chest and head to the front side of the ball.

Move your hands, arms and shoulders back and through together. The club head will strike the ball first while the club head still going down.

Next lesson covers a golf rule that will help you more than hurt you. Any questions or for lessons, call J.D. 813-957-3205.



John E.S. Cochrane
GOLF SCHOOLS

Bullfrog Creek Brewing Hosts Successful Holiday Market

By Jon Alfano

Last month, the Bullfrog Creek Brewing Company hosted their first ever Valrico Holiday Market.

The market was created in an effort to help businesses in the area, not just with sales, but growing their brand. A wide variety of businesses attended the event, with an even wider assortment of products on display. Items available to purchase included holiday items, jewelry, clothing, antiques, art vintage goods, pet accessories, sports memorabilia, and more.

Adding to the festivities was the Dog Ugly-Sweater Contest, in which everyone's favorite pets could get in on the Christmas spirit in a doggy fashion show. There were several musicians performing for the large crowd, and food trucks spotted the venue to satisfy the appetites of attendees.

The event turned out to be a roaring success. Dawn Graham, a vendor at the holiday market and co-founder of BODA designs, a local jewelry business, described her time at the bazaar, "Wonderful experience from beginning to end. The weather was perfect, and it was heart-warming to see the community turnout to support local artists and small businesses."

A major part of the success that the event enjoyed was due to the organizer, Kara Halewood of the Tampa Bay Event Company. Prior to the day of the market, she helped all of the businesses tremendously, Graham said, "Leading up to the event she promptly responded to questions and in the week before she sent detailed instructions and a site map. She was on site to greet all of her vendors and show them to their assigned space. She checked in on all vendors several times during the show to see how we were doing and if we needed anything."

Don't miss the next market on Jan. 20.



Photo: Jon Alfano



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BLOOMINGDALE COMMUNITY STATION NOTES

By Community Resource Deputy Clifford Fletcher and CSO Debbie Vijil

Another Year Come and Gone!

With another New Year here, we can all reflect on the memories of the old year and think about the hopes and challenges ahead. 2019 promises to be a year with more changes and challenges for us as a community.

Safety and Security Education

You may notice that many of the items that concern your safety and security are repeated in this column throughout the year. These include topics such as buckling your seat belts, not drinking and driving, locking up your homes and vehicles, and being cautious about identity theft.

The reason we continue to keep mentioning these safety and security topics is that there are folks who have to be reminded to do what must be done to protect themselves. While we hope that most folks listen, we can only do our best to educate and motivate them! Only you can do what must be done to protect yourself and your families.

The holidays are over, but criminals are still out there. Take time to ensure your families, homes and vehicles are kept safe and secure. **Lock your garage doors. Lock outside vehicles** and make sure valuables and firearms are taken inside.

I know you may be thinking, well, we all hear these same safety and security tips over and over every year. *"The simple fact is that they don't work unless you follow them!"*

Let's make 2019 a safe and secure year. Take personal responsibility for your property, your home, your vehicles and your finances! No one will miss them more than you. Also, be a good neighbor and watch out for your neighbors.

Finally, Drive safe, obey the traffic laws and please buckle up!

Special Thanks

As we begin this New Year, we want to wish each Bloomingdale resident and the surrounding communities a very safe and secure year. We want to especially thank everyone who provided support and help to us during this past year!

The Sheriff's Office is committed to providing a safer and more secure place to live, to work, to run your businesses and to raise your families. It is our reason for being here. Our continued work with concerned residents from your community will continue to make this possible. We will continue to seek active participation by the Sheriff's Community councils in helping all of us make even more improvements towards making our area safer and more secure.

Next Bloomingdale Area Community Council Meeting (BACC)! Don't Forget Our New time!

Get involved; attend our monthly meeting as a neighborhood representative. Our meetings are on the third Thursday of each month – this month's meeting is Jan. 17 at 6 p.m. at 3622 Erindale Drive. The BACC works directly with the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office to identify community concerns and find solutions to all types of problems. For information, call the Bloomingdale Community Station at 635-8040, or come by the station.

The Community Salutes Master Deputy Fletcher!

On Dec. 21, the following was posted on the HCSO Facebook page along with several photos. It is an amazing story that highlights our humble heroes!

Christmas Came Early: Earlier this month, Tampa Firefighter Wesley Stevens was woodworking in his garage when his heart stopped after being accidentally electrocuted. Deputy Ernie Foster and Clifford Fletcher were the first to arrive and helped bring him back and maintain him until Hillsborough County Fire took over. Overall, he was in cardiac arrest over 15 minutes. Thanks to the team effort, Wes survived and was recovering in the same hospital the day Morgan, his baby boy, was born. That would never have happened but for first responders coming together and doing what they do. Today was the first time Wes and his wife, Hannah, got a chance to meet the folks that saved him when they gathered to say hello and bring some presents for the baby. What an amazing Christmas!



Deputies Clifford Fletcher and Ernie Foster



Tampa Firefighter Wesley Stevens, wife Hannah and newborn son Morgan.
Photo: Luis Santana, Tampa Bay Times



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.



Driving into a Brand New Year

I would like to begin this New Year with the observation that our highways and byways are being navigated primarily by bozos. I came up with this brilliant theory during the nerve-shattering experience known as Christmas Shopping, so let's start this year with the **2019 Timely Tips for Daffy Drivers:**

"Turn Signals" - These nifty little gadgets are not, despite widespread belief, "optional equipment." All vehicles actually come with turn signals firmly affixed in place. Their sole purpose is to warn other drivers of your intention to turn (a) smack in front of us or (b) onto another road where you will proceed to exasperate a whole new gaggle of drivers. Regardless of your attachment to the Whimsy Style of Driving, there are those of us who do not relish surprises.

Another quirk of turn signals is their capacity to be **turned off**. It truly isn't necessary for you to drive across a 10-mile bridge with your turn signal blinking your desire to make a right-hand turn into Tampa Bay; unless, of course, those really are your plans. In that case, be my guest.

"Brake Lights" - These festive illuminations advise drivers behind you that you are slowing down; perhaps even coming to a full stop. They spontaneously burst into full glimmer when you place your foot on the brake pedal. Now, since we know the light comes on when one applies pressure to the pedal, one can safely assume that one should not use the brake pedal as a foot rest, can't one? Then why does one?

"Passing" - This is the process of pulling your car around the vehicles in front of you, all of which are apparently being piloted by "idiots," "dreamers," or "coots." I realize that by only traveling the speed limit, I am impeding your goal of meeting as many Highway Patrolmen as possible; however, when I crest a hill or round a curve and find you aiming for my hood, *you* impede *my* goal of maintaining a steady pulse.

I think I may have a solution. How about a yellow diamond-shaped sign on all the windows stating, "Bozo On Board"? At least we'd have fair warning. Happy New Year.



BLOOMINGDALE YOUTH SPORTS



Bambino Buddy Ball
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Bloomingdale Buddy Ball provides individuals with a mental and/or physical disability the opportunity to play baseball, regardless of their abilities. Buddy Ball helps individuals learn teamwork, promote self-esteem and most important, have fun.

Kids with special needs will be paired with a BYSA volunteer. Games will be on Saturdays in February, March & April at 2215 Bloomingdale Ave., Valrico

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January School News: A Look at What's Happening

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

Compiled by Deidre Morgan



January 8 – Students Return to School

January 21 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday – Non-Student Day

ALAFIA ALLIGATOR ALLEY

Jan. 22 – Elementary Report Cards



CIMINO COUGAR CENTRAL

Jan. 22 – Elementary Report Cards

Jan. 22 – Group Picture Day

Jan. 22 – Chick Fil-A Spirit Night, Bloomingdale Ave Location, 4-8 p.m.

Jan. 22 – PTA Monthly Board Meeting, Bloomingdale Golf Course, 6-8 p.m.

Jan. 24 – Math Night, 6-7 p.m.

Jan. 25 – All Pro Dad's, Multi-purpose room, 6:30-7:30 a.m.

Jan. 28-Feb. 1 – Crossing Guard/Bus Driver Appreciation Week (Please check the PTA Calendar for more info to come)



BURNS BRUINS BANTER

Jan. 14 – PTSA General Meeting, Bloomingdale Public Library, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Jan. 15 – Dad Group Meeting, 7 p.m., Place to be determined (Check website for updated info)

Jan. 22 – 8th Grade Mid-Year Writes, All 8th Grade Computer Based Test, 9:25 a.m.-4:25 p.m.

Jan. 23 – Middle School Report Cards

Jan. 23 – 7th Grade Mid-Year Writes Computer Based Assessment, 9:25 a.m.-4:25 p.m.

Jan. 24 – 6th Grade Mid-Year Writes Assessment, Paper Based Test, 9:25 a.m.-4:25 p.m.



BLOOMINGDALE HIGH BULL BUSINESS

Jan. 7 – Cheer Practice, Cafeteria, 9 a.m.

Jan. 8 – Girls & Boys Soccer vs Lennard, 6 p.m.

Jan. 8 – Girls & Boys Basketball vs Lennard, 6:30 p.m.

Jan. 11 – Regional Cheer @ Plant City, 3 p.m.

Jan. 11 – Girls & Boys Soccer vs Gaither, 6 p.m.

Jan. 11 – Girls & Boys Basketball vs Plant City, 6:30 p.m.

Jan. 12 – JROTC, Little Manatee River State Park, 7 a.m.-3 p.m.

Jan. 14 – Girls Soccer vs Plant City, 6 p.m., Boys Soccer vs Plant City, 8 p.m.

Jan. 15 – Girls & Boys Soccer vs Riverview, 6 p.m.

Jan. 15 – Girls & Boys Basketball vs TBT, 6:30 p.m.

Jan. 17 – Wrestling vs Newsome, 6 p.m.

Jan. 18 – Girls & Boys Basketball vs Durant, 6:30 p.m.

Jan. 22 – Cheer Western Conference @ Wharton, 3 p.m.

Jan. 22 – Girls & Boys Basketball vs Strawberry Crest, 6:30 p.m.

Jan. 24 – High School Report Cards

Jan. 26 – JV Girls Basketball vs Wharton, Plant, 9 a.m.

Jan. 29 – Boys Basketball @ Brandon, 7 p.m.

Jan. 31 – Improv Night/Fundraiser, Auditorium, 6-8 p.m.

Jan. 31 – Girls & Boys Basketball @ Riverview, 6:30 p.m.

Feb. 1 – Girls & Boys Basketball vs Blake, 6:30 p.m.



Bloomingdale High School Running of the Bulls 5k Set for Jan. 19

By Jane Anne Owen

With a new year around the corner, Bloomingdale High School is ready for its annual Running of the Bulls 5k. This unique race is focused on bringing the community together to support high school students.

Made possible by local business sponsorships, including the title sponsor Acropolis Greek Taverna, the Running of the Bulls 5k was created last year to raise money for the band. This year, school athletic teams also profit from the race.

Participants can enjoy the race knowing they are making a difference as 100 percent of the profit goes to the school. This matters to the programs that often need more than is available to them.

"We will use the funds to help supplement instrument repair and replacement. The fact is that we have instruments that are 32 years old. Some of them can be repaired and some of them are beyond repair," explained Jon Sever, Director of Bands for the school.

Last year's race welcomed current and past students and families, as well as runners from the community and local running groups like Brandon Running Association, FishHawk Road Runners and HTTR Tornadoes. Running on campus was especially sweet for Bloomingdale alumnus, Patricia Rossie.

"It felt amazingly nostalgic! I haven't been back to the campus since 1990 and since I wasn't a runner in high school, I never had the experience of running on the school's track field. As being part of the second graduating senior class of Bloomingdale High School, I was elated to tour the grounds once again, even if it meant wheezing towards a finish line."

A 5K race is the perfect distance and opportunity to mix fitness, social camaraderie and goal-setting. It's suitable for both runners and walkers of every level to come together, bring their families and still have plenty of time to enjoy post-race celebrating all before breakfast.

Finishers will receive medals and top age group finishers will receive awards. Registrants receive a dri-fit shirt. Registration costs \$30. Register at <https://fitniche.com/event/running-bulls-5k-2/>.





Coach Jake Coulson Receives Prestigious Award

Brief: Deidre Morgan

Bloomington High School Football Defensive Coordinator Jake Coulson was awarded the Roland Acosta 2018 Assistant Coach of the Year honors at the NFF Luncheon on Dec. 6. Coach Coulson was also promoted to Head Football Coach with the departure of former Head Coach Max Warner. Warner accepted a position at Bowling Green University as Quarterback Coach. Congratulation to both coaches on their promotions!

Pictured left to right: Terry Crouse, Noel Hike, Bruce Gifford, Jake Coulson, Matt Hike, Jairus Foster and David Hutcherson (Coach Hutch).



Photos: Bloomington Football Twitter

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Bulls Honored at Football Banquet

Brief: Deidre Morgan

On Dec. 17, the Bloomingdale Football team held their annual banquet to award players for their hard work and dedication during the season. It was a season of firsts. The Bulls made history with an 11-2 overall record and a 5-1 district record. Then they triumphed in regional play-offs making it to the 3rd round which had never been done in the school's history. Congratulations to all the winners!

Most Valuable Player – Levi Williams

Offensive Player of the Year – Charles Montgomery

Defensive Player of the Year – Malik Womack

Special Teams Player of the Year – Jacob McDonald & Justin Keijers

Coach Hutch Award – Jon Catala

Principals Award – Rodney Roseboro

Most Improved Player – James Lowe & Hunter Shrieves

Coaches Award – Ethan McAniff, Gabe Jones & Charlie Skinner

Iron Man – Lance Alderson

Offensive Skill MVP – Terrel Ferrell

Defensive Skill MVP – Jalen Jackson

Spirit Award – Landon Moody

Weight Room Award – Tank Pineda

Big Stick Award – Ethan Carde

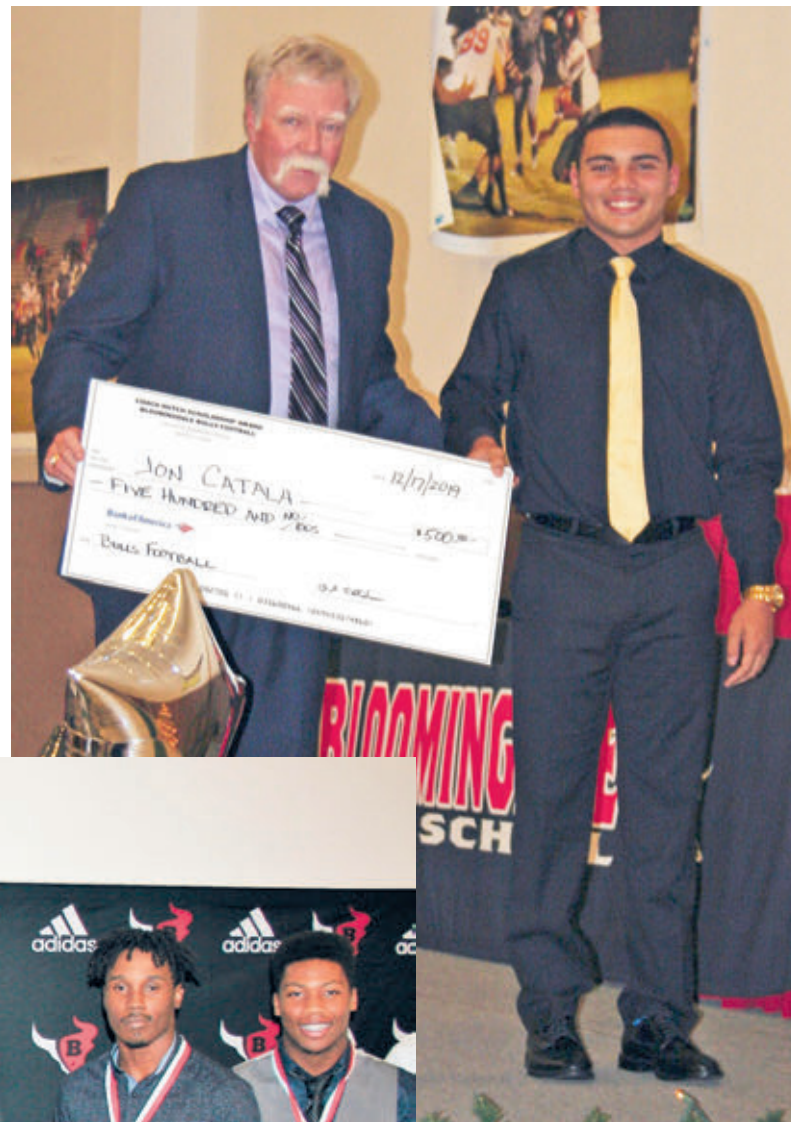
Rookie of the Year – Dominic Gonnella

Trenches Award – Quinton McCoy

JV MVP – Jac'son Boone



Pictured from left: Jacob McDonald, Ethan Carde, Terrel Ferrell, Most Valuable Player Levi Williams and Charles Montgomery.



Jon Catala receives the prestigious Coach Hutch Award, from Coach Hutch. The award is given for great academics and showing good sportsmanship on and off the field.

Photos: Kristin Carde

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Bloomington High School Football Players Sign Letters of Intent

Brief: Deidre Morgan

Two Bloomington High School Football players signed their National Letters of Intent to play Division 1 football on Dec. 19 in front of family, friends and their coaches. Jalen Jackson will be attending Middle Tennessee State University and Levi Williams will be taking his talent to The University of Tulane. This is an awesome accomplishment for these young men and the Bloomington community wishes them well. Go Bulls!



Photos: Bloomington Football Twitter

Jalen Jackson, Middle Tennessee State University



Levi Williams, University of Tulane



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