

# THE BLOOMINGDALE GAZETTE

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BLOOMINGDALE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION SINCE 1980

VOL. XLV

ISSUE 10

OCTOBER 2024

[www.BLOOMINGDALE.LIFE](http://www.BLOOMINGDALE.LIFE)



## Swimming with the Locals

"I have been younger in October than in all the months of spring." — W.S. Merwin



## Your Community Newspaper



LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!

[facebook.com/BLGazette](https://facebook.com/BLGazette)



### Editor- The Bloomingdale Gazette

Elise Cruz Aragon

[inbloomingdalenews@gmail.com](mailto:inbloomingdalenews@gmail.com)



### Office Manager

Shannon Mullins

[bl.neighbor1@gmail.com](mailto:bl.neighbor1@gmail.com)

## BLOOMINGDALE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION, INC.

P.O. Box 6313, Brandon, FL 33508 813-681-2051

Email: [bl.neighbor1@gmail.com](mailto:bl.neighbor1@gmail.com)

Website: [www.Bloomingdale.Life](http://www.Bloomingdale.Life)

Follow on Facebook: [facebook.com/Bl.Neighbor1](https://facebook.com/Bl.Neighbor1)

BNA Board Meetings are held the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Bloomingdale Regional Library.

#### President

Suzy Watts

#### Vice President

Sean Donahue

#### Treasurer

Grace Lewis

#### Directors at Large:

Laney Balis

Kalyn Dukes

Bobbi Ferraro

Kiersten Sutton

## BNA Briefs

### BNA CALENDAR

Mark your calendar for these upcoming events!

October 22 / BNA Monthly Meeting / 7 PM / Bloomingdale Regional Library

October 26 / Trunk or Treat / Bloomingdale Senior High School


October 27 / Fall Frenzy / 1-4 PM / Campo YMCA Parking Lot

December 8 / Santa Visit

### JOIN THE BNA!

\$42 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 page, click Membership.



# BNA News

## Riverview Garden Club – New Season

The Riverview Garden Club is celebrating their 70th anniversary this year.

Monthly meetings are conducted on the second Wednesday (Sep – Jun) at 10:00am, Riverview Civil Center, located at 11020 Park Drive in Riverview.

All are welcome to attend two meetings before deciding to join. For additional information e-mail the club at: [Riverviewgardenclub1954@gmail.com](mailto:Riverviewgardenclub1954@gmail.com).

## Welcome to the Neighborhood!

It's almost time for our quarterly welcome baskets to make their way to our new neighbors! We're glad you're here! Donations to our welcome basket can go to Kiersten Sutton.

## Service Hours for Students

Our neighborhood BSHS students can find volunteer hours on our website and our Facebook page. We're currently looking for volunteers for the Fall Frenzy on October 27. Interested parties can contact [bl.neighbor1@gmail.com](mailto:bl.neighbor1@gmail.com).

# OCTOBER COMMUNITY CALENDAR

October 2 - Rosh Hashanah

October 3 - Mean Girls Day

October 6 - National Transfer Money to Your Daughter Day

October 10 - World Mental Health Day

October 11 - Yom Kippur

October 17 - National Pasta Day

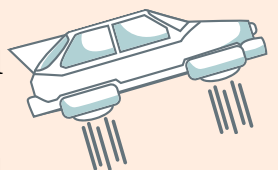
October 21 - Back to the Future Day

October 22 - International Caps Lock Day

October 25 - National Frankenstein Day

October 27 - Navy Day

October 31 - Halloween, Girl Scout Founder's Day, Diwali



# YARD OF THE MONTH

Joseph and Maria Castellanos, 124 Bessemer Ct., Brandon



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

Send YOM recommendations to [bl.neighbor1@gmail.com](mailto:bl.neighbor1@gmail.com) or call 813-651-2081. Winners receive a \$25 Gift Card to Ace Hardware of Bloomingdale and a 1 month family membership plus join fee to the Campo YMCA.



# BSD Community Update

*Kristine Schroeder*

The first phase of a new 9/11 Memorial Park has been completed at the south corner of Natures Way and Culbreath Road. The work began in late August and to date includes the installation of a flagpole, lighting, pavers and landscaping. The next phase will include a couple of benches and a monument honoring the 2,977 people killed in the terror attacks on September 11, 2001. BSD President, Tom Leech said, “this new park is another step in the trustee’s efforts to beautify small spaces in the community.”

The second phase of the project is expected to be finished in 2025.

Please join us for one of our meetings. Our meetings are held the second Monday of each month at 6:30pm at our Bloomingdale Taxing District offices at 3652 Erindale Drive.



*The new park is pictured here. Completed in installments, current progress on the park looks beautiful from all angles.*

## East Hillsborough Democratic Club

*Mary Sheppard*



The meeting of the East Hillsborough Democratic club will be on Tuesday, October 8 at 6:30 PM at Brandon Crossroads Bowl 609 Crater Ln Tampa 33619. All like minded individuals are welcome to attend. The club welcomes Lynn

Gray, candidate for Hillsborough County School Board to its October meeting. Always go to the club calendar to register and check for updates at least an hour before meetings. For more information go to [www.easthillsboroughdems.org](http://www.easthillsboroughdems.org) or call (813)645-6324.

# Beware! Duck Donuts® Puts a Wicked Twist on the Revamped

## Popular Spooky Box

Duck Donuts, known for serving Warm, Delicious and Made to Order® donuts, has unleashed a dreadfully exciting new version of the popular Spooky Box. This petrifyingly delicious box has emerged with two new tasteful enhancements, a candy spider and vanilla-flavored orange buttercream. The crunchy candy spider sits on a vanilla icing web waiting to be devoured while the swirl of enchanting orange buttercream casts a sweet spell over guests' taste buds.

The Spooky Box donuts aren't the only thing getting a transformation this year – so is the packaging for the first time. The limited-edition packaging is a blacked-out box that features a fanged, cape-wearing dracula duck of the brand's beloved mascot, Ollie. Perfect

for scare squad gathering or Halloween celebration, this box is only available with the purchase of the Spooky Box, while supplies last.

Available through Nov. 3, the Spooky Box and Spooky Half Dozen feature warm and fresh Halloween-inspired combinations to sink your teeth into such as:

- Spiderweb Surprise: Chocolate icing with vanilla drizzle and candy spider
- Fright Night: Chocolate icing with orange buttercream
- So Mummy: Vanilla icing with shredded coconut and hot fudge drizzle
- Werewolf: Maple icing with chopped bacon and raspberry drizzle

Guests can also experience spine-chilling goosebumps when they order the seasonal Cookies and Scream Milkshake. This vanilla milkshake is colored orange with blended Oreo® cookie pieces inside and topped with whipped cream and more Oreo® cookie pieces.

Duck Donuts specializes in warm, delicious and made-to-order donuts. Customers can create their own donut combination by choosing from a variety of coatings, toppings and drizzles, including traditional favorites such as chocolate icing with sprinkles and more adventurous creations such as maple icing with bacon. The family-friendly stores offer a viewing area where children and adults alike can watch their donuts being made. Duck Donuts also sells coffee, espresso beverages, donut breakfast sandwiches, donut ice cream sandwiches, milkshakes and offers online ordering. To learn more about local promotions or locate the nearest Duck Donuts, visit [duckdonuts.com/locations/](https://duckdonuts.com/locations/).



*The Spooky Box, available for a limited time.*

*The Spooky Box, available for a limited time.*

# Underwater Wonders: SeaTREK Helmet Diving at the Florida

## Aquarium

*Michelle Colesanti*

In May, my son Philip surprised me with a special Mother's Day gift: a SeaTREK helmet diving adventure at the Florida Aquarium. He had been keen to try it himself, and with our family's love for adventurous activities, I was excited to join him.

Philip and I have shared many aquatic adventures since he was 12, from swimming with dolphins at Discovery Cove to spending time with manatees in Crystal River during chilly 40-degree temperatures. However, the SeaTREK experience was a new level for us. Although I've snorkeled extensively, this was my first foray into the world of helmet diving, allowing me to explore the deeper recesses of the underwater world.

According to Roger Germann, President and CEO of the Aquarium, "The SeaTREK program aims to break down personal and cultural barriers and provide a positive in-water experience that inspires conservation of our natural world."

The adventure accommodates up to four people at a time. Alongside Philip and me, a lady celebrating her birthday joined us. We changed into wetsuits in the lockers provided, which were essential given the cool 72-degree water, making our dive comfortable.

Before we embarked on our journey into the Heart of the Sea habitat where the dive would take place, we watched a brief orientation video. We learned hand signals for communication, and techniques for managing ear pressure during the descent, and were reassured about the fun we were about to have.

The SeaTREK helmet provides continuous airflow while keeping your head dry. This means you can wear glasses or contact lenses and breathe naturally through your nose without the need for a mouthpiece.

We descended slowly to minimize ear pressure until we reached the 15-foot depth in the habitat. Once settled, I began exploring, and quickly became enchanted by a large sea turtle that seemed indifferent to our presence. We occasionally paused to let



# Underwater Wonders: SeaTREK Helmet Diving at the Florida Aquarium



a giant parrotfish swim by. I was awestruck by its size. A bonnethead shark also spent time swimming around us, but thankfully showed no interest in its new visitors.

This adventure is available to anyone 10 years or older in reasonably good health. It is particularly geared toward non-divers and even non-swimmers, as participants walk along the bottom rather than swim.

The three guides with us were always close by, ensuring our safety. We communicated with hand signals, and one guide used an Etch A Sketch-like pad to identify fish or indicate when to wait for the parrotfish to cross.

The Aquarium excels in providing quality customer service and strives to raise awareness and inspire conservation for species and habitat conservation.

You can book your SeaTREK adventure up to a month in advance. It is available on weekends and select weekdays. For more information, visit

<https://www.flaquarium.org/visit/experiences/seatrek/>.



*The author, on her recent visit to the Florida Aquarium, enjoyed the SeaTREK Helmet Diving Adventure, exploring 15 feet below the surface in the Heart of the Sea Habitat. Photos courtesy of Phil Colesanti.*

# Three New Inductees Join Bloomingdale Senior High School

## Athletic Hall of Fame

*Elise Cruz Aragon*

Bloomingdale Senior High School's Athletic Hall of Fame has welcomed its newest inductees, and the 2024 ceremony holds special significance. The Hall of Fame, founded by former Bloomingdale coach and athletic director Donny Peek, celebrates not only athletic excellence but also dedication to the school's athletic community. This year, the honorees include two remarkable wrestlers and the very individual who helped establish the Hall itself.



*The newest inductees smile for the camera. From left to right: BSHS Athletics Director Sara Bogue, Principal Marcos Rodriguez, Wrestling Coach Charles "Chuck" Kilbourn, inductees Donny Peek, Austin Figari and Chris Figari. Photos by Elise Cruz Aragon.*

Austin Figari, a four-year varsity wrestler, is the only wrestler in Bloomingdale history to qualify for the state championships four times. He earned over 100 career victories and placed 5th and 3rd in state competitions. Austin currently serves as a firefighter and paramedic in St. Petersburg.

Chris Figari, Austin's younger brother, holds Bloomingdale's records for most wins in a season and career. A three-time state qualifier, Chris achieved an undefeated season and won the state championship his senior year. He now serves as a U.S. Army Ranger.

Dr. Donny Peek, who began his Bloomingdale career in 2001, has served as a teacher, coach, and athletic director. His leadership was instrumental in building Bloomingdale's athletic programs, and he remains active in supporting young athletes. Peek also established the Athletic Hall of Fame, ensuring Bloomingdale's sports legacy endures.

The induction of these three figures honors their contributions and cements their place in Bloomingdale's storied athletic tradition.





# Experience the Charm and Thrills of the Hillsborough County Fair

*Michelle Colesanti*

This year's Hillsborough County Fair opens on Thursday, October 31, and runs through Monday, November 11. The Fairgrounds are located at 215 Sydney Washer Rd. in Dover.

The theme, "Barn in the USA" celebrates local agriculture, entertainment, and fun for everyone.

In addition to all the rides and fair food, visitors of all ages can experience the excitement of Cowboy Camp, followed by the all-new Cowboy Circus from November 5-11. Kids can dive into the world of agriculture at the Play with Giants Hands-On Agricultural Game Area.

Additional live entertainment includes an all-new Thrill Circus, a captivating Paul Bunyan Lumberjack Show, and an engaging, educational Firefighter Show. Guests can also explore a fascinating Camel display and meet the beloved mascot, Farmer Sidney.

This is one of the area's largest agricultural fairs highlighting youth participants and will feature livestock shows daily. More than 1,000 young people from Hillsborough County will show off their livestock projects.



# Experience the Charm and Thrills of the Hillsborough County Fair

For the first time, the opening weekend (November 1-3) Special Grandstand Event is the IPRA National All Region Finals Rodeo, which takes place in the Hillsborough County Fairgrounds Arena. The Special Grandstand Events during Heroes Weekend, November 8 and 9, include an all-new Hillsborough County Fair Truck & Tractor Pull, as well as a Demolition Derby, which will make its Fair debut on November 10. Don't forget to check out the Midget Wrestling Warriors, which will take place on Monday, November 11. All these events require a ticket purchase in addition to admission.

A special offer is available online for advance tickets for these special grandstand events which can be purchased until opening day. Ticketed arena events are \$30 and include Fair admission, a savings of \$11 for adults.

On Sunday, November 10, as part of Heroes Weekend, the sky will light up with a spectacular, custom 200-drone show.

Tickets are on sale now. Advanced Admission for Adults is \$9, Seniors (65 and over) \$3 and Students (K-12) \$6. Children 5 and under are free.

Gate specials include a \$2 Night on Halloween with Trick or Treat activities throughout the Fairgrounds, Hillsborough County Employee Appreciation Day (with ID) on November 2, November 4, 5, and 6 are \$5 admission days with F-H and FFA members receiving free admission on November 5 and 6. November 7 is Carload Night for \$50 a car (up to eight legally seated). This includes admission and riding armbands for everybody. Heroes Weekend, November 8-11, offers free admission for active/retired military, police, fire and rescue (with ID).

For tickets and more information, visit [hillsboroughcountyfair.com](http://hillsboroughcountyfair.com)



The 2024 Hillsborough County Fair will run from Thursday, October 31 to Monday, November 11. The Fairgrounds are located at 215 Sydney Washer Rd. in Dover.

# Things to Do in October

*Elise Cruz Aragon*

If you make room in your calendar for only one event this spooky season, make sure you make it for BNA's Fall Frenzy! With the resounding success of our last food truck rally, we've expanded the offerings for you and included more vendors. You can see us on October 27 in the Campo Family YMCA parking lot.

Start your day at the Sunshine Market on the 4th Saturday of each month at the Midtown Commons! Shop with us from 10AM to 2PM - enjoy local makers including producers of local agriculture, take-home foods, baked goods, art, jewelry and more! Live music kicks off at 10AM sharp on the green. Dog Friendly and parking is located in the garage at Midtown.

Join Us at the 2024 Promise Walk for Preeclampsia!  
We invite you to walk with the FIT4MOM Tampa Bay team and make a difference in the fight against preeclampsia! By participating, you'll be supporting the Preeclampsia Foundation's mission to improve outcomes for hypertensive disorders of pregnancy through education, community support, and research.

Every step you take helps bring us closer to a cure.

October 12, 8 AM, Gadsden Park Tampa FL

PURE Initiative is always looking for volunteers to help clean the waterways in Tampa Bay. Whether you bring your kayak to help in the water or follow onshore, there is plenty of trash to be cleaned!

Where: Picnic Island Park

What to Bring: Clothes to get dirty in, kayaks, gloves

Kayakers will go out on the water promptly at 8 AM and walkers who pick up trash along the shoreline will head out at 8:30 AM. Gloves, trash bags, and Covid-friendly items such as hand sanitizer and masks are provided. To learn more about our social distancing practices, a guide is included for your viewing pleasure. On arrival, please visit the registration table to register and fill out a waiver. If you have questions, please contact Ryan Gonzalez at (305) 804-5662.

