



THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BLOOMINGDALE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION SINCE 1980

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APRIL 2022



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THIS MONTH



The Bunny is on the Way!

Stopping in Bloomingdale April 10!

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

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Laney Balis
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Jane Owen

BNA BRIEFS

BNA CALENDAR

Sunday, April 10, 10 a.m. / Bloomingdale Bunny Visit, See www.bloomingdale.life for more information.

Tuesday, April 12, 7:00 p.m. / BNA Board Meeting Bloomingdale Community Office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road / Call 813-252-0252 or email bl.neighbor1@gmail.com for information.

Saturday, September 10 / Community Garage Sale

Sunday, December 4 / Santa Visit

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Bloomingdale Neighborhood Association

Bloomingdale Bunny Visit

**Sunday, April 10
10 a.m.**



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Celebrate Queena's Birthday At Shopping Party Fundraiser

By Michelle Colesanti

A Shopping Party will be held at Center Place on Sunday, April 24 from 2-6 p.m. to celebrate Queena's 32nd birthday and help with ongoing medical expenses. She survived the attack on her life at the Bloomingdale Regional Library 14 years ago.

It's been 14 years since Queena survived a violent attack made on her life at the Bloomingdale Regional Library leaving her with lifelong disabilities. Queena's Shopping Party, an event being held at Center Place on Sunday, April 24 from 2-6 p.m., will honor her 32nd birthday, and help raise funds for her ongoing medical needs as well as to Hope Heals The Brain, a 501c3 non-profit organization raising awareness and funds for families caring for individuals suffering traumatic brain injury in central Florida.

Queen's family is diligent about making sure she receives the proper care and support, and because of that, she is still making strides. To continue to make progress, her medical needs are great.

Her mom Vanna Nguyen said, "Queen's requires 100% assistance with every aspect of daily life, as well as numerous medical appointments and therapies. Her traumatic brain injury causes almost daily seizures. It's been extremely difficult for me, yet has simultaneously been the most rewarding experience."

The shopping party fundraiser will offset some of those expenses. Funds are needed to cover the cost of private home health-aids a few days a week, and to cover the cost of oxygen therapy at \$200/treatment as well as therapy in the water, which Medicaid does not cover as well as other therapies.

To attend, you must purchase a ticket. The cost is \$40 per person or \$75 for a couple. Kids under 5 are free. Entry to the party includes an Italian lunch and drinks and cake to help celebrate Queen's birthday. There will be music, and plenty of shopping. Attendees will have access to browse some favorite local stores.

To purchase tickets, visit www.joinqueena.com/fundraisers/.

Sponsorship and donation inquiries can be made by email to vannablue9@yahoo.com or at www.joinqueena.com/contact/. To donate towards the cost of the fundraiser, visit www.joinqueena.com/donate/ or make checks payable Hope Heals The Brain Inc. (subject line: Queen's Shopping Party). Donations to the Bloomingdale Library Survivor can also be made payable to the Bloomingdale Library Assault Victim Trust at any Bank of Tampa or SunTrust Bank.

Center Place is located at 619 Vonderburg Dr. in Brandon. Visit joinqueena.com or www.facebook.com/JoinQUEENA for more inf



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The Yard of the Month is sponsored by Ace Hardware of Bloomingdale and Campo YMCA.

Send Yard of the Month nominations to: bl.neighbor1@gmail.com or call 813-681-2051. Winners receive a \$25 Gift Card to Ace Hardware of Bloomingdale and a 1 month family membership, plus join fee to the Campo YMCA.



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Welcome to the Neighborhood: Mighty Heroes Nutrition Childhood Cancer Nonprofit Store Offers Nutritious Drinks

Story and Photos by Michelle Colesanti (Unless Otherwise Noted)



From the age of 6, Tina Downing knew that she wanted to make an impact on the lives of children. In 2017 she started a childhood cancer nonprofit called Small But Mighty Heroes (SBMH). She recently opened a shop at 3240 Lithia Pinecrest Rd., Ste. 103. Mighty Heroes Nutrition offers nutrition shakes, tea, lemonade and coffee. A ribbon cutting was held on March 5 with the Valrico Chamber of Commerce to welcome the new store to the neighborhood.

The organization focuses on children impacted by childhood cancer and their families. "We offer tailored support for each of these children and their families. We truly focus on what is impactful to them as we remain constant and relevant no matter where they are in their journey. As we say here at SBMH, it takes a village and no child fights alone," Downing added.

Downing's journey began when she was introduced to boy named Blake who had Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia and passed away at age two. "My heart was invested in him and I took his passing very hard," she said.

Downing felt there had to be so much more for these incredible little superheroes. With the opening of the store, she hopes to spread awareness of childhood cancer and use it to bring in much needed funding for children battling cancer.

She said, "Our goal is to bring the community together to help us fight for a cause that is much greater than ourselves and to spread awareness of childhood cancer one drink at a time."



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Bunny Visits Bloomingdale April 10th!



The Bloomingdale Neighborhood Association (BNA) is thrilled to announce that the Easter Bunny will return to Bloomingdale on April 10! There will be designated STOP points along the route where families will be asked to gather for Bunny visits and photo ops. The Bunny cannot randomly stop along the route. In addition, we will not stop along Nature's Way or Culbreath Road for safety reasons.

The route for the Bunny visit will be the same as the route that Santa took in December. The route will be posted on the BNA website: www.bloomingdale.life. On April 10th, the BNA will post updates on the BNA page on Facebook.

Downing plans to host monthly events to bring the community together. The Community Pet Project (CPP) will be the next fundraiser on Saturday, April 9 from 1-4 p.m. Bring your family for photographs with the Easter Bunny. Proceeds will be split between CPP and SBMH.

Every drink and every donation helps these incredible small but mighty heroes. "We aim to make our name known far and wide. It takes a village and no child fights alone," added Downing.

For more information, visit the store at 3240 Lithia Pinecrest Rd., Ste. 103 or online at <https://smallbutmightyheroes.org/> or at www.facebook.com/Smallbutmightyheroes/.



Tina Downing (along with Spiderman; portrayed by her younger son), is excited to open her new store and spread awareness about her Small But Mighty Heroes nonprofit to help local families of pediatric cancer patients.

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Flower Tent: The Flower Tent in the Campo YMCA parking lot will be onsite until the second week of May. For more information, stop by or email: dbnflowertent@gmail.com.

Naga Tea: Naga Tea opened a Valrico location in February. The Bubble Tea Shop is located in the Plaza Bella center at 1044 Bloomingdale Avenue (same center as the Green Boutique and Gasparilla Pizza). For more information, visit www.nagatea.com or email: Nagateavalrico@gmail.com.

The White Oak Cottage: The White Oak Cottage, located at 10539 South County Road 39, opened a bistro on March 11. The White Oak Cottage Boutique and

Bistro are now open Wed-Sun 11-7. The Bistro restaurant is a casual restaurant serving small plates, soups, harvest salads, artisan flatbreads and sandwiches. They feature award winning wines from the Pacific Northwest. To see the full menu, visit: www.thewhiteoakcottage.com. For more information, email: info@thewhiteoakcottage.com.

Rodeo & Family Festival at the Hillsborough County Fairgrounds: April 8th & 9th. Tampa Bay Rodeo and Family Festival, a 2-day extravaganza full of bronco busting, bull riding, barrel racing and cowboy activities the entire family will love! For information, visit: www.hillsboroughcountyfair.com.

University of Tampa Takes a Bloomingdale Field Trip

Story and Photos by Jane Owen (Unless Otherwise Noted)



On February 18, the University of Tampa's Field Ornithology class took a field trip to Bloomingdale. The class is designed to use encounters with wild birds in nature to teach upper-level science majors (many of which are preparing for careers as professional biologists) about the biology of birds. Every week they embark on a 4-hour trip to a park or nature preserve in the Tampa Bay area.

Professor Mark McRae said, "By teaching Ornithology 'in the field' my students not only learn the basic biology, they also acquire the skills to identify different species of birds, by sight and sound, which will serve them well in their future careers."

McRae brought the class to Sandy Reed's yard in Bloomingdale East because of her reputation in the local birdwatching and bird conservation community. Sandy is the Chairman of the Tampa Audubon Society Bird Protection Committee. McRae explained that Bullock's Orioles and Western Tanagers are normally found in the western United States. Sandy has one of each species that regularly visits her backyard.

"By being able to visit Sandy's yard, I could teach my students about vagrancy in birds, as well as the role that backyard bird feeders can play in modern bird conservation," explained McRae. "My students were definitely inspired by her and have clearly indicated that our visit to her yard was one of the highlights of our semester."



Bullock's Oriole



Photos by Sandy Reed



Bloomingdale Community Picnic a Success!

The Bloomingdale Neighborhood Association (BNA) hosted a community-wide picnic at the Bloomingdale West Park on March 6. Over 100 residents enjoyed the festivities that included Kona Ice, a balloon artist, games, group painting and a DJ.



BSHS Girls' Basketball Team Honored at Picnic *Bloomingdale Girls Basketball Team Places Fourth in State*

By Michelle Colesanti

The BNA honored the Bloomingdale Senior High School girls' basketball team at the March 6 Community picnic. House Representative Andrew Learned's assistant, Elizabeth Corn, read a proclamation to the crowd honoring the team and congratulating them for their successful season.

The team worked together seamlessly and made school history by advancing to the Final Four in the 2022 Florida High School Athletic Association Class 6A State Semifinals Tournament.

Three coaches helped the girls reach the top four with enough wins to beat out close to 400 teams around the state. PE teacher and Head Coach Joel Bower who has been at Bloomingdale for 11 years was happy to be instrumental in his team's first district title since 1995.

According to Bower, "This is a special group who love each other. They are a very close knit group that works extremely hard, and that combination doesn't happen too often."

Kaylie Lewis, a senior team member, was excited to be part of this winning team. She has been playing basketball all four years at Bloomingdale. When asked why this year was so different she replied, "We were more connected and there was more chemistry. It was a special group of girls."

Assistant Coach Michaela White is retired from the military. She loves volunteering with the team and agreed that this was a good group of kids which made it a lot of fun.

All the girls played a major role on the team according to Assistant Coach Wes Knauer. He felt that there was a lot of chemistry between the girls, which is an important aspect as to the success of this group.

"It was a true family as the parents and kids were all involved. It takes a village to raise a basketball team," he added.





Bloomingdale Resident Publishes Book Honoring Marines

By Jane Owen



Honor in the Marines has a storied history. In fact, the beginning lines of the Marines' Hymn, which originates from the 19th century, are: "And to keep our honor clean; We are proud to claim the title; Of United States Marine."

Bloomingdale resident LT COL (Ret) Sidney Atwater, US Marine Corps has published a book for and about marines. In the book, he shares the stories of marines and honors them using their own words.

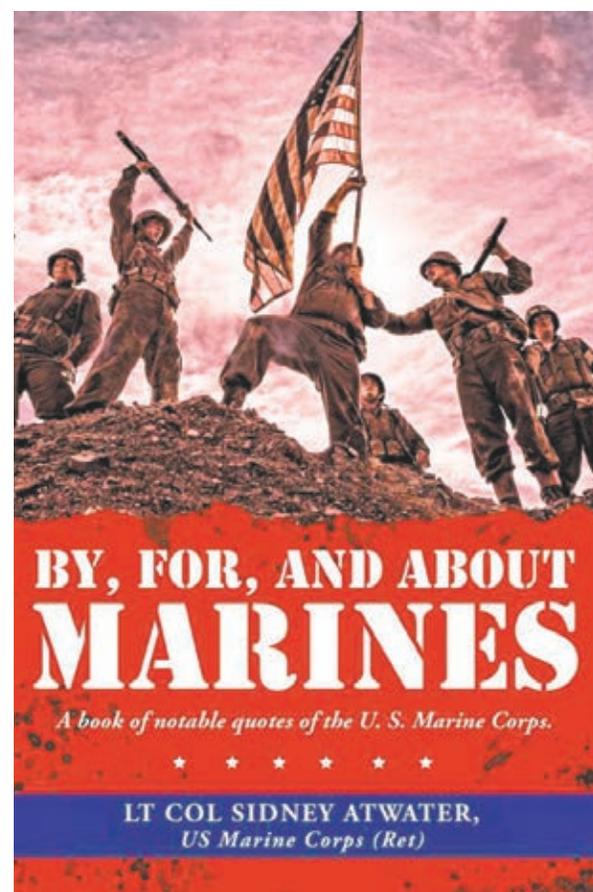
Atwater's collection of quotes started as a way to motivate and inspire the people he worked with in the Marines. The book was 35 years in the making.

"I always thought it was rather cool to find a quote about marines. I would just write it down and say who said it. For many, many years- 25 years- this was nothing more than what I called an oorah opportunity. It was just my way of sharing Marine history. I shared it with people I worked with. It was just motivational," said Atwater.

So many enjoyed his quote collection that colleagues regularly asked for copies to share and use to inspire others.

Atwater retired in 1998. At that point, he wondered if he had enough material for a book. His collection and research grew as he worked on it from time to time over the years. When the Covid pandemic happened, he decided to dedicate time to his book.

By, For, and About Marines: A book of notable quotes of the U.S. Marine Corps was published in July 2021. It is available at Amazon, Barnes and Noble and Xlibris.



Atwater's book *By, For, and About Marines: A book of notable quotes of the U.S. Marine Corps* contains more than 850 quotes and related historical information. According to Atwater, history is alive for marines; history holds the values of honor, courage and commitment together for marines.

"We go out of our way to imbue the new recruits, both enlisted and officers, with the knowledge that they are part of a long tradition. Now it is your turn so don't let the guys who came before us down. We imbue them with that spirit of honor through the teaching of history," Atwater said.

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Campo YMCA celebrates Fernando Rogue's 101st birthday!

By Jane Owen

On March 28, the Campo YMCA Silver Sneakers class celebrated Fernando Rogue. Fernando turned 101 on Friday, April 1st! Fernando is a WWII vet, the lone survivor of his battalion. He has lived through both the Spanish Flu and the Covid pandemic. Fernando moved to Valrico in 1988. He remains active, driving to the Y for his Silver Sneaker class twice a week. He says there's no secret to his longevity. When asked, Fernando says, "It's a blessing. It's a gift from God."

The Campo YMCA offers Active Older Adult/SilverSneakers programs, including both group fitness classes and activities. Class offerings include: SilverSneakers Classic, SilverSneakers Yoga, SilverSneakers Circuit and Line Dancing. Classes are Monday - Friday mornings. Activities include: Brunch Bunch / Potluck (April will be an Easter Potluck and Bonnet Contest), Book Club, Lunch & Learn sessions, Bridge Club, Pickleball, Gamer's Group, Stitch In Time, Writers' Block, BINGO, Recipe Exchange, Afternoon Tea, Adult Art, and American Mah Jongg.

You are an inspiration, and we celebrate you, Fernando!
Happy 101st Birthday!



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Burns Art Student Decorates Tile



Burns 8th grader Emma Farnsworth was chosen to decorate a tile at Burns.

Photo submitted by Art Teacher Pam Reeves

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Burns Girls Basketball Team Honored by Tampa Mayor

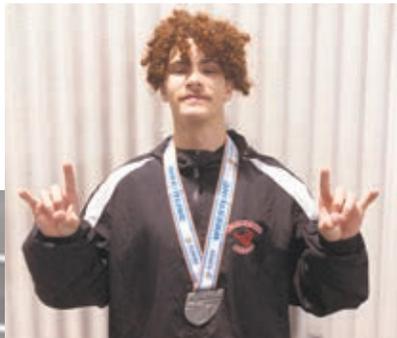
On March 24, Tampa Mayor Jane Castor honored the Burns Middle School Girls basketball team at City Hall for being County Champions. Congratulations, Lady Bruins!



Photo by Stacy Serniotti

BSHS Wrestler Wins 5th in State Competition

Bulls Wrestler Nate Overman won 5th at the FHSAA State Wrestling Championships in the 106 lb-weight class. Overman had an exceptional season finishing with a 47-8 record.



Cimino Elementary Raises \$8,881 for the American Cancer Society

Cimino Elementary raised \$8,881 for Relay for Life for the American Cancer Society. The Cimino team participated in the event hosted at Newsome High School on March 26-27.

Photo submitted by Gwen Porter



Cimino Teacher Barbee Reeves, former Cimino student and cancer survivor Brielle Finley, and Cimino Teacher Gwen Porter.



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Bloomington High School Hosts IncrediBULL Games

By Art Aiello, BSHS Journalism Teacher

Bloomington Senior High School co-hosted the 6th annual IncrediBULL Games with Newsome High School on March 11 at the Bloomington's Charley Harris Stadium. The IncrediBULL Games are a field day for students with disabilities from around Eastern Hillsborough County. Newsome High School co-hosted the event.

Marcos Rodriguez, principal of Bloomington, said the event was expected to draw more than 350 athletes from over 10 schools. Athletes were paired with a student buddy from either Bloomington or Newsome and participated in a variety of sporting events throughout the day. Athletes also enjoyed lunch, had their pictures taken, and got to experience a version of an "Olympic Village" with games and prizes.

Community sponsors and volunteers spent the day helping to run the events, award medals, and provide food. Much-needed manpower also came from student volunteers. Bloomington junior Dariya Bagley volunteered as part of her membership in the National Honor Society.

"This event definitely lived up to its name," Bagley said. "I met so many new people and had a great day filled with laughter and fun. I'm so glad everyone was able to come together for such a great cause."

While it was a normal school day for Bloomington students, many teachers took advantage of the event to bring their students to the stadium, where they lined the stands and cheered athletes on.

Pictures by Jane Owen (unless otherwise noted)



Burns Student Reginald Bruce Jr (R) high fives the Bloomington Bull



Burns student Stone Tinch walking in to the IncrediBULL Games.



Photo by Jennifer Kriegbaum



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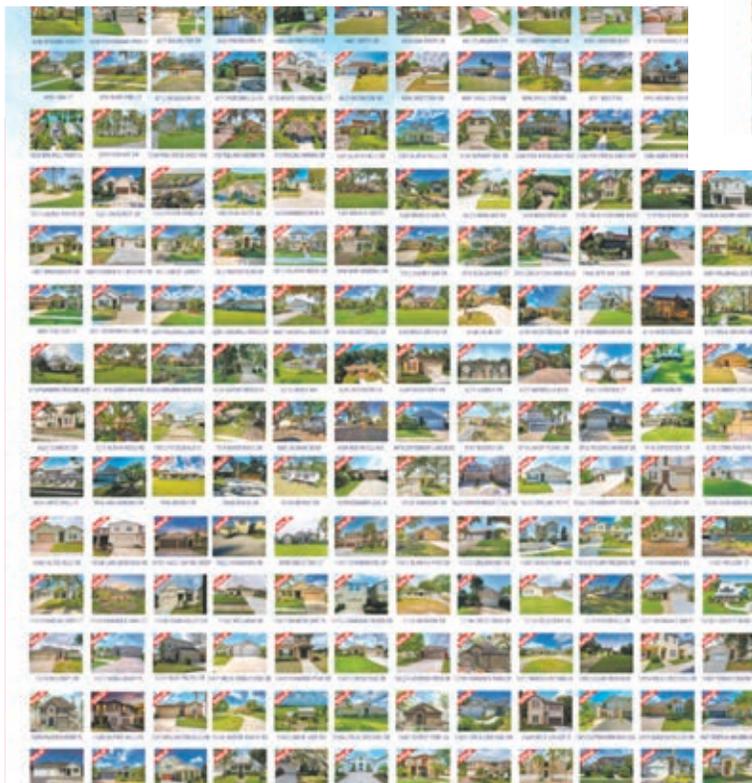
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