



THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BLOOMINGDALE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION SINCE 1980

VOLUME XLI



ISSUE 4



APRIL 2021



www.BloomingtonLife.com

The Bunny Brings Smiles To Bloomington!



Photo: Michelle Colesanti

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PLEASE RECYCLE

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2018 & 2019

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"What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make." *Jane Goodall*

THE AWARD-WINNING

BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER



JOY BOISSELLE

Editor - The Bloomingdale Gazette

3509 Bell Shoals Rd.

Valrico, FL 33596 - (813) 681-2051

Email: InBloomingdaleNews@gmail.com

Website: www.Bloomingdale.Life

Design/Layout: Chris Pascucci, NTZ Studios (ntzstudios.com)

Staff Writers: Michelle Colesanti & Jane Owen

The official publication of the BNA since 1980, delivered free to Bloomingdale residents on the first Wednesday of each month.



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

Email: Bl.Neighbor1@gmail.com

Website: www.Bloomingdale.Life

BNA Board meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at the Bloomingdale Community Office.

President:

Suzy Watts

Vice President:

Sean Donahue

Treasurer:

Grace Lewis

Directors at Large:

Bobbi Ferraro

Billy Hightower

BNA COMMUNITY CORNER

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Your Address

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Total Enclosed \$.....
Check Number #.....

WE NEED YOU! JOIN THE BNA!

The Bloomingdale Neighborhood Association membership drive continues. Just \$35 will help keep our programs and services on track. Please send your membership in today and be part of making Bloomingdale a great place to live, work and call home!

MONTHLY CALENDAR

Bloomingdale Special District Monthly Trustee Meeting/ Monday, April 12, 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. / Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road / Call 813-684-6667 for information.

BNA Board Meeting / Tuesday, April 13, 6:30 p.m. / Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road / Call 813-252-0252 for information. Send topics you want addressed to bl.neighbor1@gmail.com.

Bloomingdale Area Community Council / HCSO's Security and Safety meeting, *Cancelled Until Further Notice* / Bloomingdale Community Station, 3622 Erindale Drive, 813-635-8040

HOT! Spring and Fall Community Clean-ups, TBD / Our Spring Clean-up normally held in March has been postponed by Hillsborough County. We are still exploring our options to hold a mini-event. Keep watching for more info on our web and FB pages.

2021 Scholarship Winner to be announced at our May Board Meeting!

Community Garage Sale- TBD

Campo YMCA Trunk or Treat, October

Santa Drive-through, December 5



WANT TO SEE MORE ANNUAL EVENTS? JOIN "TEAM BLOOMINGDALE!"

We need residents like you to add your energy and a little of your time to the Association Board. Let's put our hearts and efforts into our community. Call 813-681-2051/252-0252 or email Bl.Neighbor1@gmail.com for information.

THANK YOU, EASTER BUNNY!

The 2nd Annual Easter Bunny Parade is in the books! Thank you, Irene Rapoza AKA The Bunny and Bre Newby AKA the Bunny's Sidekick, for letting us host this event with you this year! Big thank you to our bunny volunteers, many of whom are BSHS NHS members, Eli Santos and his Daytona Pace Car, Joan Bird and our HCSO deputies for keeping us safe. Finally thank you to the BNA board for spreading community spirit with events like this!



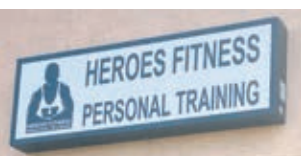
Courtesy Photo



Photos: Michelle Colesanti unless otherwise noted



Heroes Fitness
Location: 1528 Bloomingdale Ave
(in the same center as Domino's and AJ's Bikes)
For more info: (813) 895-7148
Facebook: @HeroesFitt
http://heroesfitness.org/
Email: connorblackmon@heroesfitness.org



Heroes Fitness moved to our community in late 2020. The gym is centrally located, close to Bloomingdale High School, in the same center as Domino's and AJ's Bikes. Heroes Fitness is a one-stop shop for all things related to health and fitness, from ultra-fat burning workouts to meal plans, and more. It is a results-based studio for everyone.

Heroes Fitness owner, Connor Blackmon, is a certified personal trainer who loves being in Bloomingdale and appreciates the supportive community. He offers his clients results through science-based training and nutrition. Part of his personal training includes sending weekly emails with fitness and weight loss tips, and weekly recipes to help all of Heroes Fitness's clients and fans. He also offers health and fitness advice on his Heroes Fitness blog: www.heroesfitness.org/blog.



Cimino teachers work out at Heroes Fitness!
Courtesy Photo



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Stroke survivor



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Bring on the Blueberries! Local Farms Offer U-Pick Blueberries

By Michelle Colesanti

Strawberry season has just come to an end, but you can still get your fresh berry fix. More and more area farms now grow blueberries. Although the season is shorter, the local berries are delicious and many of these farms offer U-Pick Blueberries.

Picking blueberries makes for a fun family outing, and is a great learning opportunity for kids while enjoying the outdoors together. As you reconnect with nature, you are also supporting local farmers.

Below are a few local farms planning to open for u-picking this season. Visit the farms online or call to determine when picking will take place as the ripening of the berries is dependent on the weather conditions.



Bob's Berries, LLC

Bob's Berries

11501 Winn Road, Riverview
813-586-3262

Bob's Berries is an organic farm specializing in blueberries. Local organic products, fresh raw local honey, free range chicken eggs, blackberries, olives, plums, and apples are among

other thing offered. It is slated to open its blueberry season on Saturday, April 17 with a spring event. There is no guarantee for U-pick at this specific event. Visit <https://bobsberriesfl.com/>.

Frosty Blue Blueberry Farms

1907 Streetman Dr., Lithia
813-689-7703

Frost Blue Farms plans to do primarily U-pick this year. Owners hope to begin in early April, but check online for updates. Visit <https://frostybluefarms.com> or www.facebook.com/FrostyBlueBlueberryFarm.



Lyna Berry Farms

17928 Bill Taylor Rd., Lithia
11920 Neal Rd., Lithia
813-728-9132

Lyna Berry Farms is looking at the middle to late April for blueberry picking. Please visit www.facebook.com/lynaberryfarms or visit www.lynaberryfarms.com and click on contact so that you can find out when berries are ready.



Fancy Farms

4204 Dranefield Rd.,
Lakeland
813-478-3486
Visit:
www.facebook.com/fancyfarmsinc



Many local farms will be offering U-Pick Blueberries this season. Although the season is short, the local berries are delicious.

Photo: Michelle Colesanti

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Explore the Quaint Town of Dunedin

By Michelle Colesanti

We stood at the end of the pier watching the sun slowly dip toward the horizon. Clearwater Beach, Caledesi and Honeymoon Islands stretched before us across St. Joseph Sound. The sounds of bagpipes were getting closer as the Dunedin Pipe Band made its way on to the pier to welcome the end of another glorious winter day.

My husband Phil and I had talked about visiting Dunedin for years. Fighting the Covid complacency we had slipped into during this tough time, we finally made the trek across the Courtney Campbell Bridge and headed slightly north. It took just over an hour to get there.

Dunedin can trace its history back to 1852 making it one of the oldest towns on Florida’s west coast. The name was chosen by two Scottish merchants, J.O. Douglas and James Somerville, who named it after the Gaelic interpretation of Edinburgh, which was their original hometown.

Today, the Dunedin Pipe Band keeps that cherished tradition alive by performing around the U.S. and internationally representing Dunedin. From now until the end of April, you can hear members of the band perform on the pier Friday and Saturday nights at sunset.



Visit Dunedin, one of the oldest towns on Florida’s west coast. It’s just one hour away and offers plenty to do for everyone.



There are plenty of places to park, and walking is your best mode of transportation to explore once you are there. The downtown area is quaint with plenty of cute shops and galleries to explore as well as many restaurants and bars. If you love beer, there are seven craft breweries scattered around the Main Street area. You can easily do your own pub crawl as each place has its own unique touch.

If you really like to walk or maybe bike ride, the Pinellas Trail runs right through downtown. The trail covers 45 miles from Tarpon Springs to St. Petersburg. After walking a small portion of the trail, we checked out TD Ballpark where the Toronto Blue Jays hold their spring training games. Although we found the stadium, we could not get a peek inside, but signs welcoming the team back were sprinkled throughout town.

If you visit with the kids, Edgewater Park by the bay has a nice playground, picnic tables and public restrooms. The Dunedin marina is right next to the park where you can book various types of fishing and boat trips.



If you are a Beatles fan, it might be worth a visit to the Penny Lane Beatles Museum. I didn't discover this museum until after our trip, making a return to Dunedin a must for this huge Beatles fan. It holds the collection of a long-time resident who shares his Beatles memorabilia covering several decades dating back to 1961.

We ended up having an early dinner at Bon Appétit, located at 148 Marina Plaza. We chose it because of its waterfront views. The menu offers a blend of classic European and American dishes. We shared the Sauteed Gulf Shrimp appetizer served in a Sweet and Spicy Garlic Chili Sauce and I had the Grilled Salmon three course special while Phil enjoyed the Bouillabaisse. The food was delicious and the views made me feel like I was on a mini vacation. Visit <https://bonappetitrestaurant.com>.

We only spent a few hours in Dunedin, but we really enjoyed the town's vibe. It also felt good just to be outdoors on a beautiful winter day, whetting our appetite for a return trip.



Photos: Michelle Colesanti



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Valrico

1928 East Bloomingdale (813) 662-4243

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Easter Bunny Takes to the Streets of Bloomingdale

By Michelle Colesanti

The chill in the air on the first weekend in spring wasn't enough to keep excited residents – old and young alike – from coming out to greet the Easter Bunny as it made its way through Bloomingdale East and West.

Irene Rapoza once again donned the costume for all who wanted a glimpse or maybe a photo of the famous Bunny. Her daughter, Breanna Newby, got the idea last year shortly after the pandemic began.

“My mom has always been the kind of person who wants to bring joy to everyone around her. She raised me with that same mentality. There is a lot that goes on in everyone's lives and if we can do something to make them smile and give them a happy memory, we're all about it,” said Newby.

Mom and daughter put word out via social media of their plans to make their way through the community. It was very well received. In fact, it was so popular that the Bunny made a return appearance this year on March 21 spreading out to reach more communities; this time with the support of the Bloomingdale Neighborhood Association (BNA).

Newby and her mom never thought the parade would turn into what it was this year.

Newby said, “Last year my mom just wanted to do something fun for the neighborhood, and this year we got to do it again but instead of driving around in our truck, we had so much help that made it absolutely incredible.”

Kids coming out to meet the Easter Bunny were also greeted by its helpers (student volunteers), who were busy directing the proceedings and handing out the BNA's signature duckies, this time with an Easter flair.

All in all, everyone enjoyed participating in this community event.

The Easter Bunny made its way through the Bloomingdale Communities on March 21 delighting young and old alike. The event was sponsored by the Bloomingdale Neighborhood Association.

Photos: Michelle Colesanti







April School News: A Look at What's Happening

Compiled by Jane Owen

School Calendar information is tentative.
Please follow school websites, social media
pages and the Hillsborough County Public
School site for up-to-date information.



April 2 / Non-student day



ALAFIA ALLIGATOR ALLEY

School Website: alafia.mysdhc.org

April is Military Child Month!

Wear purple every Wednesday

to show your support.

April 5-6 FSA and SSA testing



BURNS BRUINS BANTER

School Website: burns.mysdhc.org

Congratulations to the Burns soccer team for making it to the Championship game!
Go Bruins!



BLOOMINGDALE HIGH BULL BUSINESS

School Website: bloomingdale.mysdhc.org

Time for Senior Red Letters! Red Letters are due April 14. Organizers are looking for donations to cover postage and 800 white envelopes. Contact Wendy Johnson about donations or with questions about the Red-Letter project: dbandwendy@verizon.net.

CIMINO COUGAR CENTRAL

School Website: cimino.mysdhc.org

April- Spring book fair (TBD)

April 5-8 Bloomingdale Pizza Spirit Night

April 22- Earth day tree planting

April 27- cool cat ceremony

Scholarship Available!

The Hernandez Family Scholarship application deadline is April 15. The \$500 scholarship is open to all BSHS graduating seniors. To be eligible, a graduate must attend a University, College, Technical school, Trade School, or post graduate career program in Summer/Fall 2021 or Spring 2022. For more information, contact the school office.

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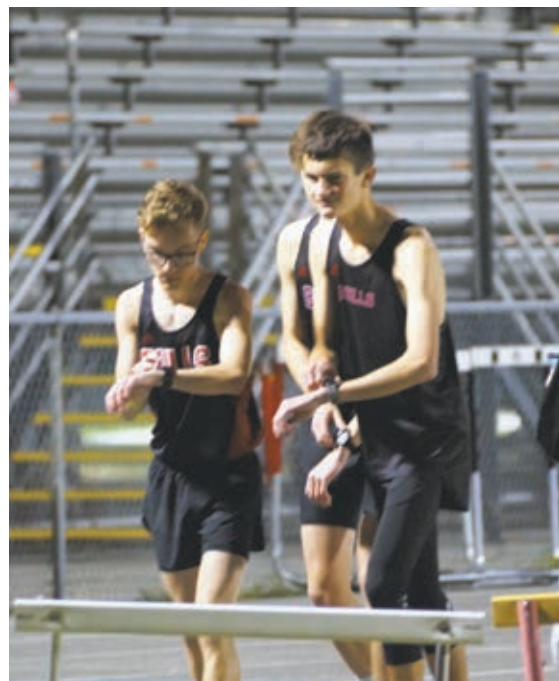


Bulls Track Team Runs Away from the Competition

Compiled by Jane Owen

Bloomington Boys and Girls Track took Overall 1st at the first 3 meets of the season:

Photos: Heather Berry



Jefferson Tri meet @Jefferson (Jefferson, Middleton & Bloomington)



Bloomington Tri meet @ Bloomington (Bloomington, Armwood, Durant)



Bloomington Tri meet @ Bloomington (Bloomington, Brandon, Durant)



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List of BSHS College Athlete Signees Grows

On Feb. 26, three Lady Bulls from the Bloomingdale Softball Team signed letters of intent to play collegiate ball. This is a huge accomplishment as only 6% of high school athletes get the opportunity to compete in college. Congratulations and good luck on your next season!



Georgia Krohn - Briar Cliff University



E-Mani Bailey-Usma, Florida Memorial University



Mikayla Cable - MIT



Kitko Honored as Coach of the Year

Congratulations to Coach Dennis Kitko selected as the 2020-2021 "Joel Medgebow Memorial Wrestling Coach of the Year" for Hillsborough County.



"This award is only possible because of the Bull Family. Wrestlers, coaches, parents, and admins, we ALL won this together!" Dennis Kitko



Bulls Wrestler Competes at State

Bulls Wrestler Zach Allison qualified and competed at the state level in the 132 lb-weight class. The team captain had an exceptional season finishing with a 34-9 record.

Coach Dennis Kitko is exceptionally proud of his accomplishments:

"Zachary Allison has come a long way in the last three years. He has worked very hard this past off season to become better and the extra work paid off. Working with the Iron Will Wrestling Club allowed him to wrestle with other great wrestlers in the area and made a great impact on his wrestling allowing him to qualify for state this year. We are super proud of his accomplishments and look forward to seeing him on the podium at state next year!"



MAY 8 & 9, 2021



ARRRGH YOU READY? RUN VIRTUALLY ON BAYSHORE!

You now have the option to run at a location of your choice or join us on beautiful Bayshore Blvd! Bayshore will be closed to allow for registered runners to run or walk the PGDC 15K, 5K, Half Marathon or 8K. Registered participants will receive huge Finisher Medals and all the Runner Amenities you've come to love no matter where you decide to run! We're implementing COVID protocols to keep everyone safe including:

- Port-a-lets and hand sanitizer units will be placed throughout the course
- Strategically placed misters & self-serve water stations
- Medical personnel on-site
- Suggested Start and Finish areas for registered participants only (Face coverings recommended)



TO REGISTER VISIT:
RUNGASPARILLA.COM



0000148959-01

Crimson Guard Excels with Award-Winning Performances

By Jane Owen

With heightened health and safety restrictions for high school sports and clubs, the 2021 Bloomingdale Crimson Guard is grateful to be able to perform during the pandemic. They have performed their production of "Unrequited" so well, they were promoted from the AA class into the Scholastic A class.

The team of 27 members took home two first place wins in Seminole on Feb. 13 and in Plant City on Feb. 20. The team was unable to compete at Strawberry Crest due to quarantined members. Instead they submitted a pre-recorded show to a virtual competition on March 20 and won third place. The team competed in the State Championships in Daytona on March 28 placing 5th.

Crimson Guard Director Billy Sullivan stated, "I am very proud of them overcoming the obstacles of performing during a pandemic. Despite quarantines, performing emotions behind a mask, and a change of classification they have risen to the occasion and have given their all. We look forward to seeing their continued growth!"

The Crimson Guard uses dance, equipment, and theatrics on the football field in the fall and then compete as their own entity in the spring. The competitive Winterguard teams compete with Varsity and Junior Varsity teams around the state from January through March. Membership is selected through an audition process, and members are held to high athletic and performance standards. For information, email Crimson Guard Director, Billy Sullivan, at williamd.sullivan@sdhc.k12.fl.us.

Photos: Fred Ocasio



Soloist Grace Norgard



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By Jane Owen



May 23, 8 a.m. at the
Hillsborough County Fairgrounds
215 Sydney Washer Rd
Dover, FL 33527

Questions? Email: BloomingdaleBulls5k@gmail.com
Registration is \$30. To register, go here and scroll to the May 23
date: <https://fitniche.com/events/>

Bloomingdale's Running of the Bulls 5k (ROTB) returns May 23. The 5k is a local favorite bringing in runners and walkers from all over. This year due to school district covid protocols, the race was moved from the school campus to the Hillsborough County Fairgrounds in Dover.

The ROTB 5k is sponsored by the Bloomingdale Band Boosters and 100 percent of profits benefit BSHS students. Director of Bands Jon Sever explained, "Funding for school programs is always a challenge. This year, our fund-raising activities have come to a screeching halt so being able to continue with the 5k is big for the program."

Local runner Heather Berry said, "I enjoy participating in the Running of the Bulls because it gives me the opportunity to work on my personal running goals while running alongside many of the cross country and track kids I cheer on each week. And, it's always nice to give back to the Rajun Bulls Marching Band that I marched with when I attended Bloomingdale."

Berry is avid runner and a member of Brandon Running Association, a mom of a current Bloomingdale Track and XC runner, and a former flute player in the band at Bloomingdale (class of 96).

The ROTB 5k is made possible by local business sponsors, including Gold Sponsors Acropolis Riverview and Heroes Paradise. Registered participants receive a dri-fit shirt and finishers receive medals. The race is chip-timed by Fitniche Events and age group winners receive awards.



Cimino teachers and staff hang out with the BSHS Bull.



Heather Berry and Frank Rodriguez celebrate their wins last year.

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BRANDON
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† On average, patients compliant with the Medi-Weightloss® Program lose 6.4 pounds the first week and 14 pounds the first month. Rapid weight loss may be associated with certain medical conditions and should only be considered by those who are medically appropriate. For Florida patients only: THE PATIENT AND ANY OTHER PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR PAYMENT HAS A RIGHT TO REFUSE TO PAY, CANCEL PAYMENT OR BE REIMBURSED FOR PAYMENT FOR ANY OTHER SERVICE, EXAMINATION OR TREATMENT THAT IS PERFORMED AS A RESULT OF AND WITHIN 72 HOURS OF RESPONDING TO THE ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE FREE, DISCOUNTED FEE, OR REDUCED FEE SERVICE, EXAMINATION OR TREATMENT. © 2021 Medi W LLC. All Rights Reserved.

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