

Byrd: HOPE CommUnity Center has two locations and supports 4 counties

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the ministry partnered with residents and local groups to address social problems such as illiteracy, lack of access to healthcare, and economic injustices. Along the way, they spearheaded the creation of six separate nonprofits, and literally, thousands of lives were changed for the better.

Today the HOPE Community Center has two locations in Apopka and supports 4 counties within Central Florida and helps over 12,000 people yearly.

After visiting with staff members a few weeks ago, I decided to invite our new (Orange County School Board) Superintendent Dr. Maria Vazquez out to the center to hear about the challenges they face every day.

The visit was moving, emotional and one of the most important things

I have done during my tenure on the board.

We spent over two hours at the HOPE Community center in South Apopka, spending the first hour talking to staff members and the second hour listening to community members sharing their stories.

Dr. Vazquez and I were mesmerized by the stories that were shared and often moved to tears. It's hard for many of us to understand what this population goes through on a daily basis, but understanding is vital if we are going to make changes to ensure they are treated with the dignity and respect that every human being deserves.

One area that is the biggest challenge right now is helping the unaccompanied minors that come to our area from other countries. Currently, HOPE is working with 200 unac-

companied minors in our area alone and has 100 more on a waiting list.

These children were sent to our country by their desperate parents who had no other option to keep their children alive or safe. It's really important to understand what terrors a parent would have to face in order to be able to let go of their child and send them away alone.

In most of these countries the children come from, boys are forced into militia training at a young age, given guns and taught how to kill. The girls are forced into the sex trade industry.

The only way these parents can keep their children safe is to do the unimaginable and send them on a journey with strangers to another country, often saying goodbye to them for years.

Being separated from

your parents is traumatic enough, but then add on a very long, often dangerous pilgrimage that ends with being locked away in a detention center for months, and these children end up in our community with emotional scars that take tremendous care and time to overcome.

Often our unaccompanied minors are living with strangers when they arrive here and are forced to work in the evenings to make money to send home to pay back the money that

the family owes for the trip to our country. It is a tremendous burden these kids face, and this is why it was important for us to learn about it.

These children have to be handled with care to overcome the trauma they have endured and they have to be met with understanding.

Needless to say, the superintendent and I learned a lot and left with many tangible goals to work on and implement in our local schools to help

ease the transition to our schools for these kids.

I'm hopeful that by sharing this experience, we all can be more sensitive to those around us that talk or look different from us and to remember that everyone has a story that we may not understand.

If you would like more information on the HOPE Community center and the important work they do, please visit their website at <https://www.hcc-offm.org>. They are always looking for volunteers!

Hayden: Open a gate, close a gate

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put onto his inner arm.

But, as Paul Harvey would say, "This is the rest of the story.": New York allows minors to receive "gender-affirming" medical services, such as, hormone therapy and puberty suppression, at New York City hospitals. So, parents are not allowed to have their children get a tattoo that is only skin deep and can be removed but are forced by the government to consent to their children radically altering their endocrinology by taking puberty suppression drugs and cross-sex hormones.

In both cases, the parents do not have any rights; they do not have any say.

Is there not a reasonable populace that will say, "Enough is enough, we will not take the beatings anymore, and we will never surrender our children to the indoctrination of this 'woke' movement so prevalent in our educational system.

"When my babies were born, I could tell what GOD intended them to be. There is a difference and GOD does not make mistakes. He created a man and a woman, and they never argued about what they thought they ought to be. There are only TWO genders, period. The Bible says, "Train up a child in the way he should go..." it does not say "In the way you think he should go!"

We are going to be held responsible for what we have allowed to go on. It has

been said that for evil to win, good just needs to stand by and do nothing. That is where we are now.

It is time to get back to being Americans that belong to a nation of laws, guided by our constitution, and created for "We the People" to have "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" not dictated to us by a tyrant, but chosen by us.

Thomas Jefferson stated, "When the people fear the government, there is tyranny, but when the government fears the people, there is liberty."

One thing you learn when you are a farmer or rancher is: If a gate is closed and you go through it, you close it back. If the gate is open and you go through, you leave it open. When this president did just the opposite of that rule, he started the downward spiral that has the United States of America in a foreign policy quagmire, domestic inflation that threatens everyone's daily living, and an educational system that has turned into social-economical teaching rather than the reading, writing, and arithmetic that determines the direction of our nation. All this is due to not closing the gate, or not leaving it open, the way you found it.

I do not know about you, but I am tired of the beating, and my morale will improve when I step into that voting booth to get off "The Bounty" or whatever vessel this administration represents. It is time for "Captain Bligh" to go, starting with his crew!!

Moore: Socialize with neighbors

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percent of my neighbors don't know. What is the issue? Suburban neighborhoods are poorly-connected socially. Socialization must improve in all neighborhoods if we wish to experience character neighborhoods and downtowns.

The team that won the *Corridor of the Year Friendly Contest* was the best socialized. It was interesting to watch them. They successfully utilized text blasts, Facebook page announcements, e-mail communication, and more.

They mounted a dozen or two volunteers to work every Saturday morning and the group grew. Just about every resident saw their neighbors pressure washing, raking, trimming trees, painting walls, and more.

Why doesn't this approach work in my neighborhood, then? I believe this because there are few regular projects or activities. HOA and regular neighborhood leaders must develop multiple opportunities for residents to interact and engage. It is hard work and can be disap-

pointing in the beginning.

And thus, so is the challenge of creating and maintaining a vibrant main street. A common vision of a vibrant main street is one bursting with hometown spirit and civic pride. The strategy in developing a main street is first building social infrastructure which enables and encourages community civility and sociability amidst a relentless onslaught of technologic innovations that tend to isolate. Overcoming community isolation and civic disengagement is the biggest challenge of our day. We must overcome the isolation to create the communities we so strongly desire.

Here's a positive story about breaking down barriers of social isolation. Sheeler Road also competed in the corridor contest. Troy Johnson, the president of Silver Oaks HOA, is a young inspiring professional. I'm always amazed how he brilliantly and energetically brings his two young daughters along to events. Troy recently offered a cleanup day, to which just a handful of his residents came. However, I supple-

mented with staff, friends, and two wonderful city commissioners. We had a great time trimming trees, bushes, and mulching. The back entrance looks terrific now. Within a week's time, Troy and his management company then hosted National Night Out. More than 100 of his residents turned out with a lot of help from the City of Apopka. Here's the thing ... I don't ever remember a Southern Apopka neighborhood hosting a citywide event. Success breeds success. I look forward to Troy hosting more events and inviting other Sheeler-area subdivisions to participate. Eventually, I believe nearby neighborhoods will also host events. Again, success breeds success. Your neighborhood leaders must focus more on social events than collecting dues and issuing violations.

I believe together, we can build character neighborhoods, areas, corridors, and main streets. The charge is to build active social networks, which build stronger bonds through community projects and action.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE ANNEXATION CITY OF APOPKA

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Florida Statutes 171.044, the Apopka Code of Ordinances, Part III, Land Development Code, Article II, Section 2.5.1.A, that **P&P BUILDCON, LLC** has made an application to the City of Apopka City Council for an **ANNEXATION** of a property located north of W. Ponkan Rd. and west of Phils Lane. This application relates to the following described property:

ORDINANCE NO. 2979

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF APOPKA, FLORIDA, TO EXTEND ITS TERRITORIAL AND MUNICIPAL LIMITS TO ANNEX PURSUANT TO FLORIDA STATUTE 171.044 THE HEREINAFTER DESCRIBED LANDS SITUATED AND BEING IN ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA, OWNED BY PHILLIP AND PATRICIA SIMMONS; LOCATED NORTH OF W. PONKAN RD. AND WEST OF PHILS LANE; COMPRISING 9.95 ACRES; PROVIDING FOR DIRECTIONS TO THE CITY CLERK, SEVERABILITY, CONFLICTS, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Vicinity Map



Parcel Identification Number: 24-20-27-0000-00-062
Contains: 9.95 +/- acres

NOTICE is given that public hearings for Ordinance No. 2979 will be held by the **City of Apopka City Council** at its regularly scheduled meetings in the City Council Chambers of the Apopka City Hall, 120 E. Main Street, Apopka, Florida on **Wednesday, November 2, 2022 beginning at 1:30 p.m.**, AND on **Wednesday, November 16, 2022 beginning at 7:00 p.m.** or as soon thereafter as possible.

Affected parties and the public may appear at the above listed hearings to speak. The proposed Annexation can be inspected at the Apopka Community Development Department located at Apopka City Hall on weekdays between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. City Hall address shown below. Please be advised that, under State law, if you decide to appeal a decision made with respect to this matter, you will need a record of the proceedings and may need to ensure that a verbatim record is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), persons with disabilities needing assistance to participate in any of these proceedings should contact the City Clerk's Office at 120 East Main Street, Apopka FL 32703, Telephone: 407-703-1704, no less than 48 hours prior to the proceeding.

October 21, 2022
October 28, 2022

Apopka City Council
Apopka Planning Commission
Community Development Department

Publish: The Apopka Chief

172309

ALL ABOUT APOPKA

The Apopka Chief

Established 1923
(USPS 545-440)

The Apopka Chief is published every Friday and entered as Periodicals, postage paid at Apopka Post Office, under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879. The Apopka Chief newspaper is published by Foliage Enterprises, Inc., every Friday at 400 North Park Avenue, Apopka, Fla., 32712-3417. An annual subscription is \$25 in Orange County and \$30 outside Orange County. Phone 407-886-2777. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Apopka Chief, P.O. Box 880, Apopka, Fla., 32704-0880.

The Apopka Chief is a consistent award-winning community weekly newspaper and a member of the Florida Press Association. The newspaper won the group's award as its best newspaper in 1982, 1987, and 1988, the only three-time winner. Letters to the editor are welcome, but must be signed and include a daytime telephone number, address, or email address for verification. Management reserves the right to edit letters.

www.theapokachief.com, news@theapokachief.com



City of Apopka Telephone Numbers

City Hall	407-703-1700
Mayor's Office	407-703-1701
City Administrator	407-703-1649
City Clerk	407-703-1704
Community Devel.	407-703-1712
Code Enforcement	407-703-1738
Finance Dept.	407-703-1725
Fire (non-emerg.)	407-703-1756
Parks and Rec. Dept.	407-703-1741
Police Chief	407-703-1769
Police (non-emerg.)	407-703-1771
Job Line	407-703-1743
Solid Waste Collect.	407-703-1731
Street Maintenance	407-703-1731
Utility Billing	407-703-1727
Medical, fire emergency	911
The city of Apopka was chartered in 1882. It is located at 28°30 north latitude and is 150 feet above sea level. Its population is about 48,000 and its total area is more than 30 sq. mi. www.apopka.net	

Orange County Telephone Numbers

Animal Services	407-836-3111
Auto/Boat Tags	850-617-2000
Building Dept.	407-836-8550
County Mayor	407-836-7370
County Commission	407-836-7350
County Attorney	407-836-7320
Clerk of the Court	407-836-2065
Elections Supervisor	407-836-2070
Fire/Rescue	407-836-3111
Solid Waste	407-836-6601
Garbage Collection	407-703-1731
Health Dept.	407-836-2600
Hunting/Fishing Lic	888-347-4356
Parks and Rec. Dept.	407-836-6200
Property Appraiser	407-836-5044
Sheriff Administrative	407-254-7000
Non-Emerg. Complaint	407-836-4357
Utilities	407-836-5515
All other departments	407-836-3111
Medical, fire emergency	911
www.orangecountyfl.net	

Other Area Numbers of Note

U.S. Senators	
Rick Scott (Rep.)	202-224-5274
Marco Rubio (Rep.)	407-254-2573
U.S. Representative	
Val Demings (Dist. 10)	321-388-9808
State Representatives	
	352-742-6275
Kamia Brown (Dist. 45)	850-717-5045
State Senators	
Randolph Bracy (Dist. 11)	407-297-2045
Orange County Commissioner	
Christine Moore	407-836-7350
Orange County Public Schools	
Pupil assignment	407-317-3233
Bus routes	407-317-3800
Superintendent	407-317-3200
School Board	407-317-3200
Miscellaneous	
The Apopka Chief	407-886-2777
Museum of the Apopkans	407-703-1707
Chamber of Commerce	407-886-1441