

THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

Volume XXX
Number 11

NOVEMBER 2010 • THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BLOOMINGDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION SINCE 1980



KIM WALLACE

Jessica Martin Photographer and Breast Cancer Survivor, helps raise money for Plaza Bella Goes Pink.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Never miss a chance to shut up."

Will Rogers

Think Pink

Plaza Bella hosts the 3rd Annual
Plaza Bella Goes Pink event.
See story, page 10.

SANTA COMES TO BLOOMINGDALE

Santa is set to make his annual
appearance from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Dec. 4 at the Bloomingdale
Golfer's Club.

See page 13 for details.

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Brandon Regional Hospital

BRH HAPPENINGS: NOVEMBER/DECEMBER COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

COMMUNITY EDUCATION CLASSES

THE MOM AND BABY SUITES

(Please call for dates, times and locations)

Educational classes for expectant parents:

- GESTATIONAL DIABETES
- PREPARED CHILDBIRTH SERIES
- INTENSIVE CHILDBIRTH
- PRENATAL TOURS
- PRENATAL BREASTFEEDING
- NEWBORN CARE CLASS

Seminars held at Oakfield Medical Plaza, Classroom B, Suite 260.

NUTRITION FOR CANCER PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

November 10, December 8
2:30pm

OUTPATIENT DIABETES SELF-MANAGEMENT

November 17, December 15
8:30am

HEART HEALTH SERIES

HEALTHY HEART NUTRITION CLASS

November 3, December 1
2:30pm

Palm Room (located in the Brandon Regional Hospital Cafeteria).

PERIPHERAL ARTERIAL DISEASE

Wednesday, November 17 • 6:30pm
presented by Umesh Gowda, MD
of Bay Area Cardiology Associates

Oakfield Medical Plaza, Classroom B, Suite 260.

SPINE HEALTH SERIES

MINIMALLY INVASIVE SPINE SURGERY

presented by Philip Henkin, MD

Tuesday, November 16 • 6:30pm • Bloomingdale Regional Public Library
Community Meeting Room
1906 Bloomingdale Ave., Valrico

FREE SCREENINGS

PERIPHERAL ARTERIAL DISEASE (PAD)

November 11 • 9:00am • Oakfield Medical Plaza, Classroom B, Suite 260
December 4 • 9:00am • Oakfield Medical Plaza, Classroom A, Suite 262

Screenings by appointment only



SUPPORT GROUPS

BRANDON STROKE AWARENESS GROUP

Thursday, November 11 • 5:30pm

Community Resources For Stroke Survivor
presented by Laura Garcia, OTR/L & Marge Booth, MSS

December 9 • 5:30pm

Oakfield Medical Plaza, Classroom A, Suite 262.

CARDIAC SUPPORT GROUP

November 11 • 6:30pm • Magan Bakaranian, MD
of Brandon Cardiology Clinic, PA

Oakfield Medical Plaza, Classroom B, Suite 260.

SURGICAL WEIGHT LOSS SUPPORT GROUP

November 18, December 16 (Holiday Party)

6:30pm • Oakfield Medical Plaza, Classroom A, Suite 262.

THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY'S MAN TO MAN SUPPORT GROUP

Tuesday, November 2, December 7 • 6:30pm

Oakfield Medical Plaza, Classroom A, Suite 262.

WEIGHT LOSS SERIES

EFFECTIVE SURGICAL SOLUTIONS FOR WEIGHT LOSS

November 18, December 9 • 6:30pm

presented by Alfredo Fernandez, MD
of Tampa Bariatrics Surgical Weight Loss

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<http://brandonregionalthospital.ballywhointeractive.com>

LAP-BAND® SEMINAR

Tuesday, November 2 • 6:30pm

presented by Lee J. Grossbard, MD of Pasco Surgical Assoc., PA

Tuesday, December 7 • 6:30pm

presented by P. Krishnaraj, MD of Pasco Surgical Assoc., PA

Seminars held at Oakfield Medical Plaza, Classroom B, Suite 260.

Seating is limited and reservations are required for all events!

Call (813) 653-1065 to RSVP.

For more information, visit BrandonRegionalHospital.com.



November Yard of the Month

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JIM HARRIS



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YOUR INSIDE CONNECTIONS

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homeowners@verizon.net

Meetings: first Tuesday
in January, March, May,
September and November
at 7 p.m.

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free to Bloomingdale
residents on the first
Saturday of each month.

Alafia river race a personal challenge

By SUSAN GREEN

When the Alafia Challenge canoe race shoves off Nov. 13, Christi Scott-Wester's pink kayak—adorned with what she describes as “hippie flowers”—is sure to spark some interesting remarks.

But Scott-Wester, 42, sees the vessel as more than a conversation piece. The longtime Bloomingdale resident credits paddle power with helping her get back into shape after years spent tied to a workstation and glued to the couch. It's also key to a period of self-discovery that launched a decade ago and kicked into high gear in the past five years.

“When I first moved to Florida, I watched kayakers while I was on a ferryboat to Egmont Key,” recalled Scott-Wester, who moved to the area in 2000. “I decided I wanted to do that. It was that simple.”

About five years went by before she took up the sport, first renting equip-

ment and learning from friends. Later she bought a pink kayak, more for its reflection of her personality than its features. It's not built for speed, she noted. But two years ago, she signed up for the Alafia Challenge, an 11-mile canoe and kayak race down the Alafia River.

“My goal the first time was to finish,” Scott-Wester said. “I did it. And I passed people. When you see people behind you, you know you're doing OK.”

Scott-Wester came in ninth in the amateur women's division, completing the race in just less than 2 ½ hours.

“My goal this year is to beat my time,” she said.

Besides challenging herself, Scott-Wester said she enjoyed the event in 2008 because of the camaraderie and organization.

“The people passing you are saying, ‘Way to go! Way to go!’” Scott-Wester said.



PHOTO FROM CHRISTI SCOTT-WESTER

Scott-Wester paddles her pink kayak.



PHOTO FROM CHRISTI SCOTT-WESTER

Christi Scott-Wester stands among the kayaks before a race.

She added that she has participated in foot races and other events and, “I've never seen anything as well organized as the Alafia River Challenge.”

The race, put on by the Alafia River Basin Stewardship Council, has been almost annual since 1999 but was not held last year because of the economic downturn.

Scott-Wester, a self-described military brat who moved around as a child but considers Texas her original home, said she was active as a dancer and in softball and volleyball as a high school student. But by the time she moved to Florida, she had become caught up in a hectic life that left little time for exercise.

Since then, she and her husband, Bart Wester, have taken up hiking with their two dogs, Bear and Sadie, along with kayaking. She also joins excursions of the Florida Outdoor Adventure Troupe, known as FLOAT, on a regular basis and

has spent time with Tampa River Runner, a group that helps injured and disabled veterans through kayaking.

“I'm in better shape than I've been in many years,” Scott-Wester said. Registration for the Alafia Challenge ended Oct. 31. In past years, more than 300 people have competed. Efforts to reach organizers to determine this year's registration were unsuccessful. Proceeds from entrance fees go to help pay for river cleanups.

The Alafia Challenge will start at Lithia Springs Park, 3932 Lithia Springs Road, Lithia, at 8:30 a.m., according to the event website, www.alafiachallenge.com. When Scott-Wester crosses the finish line at the Riverview Civic Center, 11020 Park Drive, Riverview, she expects her husband will be there to cheer her on. She said she was unable to persuade him to join her in the race but she hopes he will next year.

“I think he's afraid I'll

beat him,” she quipped.

Scott-Wester said people interested in the sport probably can purchase a good kayak for about \$300, and maybe as low as \$150 for a used vessel. It's important to research the types of kayaks and features desired before buying, she said.

Someday she might buy a racing kayak and devote herself to building up speed, she said. Another goal is to join a Canadian friend of hers from British Columbia who kayaks with orcas. The thought of paddling past killer whales is scary, Scott-Wester said, but noted that her friend worries about her Florida chum gliding among the alligators.

Scott-Wester figures if she can row past gators, she can probably brave orcas.

“We're used to the gators,” she said. “You see them all the time. You know they're there, and you just go by. I guess it's what you don't know.”



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FAMILY FEST

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BLOOMINGDALE BUZZ

THANKSGIVING IS AROUND THE CORNER, AND MANY CHILDREN HAVE A FULL WEEK OFF FROM SCHOOL THIS YEAR. THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE ASKED FOLKS STOPPING AT THE STARBUCKS ON LITHIA-PINECREST ROAD WHAT THEY HAVE PLANNED FOR GOBBLE DAY.

Compiled by Susan Green



Mallorie Ruiz, 10, is the daughter of Hollis Stiles and Louie Ruiz Bloomingdale: "Goin' to Tennessee!"



Hollis Stiles said the family, including her mother, Millie Stiles of Bloomingdale, looks forward to a Thanksgiving getaway in Wears Valley near Pigeon Forge every year. "The phones usually don't work in the cabin," she said. "We stay in and play board games. We do nothing but cook, cook, cook."



John Brewer Valrico Past Thanksgiving holidays have been "just another day." Not this year. "We're going back home to Tennessee. ... I'm finally making time to put everything else aside and focus on our family." Brewer will be taking his daughters, Meaghan, 12, and Mackenzie, 9, to see his parents and brothers near Memphis.



Tania Wells Bloomingdale: "We're staying here. We'll be at my house or my mother-in-law's, or my sister-in-law's. We haven't decided yet."



Alison Anderson Valrico "I'm going to my sister's in Largo." She says the family will feast on "the usual" - turkey, dressing, green beans and sweet potatoes.

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SUSAN GREEN

A wooded lot on the northeast corner of FishHawk Boulevard and Bell Shoals Road was cleared recently to make way for storm water ponds associated with the Boyette Road widening project.

Bulldozers making improvements needed for road widening

By SUSAN GREEN

Motorists may have noticed bulldozers and backhoes clearing a large wooded lot on the northeast corner of Bell Shoals Road and FishHawk Boulevard late last month.

The trees were removed to make way for storm water ponds associated with the widening of Boyette Road between Bell Shoals and McMullen roads, said Steve Valdez, a spokesman for Hillsborough County's Public Works Department. Bloomingdale residents who make their way to Riverview or Interstate 75 by way of Boyette probably have noticed trees and brush being cleared on the south side of the 3-mile stretch to be widened.

Land clearing is one of the first steps in a \$22 million project expected

to take almost four years to complete. It's also the third and final phase of a project that will see the heavily traveled artery at least four lanes wide for its entire stretch from Bell Shoals to U.S. 301, where the road changes names to Gibsonton Drive before it shuttles commuters to the interstate.

Traffic routinely backs up on Boyette during morning and evening rush hours, and that's expected to worsen during construction. Motorists will thread their way through a construction zone for the entire length of the stretch from Bell Shoals to McMullen for the duration of the project, Valdez said.

"There are no plans to close the road," he said. "But there could be unforeseen things that

happen."

The project is trickier than earlier phases of widening because of a bridge over Bell Creek that must be replaced. Valdez said workers will construct a new two-lane bridge for commuters before tearing out the old one. Traffic will be diverted to that bridge while the old bridge is replaced, then both new spans will remain open for traffic at the project's completion.

Valdez said plans include major improvements at the intersection of Bell Shoals, FishHawk and Boyette. New turn lanes, bicycle lanes, sidewalks, ramps for the disabled and traffic lights will require construction for 1,400 feet or more along all the roads leading to the intersection.

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didn't plan this!



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The Emergency Center at Brandon Regional Hospital not only makes kids feel better but moms and dads too!

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CERT training available

A Gazette report

Do you remember Hurricanes Andrew, Charley and Katrina and the earthquakes in Haiti and Chile?

Hopefully, we will never experience that destruction. However, if we did, are you ready? CERT volunteers are.

In the event of a major disaster, would you and your neighbors be able to manage? If emergency services were overwhelmed, would you be able to survive hours or days until they could get to you? CERT volunteers can.

Hillsborough County will train residents in how to plan for and survive a disaster until help arrives. The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association is seeking volunteers to become CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) trained to become

community leaders if a disaster should strike.

CERT training enables you to respond to emergencies by applying basic response and organizational skills. CERT members may also serve as first responders to an emergency until professional emergency services arrive. There are many ways a CERT member may be utilized as a first responder.

The training takes 24 hours and is held evenings and weekends. Each participant will receive a training manual, CERT kit and certificate upon completion of the course. The best part is the training is free. That's a pretty good cost in return for your families' lives.

If you are interested, e-mail Inbloomingdale-news@tampabay.rr.com. We must have a group of approximately 20 people to put a class together.

Light up the neighborhood

Ten bucks for a kit of 20 luminaries, not a bad deal for a very good cause, according to the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association.

The Bloomingdale Homeowners Association will again sell luminary kits to raise money for the Bloomingdale Community Scholarship Fund.

Proceeds from the sale will benefit the Bloomingdale Community Scholarship Fund. The objective of the scholarship is to reward and encourage high school seniors who live in the Bloomingdale community to pursue a college career.

This year orders for sales will begin on Saturday, Nov. 6 at the 3rd Annual Family Fest and will end on Sunday, Dec. 5th. All orders will be delivered to the homeowners by members of the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association. Orders will need to be pre-paid by mail or can be paid for at delivery time. For their convenience, homeowners may choose a delivery date of Dec. 7 or Dec. 14. Kits may also be ordered by e-mailing inbloomingdalenews@tampabay.rr.com.

Please purchase the luminaries to light up your neighborhood or simply light up your heart by helping send a student to college.



KIM WALLACE

BSHS' new assistant principal

Bloomingdale High School would like to welcome Tim Leeseberg as their new assistant principal. Leeseberg comes to Bloomingdale from Armwood High School. He taught science for seven years prior to his new position, and is excited to start his new position with Bloomingdale Bulls.

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Plaza Bella Goes Pink

By KIM WALLACE

Roz Creager, owner of Green Boutique in Plaza Bella, hosted their 3rd Annual Plaza Bella Goes Pink event Oct. 16 2010. With the help of all business owners in the plaza, they organized this event and it was a big success. They had approximately 300 register to walk on the day of event. The event started off with Antionette Cuellar speaking on the how walks like this and others have helped her through her tough times. Cuellar lost her brother in 1997 to thy-



KIM WALLACE

Jean Walker was the first survivor to cross the finish line, and was presented a Vera Bradley bag.

roid cancer; she later found out she had thyroid cancer and then in 2004 was diagnosed with breast cancer and went through chemotherapy and radiation treatment. Cuellar said after that she was hoping her battle was over, but in 2008 it was back in her bones.

She is in treatment now. She is dedicated to the cause and doesn't just want to help herself but to help others. Antionette Cuellar spoke with such faith that it inspired and made such an impact, everyone was so excited about the walk.

Plaza Bella had many



KIM WALLACE

Sydney Sanemeterio, 9, is the winner of bra contest for "Party Girl Bra" at Plaza Bella Goes Pink Breast Cancer Walk. Sydney saw a flyer in mom's office, the Center for Radiation Oncology in Brandon, and decided she wanted to enter the contest.

booths set up with raffles, silent auction, survivor tent, water station, photography booth, bra contest and DJ Chris Health from Big Beats

Entertainment. The day was a great success. Plaza Bella appreciates the community coming out and supporting such a great cause, all pro-

ceeds from the event benefit The Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer. Plaza Bella looks forward to next years events.

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BSHS alumni band takes the field

By PTSA President
CATRINIA MILLER

Friday Oct. 15, the newly formed Bloomingdale Senior High School Alumni Band performed at their first football game, Bloomingdale vs. Freedom. There was just over 50 former BSBS students marching side-by-side

with the current Rajun' Bull Band of more than 260 students.

It was an awesome sight to see, players ranging from the clarinet, tuba, trumpets and saxophone playing their hearts out.

One of Bloomingdale's former students, a 2003 graduate, is now a teacher

in the English department, Ms. Proly. She said, "I was so excited the night before that I could not sleep. The Thursday night practice was so much fun and seeing such a big group of us was fantastic".

The word got out on Facebook said Chrisie and Dan Farr, sister and brother. They were there along with the 50 alumni. Some alums came all the way from Texas, as distance was not going to hold them back.

Before the game they mixed with the Rajun' Bull band members and their families at the Rajun' Bull Band's Annual Barbecue. Mr. Carlisle, also now a teacher in the English department, enjoyed reuniting with old friends and having some great food, just like old times. Mr. Carlisle was persuaded by his students to perform. He

said "I am so glad I did it not only for my students but for me, I really had a great time."

It looks like this could be the start of something big at Bloomingdale Senior High School. It has the largest band in the county, a band that is on its way to London. Students from the orchestra and chorus are to perform in December for the 25th Anniversary of the New Year's Day London Parade. Good luck to them.

This was just the first of many years of reunions to come, and not only to see former band members. Six former Crimson Dolls, ranging from 1989 graduates to 2005, marched with this year's Crimson Guard.

Our man from Texas, Lonnie Mills said it was like breath of fresh air - he was obviously glad to be back in Florida.



PHOTOS BY

Bloomingdale Marching Band got to perform with alumni members.



Bloomingdale Graduate and English Teacher, Ms. Proly, performed with the marching band with other alumni members.

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barbara@asanayogaofbrandon.com



Free Veterans Day concert at Bloomingtondale High School

The Bloomingtondale High School Music Department is hosting a Veterans Day Concert Tuesday, Nov. 9, 7 p.m. in the school auditorium. A collaboration of more than a hundred music students, comprised of the Ambassador Show Choir, Chamber Orchestra, Jazz Ensemble and Wind Ensemble will provide an evening of patriotic songs and music from the big band era. The concert will also include a presentation from the school's U.S. Air Force JROTC. Admission is free. For information, call (813) 744-8018.

River Hills salutes America's veterans

A Veterans Day Brunch will be held at River Hills Country Club in Valrico on Sunday, Nov. 14, 2010 starting at 11:30 a.m. present military veterans. The cost is \$18.95 per person and \$6.95 for children under 12 years of age. Day and retired USAF Gen. Floyd Newton will be guest speaker. For reservations, call (813) 653-1554, ext. 242. A patriotic program will start at 1 p.m. to commemorate Veterans Day. For information, call John Ionoff at (813) 661-8407.



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He's making a list...

Santa and Mrs. Claus will make their 23rd annual visit to Bloomingdale from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 4.

Visits with Santa are free, with a donation of non-perishable food item(s) for charity.

Photos will be taken and provided for free with a \$1

charge for mailing. Personal cameras are allowed.

Children may visit Santa at the Bloomingdale Golfer's Club off of Nature's Way at 4113 Great Golfer's Club.

Student and Scout volunteers are needed to serve as "elves" during the

event and may be eligible to receive community service hour credits. For information or to volunteer, call (813) 681-2051 or e-mail inbloomingdale-news@tampabay.rr.com.

This event is free and is sponsored by the Bloomingdale Homeowner's Association.

ON REAL ESTATE

Pricing under pressure

Deciding on an asking price for your home is challenging enough these days, but you need specific pricing strategies for particular scenarios, especially if you're under pressure to move quickly or your home isn't selling after being on the market for several months. Here are suggestions for both situations.

If you're facing a deadline due to job relocation or other reasons, then you need to price competitively, even more than expected in today's market. You'll need to list at significantly less than your competition. Think 15 percent less. That may seem tough to stomach, but it's better than continuing your

monthly loan payments or the hassle of trying to find tenants to rent your home.

If your home has been listed for some time, but not generating interest, you'll need to lower your price. Of the three elements that sell a home - price, location and condition - price is the one you'll have the most control over.

If home values have declined in your neighborhood, the price you originally listed at a few months ago may now be too high and out of line with comparable listings. Now would be the time to have your real estate agent prepare a new Comparative Market Analysis



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(CMA) and re-evaluate your pricing strategy. If you've got to sell, and sell now, price it like you mean it.

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0002863303-01

SPIRIT WEEK

Photos by Kim Wallace



Mr. West, principal and Mrs. Shotwell, asst. principal of Bloomingdale show their school spirit during the week of blast to the past!



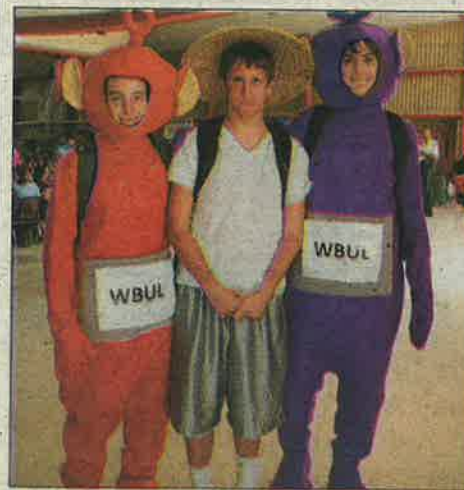
Mrs. Campbell, asst. principal and student Tony "Rocky" Gruzca are styling in their outfits for a blast to the past!



Constentine Tedrick and teacher Mrs. Applebee show their school spirit.



John Green, Ton Gruzca, Jackson Souto and TJ Donhue have fun.



Purple Teletubbie Kevin Rankin, Logan White and Red Teletubbie Kyle Coulter show their school spirit



Chris Weber and Ryan Marshall show their spirit during character day for homecoming week



PHOTO BY KIM WALLACE

King and Queen of Bloomingdale

Bloomingdale High New King and Queen of 2010, Kyle Wilkinsons and Megan Wicks

Cimino health screening

Cimino Elementary School held a Health Screening for first- through third-grade, and vision screening just for kindergarten students. This screenings are held at all Hillsborough County schools. Screening includes weight, height, vision and BMI, or body mass index. Pictured is first grader Abby Panter getting her height measured.



KIM WALLACE

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A record setting year for cross country

By **JENNIFER BEACH**
Bloomingdale
Cross Country Coach

Success is not achieved overnight or in one season. It takes a lot of hard work and patience to achieve. This is especially true in the sport of cross country. With a short season, the real work for this sport in high school takes place in the off-season. Bloomingdale High School's cross country team has shined this year but all involved will tell you that it is due to intense dedication that requires year-round commitment. From private trainings on Saturdays at 6 a.m. - a time in which most high school teens are still fast asleep - to summer camps, these high school athletes have given up free time with family and friends to devote themselves to the sport of running.

As the coach of Bloomingdale's cross country team, I am amazed at the intensity my athletes show me and their desire to improve. Bloomingdale athletics, especially cross country, has always had a history of excellence. This year is no different. We have had quite a season with numerous victories

and trophies to show for it. Our season opener, the East Hillsborough Meet held at Newsome High School, showed that us that the hard work was paying off but we were not done yet. Both the

boys' and girls' teams took home the runner-up trophy. That was only the beginning as the girls' were the Sickles Invitational Champions, the boys' and girls' were the WD Johnson Invitational champions, the boys' were the flrunners.com champions for the large school division, and the girls' were the runners-up at the Freshman-Sophomore Meet. The girls' team was ranked by the Tampa Tribune as one of the top five teams in Hillsborough County for cross country.

All of these victories have been achieved by a young team. Of the varsity line-up for the boys and girls, only one senior will be leaving each team. The ladies include Captain Janna Edwards (senior), Co-Captain Hannah Earl (junior), Kendall Hayes (sophomore), Lisa Kauff-

man (sophomore), Aissa Martinez (sophomore), Julie Roggeman (sophomore), and Stacy Weaver (freshman). The boys include Paul Pandl (senior), Captain Cormac McCarthy (junior), Eryk Harp (junior), Kelvin Alexander (sophomore), Ryan Chadderton (sophomore), Ian Ludden (sophomore), Albin Santiago (sophomore), and Daniel Cardenas (freshman). To have a group of talented athletes is wonderful but to have such young and talented athletes is a coach's dream. I have worked and trained with most of these athletes year round and nothing is more satisfying than to see their season pay off. I am fortunate to be a coach for such a wonderful high school as Bloomingdale and even more fortunate to coach one of the best teams in the country.



FROM JENNIFER BEACH

Bloomingdale High School cross country

Row 1: Heidi Earl, Michelle Fee, Kendall Hayes, Aissa Martinez, Julie Roggeman, Lisa Kauffman, Taryn Pring

Row 2: Capt Janna Edwards, Madison Pitrowski

Row 3: Nicole Kirkham, Meghan Hayes, Co-Capt Ashley Simon, Joon Colianni, Starr Cellemare, Carly Steen, Stephanie Carrion, Stacy Weaver, Coach Jennifer Beach, Coach Jaci Johnson

Row 4: Brian Little, Sean Mantzel, Peter Henry, Erick Pelaez, Brandon Tucker, Alex McCausland, Paul Pandl, KJ Alexander, Tim Granholm, Eryk Harp, Corey Geer

Row 5: Jaime Smith, Adam Weaver, Ryan Chadderton, Josh West, Brandon Elder, Co-Capt Hunter Douglas, Capt Cormac McCarthy

Row 6: Mark Weber, David Granholm, Albin Santiago, Ian Ludden, Daniel Cardenas, Devin Voyles, Dylan Sepessy, Austin Tucker



FROM JENNIFER BEACH

Bloomingdale Boys Varsity takes home 1st place at Florida Runners Big State race. Bottom Row: Ryan Chadderton, KJ Alexander. Standing: Daniel Cardenas, Cormac McCarthy, Ian Ludden, Albin Santiago, Paul Pandl, Coach Jennifer Beech.

Homeland Security and a dog named Lou

Canine donated by
Care Animal Hospital founder

STAFF REPORT

Three year-old "Lou" wasn't bred to be a police dog. In fact, when Care Animal Hospital's Dr. Richard Kane and his wife Cheri brought her home, they expected she'd live a pretty ordinary life. They soon realized this well-mannered Border Collie had much more to offer. Thanks to their generous donation, Lou is now a certified bomb-sniffing canine deployed in support of Homeland Security.

Prior to Lou's certification, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office K-9 Unit was comprised of 22 dogs and 18 deputies/handlers. The canine mix mainly consisted of German Shepherds, Belgian Malinois, Bloodhounds and Labradors. The recent addition of a Border Collie to the force has been an unexpected success.

"She's a bit smaller than most of our dogs, but as a bomb-detecting agent she is amazing," says her handler Deputy Charlotte Raschke. "If there were such a thing as

a class valedictorian in our certification class, Lou would have been it," adds Sgt. Ron Cain.

A dog typically joins the Sheriff's Office between the ages of 1 and 3 and must complete and pass a rigorous 420 hours of explosives detection training with its handler/deputy. They are then certified as a law enforcement canine and given their own ID number and badge. Lou completed her training on March 29, 2010 and is now deployed in the field. She participates in weekly training sessions and call-outs.

"On her downtime, she's like any other fun-loving dog. Lou loves a good game of catch or a quick swim in the pool" says Raschke. "But for her, bomb detection is the most exciting game. When she's at work, Lou is among the best we have ever seen."

Deputy Charlotte Raschke has the unique distinction of being the only female handler on the K-9 force. Lou lives with Raschke full-time



CARE ANIMAL HOSPITAL

Deputy Charlotte Raschke, the only female handler on the K-9 force, and Lou.

and will likely remain with her as a pet upon retirement. For more information on the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Department Homeland Security division, visit www.hcso.tampa.fl.us/Departments/Department-of-Operational-Support/Homeland-Security-Division.aspx

Care Animal Hospital was founded by Dr. Richard Kane and is Hillsborough County's largest, full-service, veterinary facility. For more information, visit www.careanimalhospital.org. Care Animal Hospital is located at 511 E. Bloomingdale Ave. They may be reached via phone at (813) 684-7387.

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Dignity

For teens, consider safety during the holidays

Teenagers love this time of year – schools are out for the Thanksgiving holidays, there are sales going on at the mall and there are plenty of parties and free time to go places. This also means more time on the road.

One of the most critical decisions drivers make every day is whether or not to wear their seat belts and whether or not they should insist that anyone riding with them wears their seat belts. It is a serious decision. All kinds of excuses are given as to why drivers don't buckle up. Those of us in law enforcement want it to become a habit for everyone. We know there is no magic answer on how to get every driver and passenger to buckle up. Each one of us has to decide.

Parents, take the time to set the example by buckling up yourselves and emphasize the importance of doing so to your teens.

Bucking up saves lives.

Teens, a special safety message for all of you – do not text while driving. Just one text can cost you your life and/or the lives of others in the car. Texting while driving is more dangerous than drinking while driving and 17 times more dangerous than talking on a phone while driving. It isn't the fact that your hands and eyes are distracted, but your head. Your mind is not on driving, that is the danger – and there are no texts worth a person's life.

HAVE A SAFE AND SECURE HOLIDAY SEASON

November is the official beginning of this year's "holiday season".

This holiday season, like all others, many of us will be busy shopping, traveling and celebrating. We in the sheriff's office want all of our residents to have

a safe and enjoyable holiday season.

The following are some safety and security tips to help each of you stay safe and secure this season. Please take the time to follow them.

AS A SHOPPER – Be extra cautious and stay aware of your surroundings and your actions. Don't get in a big rush and be careless. Stay alert at all times. Definitely, do not leave your car unlocked, especially with the engine running. Do not leave packages or other valuables in your car – lock them in the trunk. These are all invitations for thieves to take advantage of and they will. Lock up your vehicles at home too. There have been several auto burglaries in our area.

AS A HOMEOWNER – Prepare and secure your home before you head out for holiday traveling or even just for shopping. Burglars drive through neighborhoods looking for easy targets. Don't let your

home be one! Special "security watch" requests can be completed at the sheriff's Bloomingdale Community Station on Erindale Drive if you are going out of town.

Most burglaries can be prevented by taking a few simple steps, like having all door and window locks checked for proper operation, adding simple security items and paying special attention to doors. Two of the most vulnerable areas are your garage doors and garage side doors. Keep them closed, and since both give open access to your home, insure they are locked.

AS A DRIVER – No one wants to be involved in an accident, especially one involving a drunk driver, so don't be a drunk driver yourself. Do not drink and drive or ride with those who do, and talk to teens about the dangers of drinking and driving. A few minutes discussing the dangers and setting strict rules can save a life.

OPERATION MEDICINE CABINET

Every home in the county has some unused or expired medicines/drugs in its medicine cabinets. It is very critical that these unused medicines are properly disposed of – not thrown in the trash and not flushed down a toilet. Drugs that are flushed contaminate Florida's aquatic environment and can not be removed from our water.

To help properly dispose of these unused medicines, the Hillsborough

OPERATION MEDICINE CABINET

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642-2020.



Curtis Warren
Community Resource Deputy

County Sheriff's Office is working with groups such as Senior Living Options. Please feel free to attend the following event to take your unused or expired medicines for proper disposal by law enforcement.

SPECIAL HOLIDAY NOTE

With our country still at war this holiday season and especially with many parents from our community separated from their spouses and children, please support the U.S. Marines "Toys for Tots Program." They need our help. Semper Pi.

From all of us at the sheriff's office, have a safe and secure Thanksgiving holiday season.

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