

New officers

The officers of Orange Lodge No. 36 F&AM Masons were installed in December for its 167th time. See page 7A.



Sports

Former Apopka Blue Darters football player Jalen Carter is looking to lead the Georgia Bulldogs to a national title. See page 1B.



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Reflecting thoughts



A great blue heron shows its reflection in the water as it rests, looking out onto the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive recently. The entrance gate to the wildlife drive is located at 2850 Lust Rd., Apopka, and is free and open each Friday through Sunday, as well as federal holidays. The gate opens at 7 a.m. and closes at 3 p.m. The exit gate for the 11-mile, one-way drive closes at 5 p.m.

MLK Parade set for Jan. 16

The 14th annual Apopka Martin Luther King Jr. Parade will take place on Monday, January 16, starting at 2 p.m., beginning at the Apopka Community Center/VFW Building located at 519 S. Central Avenue and travel to the John Bridges Community Center on 13th Street.

The parade's theme this year is "Together, we can make a difference." The judged event will feature appearances and entrants by school bands, nonprofit organizations, churches, dignitaries, and more.

The South Apopka Ministerial Alliance organizes the annual parade.

Monique Morris is the parade chair. Rev. Richard King is the alliance president.

Apopka firefighter speaks on cause of resignation from safety group

By Teresa Sargeant
Apopka Chief Staff

A firefighter union representative said the reason he and one other member resigned from the safety committee was because of what the union rep said was a "shell game" the city administration was playing in taking responsibility for firefighter Austin Duran's line-of-duty death last summer.

Representing the Apopka Professional Firefighters Association at the Wednesday, January 4 City Council meeting at Apopka City Hall, Apopka Fire Lieutenant Alex Klepper, one of the two resigned members, addressed

the City Council about how the city handled the investigation and the precautions taken to increase workplace safety among Apopka firefighters.

Klepper and firefighter Pablo Echevarria resigned from the Austin Duran Safety Initiative safety committee late last year. Echevarria left in October, and Klepper in December.

"Because it wasn't addressed, the committee was ready to investigate and put our own eyes on Austin's injury and subsequent death," Klepper said. "We must try to determine the why. You cannot cure an illness by treating the symptoms. Driving a trailer through a thousand cones and

putting Austin's name on things does not fix the root problem. The plan was to put this together with all other findings and give this to every single new firefighter that ever crosses our threshold for them to read, learn from so we never end up here again. The plan received a unanimous vote. Then again, we were failed. All of this shading has happened. Surprise attorney meetings, disappearing letters, unsigned directives, reinterpreted policies in a shell game of who's taking responsibility. That is why we left. You cannot have a safety committee, quietly con-

See CITY Page 3A

Welcoming mural drawn at Dream Lake school

By Teresa Sargeant
Apopka Chief Staff

Dream Lake Elementary School has unveiled its newest mural created over winter break: a mural welcoming students, families, and visitors to Dream Lake Elementary as a reflection of the school's growing diverse student body.

The new mural, "Welcome to Dream Lake Elementary," was painted by Orlando artist Jon Miller over winter break, which was from December 19, 2022, to January 2, to help guide people to the main entrance of Dream Lake Elementary, the K-5 school which currently has 699 students.

The main entrance is located at the school's front facing the corner of Park Avenue and East Summit Street.

"So, when our kids and our families come back, this is going to be a new welcoming surprise that they haven't seen," said Dr. Carol-Ann Clenton-Martin,



This new mural was painted by Orlando artist Jon Miller at Dream Lake Elementary School in Apopka over the winter break.

Dream Lake principal.

Although Dream Lake Elementary decorated the pathway leading from the school parking lot to the

front entrance, the school felt more was needed to assist parents and visitors in finding the main office — hence the idea for the wel-

come mural.

Resembling a postcard, the mural reflects

See MURAL Page 10A

In May, proposed apartments divides Apopka City Council

By Teresa Sargeant
Apopka Chief Staff

Editor's Note: This is the third of a multi-part series reviewing the news of Apopka in 2022 as written in the pages of The Apopka Chief. This week covers May, June and July.

May

May 6, 2022

After a 90-minute discussion on the topic, a divided Apopka City Council voted 3-2 Wednesday, May 4, to deny a request to change the development agreement for the City Center that would have allowed the development of a 195-unit apartment complex that would have carried lower-than market-rate rents thanks to funding from

the state and county governments.

Several hundred people attended the Mayor's Prayer Breakfast Thursday, May 5, at the Apopka Community Center/VFW. Author William Federer was the keynote speaker. The Apopka Christian Ministerial Alliance organizes the event each year.

Fresh off receiving \$1.5 million in funds from the current federal budget to build a second water storage tank, the city of Apopka is seeking \$2.5 million from the 2023 federal budget to pay for replacement of asbestos cement pipes and galvanized water pipes in the city's older downtown area.

Unless cooped up by deed restrictions of a homeowner's association, city of

See REVIEW Page 11A

Lowell Swanberg, local volunteer, dies

Lowell E. Swanberg, known throughout the Apopka community for volunteering in many ways, died December 20 at AdventHealth Apopka hospital. He was 81.

Born in Benson, Minnesota, he had 12 brothers and sisters. Swanberg graduated from Benson (Minn.) High School and Mankato State University in Minnesota.

In 1961, Lowell met Stella L. Schneider, and they married in 1963. They were married for 59 years. He worked as an accountant and controller for



Lowell Swanberg
... local volunteer

the Ralston Purina Company, the Campbell Soup Company, and, finally, for

See SWANBERG Page 3A

This week

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Apopka Event of the Week

North Orange Branch Library, 1211 E. Semoran Blvd., Apopka, Tiny Tales. No registration required. Wednesday, January 11, 11:15 a.m., in meeting room. The rhythm and repetition of nursery rhymes are used to introduce young children to literature. Hold child in lap and enjoy this special time together. Recommended for babies 0 to 18 months.

Quotable

This is a life that Americans in this cynical, relativistic, angry, confused, deeply-divided era would do well to contemplate.

Guest Columnist
Dr. David Ayers on the depth of character traits needed today

Opinion

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Our position

Classic holiday movie reminds us of needed values and traditions

by Dr. David Ayers
Guest Columnist

Once again this Christmas season, countless Americans sat down to watch Frank Capra’s Christmas classic, It’s a Wonderful Life, starring the great Jimmy Stewart. I’ve seen the movie plenty of times. So why did it leave me crying again this year?

Yet it did, from the moment a desperate George Bailey cried out to his shop-worn guardian angel that he wanted to live again, all the way through “Auld Lang Syne.” Stirred by that experience and curious as to what prompted it, I decided to do something I had wanted to do for years. I made the trip to the Jimmy Stewart Museum in the small central Pennsylvania town he grew up in — Indiana, Pennsylvania.

Jimmy Stewart was an unpretentious guy who only consented to this museum — which opened in 1995, just a couple of years before his death — if it would be of like character and financially benefit his hometown. Occupying a small third floor of the Indiana Free Library with five exhibit rooms, a little theater, and a tiny gift shop, it is certainly modest. The museum walks you from his boyhood bedroom to his family hardware store and other mainstays of his youth, to his distinguished military service, spectacular acting career, California home, and personal office. The museum is superb, mainly because it faithfully distills the life and essence of a remarkable man who exemplified the basic character, commitments, and bedrock values of someone who was a lot like the fictional George Bailey. This is a life that Americans in this cynical, relativistic, angry, confused, deeply-divided era would do well to contemplate.

First, there was faith and family. Like George, Jimmy adored and emulated his small-town father, a Presbyterian hardware store owner serious about his faith and dedicated to caring for his wife and family. When Jimmy won his first Academy Award in 1941, his father, the next day, telephoned to ask him to send it home for his display window. That is where it sat for years. When Jimmy went to war shortly after this, serving often harrowing duty under heavy fire as a World War II bomber pilot flying out of England, like so many others, the Stewart family of Indiana hung the Blue Star Service Flag outside its home. Like George’s brother Harry in the film, Jimmy returned to his hometown as a decorated war hero aviator. A famous pic-

ture shows him then, kicked back with his feet on the counter next to the cash register, talking on the phone as his dad attended a line of customers. Like his dad, Jimmy was a churchgoer and dedicated Presbyterian, a one-woman husband to his wife of 45 years, Gloria, adopting her two sons, then having twin girls, all of whom he doted on and protected from the degenerating forces of Hollywood. As his daughter Kelly said in an interview, “Dad” kept “showbiz” out of their home. And his wife and children loved him in return.

Second, there was duty and self-sacrifice not only for family, but also community and country, exemplified in many ways, but perhaps most in his military service. His father served in both the Spanish-American and first World War, and both grandfathers served in the Civil War. Like his forebearers and the Baileys, Jimmy was not a shirker. He not only faced the ordeals and death of World War II with no celebrity favors, but did so knowing that, even if he survived intact, his successful film career might never get back on track. In fact, he had back-up plans before Frank Capra signed him up for the now-famous 1946 film project.

Like George Bailey, Jimmy was willing to set aside what he wanted, permanently if it came to that, in order to do what duty required. Like George, Jimmy’s sacrifices led to enduring loss and pain. He saw comrades die, his plane hit by shells, lived with the guilt he felt because he knew German civilians were dead from bombs his plane dropped. He suffered from what we would now call PTSD. But like George, his trials made him deeper, stronger, wiser, and also opened him up to real anger, even rage. Most film critics acknowledge that Jimmy Stewart’s war experience added depth and complexity, even dark undertones, to his acting that would have never been possible had he not endured heavy combat. But his wife and family also remembered him suffering nightmares even years later.

Like George, Jimmy stuck to his commitments. A Boy Scout as a youth, he remained dedicated to that organization his whole life. Despite his awful experiences in World War II, he remained in the military, retiring in 1968 as Air Force Reserve Brigadier General. In fact, he even went on a secret mission to Vietnam in 1966 which included joining a crew on a bombing mission that almost ended in disaster

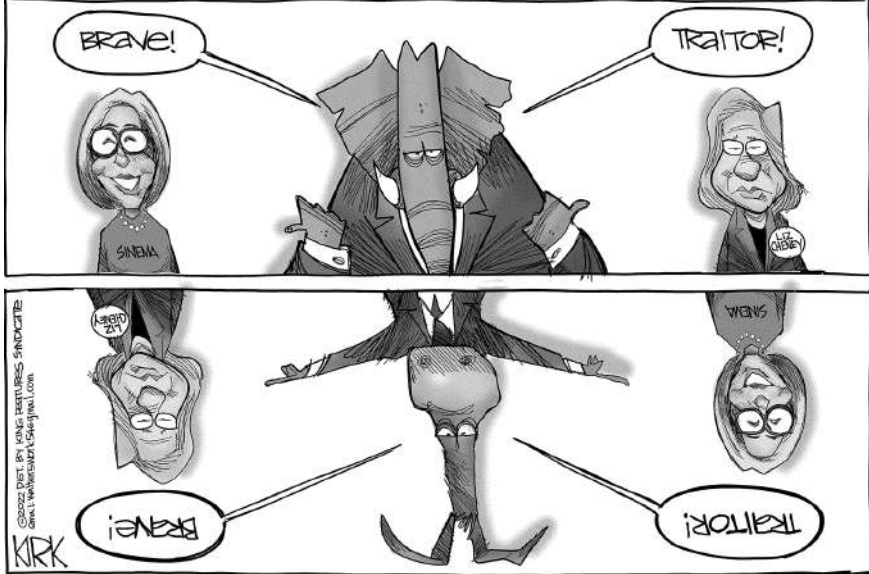
See STEWART Page 4A

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We must attract redevelopment activity

Christmas and New Year’s vacations are good on several fronts: One, I get to see more of my family, secondly, I get some rest and prepare for the year, and thirdly, I read a good book. While I regularly recommend Bill Kercher’s books on character, neighborhoods, towns, and main streets, he recommended another called “Regenerating Older Suburbs” printed by the Urban Land Institute.

In the foreword, the authors set out the questions to be answered: “What constitutes a successful regeneration? What will motivate private-sector developers to invest in older areas? Why are some suburbs more successful

County Commissioner
District 2



Christine Moore

than others in attracting significant redevelopment activity? What are appropriate roles for the for-profit, non-profit, and public sector to play, as well as the grassroots stakeholders?”

In our commissioner area, District 2, we have many older suburbs which need revitalization. I have had a measure of success with adding sidewalks, developing a neighborhood

leader, and a bit of code enforcement. I have also had failures with balloting for new streetlights. It is hard for me to understand why someone would not want to pay \$40 a year for a safer community, but alas, I have been unsuccessful in two under-served neighborhoods. The book also mentions the value in corridor improvements. Clearly, if we want private sector investment, the gateways and corridors must demonstrate that the municipality, residents, and business owners are engaged and interested in improvement.

I highly recommend when FDOT, the county, or cities improve infrastruc-

See MOORE Page 4A

The Constitution is a religious document

By: Bob Hilliard
Constitution Minutes

The fundamental act of our Founding, (the Declaration of Independence), recognizes the Creator God as the Source of Rights.

It acknowledges that the purpose of civil government is simply to “secure” the Rights God gave us.

The Constitution we subsequently ratified was based on God’s model of civil government as set forth in the Bible.

Our US Constitution “secures” our God-given rights by limiting the scope of our federal civil government. Less government means more rights

left to the people to exercise.

More regulations = less rights exercised.

That is why our Country was the envy of the rest of the world since our founding.

For the most part, we followed God’s model for civil government; other countries didn’t.

The blessing which flows from God’s model is **limited** civil government which is **under** The Law. That is why our Liberty Bell quotes Lev. 25:10 – “Proclaim LIBERTY throughout all the Land unto all the Inhabitants thereof.” I encourage you to go online: https://publiushuldah.wordpress.com/2012/06/23/the-bib-

lical-foundation-of-our-constitution/

Please print this paper and give to your clergy.

The Constitution is a theological document!

Our clergy should know this and be able to defend God’s Word as expressed in our Constitution. Our churches must declare independence from the federal government who ignores the Constitution and throw off the chains of the 501 (c) (3) tax exemptions!

God *requires* our clergy to take an active role in protecting the People from a civil government which violates the Higher Law – be it God’s Law or our Constitution *which is based on God’s Law*.

This Week In God’s Word

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.

2 Peter 1:5-7

Mema Says

Most of the time changes seem worse than they actually are

We seem to be climbing into a black hole with no escape

I was following a big tanker truck the other day and as I drew closer, I could read the sign on the very back of the tank and it said, “Full of politicians’ promises.” It was a truck that emptied septic tanks. How appropriate!

I scan the political side of the newspapers in hopes of finding some common sense in our nation’s leadership, but to no avail. It seems we are being swallowed by a great black hole from which there is no escape. We talk of a two-par-



Ike Hayden

ty system, but both parties have only their empowerment over the people as a goal. I feel we are so far down the tube, it is next to impossible to climb out. We have no leadership, we have no sense of eth-

ics, we have no purpose as a nation, and, most of all, we have lost our focus on Americanism.

Our nation once was the envy of all the nations, and people were willing to undergo the rigors of becoming citizens of this great nation. Today, the people are overwhelming our borders and burdening our economic system by taking advantage of our weak, mealy-mouthed, lackadaisical administration and all its cohorts — both Republicans and

Democrats. They are coming into our nation not to improve our quality of life, but to suck the very lifeblood from our resources.

As I said before, the people of years gone by that came into the United States came in to become Americans. They were willing to undergo transformation from the lifestyle they came from to a lifestyle that testified they were Americans. America had standards they had to meet, and a language they had to learn well enough to

quote the Preamble of the Constitution of the United States of America.

In today’s America, we’ve accommodated every language of the world. If you do not believe it, look at the paperwork it took to define my choice of healthcare: at least three pages of languages just to accommodate those who want to be here for the rewards but not the responsibilities of being an American. I love the United States and the freedom she stands for. I

served in the military to protect the rights and freedoms we are privileged to enjoy and when I see those that deliberately try to undermine and destroy the foundation of our nation, I want to stand up and say, “enough is enough!” We need to get those leaders out of our government that use our liberties against us to bring about absurd, and idiotic laws that promote equity and social justice. The United States of

See HAYDEN Page 4A

City: Klepper spoke during Jan. 4 council meeting

Continued from page 1A

trol it from the outside, and not take responsibility for your decisions.”

Klepper accused Mayor Bryan Nelson of throwing him and Echevarria under the bus at the December 21 press conference, where Nelson gave a timeline of the investigation of Duran’s death.

“You kept referring to the fact that there were claims that nothing had been done, and directing the attention towards 18 out of 23 items that were allegedly completed, which is categorically false, the two resigned employees are well aware of the status of these processes,” Klepper said. “But what was actually asserted in that resignation letter is that we have made recommendations that members of the committee or the fire chief know about, but no other member of this fire department is aware of

that information that is in the packet I gave you.”

Klepper said a lack of communication was what killed Duran.

“People knew that sand trailer was dangerous. People knew it should not be used, and nothing was ever officially communicated or done to eliminate the threat,” Klepper said. “And again, we’ve been failed.”

Klepper noted that an anonymous letter was sent to Austin Duran’s father Michael Duran, asking for help expressing personal concerns about a lack of mental health resources for department members and concerns about the investigation. However, Klepper later added that one anonymous letter doesn’t represent half of the fire department.

“What does that say to you? Why is that the outlet that they feel they need to take? You (Nelson) said we left the safety committee. Rather than

commit to furthering positive change in this department, if you want to create lasting positive change and you’re looking for the employees who are not going to cower when things get hard and not shy away from their responsibilities, we’re here.”

Nelson called a press conference on December 21, 2022 outside Apopka City Hall to give a timeline of the investigation into the sand trailer accident that caused Duran’s death and how the fire department implemented safety improvements and established a formal firefighter mentoring program. Nelson said that the investigation found that the city had committed one of eight violations, which was training.

Much of the criticism in his managing the press conference came at the City Council meeting later that evening, and came up again at the January 4 City Council meeting.

Swanberg: Local car show was among his passions

Continued from page 1A

the Zellwood Mushroom Farm before he retired in 1999.

Swanberg was an active member of the Apopka community as a member of the First United Methodist Church of Apopka, and the Apopka High School football team chain gang, which controls the first-down markers during the game.

A longtime member of the Apopka Rotary Club, he took great pride in living the Rotary motto, “Service Above Self,” as well as the Rotary 4-Way Test.

For 20 years, Swanberg poured his heart and soul into the annual Rotarian

Lowell’s Classic Car Show at Kit Land Nelson Park in Apopka. He took great pride in showing his 1956 Ford Sunliner convertible at the show and driving in the Apopka Christmas Parade each year.

Over the years, Swanberg took his classic car show on the road by having other classic car owners bring their cars to assisted living facilities and nursing homes for residents to enjoy.

More than anything, Swanberg enjoyed gathering with family and friends.

Survivors include his wife, Stella; daughter Michele S. Simonsen; son, B.J.; and seven grandchildren, Haley, Marcella, Jack, Honor, Justus, Carl,

and Carina. He is also survived by his brother, Luvern; sisters, Marcell Halpin and Darlene Jackson, as well as his “bonus daughter,” Annie E. McDaniel of Alabama, her three daughters and nine grandchildren.

Loomis Family Funeral Home of Apopka is handling arrangements with the funeral service set for Thursday, January 12, at First United Methodist Church of Apopka, 201 S. Park Avenue, with visitation beginning at 10 a.m. and the service to follow at 11 a.m.

Donations may be made in his name to: Rotary Club of Apopka Foundation, P.O. Box 7, Apopka, 32704.

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Stewart: Best friends were unlike each other in their personal beliefs

Continued from page 2A

when the plane’s flaps malfunctioned, and they were forced to crash land. When his oldest son Ronald was killed as a Marine in Vietnam in 1969, despite his sorrow, Jimmy stood by his support for both the military and that particular conflict, never accepting the idea that his son’s death was wasted.

Finally, there was fundamental human decency.

Jimmy was known for modesty, graciousness, and warmth, even as he could be stubborn and unyielding when his convictions were on the line, just like George Bailey. He epitomized the man that the fallen Violet Bick was so glad she knew because of how he cared about others without drawing attention to himself. Stewart’s basic decency is noted over and over in interviews with people he dealt with from every level, persuasion and

walk of life.

Perhaps most telling with regard to these qualities was Stewart’s lifelong, close friendship with Henry Fonda, one that went back to rooming together as starving actors in New York City in the early 1930s. Stewart was a conservative Republican and Christian, and not afraid to show it, Hollywood or not. Fonda was an agnostic, raised Christian Scientist, and a liberal Democrat. Friendships between some-

one like Jimmy and John Wayne or Ronald Reagan we understand, but Fonda? Their approaches to marriage (Fonda had five) and family (Fonda’s relationship with his children was, well, complicated) were miles apart. Yet they loved and respected each other, choosing to focus on all they shared while agreeing to disagree, and generally not discuss, their differences. They would get together to build model airplanes and talk. It was a remarkable friendship, captured well in the recent book, [Hank and Jim](#).

Decency, duty, family, community, hard work, honesty. Simple things which, as Stewart said, were blessings within the grasp of anyone, high or low, rich or poor, who

chose to embrace them. And now I understood where my tears came from, watching the climax of that marvelous film for the umpteenth time.

Whether in everyday life, mass or social media, George Bailey and Jimmy Stewart and all they represent stand in sharp contrast to the coarseness, animosity, profaneness, and hostility of our rapidly degenerating modern American culture. At Stewart’s museum in little Indiana, Pennsylvania, this Christmas season, I realized how tired and discouraged I was from the latter, and the desperate depth of my longing for the goodness of men like Stewart and Bailey to be held in honor again, not just by every man, but by those who teach and lead

us. Whether it’s Woke cancel culture or “owning the Libs,” we have come unhinged across the social and political spectrum. We need to bring back fundamental bedrock values, moral goodness, and interpersonal decency. The simple moral example of folk like Jimmy Stewart, and the mythical inspiration of films he starred in such as *It’s a Wonderful Life*, can help to heal us, if we heed what they teach, and are not ashamed of them despite the scorn of today’s intellectuals, media influencers, and pundits. Let us do just that, before it’s too late.

Maybe starting with another viewing of that film, and a lingering visit to the Jimmy Stewart Museum.

CITY OF APOPKA PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE FUTURE LAND USE AMENDMENT AND CHANGE OF ZONING

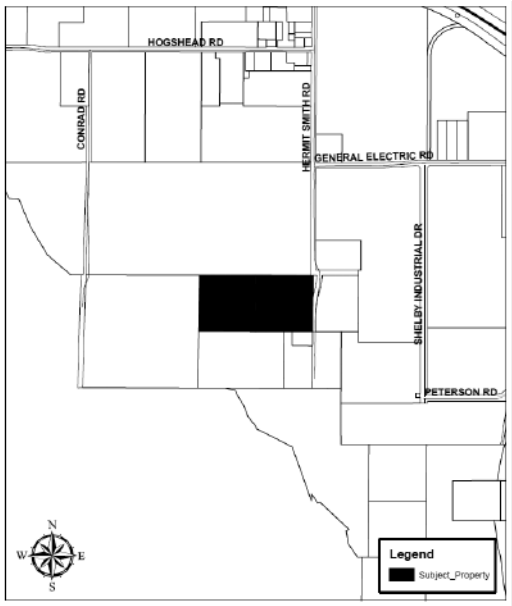
NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Secs. 163.3184 and 166.041(3)(a), Florida Statutes and the Apopka Code of Ordinances, Part III, Land Development Code, Article II, Section 2.4.7.B, that **Michael Dinkel** has made application relating to the following described property.

ORDINANCE NO. 2985

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF APOPKA, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT OF THE APOPKA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF THE CITY OF APOPKA; CHANGING THE FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION FROM COUNTY RURAL AND CITY VERY LOW DENSITY SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL TO CITY INDUSTRIAL FOR CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY GENERALLY LOCATED SOUTH OF HOGSHEAD ROAD AND WEST OF HERMIT SMITH ROAD; OWNED BY RAYNOR APOPKA LAND MANAGEMENT, LLC AND SOIL BLENDING PROPERTIES, LLC; COMPRISING 20.15 ACRES, MORE OR LESS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, CONFLICTS, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

ORDINANCE NO. 2984

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF APOPKA, FLORIDA, CHANGING THE ZONING FROM COUNTY A-1 (CITRUS RURAL) AND CITY RSF-1A (RESIDENTIAL SINGLE FAMILY-1A) TO CITY I-L (LIGHT INDUSTRIAL), FOR CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY GENERALLY LOCATED SOUTH OF HOGSHEAD ROAD AND WEST OF HERMIT SMITH ROAD; OWNED BY RAYNOR APOPKA LAND MANAGEMENT, LLC AND SOIL BLENDING PROPERTIES, LLC; COMPRISING 20.15 ACRES, MORE OR LESS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, CONFLICTS, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.



Parcel Identification Number(s): 01-21-27-0000-00-28 & 01-21-27-0000-00-061
Contains: 20.15 +/- Acres

Notice is given that the **City of Apopka Planning Commission** will hold a public hearing at its regularly scheduled meeting in the City Council Chambers of the Apopka City Hall, 120 E. Main Street, Apopka, Florida on **Tuesday, January 10, 2023 beginning at 5:30 P.M.**, or as soon thereafter as possible.

FURTHER NOTICE is given that a public hearing will be held by the **City of Apopka City Council** at its regularly scheduled meeting in the City Council Chambers of the Apopka City Hall, 120 E. Main Street, Apopka, Florida on **Wednesday, January 18, 2023 beginning at 1:30 P.M.** AND **Wednesday, February 1, 2023 at 7:00 P.M.**

Affected parties and the public may appear at the above listed hearings to speak. The proposed Future Land Use and Rezoning Applications 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.

Apopka City Council
Apopka Planning Commission
Community Development Department

December 30, 2022
January 6, 2022

Publish: The Apopka Chief

172837

Moore: Working together best way

Continued from page 2A

ture, that leaders set out to inspire the residents and business owners to improve their areas. Improvements can be relatively easy and inexpensive. For example, it’s not hard to pick up trash and park cars neatly. For a bit more investment, painting facades and upgrading landscaping provides the touch that tells the community you care. FDOT is in the process of improving U.S. 441 through the west side of Apopka, and soon through the Zellwood area. These are golden opportunities to improve the corridors.

I’m in the process of strengthening the North Pine Hills, Lockhart, and Wekiwa Springs area leader’s groups to manage these

types of activities. We have active boards of directors and members who follow my lead in corridor improvements, wall maintenance, pressure-washing, trash pick up, etc. We are also branching out to include high school students to paint fences and homes of our elderly. All I need to assist the west side of Apopka and Zellwood is a new group of leaders to step up.

Please call my office if you wish to help lead these new groups at 407.836.5850.

Our first quarterly leader’s meeting is Thursday, January 19, at Wekiwa High School.

What the book did is to help me broaden my thinking to seek more private-sector investment. I know

we must be more deliberate and purposeful about seeking larger dollar amounts for the types of major improvements we would like to see.

I also believe we cannot allow rampant, out-of-control sprawl, if we want to see infill and improvements in existing areas. I’m proud of the new, smaller developments, homes, and small businesses I have been a part of, coming to South Apopka, Lockhart, North Pine Hills, and Wekiwa Springs. I believe it goes back to looking neat and clean. No investor wants to waste millions in an area he or she believes will not bring a return on the investment.

More about regenerating older communities in next week’s column.

Hayden: Equity and equality differ

Continued from page 2A

America never promoted equity except to talk about how much your house was worth, or how much you had in savings or retirement. Equity and equality are two separate things, never meaning the same thing. Equity says everyone gets the same amount of whatever, matter or not they had any input into the making of it. Equality means everyone has an equal opportunity to work and put into the making of it, and so share in the blessings available.

Do any of you remember the child’s story of the little red hen that looked for other animals to assist her in making the bread? She went to every animal in the barnyard, she and her little chicks, and asked for help in making the bread. All the animals were like the

“woke” generation of today, they all had other “important” things to do.

So, when the bread was done and the delicious aroma filled the barnyard, all the animals came to share the feast. The little red hen told them, “You were too busy to help in the preparation and the baking of the bread, so my chicks and I will enjoy it ourselves.”

That story’s lesson used to be taught to young children and augmented by a mother or father’s admonition and testimony of hard work by them both.

I fear the lesson that was so well taught has never been incorporated into our politician’s understanding, or public service. There is so much corruption and greed in our government today and that is exactly why President Donald Trump is so feared

and hated by our thieving and lying politicians. He brought to light the “swamp dwellers” and their hatred for America and “We the People.”

Whatever you think of Donald Trump, he loved the United States and was willing to give up his life of luxury and wealthy lifestyle for the responsibility and all the scorn he endured as our president, and even still, is being skewered by those whose actions show they are inhabitants and promoters of the “swamp.” Now it is his taxes they are looking into, hoping to find anything derogatory in them, and even if they can’t find anything wrong, they will cast doubt and lie about what they do find.

I’m wondering how Al Sharpton gets away with owing millions in taxes without any investigation.

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.theapokkachief.com, news@theapokkachief.com



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Mayor’s Office407-703-1701
City Administrator407-703-1649
City Clerk407-703-1704
Community Devel407-703-1712
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Finance Dept407-703-1725
Fire (non-emerg.)407-703-1756
Parks and Rec. Dept.407-703-1741
Police Chief407-703-1769
Police (non-emerg.)407-703-1771
Job Line407-703-1743
Solid Waste Collect.....407-703-1731
Street Maintenance407-703-1731
Utility Billing407-703-1727
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**

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All other departments407-836-3111
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Other Area Numbers of Note

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Marco Rubio (Rep.).....407-254-2573
U.S. Representative
Maxwell Frost (Dist. 10)202-2252176
State Representatives
Doug Bankson407-476-6787
Carolina Amesty (Dist. 45)unknown
State Senators
Geraldine Thompson (Dist.11) 407-297-2045
Orange County Commissioner
Christine Moore407-836-7350
Orange County Public Schools
Pupil assignment407-317-3233
Bus routes.....407-317-3800
Superintendent.....407-317-3200
School Board.....407-317-3200
Miscellaneous
The Apopka Chief407-886-2777
Museum of the Apopkans.....407-703-1707
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Governor DeSantis begins second term with ceremony

By Andrew Powell
The Center Square

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis was sworn in Tuesday, January 3, after overwhelmingly winning a second term in November.

Accompanied by his wife, First Lady Casey DeSantis, and their three young children, DeSantis' inauguration was attended by a capacity crowd of supporters.

The inauguration ball was a candlelit dinner and included "A Toast to One Million Mamas" held by the First Lady in recognition of the 1.1 million women who supported her husband.

The governor reviewed his achievements over the past four years and offered a glimpse of what is to come in his second term. DeSantis stressed the need for tax cuts for Floridians amid growing inflation, introducing family-friendly policies and seeking to put an end to those who would endanger the lives and innocence of children.

DeSantis called Florida the land of liberty and the land of sanity – both he said

are reasons why Florida has become an attractive spot to raise a family.

"We will always remain a law-and-order state, we will always support law enforcement, and we will always reject 'soft on crime' policies that put our communities at risk. We will defend our children from those who seek to rob them of their innocence," DeSantis said, which was met with a standing ovation.

DeSantis added that while other states locked down their residents, Florida was a refuge during the pandemic. He pointed out the many differences between Florida's response during COVID-19 and Democrat-led states' responses.

"These last few years have witnessed a great test of governing philosophies. As many jurisdictions pursued a much different path than we have pursued here in the state of Florida," DeSantis said. "The policies pursued by these states have sparked a mass exodus of productive Americans from these jurisdictions, with Florida serv-

See TERM Page 8A

REGAL

Fri., January 6, 2022 thru
Sun., January 8, 2022

3D SHOWINGS

AVATAR: THE WAY OF THE WATER 3D (PG-13) 11:50A; 3:00; 6:40; 9:30;

M3GAN (PG-13) 1:40; 4:30; 7:20; 7:50; 10:10; 10:40

BABYLON (R) 1:30; 6:00; 10:00

WHITNEY HOUSTON: I WANNA DANCE WITH SOMEBODY (PG-13) 12:10; 3:20; 6:30; 10:30

PUSS IN BOOTS; THE LAST WISH (PG) 12:20; 1:00; 3:30; 4:00; 7:00; 9:40

AVATAR: THE WAY OF THE WATER 2D (PG-13) 12:30; 3:40; 7:40

BLACK PANTHER: WAKANDA FOREVER (PG-13) 12:00; 4:20; 6:50; 10:20

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The Way I See It
Patti Bankson

Throw the Bums Out!

There's no brass plate with my name on it decorating a desk in either U.S. Congressional building. There's no degree from Harvard Law School on a wall in my office. There are no armed, Secret Service agents following and protecting me 24/7. No one in politics knows my name or my face, and that's just fine with me. Unfortunately, that kind of anonymity comes with a price and the price is having no real way to reach out and touch those who are running this country into the ground. I'm referring to Democrats and Rhino Republicans who are determined to take our exceptional country from *Wonderful* to *Woe Begone*, i.e. a sorry state. Without the degrees and accolades from low friends in high places, I'm just an everyday citizen seen by the elite as completely inadequate and completely irrelevant. Someone too dumb to do the job, much less do it well or better. Well, I believe that I have found at least a couple of suggestions that could shine a light on some of what ails our government.

Problem: People in both houses over staying their "welcome." In the House: Don Young (R-Ak), 48 yrs; Steny Hoyer (D-MD), 40 yrs; Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), 34 yrs; Maxine Waters (D-CA), 30 yrs. In the Senate: Chuck Schumer (D-NY), 40 yrs, includes 18 yrs in the House; Richard

Shelby (R-AL), 34 yrs; Bernie Sanders (I-VT), 30 yrs, includes 16 yrs in the House; Diane Feinstein (D-CA), 28 yrs. Congress has become a way for politicians to become fabulously wealthy, quickly. Special interests contribute millions of dollars to members of the campaigns for Congress expecting special "carveouts" from the federal pie, including government contracts, direct federal subsidies or special exemptions for their business or industry written into the laws and regulations. These jobs must offer more than "just" the salaries and perks, and the life time careers. Why else would someone pay out an average of \$5 MILLION on a campaign to challenge an incumbent for a House seat? If you think that's "costly," how about \$20-40 MILLION to run a competitive campaign for Senate?

Solution: *Americans for Term Limits* is working to searching for a solution, with a lot of Pro and Con information available. Check out these websites: quora.com always has great information and debates on Term Limits and many other interesting and educational topics. And, if you have a burning question, this might be a place to get help putting out the fire. Another site with more specific information on this subject is termlimits.com. This website is primarily aimed at making changes regarding Term Limits, through an Amendment to The Constitution. I suggest learning as much as you can digest about all sides of the issue, because it's not as easy as just "*throw the bums out!*"

What do YOU think?
barefootwahine1@yahoo.com
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It's a thrilling milestone for Apopka native and clinic owner Amy Davis, Au.D. “One of the greatest joys in my life is being able to communicate with the people I love,” says Dr. Davis. “I wanted to help people with hearing loss be able to communicate and enjoy time with those who mean the most to them.”

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faces to the team, including Cynthia Quintana, Au.D. Like Dr. Davis, Dr. Quintana is an audiologist, or hearing doctor, who is passionate about helping people connect with loved ones. She champions patient education and personalized solutions to hearing loss. Dr. Quintana's Spanish fluency is a critical asset in this initiative, and the clinic is also adding Spanish-speaking support staff.

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Masonic officers

On December 27, 2022, the 2023 officers of Orange Lodge No.36 F&AM of Apopka were installed into their positions. This was the 167th annual installation of officers held in the historic lodge room in downtown Apopka. Orange Lodge No.36 F&AM is the oldest Lodge in continuous use in the state of Florida. Pictured (r to l) are Chaplain Thomas Donohue., Tyler Worshipful Rich Carter, Junior Deacon Steve Blanton, Senior Warden Christopher Sienko, Worshipful Master Patrick Tessier, Junior Warden Rolando Vargas, Secretary Michael Berry, Marshal Worshipful John Christie, Worshipful Reginald Lyle, Treasurer Gerald Rooks. Not pictured is Senior Deacon Justin Hayes.

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CenturyLink participates in the Lifeline program, which makes residential telephone or qualifying broadband service more affordable to eligible low-income individuals and families. Eligible customers may qualify for Lifeline discounts of \$5.25/month for voice or bundled voice service or \$9.25/month for qualifying broadband or broadband bundles. Residents who live on federally recognized Tribal Lands may qualify for additional Tribal benefits if they participate in certain additional federal eligibility programs. The Lifeline discount is available for only one telephone or qualifying broadband service per household, which can be either a wireline or wireless service. Broadband speeds must be at least 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload to qualify.

CenturyLink also participates in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which provides eligible households with a discount on broadband service. The ACP provides a discount of up to \$30 per month toward broadband service for eligible households and up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands.

For both programs, a household is defined as any individual or group of individuals who live together at the same address and share income and expenses. Services are not transferable, and only eligible consumers may enroll in these programs. Consumers who willfully make false statements to obtain these discounts can be punished by fine or imprisonment and can be barred from these programs.

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No secret that food prices rose in 2022

By Casey Harper
The Center Square

Food prices soared in 2022, and so far, there are few solutions seen for 2023.

The latest Consumer Price Index Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that grocery prices increased 12 percent in the previous 12 months, far higher than the already elevated inflation rate.

The BLS index for wholesale prices showed the cost of fresh and dry vegetables skyrocketed this year with a 38.1 percent increase last month alone. The price for eggs for fresh use rose about 244 percent in the prior 12 months. A few foods, such as finfish and shellfish as well as beef and veal, saw decreases at the wholesale level, but most others saw double-digit increases.

Those increases outpaced overall inflation. Wholesale prices for all kinds of goods and services increased by 7.4 percent in the previous 12 months and consumer prices increased 7.1 percent in the previous 12 months.

President Joe Biden has taken fire for

the elevated prices, in particular the price for food and energy.

“American families are bearing the cost of profligate spending by liberals in Congress and the Biden administration, especially when it comes to food prices,” said E.J. Antoni, an economic expert at the Heritage Foundation. “While overall prices have risen 14 percent under Biden, the cost of food has risen even faster, shooting up 17 percent in that same time. In just the last year alone, food prices are up 11 percent. Things are even worse for working families with relatively low incomes because they rely more on staples like eggs and flour, which have risen much faster than overall food prices.”

U.S. Sen. Rick Scott, R-Fla., blasted Biden for the inflation “crisis,” saying “Democrats’ socialist policies and reckless government spending, like the \$1.7 trillion Pelosi-Schumer Spending Bill, continues to shrink budgets for families as the prices of everyday goods continue to skyrocket.”

See FOOD Page 9A

Term: He gave no hint as to 2024

Continued from page 5A

ing as the most desired destination, a promised land of sanity.”

DeSantis was heavily criticized for his response to COVID-19 both from Democratic leaders and some Republicans in and out of Florida.

DeSantis said those same leaders were busy wastefully spending large amounts of taxpayer dollars while putting public safety at risk.

“Many of these cities and states have embraced a faddish ideology at the expense of enduring principles. They’ve harmed public safety, coddling criminals and attacking law en-

forcement, they’ve imposed unreasonable burdens on taxpayers to finance unfathomable levels of public spending,” DeSantis said.

“They have harmed education by subordinating the interests of students and parents to partisan interest groups. They have imposed medical authoritarianism in the guise of pandemic mandates and restrictions that lack a scientific basis,” he added.

DeSantis was one of the few leaders to keep children in public schools during the pandemic.

“Leaders do not follow – they lead,” DeSantis said.

The Florida governor did not hint at whether he

is running for president in 2024, and instead focused on his state and the issues facing Floridians that are, according to DeSantis, a direct result of the leadership of the Biden administration – one of the biggest being illegal immigration.

The governor also touched on the “woke” ideologies spreading through academia, and the Democrat-controlled White House.

“We seek normalcy, not philosophical lunacy,” DeSantis said. “We will never surrender to the woke mob. Florida is where woke goes to die.

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tions, vaccines, dentistry, and nutritional and behavioral advice are just some of the services provided by the doctors and staff in a beautiful office that is as comfortable as your own home.

Veterinary schools expose potential animal doctors to just about every species of animal in the world (except humans!). With such a vast collection of animals to study though, most vet schools lack the capability to include extensive study of exotics in the core curriculum.

There are exotic study courses that can be taken as electives, and vet students can gain lots of real-world experience through internships and study programs. It all starts with a vested personal interest though, and many veter-

inarians choose to stick with common species such as dogs, cats, and horses as their primary study.

If you've ever owned a dog or a cat, you know that if your furry friend needs medical care, you can take him to your local vet's office. But what happens when your iguana, parrot or rabbit gets injured? What about when your chinchilla or ferret doesn't feel well?

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- Plymouth Woodshed Restaurant (Highway 441 & Boy Scout Rd)
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Obits

JOHN (JACK) ALFRED BRUEHL, 83, Apopka, died December 12, 2022. Mr. Bruehl was born in Detroit, Michigan. Survivors: wife, Carol J.; son, Scott; sister, Carol Baker; two grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Loomis Family Funeral Home, Apopka.

...
TODD KEITH BRUEHL, 52, Apopka, died November 22, 2022. Mr. Bruehl was born in Detroit, Michigan. Survivors: mother, Carol; brother, Scott. Loomis Family Funeral Home, Apopka.

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Food: Prices began rising before invasion

Continued from page 8A

The Biden administration has pushed back on those criticisms while acknowledging the pain Americans are feeling from higher prices. Biden has largely blamed Russian President Vladimir Putin’s invasion of Ukraine.

Ukraine is a major food producer as well as a major exporter of key ingredients in fertilizer. The invasion has hurt food production and tied up the supply chain, making food and the fertilizer that helps it grow significantly more expensive.

“The two challenges on the minds of most working families are prices at the pump and prices at the grocery store,” Biden said during remarks in June, the same month gas prices set records and surpassed a \$5 per gallon national average. “Both of these challenges have been directly exacerbated by Putin’s war in Ukraine.”

Experts agree the invasion “exacerbated” the problem, but inflation was already

soaring before Russia invaded Ukraine, and food prices were not immune to those increases.

In the middle of February, about two weeks before Russia invaded Ukraine, BLS released consumer price index data showing food prices had already risen significantly. That data showed that “food at home” prices had risen 7.4 percent in the previous 12 months. Economists say about 2 percent inflation annually is a good increase for a healthy economy.

The meat, poultry, fish, and eggs category rose 12.2 percent in that data. An avian flu outbreak has contributed to rising prices this year.

The soaring cost of groceries has made it harder on Americans, many of whom are already struggling to make ends meet.

PYMNTS released its latest survey data earlier this month, which showed that as of November, 63 percent of U.S. consumers report that they are living paycheck to paycheck.



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The Scapegoat

In the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus, God tells the Israelites that they must offer particular sacrifices in order to receive God’s forgiveness. One of those sacrifices is the scapegoat, which bears the sins of the community and is then sent into the wilderness: “When Aaron has finished making atonement for the Most Holy Place, the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat. He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites—all their sins—and put them on the goat’s head. He shall send the goat away into the wilderness in the care of someone appointed for the task. The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a remote place; and the man

shall release it in the wilderness.” (Leviticus 16:20-22 NIV) Thenot that we can put our sins on a sacrificial animal and send it off into the wilderness is strange but intriguing. Like casting our burdens upon the winds or the waters, the scapegoat feels purifying to us. Perhaps this is why it feels so good and so cathartic to confess our sins; we can finally let go of them. We do well to remember also that for Christians Jesus is the ultimate scapegoat, the sinless victim who takes all of our sins upon himself and is then cast out into the figurative wilderness via his crucifixion. Consider how you might cast off your sins, both literally and figuratively, by confessing them.
-Christopher Simon

But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint. Isaiah 40:31

In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.
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Although medical marijuana is legal in Florida, it remains illegal under federal law.

Mural: Artist had already painted some murals

Continued from page 1A

Dream Lake Elementary's history. The mural shows an airplane pulling the banner with the words "Dream Lake Elementary." The property where the school sits along Park Avenue between Summit Street and Martin Street was once an airstrip. The McBride family owned the property where the school now stands, and the hangar for the airstrip used to be where Maters & Taters Produce now exists.

The plane and banner are surrounded by words in different languages all meaning "Welcome." In the mural's upper left-hand corner is a silhouette of a dragon, the school mascot.

Clenton-Martin had known Miller since 2012.

Since then, Clinton-Martin has asked Miller to paint new murals for the schools where she was principal. Miller had painted at least 16 murals for Dream Lake Elementary School on the inside and outside, including a mural in 2018 for a wing for students with cognitive disabilities, and another one in 2020 in the pavilion where physical education classes take place.

The murals were a collaboration between Miller and the school faculty and administration. For classroom murals, Miller would sit down with teachers and come up with a representation of what teachers wanted

ed their students to experience entering the classrooms.

"We're also a school of innovation, which means that we have an opportunity to present teaching and learning in a uniquely different way to our students," said Principal Clinton-Martin. "Our teachers often do interactive and engaging lessons for our kids, so we're really proud of that, too."

Miller is putting the finishing touches on the "Welcome to Dream Lake Elementary" mural, and is painting new murals for the school, such as shields outside of each classroom

representing STEAM subjects (science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics) and students' house colors (a concept the school adopted from "Harry Potter"), and calming art for the behavioral room.

Miller said he has been blessed to continue to do art and find employment. He has painted murals for schools throughout Orange County Public Schools.

"I've been lucky as a mural artist knowing that it's always art. It's a very up-and-down business, and so you take advantage of opportunities that are there. So, that's kind of was my goal," Miller said.



This is one of the murals that the artist painted at Dream Lake Elementary School in Apopka.

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Orange County Court Self Help Centers

Named in honor of the late Orange County Clerk of Courts Lydia Gardner, the Self Help Center was created to provide customers with limited legal guidance and low-cost attorney consultations. The Center is the first of its kind in the Orange County community to help citizens who either don't have a lawyer or cannot afford one.

The Self Help Center will assist only with the following case types: Family Law (excluding restraining orders); Child Custody/Child Support; Divorce; Paternity; And more; Small Claims; Residential Evictions

Services provided include: Attorney consultations; Form completion assistance; Notary and copy services. The services provided are not based on income.

What is the Self Help Center?

The Clerk's Self Help Center is designed to provide legal assistance to Orange County citizens who are representing themselves before the court and do not have a private attorney. It is the first of its kind in our community to help people who either don't have a lawyer or cannot afford one.

Where are Self Help Centers located?

There are two self-help centers. The Orange County Courthouse is located at 425 North Orange Ave., Suite 340 (3rd floor, Orlando, FL 32801. Hours of Operation: Mon - Fri: 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

The Apopka Service Center is located at 1111 N. Rock Springs Rd., Apopka, FL 32712, and the hours of operation are Tuesdays, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. This self-help center began operation on October 17, 2017.

What services are offered at the Self Help Centers?

The Self Help Center offers assistance to customers in completing court forms, filing documents electronically and providing access to contracted attorneys at an affordable price. Other services available at the Self Help Center are printing, copying, notary and general consultations.

What types of cases will the Self Help Center offer assistance with?

The Center focuses on assisting customers with Family Law (excluding injunctions), Small Claims, Landlord-Ten-

ant and Eviction cases.

What is Family Law?

Family Law consists of alimony, child custody/visitation, child support, contempt, divorce, name change, paternity, step-parent adoption, support unconnected with dissolution of marriage and temporary custody.

How can I schedule an attorney consultation?

Attorney consultations are set by appointment and must be for a minimum of 15 minutes, charged at \$1.00 a minute. Consultations may not exceed more than one hour at one time within a day. You will need a credit card in order to schedule the consultation online

How do I schedule an appointment without access to the internet?

If you do not have access to a computer or smart device at home, you can come to the Self Help Center's two locations to schedule an appointment in person or use a customer computer in room 340.

How can I schedule an attorney consultation without a credit card?

Come in to the Self Help Center and make an appointment with a deputy clerk at the front counter.

What if I am unable to schedule an appointment due to a disability?

You may call the Ninth Circuit Court's American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) line at (407) 836-2303 to leave a message for further assistance.

When is the Self Help Center open?

The Self Help Center is open Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Courthouse, and Tuesdays, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. starting October 17, 2017 at the Apopka Service Center.

Are there income restrictions to receive services?

No. Services provided at the Self Help Center are not based on your income.

What is the Self Help Center's phone number?

You can contact the Self Help Center by calling 407-836-6300 for the Courthouse or 407-836-2007 for the Apopka location

What forms are Available?

A limited number of forms are available for download from myorangeclerk.com. If the form you are looking for is not available on this site, consider searching the Florida Courts or other websites.

A limited number of form packets are available for sale in our divisions and branch locations



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Tell them you saw it in The Apopka Chief

Review: Apopka firefighter Austin Duran died on duty on July 15

Continued from page 1A

Apopka residents will soon be allowed to keep up to four egg-laying chickens in their backyard.

About 40 people attended a press conference on Friday, April 29, in Apopka that was intended to draw attention to immigration-rights reform by highlighting a Sunday, May 1, rally in downtown Orlando.

The Apopka Blue Darters baseball team seems to be getting hot at just the right time. Coach Bobby Brewer's squad opened the District 7A-2 tournament Tuesday, May 3, with an 11-1 shellacking of the DeLand Bulldogs in a district semifinal game played at historic Sanford Stadium.

Although the Apopka High softball team fell 5-3 to Hagerty Tuesday, May 3, in a District 7A-3 tournament semifinal game, the Blue Darters (17-7) are still expected to land a regional playoff berth due to their FHSAA ranking.

May 13, 2022

Members of the Apopka Police Department and Bike/Walk Central Florida held a special detail Wednesday, May 11, to help education members of the public about the need to observe proper driving laws when it comes to crosswalks and trail crossings.

The city of Apopka accepted a proposal to be a sister city to the Mexican municipality of Corregidora at the Apopka City Council's Wednesday, May 4, meeting at City Hall.

Apopka Planning Commission Chair Jim Greene is stepping down from the board with his last meeting being on Tuesday, May 10.

In one of the most bizarre endings to a high school baseball game, the Apopka Blue Darters topped longtime rival West Orange 4-3 with the winning run scoring in the top of the seventh inning after a West Orange defender threw his glove high in the air to try to stop an errant throw from the outfield.

The Wekiva Mustangs continue to take steps toward a future of being a top name among the sport of boys track and field. Eight entries from Wekiva's boys and girls teams competed at the Region 4A-1 championship meet, held Saturday, May 7, at Flagler Palm Coast High School.

The Apopka Blue Darters boys volleyball team won the District 8 championship April 28 by defeating West Orange 3-1. The Blue Darters moved on to a regional quarterfinal contest, falling to Lake Brantley. Apopka finished with a 12-4 record.

May 20, 2022

In a 2-2 vote, the Apopka City Council failed to pass a proposed ordinance that would put into the city code rules of decorum for conduct at city board meetings that are now contained in a resolution that was passed in 2016 under then Mayor Joe Kilsheimer. The ordinance would have had a few differences from the resolution.

During a talk in Apopka on Wednesday, May 18, ABC Channel 9 Chief Meteorologist Tom Terry advised visitors about the upcoming hurricane season as well as gave a review of superstorms that have happened over the course of years.

The Sprouts Farmers Market will open today,

Friday, May 20, at 7 a.m. with a ribbon cutting being held just prior. The store is in Wekiva Riverwalk shopping plaza at 2283 E. Semoran Blvd., Apopka.

Last weekend's Family Mental Health and Wellness Fair sought to make a wide array of mental health resources and support available to the public in an effort to lift the stigma traditionally associated with therapy.

The Apopka City Council voted unanimously to authorize moving forward with adopting the 2023 proposed stormwater assessment rates, which will see a tiered system that categorizes single-family homes based on each building's impervious surface area.

The 2022 season ended Tuesday, May 17, for the Apopka Blue Darters softball team in a heartbreaking 5-4 loss on the road to Orange Park Oakleaf in a Region 7A-1 semifinal contest.

The St. Johns Bartram Trail Bears used a solo home run early and a pair of two-run homers late to defeat the Apopka Blue Darters baseball team 5-0 in a Region 7A-1 semifinal game on Friday, May 13, at Bartram Trail.

May 27, 2022

The race to replace City Commissioner Doug Bankson got a big jolt this week when recent mayoral candidate and former Commissioner Kyle Becker announced this week that he would run for Seat 3 that Bankson is leaving in his effort to run for the Florida House of Representatives.

The city of Apopka must replace three garbage trucks which burned up Wednesday, May 18, but that is easier said than done, Mayor Bryan Nelson said this week.

Community members observed Florida Emancipation Day on Friday, May 20, on the steps of Apopka City Hall.

A bid opening for the long-awaited Harmon Road extension project along with associated items was held Monday, May 23, via a Zoom call by Jessica Pugh, the city of Apopka's purchasing manager.

The Apopka Post Office collected 4,000 pounds of food as part of the 30th annual Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger, which took place May 14.

Dream Lake Elementary school celebrated its 125 fifth graders on Wednesday, May 25, which was Orange County Public Schools' last day of school. These fifth graders were part of the 2016-2017 kindergarten class when the school's newly reconstructed building opened, thus making them the first class to attend the K-5 school in the remodeled building.

The Lake Apopka Natural Gas District (LANGD) Board of Directors voted unanimously at its Monday, May 23, meeting to donate another \$5,000 to the district's assistance program for customers struggling with their utility bills.

Gjerome Mogul, Apopka High School athletic trainer, has been named the Secondary School Athletic Trainer of the Year for Florida by the Athletic Trainers' Association of Florida. Mogul has been at Apopka High for more than 15 years. He will receive the award in July at the group's annual meeting in Kissimmee.

The Wekiva Mustangs would have liked to conclude spring football prac-

tice playing an entire contest against the Miami Norland Vikings. However, 14 minutes was enough to showcase a much more competitive team that will line up in 2022 than the 4-6 squad from last season. The 2021 season began with four losses. Then Wekiva won four of the final six contests. The Mustangs led 12-0 with 9:58 remaining in the second quarter when the spring game was called.

Members of the Apopka High School Special Olympics team participated in the Special Olympics Florida Summer Games Friday, May 20, and Saturday, May 21, at ESPN's Wide World of Sports.

June

June 3, 2022

Once the city of Apopka and a law enforcement technology company sign off on a \$1.37-million five-year piggyback contract, the Apopka Police Department should receive the most up-to-date equipment, including body-worn cameras about 60 days afterward.

The Apopka City Council has agreed for the city to alternate two Saturdays per month during next season's free Saturday Sounds concert series and leave the first and third Saturday per month open to paid events hosted by other promoters.

More than 700 members of the Class of 2022 graduated from Apopka High School. The graduation ceremony took place at the Amway Center in Orlando on Thursday, May 26.

The Wekiva High School Class of 2022 had its graduation ceremony at Addition Financial Arena on the University of Central Florida campus on Wednesday, May 25.

Numbers released this week by the Orange County property appraiser's office show that property values in the city of Apopka have risen by an average of 21.2 percent. Those jumps in property values will be reflected in property taxes for the 2022-2023 fiscal year that begins October 1.

New rules stipulating how Orange County residents and businesses can apply fertilizer to their lawns and landscapes are now in effect, Orange County government announced on Wednesday, June 1.

June 10, 2022

Last week, the city of Apopka opened Camp Wewa's first summer day camp since the city acquired the property from the Central Florida YMCA and renovated it with volunteers' assistance.

Qualifying for the upcoming Apopka city special election will be held June 13-17. The special election is scheduled for August 23 and will be on the same ballot as the primary election for the Florida governor's election and other state and local races.

Trammell Crow Company, the largest commercial real estate developer in the United States has its eye on Apopka. The company plans to build three large warehouses totaling 710,073 square feet at 444 Hermit Smith Road, across the street from the Amazon last-mile warehouse.

The legacy of singer and Apopka native Jerry Lawson lives on in the documentary "Just a Mortal Man – The Jerry Lawson Story," which will premiere on the PBS-affiliated station WUCF on Tuesday, June 21, at 10:30 p.m.,

in conjunction with Juneteenth and Black Music Month.

The Apopka Juneteenth Freedom Day Celebration will take place on Saturday, June 18, 1-7 p.m. at Alonzo Williams Park, 225 M A Board Street, Apopka.

June 17, 2022

The city of Apopka will likely be facing a lawsuit from a developer after the City Council denied a second request to change the city's development agreement regarding residential housing at the City Center.

After losing three garbage trucks to a fire in May, the city of Apopka, to keep up with the demand, has been renting three trucks at a cost of \$24,000 per month.

As the new Parks and Recreation Department director for the city of Apopka, Radley Williams said his top priority is to get his department accreditation through the National Recreation and Park Association.

As of mid-morning on Thursday, June 16, two people had qualified to run for Seat 3 on the Apopka City Council that will be vacated by Commissioner Doug Bankson, who is running for Florida House of Representatives District 39.

The Apopka Planning Commission voted unanimously, 5-0, this week to recommend approval that the city of Apopka begins the abandonment of the Kelly Park Crossing Development or Regional Impact (DRI) because several pre-development requirements set forth by the city have not been met to keep the 10-year-old DRI relevant.

Apopka resident Fred Robinson has been inducted into the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs Governor's Hall of Fame for his work over the years to aid military veterans throughout Central Florida.

June 24, 2022

A developer has filed a lawsuit against the city of Apopka in an effort to build an apartment complex in the Apopka City Center that will have some apartments reserved for affordable housing.

The political races are set as qualifying is completed for the city, county, and statewide elections for August and November. The race closest to home – Seat 3 on the Apopka City Council – drew two candidates to replace City Commissioner Doug Bankson, who is giving up the seat to run for Florida state House District 39.

An Apopka resident won a gold medal in equestrian in the Special Olympics that was held in Central Florida in early June.

July 1, 2022

In an effort to make downtown Apopka – especially the City Center – a more financially attractive spot for better restaurants, a new law passed by the Florida Legislature and signed by the governor will make it much cheaper for smaller restaurants to obtain a liquor license in downtown Apopka.

Land on the north side of the interchange of U.S. Highway 441 and State Road 436 has been cleared to make way for the construction of a Winn-Dixie supermarket and other businesses as part of the City Center that is under development on the south side of the highways. The supermarket is expected to

open in early 2023.

Several sales-tax holidays begin in Florida today, Friday, July 1, for everything from live sporting events to children's diapers to energy-efficient appliances.

The Orange County School Board voted unanimously Tuesday, June 28, to approve Dr. Maria Vazquez as the next superintendent of Orange County Public Schools. Currently, she is the deputy superintendent for OCPS.

Apopka High School graduate Donald Scott once again qualified for the world championships in the triple jump by finishing in first place in the USA Track and Field Outdoor Championships held June 23-26 in Eugene, Oregon. Scott's triple jump that earned him first place came on his first leap of 56 feet (17.07 meters). Scott's victory landed him a spot on the U.S. team for the 2022 World Athletics Championship that will take place July 15- 24, in Eugene, Oregon.

The city of Apopka's Development Review Committee (DRC) looked at six different proposed developments Wednesday, June 29, including the rezoning and master plan approval for a development of more than 21 acres that would bring multi-family housing and commercial to near the intersection of Kelly Park Road and Plymouth-Sorrento Road.

July 8, 2022

The community – in Apopka and outside the city – are rallying around the Apopka firefighter who was injured on the job last week and recently underwent his fourth and what should be his final surgery this week.

The city of Apopka held a free Independence Day celebration on Monday, July 4, at the Apopka amphitheater, drawing several thousand people to enjoy a concert and fireworks.

Although another potential buyer has a contract on the property, the city of Apopka will be ready to negotiate with the owner of a 20-acre tract adjacent to the city's Camp Wewa property should that contract fall through.

Two members of the Apopka Planning Commission were unanimously approved this week for another three-year term, while a new member was also voted in to replace a member who resigned from the city board.

Hope CommUnity Center, a nonprofit organization located in Apopka, received the 2022 Florida Impact Award from Leadership Florida. The award was announced June 25 at Leadership Florida's Annual Meeting in Orlando.

As a part of its 50-year celebration, Hope Community Center will celebrate its Pathway to Citizenship Program participants as they become Naturalized Citizens at their "We The People" event on Saturday, July 9, on the grounds of the South Apopka building located at 800 S. Hawthorne Ave., Apopka.

Kevin Burgess of Apopka was installed this week as the district deputy for the BPO Elks for lodges in the North Central District of the Florida State Elks Association and will serve a one-year term.

The Apopka Little League's Junior team not only turned the opportunity of a rematch into a victory over Windermere, but the play was as commanding and authoritative while also

thorough as the 12-1 Apopka victory in the District 14 championship tournament final indicates.

A much-improved ability to prepare for the upcoming season paid dividends for the Wekiva Mustangs football team June 22 during a summer 7-on-7 league in the form of two victories.

July 15, 2022

The Apopka Planning Commission voted 5-0 to recommend approval for a plat for a new Winn-Dixie location, which will anchor the downtown City Center.

A neighborhood park was renamed for a former homeowner association president in her honor.

July 22, 2022

In addition to lifting weights and working out during summer conditioning drills, players on the Apopka High School football team added a new activity this week – helping perform a home makeover for an Apopka family.

The final day to register to vote or to make changes in a current voter registration will be Monday, July 25, which is the book-closing deadline for the August 23 election.

The Apopka City Council will hold budget workshops July 25, 26, and 27 to go over the proposed budget for each city department. The city budget must be approved before September 30 as the new fiscal year begins October 1.

July 29, 2022

Many people lined U.S. Highway 441 in Apopka on Saturday, July 23, to honor Apopka firefighter Austin Duran, 25, who died July 15 after suffering an on-the-job accident when a trailer filled with sand fell on him.

There was talk about six new firefighter positions, a new firetruck, two new ambulances, and reimbursement to new paramedics for their EMS schooling, but the Apopka City Council's budget workshop Monday, July 25, about the Apopka Fire Department boiled down to safety and training for the firefighters in light of the recent death of Austin Duran.

Attendees met 15 candidates in this year's election for various public offices during the annual Political Hob Nob and Straw Poll, organized by the Apopka Area Chamber of Commerce, held Tuesday, July 26, at the VFW/Apopka Community Center.

Buoyed by higher property values that will bring in 21.5 percent more in property tax dollars, the Apopka City Council voted Wednesday, July 27, to keep the tax rate the same for the upcoming fiscal year that begins on October 1.

If summer 7-on-7 results mean anything, the Wekiva Mustangs football team showed a much-improved ability to prepare for the upcoming season on June 22 in the form of two victories, 14-0 and 21-7 over the West Orange Warriors 20-minute competition.

A free, youth football camp sponsored on Saturday, July 23, at Apopka High School by AHS alumnus and all-star football player Jalen Carter had all the typical settings of a football camp for kids, including the youngsters themselves, local high school players helping coach the kids, high school football coaches, and camp organizers.

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Pursue family-friendly resolutions together

There are plenty of resolutions that families can enjoy together. Undertaking goals as a family unit can create an accountability that keeps everyone on track. Here are some resolutions to think about making right now.

- * Eating healthier meals together can move everyone's personal health in the right direction. Start by adding a fruit or vegetable to every meal and try whole grains or a new grain, like quinoa. Small changes can add up to big gains and healthy results.

- * Transform negative thinking patterns into positive ones. The family can keep gratitude journals, highlighting things in their lives they are grateful for or actions that make each person proud.

- * Plan for screen-free family time each day so that everyone can engage without the distractions of social media, work, friends, and other digital activities.

- * Collectively aim

to get more sleep each night. This may be achieved by turning electronics off earlier each night and spending the hour or two before bed engaged in lighthearted conversation or stress-busting activities like reading books.

Greetings of the Season

We Wish Everyone a Happy Healthy and Prosperous New Year! May there be Peace for all people in 2023

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Wishing everyone a very Happy New Year

Commissioner Diane Velazquez and her husband, Ed, wish all the residents of Apopka, visitors and the business community the best for the New Year; may it be healthy and prosperous. God bless.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

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