



# THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BLOOMINGDALE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION SINCE 1980

Vol. XLIII



ISSUE 8



AUGUST 2023



WWW.BLOOMINGDALE.LIFE

THIS MONTH

## WORK HARD, PLAY HARD



**BYSA PITCH HIT RUN @ BLOOMINGDALE**

**YARD OF THE MONTH**  
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**LEE RASCHKE PROMOTED**  
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*Page 10*

**COACH BATEMAN RETIRES**  
*Page 14*

PLEASE RECYCLE



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THE AWARD-WINNING

# BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

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**Editor - The Bloomingdale Gazette**  
3509 Bell Shoals Rd., Valrico, FL 33596 - (813) 681-2051

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*Tampa Bay*  
**Times**

### BLOOMINGDALE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION, INC.

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

Email: [Bl.Neighbor1@gmail.com](mailto:Bl.Neighbor1@gmail.com) Website: [www.Bloomingdale.Life](http://www.Bloomingdale.Life)

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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:**  
Laney Balis

Kalyn Dukes

Bobbi Ferraro

# BNA BRIEFS

## BNA CALENDAR

Thursday, August 3, 7 p.m. / Music Bingo Fundraiser Benefiting Seeds of Hope sponsored by the BNA / Come join the fun at Bullfrog Creek Brewing Company! Food donations would be greatly appreciated! All proceeds support local families through the Seeds of Hope food bank. Call 813-252-0252 or email [bl.neighbor1@gmail.com](mailto:bl.neighbor1@gmail.com) for information.

Tuesday, August 22, 7-8 p.m. / BNA Meeting / Bloomingdale Regional Public Library - McLean Family Community Room / Call 813-252-0252 or email [bl.neighbor1@gmail.com](mailto:bl.neighbor1@gmail.com) for information.

Saturday, September 9 / Community Garage Sale

Sunday, December 3 / Santa Visit

### JOIN THE BNA!

Just \$35 annually helps keep our community programs going. Please send your membership in today and be part of making Bloomingdale a great place to live! Membership can be paid through PayPal!

Scan this QR Code or visit <https://bloomingdale.life>  
At the bottom of the homepage, click Membership.



## Bloomingdale Neighborhood Association

# Monthly Meeting 4th Tuesday, 7-8 p.m.

## Bloomingdale Library

1906 Bloomingdale Ave.

[www.Bloomingdale.Life](http://www.Bloomingdale.Life) for details

# YARD OF THE MONTH

**CORNELL & MIHAELA ZET**  
**3816 WINDTREE CT., BRANDON**



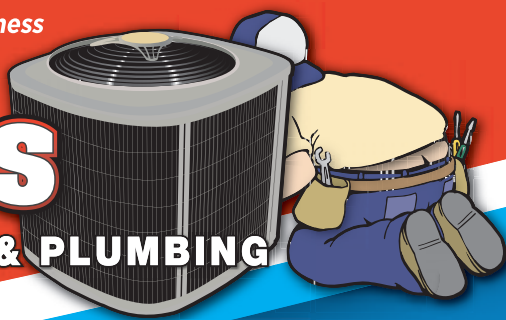
The Yard of the Month is sponsored by Ace Hardware of Bloomingdale and Campo YMCA.

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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# Kilene Kelly Group Celebrates Anniversary with 5th Annual Ice Cream Social

By Jane Owen

The Kilene Kelly Group, a real estate team at Keller Williams Suburban Tampa, celebrated their anniversary with the 5th Annual KKG Ice Cream Social. Owners Kelly Heldreth, Kilene Schelle, and Rob Schelle live in Bloomingdale. They, along with their entire KKG team, brought together current and past clients to share in some family fun with Louie G's Ice Cream, Contests and Games. KKG enthusiastically supports local—schools, sports, and our military through donations and participation in local events. Their motto is: “We don’t just sell here, we live here”.



Sweet smiles and art for Elijah Lowther



## AUGUST COMMUNITY CALENDAR

**AUGUST 3:** Music Bingo at Bullfrog Creek Brewery to support Seeds of Hope Food pantry. Sales for Bingo cards start at 6:30 and bingo starts at 7.

**AUGUST 4 -6:** Free appetizers at Bloomingdale Beef O’Brady’s with a donation of school supplies. Items requested for the Brandon High School school pantry include: pens, pencils, glue sticks, college ruled notebooks, folders with prongs and pockets, deodorant and toothpaste

**AUGUST 6:** Memory Rock at Chill Cawfee (3407 Lithia Pinecrest) from 1 to 3 p.m. Drop in event where participants can decorate a rock with love and creativity to remember someone or something dear to your heart.

**AUGUST 8:** Monthly meeting of The East Hillsborough Democratic Club 6:30pm, at Brandon Crossroads Bowl 609 Crater Ln Tampa, 33619. Florida House Representative district 64, Susan Lopez-Valdez

will be the guest speaker. To register, visit [www.easthillsboroughdems.org](http://www.easthillsboroughdems.org) or call (813)645-8324

**AUGUST 10:** Hillsborough County Schools Start!

**AUGUST 10:** Hillsborough County Republican Executive Committee Meeting, 7 p.m. at the International Event Venue, 6463 W. Hillsborough Avenue, Tampa. For more information, please go to [www.Hillsborough.gov](http://www.Hillsborough.gov).

**AUGUST 12:** Plaza Bella Plant Sale (plaza with the Green Boutique, 1032 Bloomingdale Ave) from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**AUGUST 19:** BayCare Fitness Center Open House (2470 Bloomingdale Ave) Email [BayCareFitnessCenters@baycare.org](mailto:BayCareFitnessCenters@baycare.org) or call 813-586-8600 for more information.

**AUGUST 26:** Art at Dark @Creative Junk Therapy, 772 W. Lumsden Road, Brandon



## CHAMBER MEMBER AWARDS

The Brandon Chamber of Commerce recognized and celebrated the collective success of our business community in a red carpet style event at HCC Brandon Campus to present the Annual Chamber Member Awards Presented by HCA Florida Brandon Hospital.

Congratulations to all the finalists and recipients from these remarkable organizations that have made exceptional contributions to our community over the past year.

### 2023 RECIPIENTS

- Small Business - Carole Gill Consulting
- Medium Business - Cherry Blow Dry Bar
- Emerging Business - Florida Trade Academy
- Small Nonprofit - Outreach Free Clinic & Resource Center
- Large Nonprofit - High 5, Inc.
- Leadership Impact Award - Steve Manning
- Greater Brandon Community Leadership Award - Liz Brewer



# GREATER BRANDON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE NEWS

## RIBBON CUTTINGS



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[www.brandonchamber.com](http://www.brandonchamber.com)







# BLOOMINGDALE COMMUNITY STATION NOTES

By Community Resource Deputy Clifford Fletcher  
"One Team, One Family, One Community"

## BACK TO SCHOOL

School will be back in session before you know it. Aug 10th is coming soon. Be smart and do your part... The alternative could cost you more than you think. Lookout for school zone signals and always obey the speed limit. Watch out for our children, near schools, bus stops, sidewalks, in the streets, and school parking lots. Watch out for your school crossing guards and obey their direction. On several occasions drivers have almost hit the crossing guard and children. Be a good role model. Always buckle up in the car, and follow the pedestrian rules. Your children are watching and will learn from you.

Remember NO Texting and driving. In Florida you can't hold your phone in school or construction zones. The safety of your kids and the safety of other kids are much more important than any phone call. Our first concern each school year is the safety and protection of the thousands of kids headed back to school in our community. Many of these kids will be walking or riding their bikes to school for the first time. Others will be waiting at bus stops for their school buses near streets and corners.

Florida traffic law 316.172 requires that ALL VEHICLES MUST STOP BOTH WAYS for school buses on roads without medians. If the road has at least five-foot width of grass or a raised median, opposite traveling traffic does not stop. Drivers, keep a safe between other vehicles and especially school buses in front of you. SLOW DOWN.

Parent speak to your children about how to be safe and alert while getting to school. Especially those with teenage drivers. Emphasize safe bike riding – wearing their bike helmets, crossing only at crosswalks, obeying all bike-riding rules, and watching for cars. Have your kids walk or ride their bikes in groups with friends or classmates. Discuss the importance of being very careful if strangers approach them. Review the route they should take to school and walk or ride it with them. Note the seriousness of them staying at their bus stop, watching out for cars and behaving while they wait. Accidents only take seconds to happen. We want to help make Hillsborough County a safer place but we need your help. Have a safe school year. Visit our home page <https://teamhcsso.com/> for more safety tips.

Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office is looking for School Crossing Guards. <http://www.hcso.tampa.fl.us/A-Z-Directory/S/School-Crossing-Guard-Information.aspx>

- 12 traffic crash with injuries.
- 16 crashes with property damage.
- 2 bicycle thefts.
- 2 vehicle thefts. Arrests complete.
- Theft of vehicle parts.
- Petit theft with warrant issued.
- One grand theft.
- One drug case
- One DUI arrest.

From June 1st to July 20th Bloomingtondale has had the following incidents:

## BLOOMINGDALE SPECIAL DISTRICT

### AUGUST BSD UPDATE



## Bloomingtondale Special District Works Hard for our Community

By Kristine Schroeder, BSD Community Relations

The District responded quickly last month after vandals defaced the entrance signs to the Fairway Manors neighborhood off Nature's Way. Graffiti was spray painted on the Fairway Manors signs and brick walls sometime overnight on Friday, July 14, 2023. The District's property manager was quick to purchase paint and cover the graffiti on the signs early on Saturday and was able to secure a pressure washing company to clean the brick wall by Saturday evening. This is not the first time the District has had to react to such vandalism over the years, usually during the summer months. The entrance signs will be professionally cleaned and painted in the coming weeks.

In other news, the District is wrapping up some turf replacement and will be moving forward with the replacement of dead shrubs throughout the community. Your Green Team will also be working to weed and clean up flower beds throughout the area.

Please join us at our new office location at 3652 Erindale Road for our meetings held the second Monday of each month at 6:30 pm.







# Bloomingtondale Resident Lee Raschke promoted to Major with the Hillsborough County Sherrif's Office

By Jane Owen



- Joined Plant City Police Department in 1993
- Transferred to HCSO 1997
- Served as Resource Deputy at Burns Middle School for the 2000 and 2001 school years.
- Worked in the detective division investigating crimes against children for 13 years.
- Served in Internal Affairs from 2014- 2015.
- Promoted to patrol corporal in 2015.
- Transferred to the Criminal Investigations Division Violent Crimes section in 2016.
- Served as a Sergeant of the Special Victims section, Lieutenant for Criminal Investigations Division, and Captain of the Criminal Investigations Division.
- Promotion to Major for the Criminal Investigations Division.

On July 18, Bloomingtondale resident Lee Raschke was promoted to Major with the Hillsborough County Sherrif's office. He will now serve as the Major for the Criminal Investigations Division.

Lee is dedicated to our Bloomingtondale community. In addition to serving in law enforcement, he serves as a Trustee with the Bloomingtondale Special District (BSD). BSD President Tom Leech says Lee brings his own unique insights into the Board's job of maintaining the community at its best.

"Lee chairs our Tax Roll committee which ensures the annual assessment is correct and accurate for each Bloomingtondale homeowner. Lee's understanding of law enforcement and community safety helps us understand how to deploy the off-duty deputies involved in our Community Safety program," Leech said.

THE AWARD-WINNING

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# Bristol Green Residents Receive \$500 in Bloomingdale Beautification Award Contest

By Michelle Colesanti

Stephen and Leslie Beckhorn, residents of Bristol Green, were excited to receive \$500 thanks to the first annual Bloomingdale Beautification Award (BBA) contest recently held by the Bloomingdale Neighborhood Association.

The contest ran from April 1 to July 1 and to participate, residents had to make improvements to their home property by improving curb appeal, greenery, color, cleanliness, lawn maintenance, and neatness. A time-dated before and after photo of their yard or home had to be taken as part of the submission process.

The BBA committee reviewed the entries received and then viewed the homes. About a dozen residents applied, but only eight met the requirements that were set forth.

Judging was done on curb appeal, with guidelines from county code regulations as well as using deed restrictions (if applicable) for judging guidance.

Suzy Watts, President of the BNA, said, "We live in a beautiful community. Many of our neighbors have gorgeous homes and gardens. We celebrate one each month with Yard of the Month. With this award, we rewarded neighbors who transformed the exterior of their home."

Leslie, who is a Pilates instructor at Baycare Fitness Center, said she is a very competitive person and when she heard about this contest, she knew she was going to work hard and try her best to win. The Beckhorn's have lived in their home for six years and at least 90 percent of the landscaping has been changed over that time. They did all the work by themselves.

"We just love our home. All the labor has been worth it," noted Leslie.

George May is a past president of the BNA (formerly known as the Bloomingdale Homeowner's Association) and his company, American Investment Advisors, is one of the sponsors.

He said, "I had volunteered to help locate homes for the monthly yard of the month award and noticed some of the homes and neighborhoods were going down. The board does a lot of things for the community, and I felt like this was an area that could use a little help."



George May presents a \$500 check to Stephen and Leslie Beckhorn for winning the BNA's first annual Bloomingdale Beautification Award.

L-R: Suzy Watts, Pat Magruder, Stephen Beckhorn, Leslie Beckhorn, and George May

Magruder Insurance Agency also sponsored the award.

Pat Magruder said, "I believe positive actions should be rewarded. And the effort to improve one's home is very important, not only to maintain one's own property values but those of the entire neighborhood."

Their commitment to the Bloomingdale community is much appreciated by both the BNA and residents.



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## Bloomingdale East & West Community Garage Sale

**Saturday**  
**September 9, 2023**  
**8 a.m.**

Over 100 sales throughout Bloomingdale East & West

Visit our Facebook page for updates.

www.Bloomingdale.Life • Email: Bl.Neighbor1@gmail.com

Bloomingdale Neighborhood Association



# **BNA Garage Sale is September 9** **Enjoy These Tips to Participate Successfully**

By Michelle Colesanti

The Bloomingdale Neighborhood Association (BNA) will hold its annual Garage Sale on Saturday, September 9. There are many reasons to participate, especially if you are interested in clearing your home of items that are no longer of use to you.

Depending on what you plan to sell, you can earn anything from a few dollars to a few hundred, but it's the opportunity to declutter and reorganize that is most appealing.

Give yourself enough time before the sale to go through drawers, under beds, inside cabinets, and the garage, to find long-forgotten items that have outgrown usefulness. Find an out-of-the-way spot to store your items.

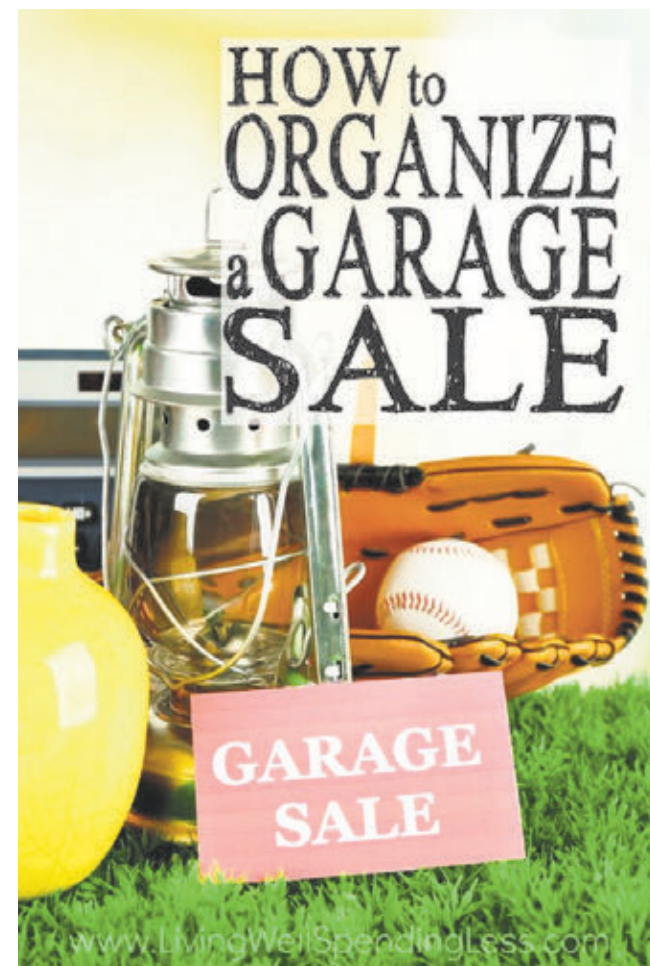
Good organization is the key to keeping your sanity through the process. Sort by item type. Keep like items together and consider pricing them all the same. That way you don't have to make price tags for individual items, and it will be easier for you to remember the cost. For example, if you have a lot of baby clothes, you may price them all at \$1 or toys at \$2 or \$3. Remember that a lot of people will try to bargain with you, so keep that in mind when pricing the items in the first place. Other homes will be participating, so you need to be competitive.

Work on pricing as you sort through your items to make it easier. The Dollar Store or Walmart sells inexpensive stickers you can use if you do choose to individually price items. Remember, just because the item meant something special to you doesn't mean it will serve the same purpose for others. If you really want it out of the house, price it to sell.

Have everything set up and ready to set out first thing in the morning. Your first customers may appear up to an hour prior to the sale start time, most likely before you are quite ready to begin. But you can make quite a few dollars early on if you allow the early birds access to your goods.

The BNA will take care of advertising the Community Garage Sale but make signs to post in and around your immediate neighborhood leading people to your specific sale. Don't forget to remove them when it's over.

Consider donating unsold items to Life's Treasures Thrift Store, 1335 West Brandon Boulevard, Suite C (Brandon Plaza), Lighthouse Ministries, 535 E. Brandon Boulevard, or at one of the local Goodwill locations.



The Bloomingdale Neighborhood Association will hold its annual community Garage Sale on Saturday, September 9.





# Bloomingdale Youth Sports Association Hosts MLB's Pitch, Hit and Run Event

By Jane Owen

Bloomington Youth Sports Association (BYSA) held their first ever Major League Baseball® Pitch Hit & Run event on July 16! The Pitch Hit & Run event provides boys and girls -- ages 7 to 14 -- an opportunity to showcase their baseball and softball skills. Athletes are tested, and their measurements are recorded. Winners in each age group have a chance to advance to higher level competitions.



  
CONGRATULATIONS  
WINNERS

SOFTBALL	BASEBALL
Division 7/8 Madison Ooley	Division 7/8 Owen Fiedler
Division 9/10 Madilyn Jarocki	Division 9/10 Henry Brennick
Division 11/12 Victoria VanAlmen	Division 11/12 Christian Gaines
Division 13/14 Chanel Williams	Division 13/14 Dylan Dahlback

## Congratulations to Bloomingdale High School Alum Brock Wilken for being Drafted by the Brewers

Holding the 18th overall pick in the 2023 MLB Draft, Bloomingdale's Brock Wilken was selected by the Milwaukee Brewers.

Story to come in the September Gazette!



## Back-to-School Pictures Wanted!

The Bloomingdale Gazette wants your back-to-school photos! Please email hi-res photos (as close to or larger than 1MB) with names and school attending no later than August 25 for our September issue. Email: [inbloomingdalenews@gmail.com](mailto:inbloomingdalenews@gmail.com)





## Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Visited iStroll at Bloomingdale East Park

The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office visited iStroll Brandon on July 18th at Bloomingdale East Park. The group discussed law enforcement. The kids got to ask questions, hold a bulletproof vest, and look inside the cop car, and even got pencils and stickers!



## Welcome to the Neighborhood: How Sweet it Is! Little Cheesecake Company Opens

Story and Photos by Michelle Colesanti

### Little Cheesecake Company is a Sweet Addition to Community

Maribel Neto had a dream to open a shop selling her homemade cheesecakes and it recently came true. Along with the support of her husband, Sergio, she celebrated the grand opening of the Little Cheesecake Company on July 14.

Located in the Bloomingdale Plaza shopping center right next door to the Recipe Box, Maribel bakes daily offering 16 varieties of New York-style cheesecake. Choices range from plain New York cheesecake to specialty cheesecakes such as Peach Cobbler, Oreo, Strawberry Shortcake, Reese's, Butter Pecan, Carrot Cake, Baklava, and more. The variety of choices changes weekly, and she will post on social media what is available each week.

If you are looking for something different, try the cheesecake-stuffed donuts, cheesecake-stuffed apples, cheesecake dessert cups, and cheesecake-stuffed cones.

There are a few tables inside the store where you can enjoy the sweets onsite. Hot coffee and tea, as well as cold drinks, are also available.

While still working full-time, Maribel started baking cheesecakes in her home kitchen and selling them to neighbors after

establishing her cottage food license.

She said, "My dream was to always own my own small bakery, and with hard work and determination and the help of my husband and in-laws, I could make my dream come true."

The Neto's moved to FishHawk from Connecticut 11 years ago. Sergio started a small mechanic shop in Brandon, which has expanded over the years. Maribel enjoyed a full-time career in the corporate world as a business manager for 10 years before pursuing her cheesecake passion. They also have four children and eight grandchildren.

"We love the Florida life and are so happy to live here," added Maribel.

You can purchase cheesecake by the slice or as a whole cake. Prices vary depending on the type of cheesecake purchased. For specialty items, 48-hour notice is required.

The Little Cheesecake Company, located at 143 E. Bloomingdale Avenue, is open Tuesday-Thursday from 11 a.m.-7 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m.-8 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. It is closed on Monday.

For more information, call 813-438-5020 or visit [www.facebook.com/littlecheesecakecompany](http://www.facebook.com/littlecheesecakecompany).



The Little Cheesecake Company recently opened in the Bloomingdale Plaza shopping center located at John Moore Road and Bloomingdale Avenue.



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# Take Time to Relax: Relaxation Tips Relax locally at Salon Roxy's New Spa

By Edward DeFreitas, Student Reporter

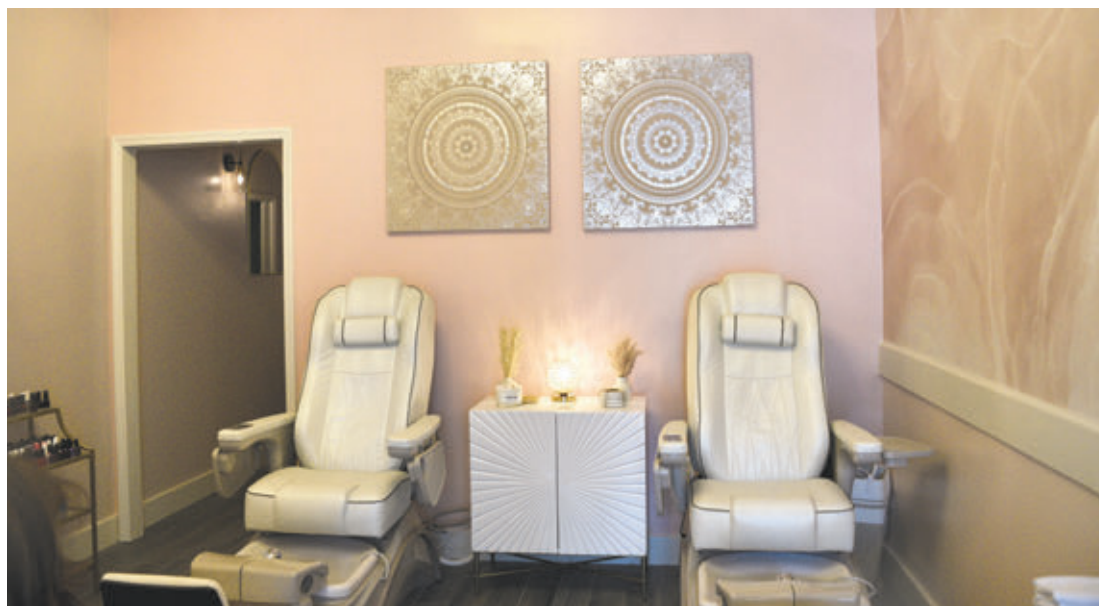


A new school year is right around the corner once again, this means there is lots of chaos, stress, demands, and shopping in the air. It is important to prepare yet also especially important to relax, unwind and destress while we still have the summer. Prioritizing relaxation helps maintain a healthy balance in our lives. Here are some ideas:

1. Create a calming consistent sleep routine: establish a good consistent bedtime and wakeup schedule to help schedule the rest of your day along with your emotions. You could incorporate relaxation techniques such as deep breathing or meditation to improve better sleep and sleep quality. You could use apps such as Headspace to help give you a guide. You could also consider activities like reading a book or taking a bath before bed to wind down before bed.
2. Disconnect from technology: Constant and everyday exposure to screens can contribute to feelings of stress, anxiety, and sleeplessness. Take regular breaks from your devices and engage in activities that do not engage with technology, such as, spending time with family, playing board games, reading a book, engaging in a hobby, or even just spending some quiet time alone outdoors on a walk. Disconnecting from technology allows you to be more in the moment and the present meanwhile reducing mental clutter such as, stress, anxiety, anger, and sleeplessness.
3. Relax your body and your muscles: Relaxing your body, muscles, and senses can be an immense help in de-stressing and relaxing. When you take your time to unwind and release tension, it allows your body to release built up stress and promote a sense of calm and relaxation. By engaging in activities such as breathing exercises, stretching, pampering yourself, you can relax your muscles and alleviate physical tension. Furthermore, focusing on your body, senses, and mind through activities such as facial massages, and overall self-care can help create a peaceful relaxed mind.

Well, just in time for the new school year Roxy Salon is adding a brand-new spa feature to their already great hair salon. Roxy Salon will now offer nail treatment, facials, waxing, massages, eyelash lifts, and extensions. This provides a perfect opportunity for students and their parents to pamper themselves and rejuvenate their minds and bodies for an entire day before the school year starts. Whether it is a quick escape between studying for homework and tests, a well-deserved break between semesters, a nice peaceful after school or work activity, or a family bonding experience, Roxy Salon will be there for you. Roxy salon and their new spa features is sure to become a popular destination for students and their families to relax, recharge, and take a break from the stresses of life. These services can also be delivered straight to your home or office or any event where a spa is needed, no drive needed with Roxy's mobile spa. Roxy's mobile spa is a traveling spa that will bring its services to you so you can enjoy a relaxing spa day wherever you may be and enjoy a touch of heaven and relaxation provided by licensed and seasoned professionals at their craft.

By prioritizing relaxation, giving yourself the opportunity to de-stress, and incorporating these relaxation ideas into your routine, you can improve your overall wellbeing and cultivate a healthier mind and body as well as be better equipped to handle the new school year. Remember, taking care of your mental and physical well-being is essential for academic and physical success and happiness in your life.



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# Running of the Bulls 5k Participant Selected as Interim Superintendent

By Jane Owen



On May 20th, Van Ayers, the Chief of Strategic Planning and Partnerships for Hillsborough County, ran Bloomingdale High School's Running of the Bulls 5k.

On Tuesday, June 20th, the Hillsborough County School Board selected Van Ayres as the Interim Superintendent after Superintendent Addison Davis submitted his resignation the week before. Van Ayers started his term on July 15.

Ayers is dedicated to serving community and schools, is an avid runner and loved the combination of his passions at the Bulls 5k.

"It was a great morning at the Running of the Bulls. I love supporting the school and community and had a wonderful time. I love seeing so many people turn out for such a worthy event. I can't wait till next year!" Van Ayers said.

# BSHS Rajun' Bull Band Marches in the Brandon July 4th Parade



The Community Roundtable was pleased to present the 2023 Brandon Fourth of July Parade after missing a few years. President Janine B. Nickerson stated that The Community Roundtable, an all-volunteer organization, was committed to bringing back this Brandon family tradition for residents. The Parade has been organized by the Roundtable since 1957 as a tribute to our freedom in America.

"The continuing support by the Bloomingdale, Brandon, and this year, Armwood band members is a testimony to our patriotic celebration," Nickerson said.

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# Dale Bateman Retires after Coaching at Bloomingdale High School for 32 Years

By Jane Owen

Words can't adequately describe the level of excellence that Dale Bateman has had in his running career.

In 1975, Dale Bateman won the Naval Academy Sword, the highest athletic award at the Naval Academy given to midshipman of the graduating class by the athletic committee, all due to his running achievements in college. Bateman holds the freshman 2-mile record at the Naval Academy (9:11). He held the 800 record for 38 years (from 1974 until 2012).

Bateman's competitiveness was evident early at Laurel High School in Maryland. He was state champion in the mile, half marathon, and 1000 yards. In his senior cross-country year, his team won state. He went on to Nationals and was 4th in the half marathon. Bateman has run 12 marathons. His marathon PR is 2:22 in Iwakuni, Japan.

His innate competitiveness is matched only by his passion for the high school student athletes that he has coached. Bateman started coaching at Bloomingdale High School in 1991. He retired from the Navy as a Lieutenant Commander in 1994. He became Bloomingdale's head track coach in 2017 and head cross country coach in 2019. In 2017, Bateman was inducted into Bloomingdale High School's Athletic Hall of Fame.

This year, Bateman not only took the largest number of Bloomingdale athletes in school history to the state track meet; he was awarded Hillsborough County Federal Division Western Conference Track Coach of the Year.

After 32 years as a high school coach, Coach Bateman retired after the 2023 track season.

If you ask him, his two greatest athletic achievements are winning the Naval Academy Sword and coaching high school athletes to success.

His coaching philosophy embodied a goal for every runner to consistently improve no matter their talent level. Bateman talks enthusiastically about the state placers he coached and the athletes he coached that started off struggling to run a mile and ended up loving the sport and making varsity and districts and regionals.

"Coaching at the high school level, you want the kids to have a positive experience... achieve goals and not have a bad outlook on running," Bateman said. "It's a process. They don't know their potential until you show them."

Bloomingdale High School teacher Jennifer Beach was coached by Bateman when she was a student at Bloomingdale and then coached with him for 21 years.

"I finished my last season of coaching involvement this past year and it gave me time to reflect on all the lessons I've learned from him. I've learned that the sport of running is a metaphor for life. With hard work and persistence, personal bests are always possible. Life has its ups and downs, like race times, but how you work through it determines your character," Beach said.

Bloomingdale's Athletic Director, Sara Bogue, says Bateman's retirement is a huge loss for Bloomingdale.

"Coach Bateman is a legend at Bloomingdale! He has dedicated many years of service to our student athletes, families, and community. As a hall of fame coach, he has built one of the best running programs in our district with many state qualifiers in both cross country and track and field," Bogue said.

Bateman has mixed emotions about retiring:



"You know, it's time. It's relief and then regret... because of what I am leaving behind. I am leaving somebody behind whose times far surpass mine as a sophomore in high school. I've told him- You've already surpassed me. So going on from here, I want to see even better things than me," Bateman said.

Regardless of what happens with the up-and-coming runners, Coach Bateman's inspiration is long-lasting at Bloomingdale High School. He leaves a legacy that is the combination of excelling both as an excellent runner, a winning coach and an inspiration to hundreds.

Coach Bateman at the 2023 BSHS Track Banquet.



In 2017, Coach Bateman was inducted into Bloomingdale High School's Athletic Hall of Fame. Pictured with Principal Sue Burkett.



Dale Bateman running the U.S. Naval Academy Cross Country Course during his junior year at the Naval Academy.





## Movie Filmed in Bloomingdale Shares Important Alzheimer's Message

By Marie Gilmore

A new holiday full length feature film is in development and filmed locally this summer in Valrico and Plant City.

Dimming Lights is a movie about three sisters who head to their childhood home for Christmas after they learn their estranged mother is in the late stages of Alzheimer's. The movie stars award-winning actress Heather Fraley and is directed and produced by Domain Pictures, an independent film company founded in 2007 by international award-winning director Preston Walden and Fraley.

Scenes were shot in Valrico at Bloomingdale Presbyterian, a local church led by senior pastor Susan Hill who is known in the community for allowing service organizations and groups to meet at the church. Home of Boy Scout Troop 61 and Seeds of Hope weekly food distribution, the church also holds Bible study, support groups and classes and is also a voting precinct.

Hill, a former army chaplain credits her church leadership for allowing community activities including feature films to be shot at her church.

"It was an exciting moment for members of the church and community to come together," said Hill. "It was pure joy hosting this movie scene. I believe God used us to help lift up Alzheimer's awareness and that is truly the best thing about the church hosting this."

Walden was thrilled with the location and said, "Bloomingdale Presbyterian was the perfect set for a very important and a very emotional scene for the film."

Other filming locations included a restaurant, Christmas Store, downtown Plant City and a bar.

"We are set to have our premiere in November," added Walden, "which is the beginning of the holiday season and it is also National Alzheimer's Awareness Month."

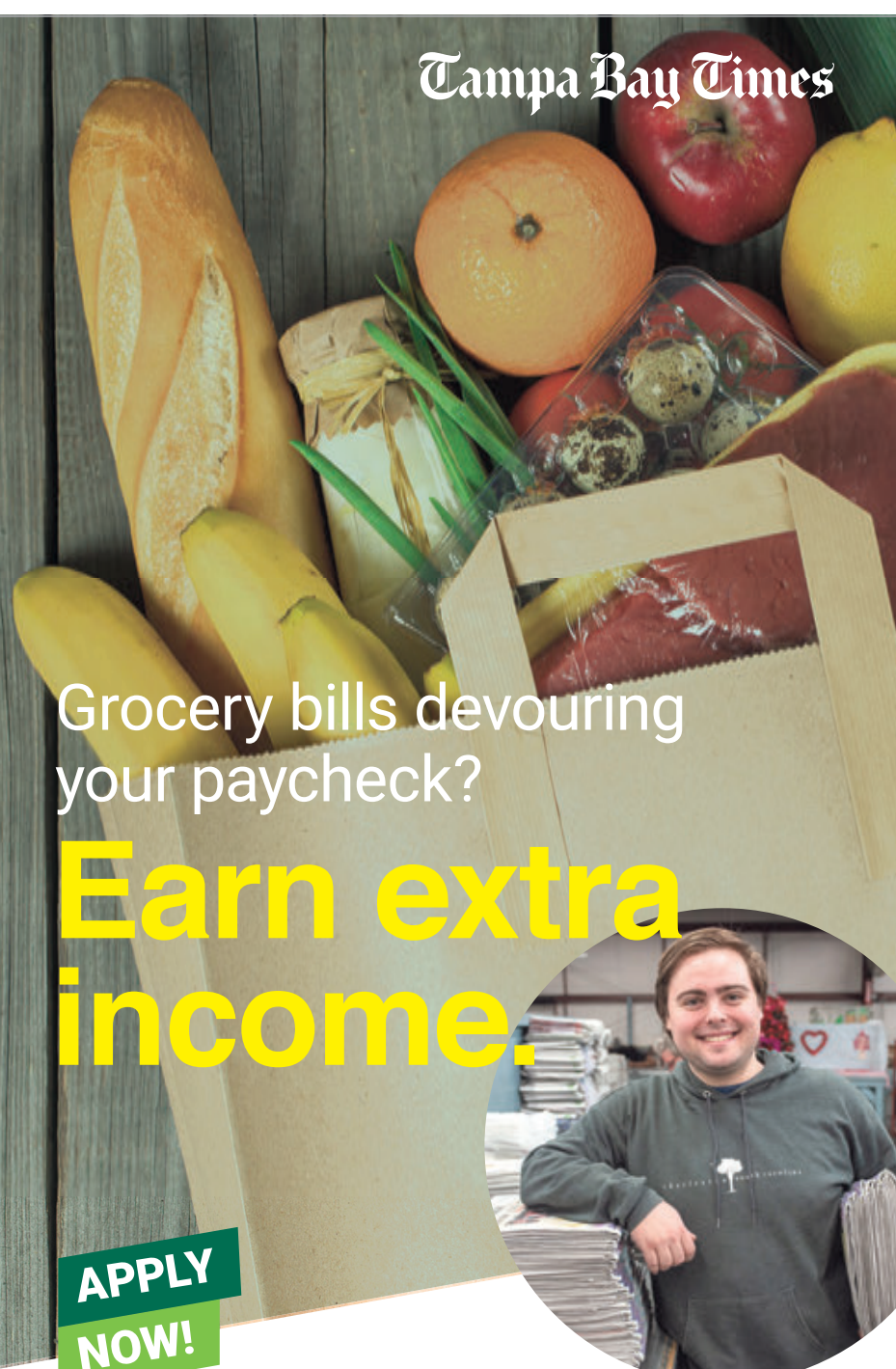
There will be a memorial dedication at the end of the film for those involved with family members affected by Alzheimer's.

For more information about Dimming Lights and it's release dates, visit [www.facebook.com/DomainPicturesEST2007/](http://www.facebook.com/DomainPicturesEST2007/) or email [domainpictures37@gmail.com](mailto:domainpictures37@gmail.com).



Dimming Lights, a feature length film, was shot at Bloomingdale Presbyterian Church in July.

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