

THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

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Proud to be a Bull – for a year

An exchange student from Ghana is learning more than math and science during his stay in Bloomingdale. See story, page 4.



YES, VIRGINIA

Santa is coming back to Bloomingdale

Once again, Santa and Mrs. Claus will make a special trip to Bloomingdale – this year he'll be at the BHA office, 3509 Bell Shoals Road, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Dec. 2. For information call (813) 477-7120.

PROVIDED
Rodney Raphaels' school week isn't much different than his classmates – here in Bloomingdale. It is vastly different than the school he is visiting from in Ghana.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Fallen leaves lying on the grass in the November sun bring more happiness than daffodils.”

Cyril Connolly



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New director takes the baton

Dale Lewis Assumes Leadership of Orchestra Program

BY SUZANNE JONES

Orchestra Director Dale Lewis looks perfectly at home on the Bloomingdale High School stage. During the first orchestra concert of the year, he appears relaxed, friendly and yet focused on the music and his students. He could easily pass for a veteran BSHS teacher, but in fact Mr. Lewis is still learning his way around Bloomingdale, double time. In his first nine weeks teaching at BSHS, Lewis helped the music department move into its newly renovated space; became acquainted with students, staff, and parents; and prepared four orchestral groups for the Oct. 16 performance.

Though new to Bloomingdale, Lewis exudes the low-key confidence of a seasoned teaching professional. In his 15 years of teaching experience, Lewis has spent the majority of his career directing orchestras at every public school level – elementary, junior high and high school – as well as serving as adjunct faculty at a small college. Though strings have taken center stage in his teaching career, Lewis has also directed chorus and band.

Prior to coming to BSHS, Lewis directed or-



JEFF OGDEN

Mr. Lewis prepares Concert Orchestra before first concert of the year.

chestra for eight years at Mann Middle School, with a portion of that time split between Mann and Armwood High School. Most recently Lewis directed orchestra, taught guitar and directed the chorus at Mann. When asked why he decided to take the job at Bloomingdale, Lewis replied, "Bloomingdale's music program has a great reputation, and I love working with high school kids....You see the kids improve musically and you see them mature and grow as people. High School is such an important time when kids are making key decisions. I like helping them along the way."

Lewis is still developing his vision for the BSHS strings program. He wants to learn more about his students and the program in general. When asked

about funding, Mr. Lewis was straight to the point.

"The boosters are great, but money is tight," he said. "I intend to set up a plan to replace the instruments, especially the larger instruments like basses and cellos, which students may not own."

He feels strongly that providing the student with good instruments enhances their playing and love of music.

Perhaps nothing sums up how Mr. Lewis feels about his short time at Bloomingdale better than his own words near the conclusion of his first Bloomingdale concert.

"I love working with your kids," he said. "There are times during class that I catch myself looking around the room and thinking – I am the luckiest person in the world."

BHA 2012 Annual Membership Drive: It's not too late to participate!

The BHA – the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, Inc. – is the only community organization representing all of Bloomingdale's 5000 residences in more than 40 neighborhoods. In October, residents received the BHA Annual Membership Drive mailing. This packet in-

cluded a list of programs and activities made possible through membership dues, a green membership form, and a BHA Scholarship donation form.

Help us continue our work to keep Bloomingdale a great community in which to raise a family – a great place to call home.

Return your green Membership Dues form and \$25 dues payment as soon as possible to Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, P.O. Box 7221, Brandon, FL 33508. For information, call (813) 681-2051 or contact us by email: bloomingdale.homeowners@gmail.com.

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Meetings: first Tuesday in January, March, May, September and November at 6 p.m.

Web site: bloomingdalegazette.com

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Proud to be a Bull, for a year

Exchange Student Rodney Raphaels is living the Bloomingdale life.

BY KIM MILLER

Like many of his junior classmates, exchange student Rodney Raphaels crowds his school week at Bloomingdale Senior High School with advanced academic courses and extracurricular activities. In addition to enrollment in a number of rigorous academic courses – Anatomy and Physiology, honors U.S. History and honors Chemistry were just a few – Rodney's first semester included running cross country. He plans on try-

Rodney's typical school day in Ghana:

5 a.m. Wake up, morning prayer and Mass
6:30 a.m.-2:15 p.m. Attend classes, 30 minute breakfast break
2:15 p.m. Lunch, then mandatory 1-hour siesta (no books or papers allowed, strictly rest).
3:15 p.m. Physical education (two days), manual work* (three days)
6 p.m.-10:30 p.m. Supper, four hours of study time, evening prayers
10:30 p.m. Return to dorms to sleep
*Manual work includes chores such as laundry, cleaning, maintaining the grounds, and latrine duty. The school restroom, called the "White House," consists of buckets behind which used toilet paper is thrown. For latrine duty, two students empty the buckets and burn the paper. Students have free time on Wednesdays after siesta.

ing out for Bulls soccer this fall and track and field in the spring, if approved by the Florida High School Athletic Association. A rigorous schedule is nothing new to Rodney. Back home in Navrongo, Ghana, he attended Notre Dame Seminary Senior High School, an all-boys boarding school. But while Notre Dame Seminary Senior High is considerably smaller than BSHS, with 400 students in three grades vs. 2,350 students spread across four grades here, the days were much longer.

Notre Dame Senior High is also more rigid in terms of discipline than Bloomingdale High. Rodney comments,

"My school is very strict. You have three 'lives' to spend over your three years in school," said Rodney. In other words, three strikes and you're out, with the first strike earning one week internal suspension that consists of hard labor. The second strike earns the student one week of external suspension, where the offending student must return home and face the humiliation. Upon a third strike, the student is out. By the way, Rodney still has all three lives left.

School life is only one aspect of Rodney's exchange student experience. Home life with the host family also contributes greatly to understanding a teenager's life in America. Rodney lives with Steve and Karen Hopper, who have three children of



PROVIDED

Part of the Hopper family. Rodney takes in Orlando with Steve and Karen Hopper and their son, Alex.

their own – two daughters in their 20s and a 7-year-old son, Alex, a second-grader at Cimino Elementary. Rodney and the Hopper family have adjusted well to each other.

"At first we were worried about a language barrier, but Rodney speaks English," said Karen. "There really wasn't much of a change in the household, he just fit right in."

He has tried and liked many of the foods prepared by Karen, who he calls "mum," especially fried chicken. On occasion Rodney gives Karen a break and cooks some of his favorite foods from Ghana. Rodney plays Wii with Alex, and has learned to swim, ice skate and play miniature golf. He enjoyed his first taste of pizza when some of the cross country team took him to CiCi's.

As for the community, Rodney is amazed at how



PROVIDED

Rodney with mom, sister and brother. Navrongo, Ghana.

nice the roads are here. appointed."

"No potholes," he said.

So how does Rodney's experience so far stack up to his expectations about America? He expected "better standards of living," and he is "not dis-

Here's hoping that Rodney's stay in the United States and his opportunity to be a Bloomingdale Bull is a great experience that he will remember and share for a lifetime.

BSHS golf teams on the right tracks

BY KIM MILLER

In golf, a swing with the wrong slice can be as bad as getting the wrong slice of meat from the turkey. However, the Bloomingdale High School boys golf team seems to be getting all the right slices. Currently, the boys team is 8-1, and will be moving on to districts.

"These are a good bunch of kids, who really enjoy themselves on the golf course," said Coach Allen Ware.

He also feels that senior Tyler Miller has a great chance of making it to states, but he must get past districts and regionals.

"I love everything about golf, and I definitely have

the potential to make it to states," Miller said. "I practice every day, anywhere from 30 minutes to six hours."

Coach Nancy Harris says she has an amazing girls team, despite their 5-5 record.

"Everyone we play always comments on how friendly, and professional the girls are on the course," stated Harris.

Harris' goal for the girls is for them to enjoy themselves, and to build on their golf fundamentals, so they can enjoy and play the game for a very long time. Kennedy Stites said she has enjoyed her three years of Bulls golf. She says she made great friends, and had a lot of good fun.



KIM MILLER

Alex Hartley; Katy Mann; Rachel Wallace; Coach Harris; Elizabeth Jackson; Bailey Stites; Olivia Fletcher; Kennedy Stites



KIM MILLER

Michael Tyzzani; HJ Fitchett; Robert Bullara; Travis Bird; Coach Ware; Jacob Gonzalez (co-capt); Austin Haley (capt); Tyler Miller



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BSHS Holds Court

2012 Homecoming Court Members Share Perspective

By SHAPHALI JAIN

Bloomingtondale High School held its 2012 Homecoming game on Friday, Oct. 5. For many, homecoming means a football game and a dance. It's also a chance for high school alumni to meet up at a home football game. For students, homecoming means much more. The week leading up to the game involves class spirit competitions and rallying the entire student body to cheer for the school. The homecoming dance marks the first semi-formal event of the year – an opportuni-

ty for students in all grades and returning graduates to top off the week in style. The young men and women selected each year to be on Bloomingtondale Senior High's Homecoming court experience the week from an entirely different perspective.

The Homecoming Court in Bloomingtondale is selected by the student body. Each grade nominates representatives who have contributed significantly to their school. Students subsequently select, by vote, one young man and one young woman from each grade level to serve

on the court. Once the Homecoming Court is announced, the entire student body votes for the queen and king, who are announced during the homecoming game half-time, after the court ceremony has taken place.

This year Bloomingtondale's Homecoming game festivities were threatened by rain. The game was delayed for over half an hour due to showers, and nearly cancelled altogether. Luckily, the weather held for both the game and half-time ceremonies. Undeterred by fickle conditions, paired members of the court were driven around the track in convertible Corvettes provided again this year by Tampa Bay Vettes (TBV). The boys in their suits rode in the front seats with the drivers; the girls, resplendent in their beautiful dresses, sat on rugs atop the cars. Before unveiling the king and queen, each member of the court was introduced and his/her accomplishments and achievements were announced to the crowd.

No one better describes the feeling of Homecoming and involvement in Homecoming Court like those students who were selected for this honor. So, how did it feel to be a part of 2012 Homecoming Court at Bloomingtondale



KIM WALLACE

2012 Homecoming Queen Samantha Pena and King Mark Mooney

TBV helps with Homecoming

Tampa Bay Vettes (TBV) is one of the largest Corvette clubs in the Tampa Bay area and been supporting the local high schools at Homecomings since the late 1990s. Each year the club provides cars and drivers for BSHS Homecoming. When asked why TBV participates in Homecoming ceremonies, Marlene Varnum and John Koffron (TBV Homecoming Chairs) replied, "The answer to why we do homecomings is not simple. We ask for a \$15 donation for each Corvette and then donate this money to a charity at the end of the year. I believe it goes deeper than that though. All the TBV Homecoming volunteers are very honored and proud to support the students. Going around the track and hearing the crowd go wild is a great feeling. Corvette represents America's only true sports car. The students get it."

High School?

Peter Hanhan (Sophomore): It felt like everyone I love was there to celebrate a really memorable moment with me. The snazzy car topped it off.

Anya Jain (Senior): The nomination and the entire experience were beyond words. To be able to represent your class with some of the most amazing people I have ever had the privilege to know was such an honor.

Vincent Roth (Senior): It felt awesome! I was so honored to be selected by my classmates to represent senior class on Homecoming Court. I was so proud because I felt that I must have done some-



KIM WALLACE

2012 Bloomingtondale Senior High Homecoming Court

thing right to make my peers respect me enough to choose me. It was a very humbling experience.

Carly Wilkinson (Senior): It was everything a girl dreamed of when she

was young. I felt like royalty on top of that Corvette and from all the attention that I received. This is definitely a memory that will last forever. I am so thankful and blessed to have been able to experience it.

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KIM WALLACE

Bruins Band members enjoy the high school game experience from the stands.

Burns Bruins band performs with BSHS

BY KIM WALLACE

The Burns Middle School Bruins Band performed with the Bloom- ingdale Senior High School Rajun' Bulls Band at a home game. Due to rain, this year's performance was confined to the stands.

Burns Bruins basketball takes to the court

BY KIM MILLER

The Burns Bruins girls and boys basketball teams have been shooting it out with other middle schools since September. The boys team is currently undefeated (5-0), with their latest triumphs being McLane and Mann middle schools. Coach Hemphill was grinning ear to ear when acknowledging the amount of experience on the team and the quality of players he has gotten to coach this season.

"A lot of these kids play travel or AAU basketball, and they are great role models for the younger players," he said. "The team could improve on their defense, but I really like these kids."

The girls basketball team is currently 2-2, with their latest defeat coming from the hands of McLane Middle School. At one point in the game the girls were up 21-14, but three 3-pointers from the opposing team quickly changed the momentum of the game, and the Bruins



KIM MILLER

Bruins player Kyle Bird plays hard against McLane

ended up losing 24-29. Coach Gatz wishes she had more time to spend teaching the girls the fundamentals and helping them to play cohesively. She remarked that she has a few players that play AAU ball, and they will help guide the younger or more inexperienced players.

"These are really great kids," said Coach Gatz. "They like to learn and have a good time doing it."

Thank you Brandon

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2012



2011



2010



2009



2008

Swim and Dive teams finish strong

BY KIM MILLER

The Bloomingdale Senior High School girls and boys swim and dive teams aren't going against the tide – in fact, they're going with the flow. Both the girls and boys teams finished with an 11-2 record, with their second loss coming from their friendly rival, Newsome High School.

Coach Applebee had this to say about that particular meet, "Despite being shorthanded, Bloomingdale challenged Newsome to a dual in the pool, coming up only a few points short of a win. Bloomingdale swim and



KIM MILLER

BSHS Swim and Dive teams celebrate in their element.

dive always looks forward to the friendly rivalry between both teams, which brings out the best in all our athletes."

Coach Raschke had nothing but praise for the athletes,

"I think our swimmers have a connection and cohesiveness that cannot be coached," she said. "I consider each of them to hold

a piece to a dynamic puzzle, and when placed together great things happen. Our swimmers are some of the best young people at Bloomingdale, and represent the sport and our school well. Whether we win or lose they continue to hold the highest respect for their competition, this sport, and each other."

Volleyball nets gains

BY KIM MILLER

Bulls girls volleyball has kept it all in the family. Margeaux Sinibaldi is the head coach, her assistant and junior varsity coach is her younger sister, Julie Howlett, and the spirited voice behind the microphone is her father, Ray Sinibaldi.

Coach Sinibaldi started her volleyball career at Venice High School in Sarasota, and continued playing for the University of Tampa, where she played the position of libero (roaming defensive player). In her junior year the Spartans won a national championship. Her sister, Julie, followed the same path. Coach Sinibaldi came to BSHS three years ago, coaching the junior varsity team in her first season, and has been at the helm for past two seasons.

When asked about her team's strengths and weaknesses, Coach Sina-



KIM MILLER

Bulls players Haley Neil, Karissa Rhoades, Brandy Higgins, Regan Huet enjoy a special game moment.

baldi had a lot to say about their strengths.

"We are a young team," she said. "Although we have three seniors that are huge contributors, the core is younger players. We are strong in all positions."

All of these girls work hard. Many of them play volleyball on travel or competitive teams when not playing for BSHS, so they train and play volleyball practically year round.

As far as weaknesses, she said "I don't think they know how good they can be."

When she met with parents and players at the beginning of the season Sinibaldi told them not to

be discouraged by their record. With four games left in the regular season, the Bulls are currently 10-10 overall. They are 3-1 in district play, with the latest loss against Plant High School, which the Bulls defeated twice this year in tournament play.

The varsity roster consists of the following players:

Abby Bernaldo (soph); Becca Brown (sr.); Chelsea Chavers (soph); Lydi Dees (jr.); Kaitlyn Grice (soph); Danielle Gross (sr.); Brandy Higgins (sr.); Regan Huet (fr.); Taylor Huet (jr.); Mandy Linsky (jr.); Haley Neil (jr.); Karissa Rhoades (soph); Marissa Rovani (sr.)

BSHS loses homecoming game

BY KIM WALLACE

Homecoming 2012 at Bloomingdale started off with spirit week, where students dressed up each day to show their school spirit, and ended with a Blackout Day pep rally on Friday. The football game didn't go Bloomingdale's way, with Alonzo Ravens defeating BSHS 20-0, but the Saturday night homecoming dance went off without a hitch.

BSHS Sophomore Class wins spirit stick at Pep Rally.



KIM WALLACE

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Take a moment to remember this Veterans Day

Veterans Memorial Park and Museum -Too Close to Miss

BY SUZANNE JONES

Situated on 35 acres along the banks of the Tampa Bypass Canal off U.S. Highway 301 N., Veterans Memorial Park and Museum is a fitting place to visit this Veterans Day. The park is not far from our community (less than 5 miles from the Brandon Mall); perhaps you've driven right by it. The park's name is displayed on a beautiful stone wall at the entrance, and a helicopter hovers dramatically overhead, yet it is easy to breeze right by.

"We're in the process of procuring larger signs to be posted on Highway 301 so that people can find us more easily," explains Bob Silmser, Veterans Memorial Park and Museum Committee Co-Chair. The park is definitely not to be missed, especially on Veterans Day weekend.

Veterans Memorial Park and Museum honors all those who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States, and pays special tribute to the fallen from Hillsborough County. Bob Silmser, himself a Vietnam-era veteran, has been involved in the park's planning and development since day one. His pride is evident as he describes the history of the park, plans for continued expansion, and especially construction of the Vietnam Memorial.

The Vietnam Memorial was completed in 2011 and is the first of 16 theater of war exhibits to be constructed at the park. The

exhibits will honor Hillsborough County residents killed in every major conflict since the Seminole Indian War. The Vietnam Memorial is of personal meaning to Silmser, because he worked closely with Lt. Col. James Basta – in whose memory the memorial was named – to design and raise money for its construction.

"We are planning to complete exhibits for 14 additional theaters of war within the next 18 to 24 months," remarks Silmser. "The last thing to be built at the park will be the Veterans Educational Center."

Slated for completion in 2016-2017, the educational facility will alleviate the overcrowded display space of the current museum. The present museum is open only on weekends and houses artifacts collected at Hillsborough's Fort Foster, a collection donated by the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association of Florida, and other displays that highlight the role of Florida and its resi-

dents in military campaigns throughout history.

Every three months Veterans Memorial Park hosts a Field of Honor Ceremony, which is sponsored by the Veterans Council of Hillsborough County. The ceremony honors all soldiers who have died in the war in Afghanistan during the last three months. Their names are read and an American flag is placed in each soldier's memory. A new Field of Honor is currently under construction. The next ceremony is scheduled for Jan. 15, 2013.

Hillsborough County Veterans Council will celebrate its 48th Annual Veterans Day Tribute at Veterans Memorial Park and Museum. The ceremony will begin at 11 a.m. on the 11th day of the 11th month (Nov. 11), which is in remembrance of the date and time the Armistice was signed to end the first world war. The park is free and open to the public. For hours and directions call (813) 744-5502 or visit the park's website at www.veteransparkhc.com.



Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Veterans Memorial Park



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KIM WALLACE

Olivia, Alyssa and Alexandra Cuellar release doves in memory of their mother.

Plaza Bella goes pink

BY KIM WALLACE

The fifth annual Plaza Bella Goes Pink Walk took place Saturday, Oct. 20. Roz Creager, owner of The Green Boutique, is behind this annual event that is supported by the other businesses in the Plaza Bella complex as well as more than 300 walkers. Money raised from the

walk and raffle goes to the American Cancer Society and the Vera Bradley Breast Cancer Foundation. This year's walk was in memory of Antionette Lombardi-Cuellar, who fought strong until her passing in May of 2012. Cuellar was a guest speaker at two of Plaza Bella's walks in the past and

shared her strength, faith and determination with those in attendance. This year her daughters, Alyssa, Olivia, and Alexandra, shared their memories of her. As David Cuellar stood and listened to his daughters, he said he could not be more proud.

An especially touching moment took place before the walk when Captain Lewis of Seffner quoted Psalm 55:6, "Oh that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away, and be at rest." During a moment of silence Captain Lewis and each Cuellar daughter released doves, which Lewis supplied from his farm.

The Cuellar Family led the walk down Bloomingdale Avenue to Alafia Elementary and back. At the finish line Roz Creager and the Bloomingdale cheerleaders celebrated all those who participated in the race. Roz proclaimed the day a great success and looks forward to next year's walk.

BY DEE and
MADEE PRETHER

Did you know that Thanksgiving did not start in Massachusetts? That pilgrims, pumpkins and turkeys weren't involved in the least? It may bust your buckles to learn that Thanksgiving has its roots right here in Florida! Move over turkey - Cocida may be the true guest of honor at the table.

Historians disagree about the site of the original Thanksgiving. Their differences of opinion center primarily on whether the settler celebrants fathered the United States, and how closely the feast resembled the traditions upheld throughout the years. Despite their stance, historians agree that earlier feasts of thanks took place in several areas of the county. So here is some food for thought when you start planning this year's feast of plenty.

The defining Thanksgiving celebration, and the one the general public associates with the holiday's origin, was that of 1621. As you all learned in elementary school, along with how to make a hand turkey, the Pilgrims arrived in Plymouth in 1620 in search of religious freedom. Having landed in the winter, the first few months were a struggle. The Wampanoag tribe taught the English how to survive in this strange new land; how to grow corn, catch eels, fertilize the soil, etc. The Wampanoag leader, Massasoit, also donated food to the colonists. In October of 1621 the Pilgrims hosted a feast to celebrate their survival and their alliance with the Native

DID YOU KNOW?

Thanksgiving May Not Be All Pilgrims and Turkey

Americans. This would come to be known as "The First Thanksgiving."

Texans stake claim that the first Thanksgiving was held much earlier than the 1600s. In 1541 the Spaniard Francisco Vasquez de Coronado and 1,500 of his men arrived in what we know as the Texas Panhandle. After a six week journey through the dry and desolate American Southwest Vasquez entered the Palo Duro Canyon to find a plethora of food and water, saving the expedition. Before continuing on their journey, the men held a feast to give thanks for their survival.

Floridians can draw a line in the sand that St. Augustine, Florida was the site of the original Thanksgiving. Spanish Adm. Pedro Menendez de Aviles came ashore on Sept. 8, 1565. Aviles, 500 soldiers, 200 sailors, 100 civilian families and artisans, and the Timucuan Indians who occupied the village of Sely (present day St. Augustine) held the first Thanksgiving feast after holding the first Christian Mass. The Timucuan brought oysters and giant clams (maybe a wild turkey was amongst the offerings). And according to Florida teacher, Robyn Gioia, the Spaniards carried from their ships garbanzo beans, olive oil, bread, pork and wine—many of the ingredients used for the Spanish stew, Cocido ("co-SEED-o").

No matter the viewpoint, centuries ago Thanksgiving was about survival, a celebration of overcoming of obstacles. Today, Thanksgiving is a

Want to learn more?

The Internet is rife with information and links to historical research. For a bit on the Texan Thanksgiving peruse an article by Marian T. Horvat, Ph.D. on Tradition in Action's Web site, http://www.traditionaction.org/History/B_024_Augustine.html. For a lighter read on the Floridian side, try "America's REAL First Thanksgiving," by Robyn Gioia, a fifth-grade teacher in Florida.

Here is a recipe that Gioia shares with her readers:

COCIDO

1 pound garbanzo beans, soaked overnight
8 cups water
1 tablespoon pepper
2 teaspoons saffron
1 clove garlic, minced
1 pound chorizo sausages, thinly sliced
1/2 pound salt pork, diced
1 medium onion, diced
4 medium potatoes, diced
1 savoy cabbage, quartered
2 large carrots, thickly sliced
2 leeks, cut into short lengths
Drain beans, rinse and put in large kettle. Add water, spices and garlic. In skillet, fry salt pork and onions until brown. Drain and add to kettle. Simmer for 2 hours. Add remaining ingredients and simmer 45 minutes.

time for overeating, football, and parades in New York. However, we still remember what Thanksgiving is about: showing gratitude for good fortune and good friends.

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Community Station Notes

The holidays are here

Almost all of us enjoy this time of year, especially teens – schools are out for Thanksgiving break, there are lots of sales going on at the malls and other stores, and don't forget all the holiday parties and free time to go places. This also means more driving time for teens.



Curtis Warren

make that decision every time we get into the car. Parents, it is critical that you take the

time and set the example by buckling up yourselves and emphasizing the importance to your teens. Bucking up saves lives.

One of the most critical decisions teens make as drivers every day is whether or not to wear seatbelts and whether to ensure seatbelts are worn by passengers in their cars. It's a serious decision, especially for teens still learning to drive. All kinds of excuses are given as to why drivers don't buckle up, especially teen drivers. Those of us in law enforcement want it to become a habit for everyone to buckle up. Each one of us has to

Teens, a special safety message for all of you: do not text or talk while you are driving. Just one text can cost you your life and the lives of anyone riding with you. 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. There is no text

worth a person's life. Drive alert, don't text or talk. Make these holidays ones to remember, not ones to regret.

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 folks 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 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 visible in your car – lock them in the trunk. Interested criminals will break into your car, and there have been several auto burglaries in our area this year.

♦ AS A HOMEOWNER: Prepare and secure your home before you head out for shopping or, more importantly, holiday traveling. Burglars drive through neighborhoods looking for "easy targets" like open garage doors or windows. If you are going out of town, take advantage of special "Security Watch" requests that

can be completed at the Sheriff's Bloomingdale Community Station on Erindale Drive.

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 close and lock all doors. Two of the most vulnerable areas are your garage door and garage side door – make sure both are closed and locked, since both give access to your home.

♦ AS A DRIVER: No one wants to be involved in an accident, especially one involving a drunk driver, so don't be one yourself, and make sure you don't ride with those who do. Talk to your teens about the dangers

of drinking and driving and set the right example. A few minutes discussing the dangers and setting strict rules can save a life – your teen's life.

SPECIAL HOLIDAY NOTE:

With our country still at war during this holiday season and especially with many parents from our community separated from their spouses and children, please help them have a safe and secure holiday.

Please support the U.S. Marines "Toys for Tots Program." They need our help. Semper Parvum!

From all of us at the Sheriff's Office: Have a safe and secure Thanksgiving holiday season!

BLOOMINGDALE BUZZ

What are you thankful for this Thanksgiving?

by SHAPHALI JAIN
An American tradition since 1621, Thanksgiving can mean many things to different people. For most of us, the holiday conjures up pictures of warmth, family, friends and most definitely, festive meals. It also brings to mind parades, football and yes, turkey. However Americans choose to celebrate Thanksgiving, hopefully we will take a few moments to remember those

things for which we are most thankful.

For this month's Bloomingdale Buzz, we decided to stop at the Bell Shoals Shopping Plaza (at the intersection of Bell Shoals and Glen Haven) and ask some folks who live or work in the Bloomingdale community what they were thankful for this Thanksgiving.

Amna, owner of Charm Ville Day Spa: "I am thankful to God for blessing me

with a great family, good health and happiness."

Cassy Blackburn: "I am thankful for my family"

Dr. Nazneen Noorani, owner of Noorani Medical Center: "I am thankful for my family and friends."

Sarah Primm: "I am thankful for having a supportive family."

Steven Mullen: "I am thankful for my family, my friends, my dog and my shoes."

Bloomingtondale Gazette Wants To Hear From You

Do you have a story to share? Would you like to try your hand at writing an article for the Gazette?

Know of any fun events coming up in our community?

The Gazette is your Bloomingdale

community newspaper. Please pass along information, photos and stories you think others would like to read. Send inquiries and submissions to bloomingtondaleneews@gmail.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

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