

Residents are Spring Cleaning!

See story on pp. 12 & 13



TODAY!

Fourth Annual
**Community
Garage Sale**
April 6, 2019
8 a.m.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"If you want to get rid of stuff, you can always do a good spring cleaning. Or you can do what I do. Move". *Ellen DeGeneres*

Photo: Wendy Knipp

This Month

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PLEASE  RECYCLE

THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

YOUR INSIDE CONNECTIONS

Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, Inc.

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

Email: Bloomingdale.Homeowners@gmail.com

Website: www.BloomingdaleHOA.com

BHA Board meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at the Bloomingdale 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



WENDY KNIPP

Guest Editor - The Bloomingdale Gazette

3509 Bell Shoals Rd.

Valrico, FL 33596 - (813) 681-2051

Email: InBloomingdaleNews@gmail.com

Website: www.BloomingdaleHOA.com

Editor: Joy Boisselle

Design/Layout: Chris Pascucci, NTZ Studios

Staff Writers: Wendy Knipp, Deidre Morgan, Jessica Hinson
and Student Reporter: Jon Alfano

The official publication of the BHA since 1980

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



ANDREA DALY

Community Development

Program Manager, Advertising

11268 Winthrop Main Street, Suite 101

Riverview, Florida 33578 - (813) 731-2490

Email: adaly@tampabay.com

Tampa Bay
Times

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call/text
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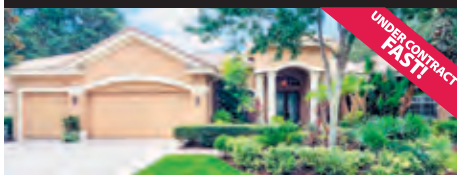
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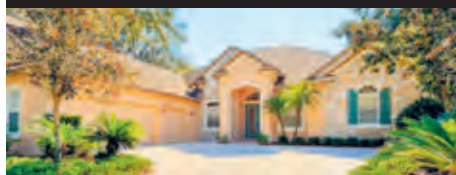


FishHawk



Custom-built 4 bed/3 bath pool home, conservation views, gated, walking distance to schools and amenities, on .34 acres! **\$459,000**

FishHawk



Stunning 4 bed/4.5 bath pool/spa home on cul-de-sac with wood views in gated Dunlin Woods. Open floorplan, upstairs bonus room, MOVE-IN READY! **\$689,000**

Buckhorn



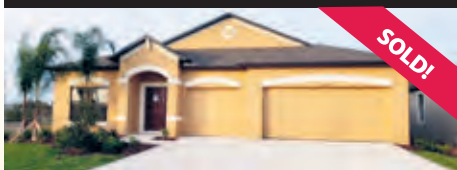
Charming and updated 4 bed, 2.5 bath w/ private screened pool. Close to the park, immaculate and move-in ready. **\$344,900**

FishHawk



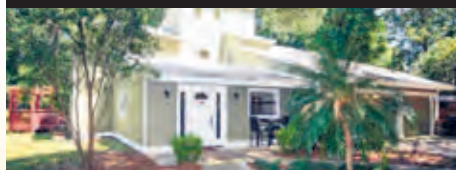
Gorgeous Cardel-built 4 bed/2 bath/2-car garage home with conservation views, new carpet, new paint, stainless steel appl., split bedroom floor plan. **\$299,900**

South Fork Lakes



New construction in Riverview, M/I Home Contact us today to learn how we can help you save money when buying a new home.

Valrico Short Sale



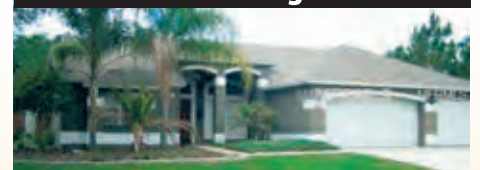
6 bed, 4.5 bath pool home on 2.2 acres - zoned ASC-1, fixer-upper, can be subdivided, great commercial potential, or single family with land close in town; bank approved. **\$359,000**

FishHawk



Gorgeous Suarez-built home with 2,904 square feet that includes 4/3/3 plus bonus room all on one floor. Upgraded countertops, large screened lanai, fenced backyard. Walk to Park Square & Aquatic Center. Call today for more details or for a private tour.

Lithia Ridge



All new kitchen and baths! This home has a pool & spa with over 2,700 square feet with 4/3/3 sitting on 1/4 acre (mol). Huge private fenced backyard. **Call today!**

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Yard of the Month



Photo: Wendy Knipp

Ted & MaryAnn Anderson

2302 Longmore Court, Valrico (Somerset)



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



A Taste of the Derby!

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For Sponsorship and other info, contact 813-654-1388 or director@theoutreachclinic.com



BHA COMMUNITY CORNER



DON'T FORGET TO LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!



New Board Members Wanted, 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" or volunteer on a committee. 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.

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 ongoing! Join TODAY! // 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.

Monday, April 8, 6:30 p.m. / Bloomingdale Special Taxing District Monthly Trustee Meeting // Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road. Call 813-684-6667 for information.

Tuesday, April 9, 6:30 p.m. / BHA Monthly Board Meeting // Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road. Residents always welcome. Call 813-681-2051 for information.

Thursday, April 18, 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.



2019 BHA EVENTS TODAY!



SAVE THE DATE!

FREE Shredding Event Coming in August or September!
Stay tuned for details!

Fall Festival - October or November, TBD

Santa - December 8

BHA BRIEFS

Board Meeting Highlights and Other Board News

Discussion focused on the March clean-up and how to make it bigger and better. The shredder vendor and charity for donations were last minute "no shows." The board voted to have a free shredding event sometime in August or September. Details will be published when known. Board members were asked to actively recruit new board members.

Introducing Our Newest Column Featuring Bloomingdale Pets... Bloomingdale's Animal House!

Bloomingdale Photographers and Pet Lovers! The Gazette wants photos of your adorable "fur or furl-less" babies for Bloomingdale's Animal House! Some will grace the cover, others will be highlighted in the issue! Send high resolution photos to inbloomingdalenews@gmail.com. To date, we have received over 30 submissions! This month, we are using only one submission, but in the following months, we will use several photos in each issue.

Meet hedgehog Piper
Leech one of our
Fur-Less Babies in
Bloomingdale!

Photo: Will Leech



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BANDAGE



URGENT CARE \$\$

STITCHES



EMERGENCY CARE \$\$\$

CASTS



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Hospital-South. And then there's the **St. Joseph's Hospital-South** emergency department, which is always on hand, and best saved for, well, emergencies. BayCare is always ready to care for you with **BayCareAnywhere** doctors available 24/7, local **BayCare Urgent Care** Centers open seven days a week with extended hours, and emergency care available at **St. Joseph's Hospital-South**. Learn where to get the right care: BayCareRightCareRightPlace.org



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St. Joseph's Hospital-North • St. Joseph's Hospital-South

BAYCARE.ORG

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

TODAY!

JOIN US FOR THE 8TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL!

10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Rain or Shine! / The Village Early Learning Center, 3741 Canoga Park Drive, Brandon // The Village Family

Foundation and the Village Early Learning Center invite you to join us in celebration of community, culture and fun. This is a free event and all children in attendance will receive a new book to take home. There is a stage with live entertainment beginning at 10 a.m. There will be a food truck on campus for the event. Tour our classrooms and visit displays outside, which are decorated to represent countries from around the world. You'll even have a passport- so don't forget to get it stamped as you travel the globe.

Country displays include history, customs, fun facts, crafts and even food! Come learn about 28+ countries and cultures! Check us out on Facebook @ villagefamilyfoundation or call 813-651-0779 for information.



Today throughout April 13, Every Saturday, Tuesday and Thursday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Bloomingdale Library, McLean Community Room / Free Tax Help from AARP Tax-Aide Foundation //

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide is available free to taxpayers with low and moderate income, with special attention to those 60 and older. Assistance is provided by the AARP Tax-Aide Foundation on a first-come, first-served basis in cooperation with the Free Tax Preparation Program of Hillsborough County. Customers desiring assistance should review this list of recommended documents to bring to work with tax prep volunteers.

April 17, Breakfast 8 to 11 a.m. and Dinner 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. / Brandon Ladies of Elks, 800 Centennial Lodge Dr., Brandon //

Monthly breakfast and dinner hosted by the Brandon Ladies of Elks! Served in the main hall of the lodge, Breakfast is \$7/person and Dinner (including dessert) is \$8/person. Open to the public and tickets can be purchased at the door.



April 30, 10:30 a.m. / Wake Up, Brother Bear at the Bloomingdale Regional Public Library, 1906 Bloomingdale Ave. //

Watch as Brother and Sister Bear experience a full year of glorious seasons. See a waterfall melt, meet a butterfly, chase an elusive fish, and skate on an icy pond. In this show that is especially for the very young, children are invited to join the action with a small bag of props that help create magical moments. For ages 2-7. Presented by Creative Arts Theatre Company, the City of Tampa's professional theater company for young audiences. Register through the calendar feature at HCPLC.org.



Free Healthy Kids Day

The Y Wants to Awaken Summer Imagination at Free Healthy Kids Day Saturday, April 27, the YMCA is holding free community events to inspire more kids to keep their minds and bodies active at the annual YMCA's Healthy Kids Day, the Y's national initiative to improve health and well-being for kids and families.

Healthy Kids Day is an opportunity to ignite children's imaginations so that they can imagine what they'll accomplish this summer. The free open house features activities such as summer camp games, poolside fun, music, demos, free healthy snacks and visual arts to motivate and teach families how to develop and maintain healthy routines at home throughout the summer months. Healthy Kids Day is a powerful reminder to focus on helping children imagine what they can accomplish over the summer.

"When a child is healthy, happy and supported they can make great things happen," says Senior Communications Director Lalita Llerena. "We believe in the potential of all children, and we strive to help kids find that potential within themselves. A child's development is never on vacation and Healthy Kids Day is a great opportunity to educate families and motivate kids to stay active in spirit, mind and body throughout the summer." Call 813-684-1371 for information!



Master Gardener Library Program

May 1, 6:30-8 p.m. / Master Gardener Plant Clinic: Edible Flowers / Bloomingdale Library, 1906 Bloomingdale Ave. / Turn your brown thumb green! Join master gardeners on the first Wednesday of every month through May 19 //

Don't forget to bring a plant or other gardening item for our fun Plant Swap. We eat with our eyes. Try something different, plant an edible flower garden. Learn what types of flowers are edible. Take home some basic recipes that you can use to start cooking with flowers. Your hosts for this class are Master Gardeners Richard Seedroff and Barbara Glotzbach.



How to File a Homeowners Complaint

By Joe Harless

According to Ron Spiller, Director of Hillsborough County Code Enforcement, the BHA established a Neighborhood Standards list in collaboration with the County Code Department in order to help maintain properties in non-mandated neighborhoods in the community.

Residents can file a Homeowners complaint through Hillsborough County:

1. Online - <https://hillsboroughcounty.org/en/government/departments/code>
2. Phone - 813-274-6600
3. Mail - Code Enforcement Department, 3629 Queen Palm Drive Tampa, FL 33619

The complainant will receive an email acknowledging receipt and the name of the officer assigned. Within 3 work days, the officer will observe the violation and take it from there. The case progress can also be tracked online.

Complaints can be anonymously made through county, but it is important to note that information received regarding code violations is not be exempt from public record. If the person being complained against asks who made the complaint, the information must be provided.

The top reported violations for the Bloomingdale area include overgrowth (lawns not being cut or trees trimmed), trash, junk, and debris, and inoperable vehicles. Residents take pride in the community, so if they see something, they report it. That mindset is one reason that Bloomingdale is as nice as it is.

Residents can still file complaints anonymously through the BHA office:

1. Online- <http://bloomingdalehoa.com/contact-us/>
2. Phone – 813-681-2051
3. Email – Bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com



Squatters were recently removed from a Bloomingdale property after a Complaint to Code Enforcement about the property conditions.

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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.)

NEW TRUSTEE

The BSTD Board of Trustees welcomed new member Claire Letkiewicz at the regular monthly meeting held on March 11. Ms. Letkiewicz, and her husband, Ray, has been a resident of Bloomingdale Cove since November 2014. In December 2017, she became a board member and President of the Bloomingdale Cove Homeowners Association (HOA).

Ms. Letkiewicz attended BSTD meeting regularly for the past year until becoming a Trustee. She also regularly attends Bloomingdale HOA and Bloomingdale Area Community Council monthly meetings. The new trustee is a doer and a team player who wants to help her community.

SPRING FLING

By Miriam Leech

Spring has arrived in Bloomingdale—new plantings, lots of pollen, and of course, Spring Break for Hillsborough County schools. With this time of year, the Bloomingdale Special Taxing District (BSTD) has seen increased property damage.

Sometime between Sunday, March 17, and Monday, March 18, vandals spray painted signs, sidewalk, fencing, brick walls, and a Frontier utility box at both Oak Crest and Eagle Pointe neighborhoods on Erindale Avenue. The vandalism resulted in \$2,400 in sign removal, cleaning, repainting, and re-installation, and another \$250 in pressure washing costs for the District. It is no laughing matter.

On the evening of March 25, there was another wall hit at the intersection of Erindale Drive and Culbreath Road, in almost the exact same spot as last summer's hit that destroyed a sign and wall, as well as incurred extensive to a homeowner's property. Wall damage this time was less extensive; however, the contractor's estimate and insurance claim against the driver are still pending. This will all determine the overall cost to taxpayers once settled.



BLOOMINGDALE

Special Taxing District

3509 Bell Shoals Road
Valrico, Florida 33596
(813) 684-6667 Office
(813) 684-2358 Fax
BSTD@verizon.net

www.bloomingdaletaxingdistrict.org

Hours: 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Tom Leech, President
Bob Meginnis, Vice President
Charlie Woodcock, Treasurer
Jay Kittle, Secretary
Russell Jones, Trustee
Randy Kehrmeier, Trustee
Claire Letkiewicz, Trustee

Monthly Meeting

The residents of Bloomingdale are invited to attend the next meeting of the BSTD on April 18th 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!

(Left) Graffiti: Vandals spray painted this wall at the Eagle Pointe neighborhood on Erindale Drive, as well as signs, fencing, and sidewalk at Oak Crest sometime between March 17 and March 18.

(Right) Erindale and Culbreath: Another wall hit occurred at the intersection of Erindale Drive and Culbreath Road on the evening of March 25. This is almost the exact same location where the wall and sign were destroyed in an accident last July 1.

Wanted: A Forever Home and Family!

Source: Hillsborough County



Hillsborough County's Pet Resource Center (PRC) has many cats and dogs looking for their "forever" homes. The PRC is the only open-admission facility in the county, meaning it accepts dogs and cats regardless of breed, size or medical condition. Residents can visit the center or search online to view hundreds of adoptable animals. All pets are microchipped, vaccinated, registered, and spayed or neutered before adoption.

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

Here are just a few fabulous faces to choose from:

Bree



Bree is a 3-year-old female who is friendly with adults but unsure of children. She is housebroken, leash-trained and enjoys long walks.

Diego



Diego is a 2-year-old male who is playful with adults, but skittish around loud noises. Basic training classes may help a lot.

Rosey



Rosey is a 7-year-old female who loves people and may be best without any other pets.

Tiki



Tiki is an 11-year-old female who likes other cats, lounging and attention but is unsure of children.

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www.IernaAir.com

Bloomingdale Residents Enjoying Spring Break

By Wendy Knipp

Spring Break included St. Patrick's Day! Residents Alex, Chris, and Donny Childress enjoyed attending Tampa's River O' Green Festival on March 16.



Over the break, Campo YMCA offered "Safe Around Water" classes to the community for ages 3-12. Pictured are Zoey age 4 (left) and Serenity age 6 (right) with Instructor Case.

Photo: Deidre Morgan



Pictured are
Elijah age 5
with Instructor
Hannah.
Photo: Deidre Morgan

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

The Chadderton Group
Keller Williams Realty

813-601-5659

ronniemclaughlin@kw.com

www.chaddertongroup.com



BEFORE



AFTER

Save Time and Money while Transforming a Bathroom

When remodeling a bathroom as a DIY project, there can be a lot of time and expense involved. Between all the purchases such as flooring, an updated bathtub, modern tile, fresh paint and a new vanity, the costs add up fast. And you may simply not have the knowledge and background to complete the job. Ideally, find a trustworthy contractor that can save you money by refurbishing rather than replacing.

Neighborhood Snapshot - Augusta Village/Stratford Trace

This voluntary HOA neighborhood is located off Natures Way Blvd on the south side of Bloomingdale. The Streets are Arley Place, Buckner Road, 1401-1604 Dumont Drive, Elba Place, Elton Place Lukow Place, Midoneck Court, 1315 to 1454 Monte Lake Drive, 1604 to 1612 Oak Arbor Lane and Queensbury Avenue. Fourteen homes sold over the past 365 days at an average of \$126 per square foot.

Premier Kitchen and Baths changed the look of this tub and tile in just 4 hours for about 1/2 the cost it would take to replace the tub and tile. Find a video of this transformation at facebook.com/ronniekw.

A Fond Farewell to Winn Dixie

By Wendy Knipp

Customers were saddened to see that the Winn Dixie grocery store located at 179 Bloomingdale Avenue shut its doors on March 25. After decades of service to the community, it was deemed an “underperforming store” by its parent company, Southeastern Grocers. Customers will miss its convenient location and friendly faces working there. According to one worker, employees were offered either a severance package or a transfer to another Winn Dixie store. No word yet on what will replace it.



Photos: Wendy Knipp



Teens: The Side Effects of “Senioritis”

By Jon Alfano

It's that time of year. Many seniors, including myself, are entering the twilight of their high school careers. With so many exciting events coming up such as grad bash, prom, graduation, and starting college, it is easy to lose focus on the here and now. Dropping everything in the final quarter is commonly referred to as “Senioritis” but beware as this condition can have serious consequences impacting graduation and/or college acceptance.

Seniors are required to pass a certain level of classes in order to graduate. Slacking-off in the final quarter could result in failing exams and depending on performance earlier in the year, failing the class.

Getting into college is very competitive. Slacking-off may cause your college to rescind your acceptance. Offers of admission from universities are not permanent and your grades are still monitored through the end of the year. If they notice that your grades begin to slip below their standards, they may not hesitate to revoke their acceptance, especially in the more competitive colleges. Do not let your grades slip this quarter or you could find yourself left out in the cold instead of going to your preferred school.

Good luck graduating seniors!



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BDGZ50

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Residents Spring Cleaning at Community Clean-up



On March 2, residents eagerly lined up at 1626 Natures Way to do some spring cleaning and participate in the highly-anticipated Community Clean-Up organized by the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association (BHA).

This annual event gives residents an easy way to remove unwanted items from their homes responsibly and without having to haul it all the way to the dump. Not only could residents bring items such as furniture and grills, but the BHA also coordinated services to properly recycle electronics (eCycle Florida) and prescription medications (6th Medical Group). In all, 10 commercial dumpsters were filled.



This event really helps to spruce up the neighborhood. Suzy Watts is our BHA President and says, "The efforts of everyone involved helps to keep our Bloomingdale community beautiful and safe." BHA Vice President Sean Donahue chaired this event with Charlie Woodcock as Co-chair and Donahue says, "By providing a venue for Bloomingdale residents to easily remove unsightly objects from their property, we make Bloomingdale's appearance nicer. We all benefit from this service regardless of whether we drop off items or not."

Your BHA Membership dues helped to pay for a portion of this event and residents also donated almost \$700 on site to help defer costs. Of course, this could not have been a success without the hard work of the BHA Board and volunteers, including many students who spent their Saturday giving back to the community.

Thank you to the Board, the volunteers, and all the residents for helping keep Bloomingdale beautiful!





The shredder was a "no show" due to unforeseen circumstances. The BHA will offer a free shredding event in August or September so stay tuned for details!



Wildlife... Up Close and Personal

Article/Photos by Chris and Elizabeth Dennard



(Editor's Note: In our new column, Bloomingdale residents Chris and Elizabeth Dennard, profiled in last month's Gazette, will share their love of local and global wildlife.)



THIS MONTH: THE CRESTED CARACARA

Caracaras are from the Falcon family and can be found in Florida, Arizona, Texas and the Caribbean. They live in a semi-open habitat offering open ground for hunting and dense cover for nesting. First described in 1871 by John Audubon, "Caracara" comes from a south American Indian name, based on its bird call. It is the national emblem of Mexico and is commonly called the "Mexican eagle." Because of hunting and habitat loss in the United States, it is currently considered a threatened species.

Behavior

These birds fly very close to ground often surprising their prey because of how fast and quiet they fly. Roosts may contain up to a dozen Caracaras but abundant food sources may cause more than 75 to gather. Several years I ago saw 30 caracaras together in a local orange grove.

Breeding/Nesting

They typically breed from December until May. Caracaras build nests by weaving plant material, sticks, weeds and debris into a bulky 2-foot structure. Nest sites are usually 8' to 50' above ground in shrubs, trees and cabbage palms. Crested Caracara stay together for the breeding season; however, live a solitary life at other times. The female lays from 1-4 eggs that are cinnamon in color. The young usually fly off (fledge) after 6 to 8 weeks.

Hunting

This scavenger has probably the most varied diet of any bird of prey. It primarily eats carrion, but also eats live prey including insects, rabbits, squirrels, skunks, birds, snakes, lizards, alligators, bird and turtle eggs and occasionally fruit. They fly low searching for prey they can surprise.





BLOOMINGDALE COMMUNITY STATION NOTES

"One Team, One Family, One Community"

By Community Resource Deputy Clifford Fletcher
and CSO Debbie Vijil

Area Law and Order

Between Feb. 12 and Mar. 18, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office conducted 70 traffic stops which resulted in 15 citations, 23 verbal warnings and 32 written warnings. There were 3 injury crashes and 4 non-injury crashes. Additionally, we had 3 DUI arrests, 5 vehicle burglaries and 1 residential burglary of an unsecured residence.

A telephone scam was recently reported in which the suspect demanded payment on victim's TECO "delinquent account" in order to avoid service being terminated. The resident knew better and hung up, but if you're unsure, hang up and call the company directly at the number you recognize.

Protect Yourself!

Always remove valuables from your car and lock your doors. A stolen wallet can easily turn into identity theft. You know your neighborhood better than anyone so if you see something strange, please call us at 247-8200 or 911. Don't wait!

Crime Mapping

Visit <http://gis.hcso.tampa.fl.us/publicgis/crimemapping/> to discover crimes reported in your area.



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BLOOMING IN BLOOMINGDALE

Photo Provided By: Peter and Eileen Kadzielewski

By Gwen Graverson

...HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

Container Gardening

By Dr. Scott Graverson

For many of us “Yankee” Wisconsin transplants, the idea of planting a vegetable garden in November is as unsettling as a Sunday without a Packers game. After several years of watching my fragile tomatoes wither in the Florida sun, I decided to start planting in the Fall. Because the soil here tends to be sandy, I decided to try container gardening.

The containers were cut-up 55-gallon barrels. I created a watering system using 4” corrugated perforated pipe, pipe sock, and ½” PVC pipe. I cut the pipe to a length large enough to form a ring on the bottom of my container and I placed a sock over the pipe to keep out the dirt. I inserted a length of PVC into the pipe, long enough to extend past the top of the container, but I did not drill holes in the bottom of the containers. This system worked best with a single drainage hole half way up the side of the container.



The watering system uses easy-to-find supplies from your local gardening store.

Once you have your system set up, fill ¾ to the top with good soil and plant your starter plants. Because the heat adversely affects the roots of your plants, it is best to plant once the temperatures are consistently below 80 degrees. Add your favorite water-soluble fertilizer to your watering can and, using a funnel, pour 1-2 gallons of water into the feeding tube once a week. You may need to add some more water during the week, depending on the weather; I usually water twice a week.

Advantages of Container Gardening

Container gardening requires watering from the bottom, so it encourages deep root growth and you don’t need to water as frequently. With the moisture already at the bottom of the container, there is less evaporation. If you use a fertilizer like fish emulsion, the critters in your yard are less likely to smell the fish and dig up your plants.

Enjoy your home-grown veggies!



Tomatos and peppers thrive in the large container gardens.



Florida Gardening Tips for April

Source: <http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/lawn-and-garden/florida-gardening-calendar/>

- Annuals – Coleus do well in sun or shade and provide vivid colors and patterns for months.
- Bulbs - Planting daylilies ensures months of color from these low-maintenance plants.
- Herbs - Nasturtiums leaves and flowers add a peppery zest to salads.
- Vegetables - Continue planting warm-season crops, such as beans, sweet corn, and squash. Mulch well to prevent weeds and provide water if the weather has been dry.
- Pests - Monitor landscape plants weekly for aphids on tender new growth. For lawn insects, rule out cultural problems, such as lack of water, that resemble insect damage before applying a pesticide. Identify and conserve insects that benefit your yard.
- Flowering plants - Check if leaves and/or flowers of gardenias and roses are damaged.
- Perennials and bulbs - Divide clumps of bulbs, ornamental grasses, or herbaceous perennials to expand or rejuvenate garden beds or to pass along to friends.
- Lawns - Apply fertilizer after new growth has started which is usually early April, choose a fertilizer (not a "weed and feed") with little or no phosphorus unless a soil test indicates the need for it. A fertilizer with controlled-release nitrogen yields longer-lasting results.
- Shrubs - Choose from a wide variety of shrubs to add to the landscape now.
- Mulch - Add mulch to minimize weeds and conserve moisture during dry weather. Organic mulches add nutrients to the soil.



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April School News: A Look at What's Happening

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

Compiled by Deidre Morgan



April - Month of the Military Child

April 8 - Non-Student Day - No School

April 19 - Good Friday - Non-Student Day - No School

April 26 - Relay for Life - 6:00pm - 6:00am April 27 @ Bloomingdale High School

May 6 - 10 - Teacher Appreciation Week



ALAFIA ALLIGATOR ALLEY

April 18 - Myth Bowl

April 24 - Administrative Professional Day

April 26 - 4th Grade SLAM Bowl

April 29 - May 3 - BOGO Book Fair

Alafia Spirit Store/MINT/Book Swap

Mondays 7:10am - 7:35am (Kindergarten - 2nd)

Wednesdays 7:10am - 7:35am (3rd - 5th)

Yearbook Sponsors

Yearbook Sponsors are needed. If you are interested or know someone who is, please contact the Yearbook Team at AlafiaYearbookPTA@gmail.com.

Fundraiser "Thank You"!

The Alafia PTA would like to say "THANK YOU" to everyone that helped us reach our fundraising goal and the many volunteers that helped us with our Fundraiser, Spring Fling Carnival and FUN'd Run. We couldn't do it without you!!



CIMINO COUGAR CENTRAL

April 6 - Spruce Up Cimino

April 16 - PTA Board Meeting - 6:00pm - 8:00pm @ Bloomingdale Golf Club

April 22 - 26 - Spring Book Fair

April 23 - Chick Fil-A Spirit Night - 4:00pm - 8:00pm @ Bloomingdale Ave Location

April 23 - Spring Concert - 6:30pm - 7:30pm

April 26 - All Pro Dad's and Mom's - 6:30am - 7:30am - Multi-Purpose Room



Burns Bruins Banter

April 10 - Report Cards

April 10 - Flag Football vs Shields - 6:00pm @ Bloomingdale HS

April 16 - Dad Group Meeting - 7:00pm - Place to be Announced

April 17 - Burns Got Talent Rehearsal - 6:30pm @ Bloomingdale HS

April 18 - Burns Got Talent Show - 6:30pm @ Bloomingdale HS

April 24 - SAC Meeting - 8:15am - Media Center

April 24 - Flag Football vs Randall - 6:00pm @ Bloomingdale HS

April 25 - Spring Orchestra Concert - 6:30pm @ Bloomingdale HS

April 30 - Spring Band Concert - 6:30pm

May 2 - Chorus Spring Concert - 6:30pm @ Bloomingdale HS



BLOOMINGDALE HIGH BULL BUSINESS

April 6 - Baseball @ Leto - 1:00pm

April 6 - PROM - 8:00pm - 11:00pm - Palmetto Club

April 9 - 12 - Spring FSA Writing (9th & 10th Grade)

April 9 - Girls/Boys Lacrosse vs Wharton - 5:00pm

April 9 - Softball/Baseball vs East Bay - 7:00pm

April 10 - Softball/Baseball vs Steinbrenner - 7:00pm

April 12 - Grad Bash - 4:00pm - 4:00am April 13 - Universal Studios, Orlando

April 12 - Softball/Baseball @ Durant - 7:00pm

April 12 - Boys Lacrosse @ Mitchell - 8:00pm

April 13 - AP Psych Mock Exam - 8:30am - Cafeteria

April 15 - Varsity Flag Football @ Brandon - 7:00pm

April 16 & 18 - Boys Lacrosse Districts @ Plant City - 5:00pm

April 16 & 18 - Girls Lacrosse Districts @ Newsome - 5:00pm

April 16 - Softball/Baseball vs Plant City - 7:00pm

April 17 - Cap & Gown Delivery - 9:30am - Auditorium

April 18 - Softball/Baseball @ Riverview - 7:00pm

April 22 - Orchestra Spring Concert - 6:30pm

April 23 - Chorus Spring Concert - 7:00pm

April 23 - Softball/Baseball vs Brandon - 7:00pm

April 24 - Band Banquet - 6:00pm

April 25 - Softball/Baseball vs Newsome - 7:00pm

April 27 - AP Lang Mock Exam - 8:00am - Cafeteria

April 27 - Band Prisms Concert - 7:00pm

May 3 - Baseball @ Jefferson - 7:00pm

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Burns Middle School - Math League Grand Champions!

By Emily Nichols & Emma Voehl

Photos: Burns Middle School

In February, Burns Middle School competed in the Hillsborough County Math League Competition with approximately 40 other middle schools from across the District. The teams were made up of 4 students per grade who took individual and team tests. Individual scores were combined with the team score for an overall score. The 6th grade team, 7th grade team, and Algebra team each took First Place in the region and each team member also placed individually. After all team scores were combined, Burns had the highest scores and each team was pronounced GRAND CHAMPIONS!!

Congratulations to the winners and their coaches!



7th Grade Team Grand Champions and Individual Champions (left to right) Emma Voehl (1st place), Joseph Brown (2nd place), Tyler Hacker (4th place), Kody Nguyen (3rd place), Coach Virginia Keith



6th Grade Team Grand Champions and Individual Champions (left to right) Guy Tristan Bensley (1st place), Nicolas Darby (3rd place), Hannah Ray (4th place), Mason Kriz (2nd place), and Coach Alice Jones (not pictured)



Algebra Team Grand Champions (rear) Principal Matthew DiPrima and (front left to right) Hanlin Zhang (2nd place), Emma Skousen (4th place), Emily Nichols (5th place), Hadley Horton (1st place), Coach Shelly Teal

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Bloomington Celebrates 50 Years of Baseball!

Brief and Photos by Deidre Morgan

The Bloomington Youth Sports Association, formerly Bloomington Little League, held a 50-year anniversary celebration on February 23. The ball park was full of activities and the fields were busy with games. BYSA President Dave Nolte introduced the guest speaker, Joe Perez who currently works with the New York Yankees as the Education Coordinator. He is retired from the Hillsborough County School system and was the former Head Coach at Tampa Catholic. During his time at TC he coached the team to the 1979 State Championship game and won. The 2014 Girls World Series Champions (age 12) were honored during the ceremony. Bloomington High Schools Drum Line provided entertainment for the crowd. The BYSA has two seasons a year, Fall and Spring. The Fall season is more of an instructional and developmental session with one practice a week and one game on Saturday, teams are selection with no try outs. During the Spring season things get a bit more competitive with 3-4 practices prior to the season, a few practices during the season and two games per week. All players participate in tryouts and teams are selected through a draft by managers. Ages run from 4 years old (T-Ball) all the way to age 18. For more information or to sign up your child, visit www.bysa.website.siplay.com.



A softball player is in the batter box and ready to swing.



All eyes are on the ball as the batter and umpire watch the pitch.



Photos by Deidre Morgan

Paul Figueroa, who serves on the BYSA board, watches as participants line up to try and dunk his son Teddy in the Dunk Tank. Paul played baseball at the park back in the 80's. His son Teddy has been playing baseball for 5 years at the park and is currently on the Bloomington Braves team.

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Bloomington High School Hosts Odyssey of the Mind

Brief and photo by Deidre Morgan

Bloomington High School was proud to be chosen as the Regional Tournament Host for Odyssey of the Mind which took place on March 2. The concept is to choose a long-term problem and then find a solution through teaching teamwork skills, appreciation of others, self-confidence, and overcoming obstacles.



(Standing from left) Heather Hanks (former Bloomington teacher, Regional Odyssey Board member and current AP at Plant City High School) and Laurie Filardo (Regional Director for Odyssey). (Sitting from left) Debby Field (Judge Coordinator), Gladys Aboude and Tabitha Manes.

Bloomington's Football Team Golf Fundraiser a Success!

Brief and photos by Deidre Morgan

The Bloomington High School Football team held their 3rd Annual Golf Classic at the Bloomington Golfers Club on March 2 to raise money to improve facilities, pay for uniforms and fund the season. Local businesses supported the event by donating raffle prizes and sponsorships. This year's event raised over \$8,000! Congratulations!



The golfers have claimed their carts and ready to start the day on the course.



Bloomington Alumni Logan Crouse (left) is ready to hit the links with Coach Hutch (seated) and Head Football Coach Jake Coulson.



Mike and Melanie Skinner are ready and waiting to tee-off.

Amazing Season for the Burns' Soccer Team

Brief and photos by Wendy Knipp

Burns is proud of its boys' soccer team and Coach Mercer for making it to the Semi-Finals in their District against some tough competition. The team was undefeated until the very last game of the Semi-Finals. Way to Go Burns!



Congratulations Boy's Medley Team

Brief and photos by Jane Owen

Congratulations to the Bloomington Boys' Distance Medley team on winning 1st place at the Manuel-Griffin-Fraunhofer Relay Track Meet at Leto High School on March 9. The Distance Medley is a relay of four events: the 1200, 400, 800 and 1600 (in that order). Pictured (left to right) are Hunter Berry, Elijah Calhoun, Jon Owen, and Clinton Sims.





Burns Gets Colorful with Fundraising

Brief and photos by Jessica Hinson

Burns Middle School's PTSA hosted a Color Fun event on March 8th and raised approximately \$1500 for school programs. Donning white shirts, students ran through colorful powdered chalk stations and played games such as tug of war, hula hooping, and slip and slide. This fun event was a huge success and the students are looking forward to participating again next year!



7th and 8th grade students had fun getting doused with chalk.



Principal Matthew DiPrima (rear) enjoyed this event along with 8th graders (left to right) Charlie O'Brien, Jake Kriegbaum, and Bobby Cuthbertson.

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Bloomingtondale Music Students Performed in Vienna and Prague

By Jane Owen

Bloomingtondale High School Music Department students traveled to Austria and the Czech Republic during Spring Break (March 15 -22) for an invaluable opportunity to perform internationally. This trip was organized through Youth Music of the World, a company dedicated to pairing talented musicians and entertainers with opportunities to perform around the world.

The Bloomingtondale Band performed through the streets of downtown Vienna with a stop in Stephansplatz and then through the streets of Prague which went from the Estates Theater to Old Town Square. The Bloomingtondale Chorus and the Orchestra performed in the Vienna Community Church, the Peterskirche, Prague's Church of the Holy Saviour, and the Church of St. Nicholas in Old Town Square.

The group totaled 247 people, 170 of which were students. The experience offered the students much more than an international performance. Bloomingtondale's Band Director Jon Sever said he likes providing the students the overseas opportunity. He says, "It is practical application of the world they study... It makes the books they read in school REAL and relevant."

Students found the trip awe-inspiring.



John Pignataro, a freshman tuba player, said his favorite part was marching in the band through the Vienna and Prague. "Going through the streets with a huge crowd following us made me feel like I was on tour for a famous marching band. I'm glad I went because the trip was the experience of a lifetime."

Orchestra (violin, piano) student and senior Bre Jenkins was grateful for the trip, "I'm so glad I went because it is such a rare opportunity to travel internationally with my friends and family, and I will never get the chance to perform in another country!"

Congratulations to Bloomingtondale's talented music students, Jon Sever who directed the Band, Jason Locker who directed the Chorus and Beverly Sutherland who directed the Orchestra!

Performances can be viewed on YouTube by searching "Bshs 2019 europe trip."

Orchestra students played in the Church of the Holy Saviour in Prague.

Photo: Jane Owen



Band students pose in the Old Town Square of Prague.

Photo: Jane Owen



Chorus students enjoyed performing at Peterskirche in Vienna.

Photo: Sharon Gaertner

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Bloomington Girls Soccer: Kicking and Running While Looking Stunning

By Deidre Morgan

On March 12, the Bloomington Girls Soccer Team was dressed to impress at their End of Year Banquet held at River Hills Country Club. The team finished the overall season 9-2-2 and district 5-0-1. They lost in the 1st round of the Regional Games to Seminole High School 2-1. Coach Heather Iverson, who has been the Head Coach for 7 years, said that she could not be prouder of all the ladies and what they have accomplished on and off the field. Iverson said she is especially proud of the seniors who have played all four years; Annaliese Sip (Team Captain), Madelynn Shepard, Hannah Weisman and Chloe Starkey.

Claudia Hernandez, a senior who has played for three years, along with Sip and Shepard, have been selected to play in the All-Star Game. Sophomore Elise Vera was selected as the Week 16 Florida Orthopedic Institute's Athlete of the Week. Elise and Annaliese Sip were also selected to 1st Team for the All Western Conference. 2nd Team selectees are Alyssa McDonald (Team Captain) and Madelynn Shepard.



The Bloomington High School Lady Bulls Soccer Team along with Assistant Coach Chad Kasten (left) and Head Coach Heather Iverson (far right) pose for a picture before the End of Year Banquet at River Hills Country Club (Photo: Deidre Morgan).

Coach Iverson is also very proud of the girls for their high academics and while none of the seniors intend to play soccer in college, she is very proud of the schools they have been accepted to attend; UNF, UF, USF and Washington University in St. Louis. Chloe Starkey is ranked 3rd and Annaliese Sip is ranked 6th in the graduating Class of 2019. Coach Iverson announced at the banquet that she will be stepping down from the Head Coaching duties next year. She will still be teaching at Bloomington and will remain as the Business Manager for the team. Congratulations to Coach Iverson and the Lady Bulls Soccer Team on another successful season!

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