

The Apopka Chief

A MAINSTREET DAILY NEWS PUBLICATION

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Council reduces utility rate increases

New rates took effect Feb. 3

By Teresa Sargeant
Reporter

The Apopka City Council voted Wednesday to reduce previously adopted increases to water, wastewater and reclaimed water rates after city staff and an outside consultant found higher revenues and operational savings.

Per the adopted resolution, effective Feb. 3, the utility rate schedule for fiscal years 2026 through 2029 has been revised. Under the new plan, the FY2026 increase will instead be 10%, followed by 6% increases in each of the next three years.

This is different from September 2025, when the council approved a 15.5% rate increase for FY2026, followed by planned increases of 9% in FY2027 and 6% in FY2028 and FY2029.

After the September vote, the council asked staff to find efficiencies in the budget, according to city finance director Blanche Sherman.

“During that discussion pertaining to the rate increase, the administration instructed city staff to review the Fund 401 utili-

Candidates debate growth, utility hikes

Hundreds attend mayoral debate

By Teresa Sargeant
Reporter

Apopka’s three mayoral candidates addressed their visions for the city during the first debate of the 2026 municipal election cycle, touching on issues ranging from growth and infrastructure to utility hikes and even legal challenges as public officials.

Around 500 people attended the Apopka mayoral debate Tuesday night at the Apopka High School Performance Arts Center. The Apopka Chief, WESH 2 News, and the Apopka High School PTSA co-hosted the event, which was sponsored by Maynard Nexsen law firm. Chief publisher J.C. Derrick and WESH 2 reporter Greg Fox served as co-moderators.

Orange County Commissioner Christine Moore, City Commissioner Nick Nesta and incumbent Mayor Bryan Nelson addressed a range of issues impacting the city, including infrastructure, affordable housing, and the impact of potential property tax reform state lawmakers are considering during the current legislative session.

One topic the debate focused on was how Apopka, as Orange County’s second largest city with more than 66,000 residents, should fi-



Photo by Dana O’Connor
Orange County Commissioner Christine Moore, incumbent Mayor Bryan Nelson and City Commissioner Nick Nesta discuss issues at the Apopka mayoral debate.

nance the “growing pains” of its expansion.

In his opening statement, Nelson defended his two-terms as mayor, citing more than a \$30 million reserve and a reduction in general fund debt to under \$2 million, freeing up over \$1 million for infrastructure and public safety.

“We have found our way out of a hole,” Nelson said, arguing that the city is in a much stronger financial posi-

tion than when he took office eight years ago.

Nesta and Moore talked about the fiscal burden placed on current residents, such as the combined water rate increase of almost 40% over the past two years.

Nesta, who voted against the rate increase in September, said the city is improperly using utility funds to help subsidize the general fund by over \$6.8 million.

“We can’t afford this in-

crease,” Nesta said, adding that inaccurate meter data has hurt residents.

Nelson said that the increased rates are necessary to maintain the city’s investment-grade status and fund essential wastewater plant debt.

Moore noted that water rates have been increasing in cities around the county due to inflationary pressure.

MAYORAL DEBATE, A5



Photo by Dana O’Connor
WESH 2’s Greg Fox speaks as the Chief’s J.C. Derrick listens on.

Mayoral debate educates on issues, process

Event draws Apopka residents and out-of-towners

By Teresa Sargeant
Reporter

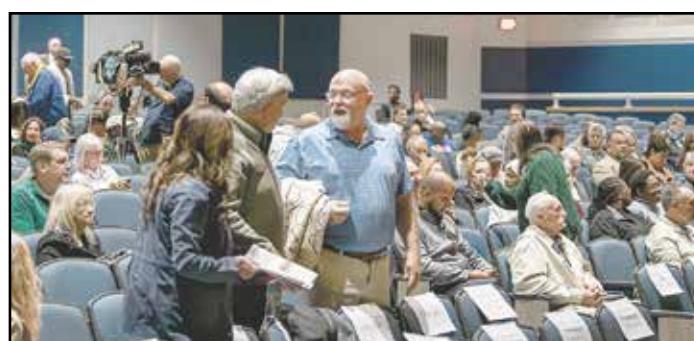


Photo by Dana O’Connor

Attendees greet each other at Apopka High School before the debate begins.

High School Performing Arts Center, drew students, voters, elected officials and oth-

ers who came to hear from the three candidates, Orange County Commissioner Chris-

tine Moore, incumbent Mayor Bryan Nelson and City Commissioner Nick Nesta.

The strong attendance showed that “there’s a lot of interest in this election,” said Angel de la Portilla, an Ocoee resident.

“People in Apopka really care about their city and their leadership, so that’s where they show up,” he said.

He also described the importance of regional collaboration among cities like Ocoee, Apopka, and Winter Garden, especially considering potential property tax re-

form, a topic that was discussed at the debate.

“The cities are going to have to figure out new ways of working together, so sharing some of the services that they provide and all that, all that stuff’s very important,” he said.

The Apopka Chief, WESH 2 News and the Apopka High School PTSA co-presented the event, which was sponsored by Maynard Nexsen law firm. WESH 2 News reporter Greg Fox and Chief

ATTENDEES, A6

Apopka bands together as freezing temps blanket area

Matthew’s Hope struggles to support homeless in chilly weather

By Sarah Merly and Teresa Sargeant
Reporters

As the temperatures dropped sharply last weekend and into this week, Apopka residents banded together to stay warm.

“The thing I’m most impressed by is the community



Courtesy of Scott Billue
Matthew’s Hope volunteers prepare food at the Winter Garden outreach center.

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Velazquez seeks to overturn advance legal fees policy

Anderson alleges ‘hate group’ influence is behind motion

By Teresa Sargeant
Reporter

The Apopka City Council descended into a heated debate Wednesday as a motion to reconsider a controversial legal fee policy sparked allegations of political cowardice, social media bullying, and internal “con-

sspiracy” among elected officials.

During her council report, Commissioner Diane Velazquez motioned to reconsider a resolution that allows advancing up to \$5,000 per case to elected officials facing civil or administrative proceedings related to their role in office. If the official loses the case or is not cleared, that person must pay the city back.

“I would like to rescind my initial vote on this,” Velazquez said. “The reason

for it is that the public — and I have very strong support from different constituents — have all asked me to reconsider my vote. They do not want city tax funds to pay for anyone’s — and that includes all of us — to pay upfront for legal fees.”

She clarified that while she supports reimbursement if a member is found not guilty, her constituents largely oppose advancing the funds.

COUNCIL, A7

Opinion

The Apopka Chief

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Return of the Jedi—making your voice heard

Editor's note: This is the third part of a series on property tax reform.

In the Star Wars universe, the Jedi were the ones with the true power, and their lightsaber was their trusty weapon. As a citizen and voter, you are the ones who hold the true power, and your voice is your lightsaber.

In this final Star Wars-themed column on property tax, I want to share how to make your voice heard regarding the property tax proposals that will ultimately be placed on the ballot in November.

Regardless of which property tax proposals make it to the ballot, you as the voters have the option of voting "yes" (or "no") on which proposals you agree or do not agree with. You have the power to vote yes or no on any or all of the proposals.

It is not a menu that only allows a single choice; you can vote any way you like on all that make it to the ballot. In other words, a "yes" or "no" on one proposal does not cover all the other proposals or disqualify another proposal.

Unlike legislation that is passed, any proposals that make it to the ballot for a vote during elections are considered to be constitutional amendments, where they must receive 60% approval by the voters to become effective. (Let me also remind you that the process is still ongoing, and the Senate must

Florida House of Representatives



Doug Bankson

also weigh in, so there may only be one or two that actually make it to the ballot.)

There are two key ways you can let your voice be heard. First, as your representative I would like to hear where you, the residents of

District 39 stand on these proposals. Do you favor a complete removal of homestead taxes, or a proposal that exempts school and first responders? Should people truly own their home or "rent from the government"?

Please reach out to my district office and let me know your preferences or concerns on any or all of the property tax proposals in the coming weeks. You can reach me at (407) 598-8470, or email me at Doug.Bankson@flhouse.gov.

You can also follow the bills at flhouse.gov and flesenate.gov, where you can enter the House or Senate bill number and contact bill sponsors and legislators directly regarding your thoughts and preferences for the ballot this November.

As we move forward with this process in the coming months, I encourage you to stay informed on the variety of property tax proposals (as discussed in my last column) and consider how each one can impact you or your loved ones. It's here that you can then use your voice in deciding how to vote in November.

APOPKA ELECTION 2026:

Voter registration deadline: Monday, Feb. 9

Early voting dates: Monday, Feb. 23 through Sunday, March 8, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

Election Day: March 10, 7 a.m.-7 p.m.

What's on the ballot: Mayor; City Council seats 1, 2 and 4; eight city charter amendments

About The Apopka Chief

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Letters to the editor are welcome and encouraged, but they should be signed and include a daytime telephone number, address, or email address for verification. Management reserves the right to edit letters.

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- **Mobil (Citgo):** 454 E. Main St.
- **One Florida Bank:** 21 E. 3rd St.
- **Optical Eyeland:** 730 S. Orange Blossom Tr.
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Legislators tackle school funding issues

Orange County School Board, District 7



Melissa Byrd

dents who were actually in public schools. Our local budget was severely affected by this issue this year, as we were very late in receiving our state funding while they worked out the scholarship issues.

The House has not yet approved the bill because it is developing its own version, with concerns regarding the separation of voucher funding from the main education budget.

So our advocacy was to encourage the House to get on board with the plan to separate the scholarship funding from our regular state funding for public schools, so our budgets are not affected in the future.

We also spoke about electric bike and scooter safety, immigration enforcement issues around schools, and school closures.

Overall, our representatives, as always, were receptive and responsive. I encourage all voters to pay attention to the work being done by our lawmakers during this legislative session and reach out to your representatives to share your stories and concerns. Your voice can make a difference.

One of the key parts of being a school board member is to help advocate in Tallahassee for legislation that improves the education we provide. That's because so much of what we do, from our funding to our curriculum, is controlled by the state government.

As such, last week, I traveled to Tallahassee as part of the Florida School Boards Association's "Day in the Legislature" annual meeting.

This trip started with a day of bill briefings by FSBA staff and other leaders from around the state, where we reviewed the latest information on education bills that have been filed and got up to date on the education talks currently taking place in the capital.

The next day, we spent the day visiting legislators in both the House and Senate, discussing the bills and advocating for the issues that affect our schools locally.

I had several productive meetings with Representative Doug Bankson and Senators Keith True, now, Carlos Guillermo Smith and LaVon Bracy Davis. As is usually the case, our meetings centered on funding — although this year, there

was an additional request.

The Senate unanimously passed a bipartisan bill correcting many of the funding issues that the expanded school scholarship program has experienced over the last couple of years. The bill, Senate Bill 318, was introduced in response to a 2025 Florida Auditor General report that indicated issues with the tracking of funds in the state's \$4 billion, now-universal, voucher system. The legislation aims to ensure that funds follow the student properly to their chosen school.

The audits found over \$270 million in unaccounted funds, potential overpayments for 30,000 students and \$47 million sent to stu-

Who says the highway can't be my way?

Columnist



Jake Vest

lecting in speeding fines on I-95 alone?

If it is too much for the Highway Patrol, give the job to AT&T and Verizon. Your phone knows everything about you, including where you are at any given time. If your phone is 100 miles further down a road than it was an hour ago, you're busted.

Better yet, some vigilante justice could do the trick and would be more satisfying for us victims. Put an identification code and a scanner on all vehicles and let motorists vote on who's driving like a jerk. If a car tailgates, zips through traffic carelessly, cuts you off, or is generally reckless and annoying, you push a button on your steering wheel to report it.

After a certain number of reports, a fine would be issued electronically, charged to the phone bill. Enough additional jerk votes and the vehicle is shut down, just like they do with golf carts that get too close to the greens or go out of bounds.

That would leave a lot of pedestrians on the road in harm's way, but just think of the exercise benefits. If enough people have to walk back to New Jersey from Central Florida, we'd have a surplus of highly developed athletes, maybe even Olympic class.

That might come in handy in case we have to replace a few who are in jail.

I can do 75. But if I do, I'm liable to abuse, rude gestures and some distracted driver trying to park a GMC Yukon in my back seat.

This is not just a traffic thing any more, it's assault. There are so many victims in the same demographic that this is practically a hate crime — motorized elderly abuse. It's also intimidation, defined federally as "actions designed to induce fear, coerce behavior, or prevent someone from exercising their legal rights."

I haven't read the Constitution closely, but surely we've got the right to drive legally and to use some portion of the roads we paid for. Not to mention the cruel irony that my Social Security "benefit" is taxed and part of it goes for buying speed-limit signs.

What is it about this country making laws and not enforcing them? Do we just not want the billion dollars a day we could be col-

Restaurant sues city for alleged code violation

Lawsuit alleges delays, financial losses during renovation

By Teresa Sergeant
Reporter

An Apopka restaurant and its owner have filed suit against the city and one of its code enforcement officers, alleging that the officer acted beyond his legal authority and caused delays and financial losses during the restaurant's renovation.

The complaint, filed Jan. 6 in Orange County Circuit Court, was brought by Valerie Sparkman individually and on behalf of Just Like Momma's Soul Food and Wings LLC. The lawsuit names the city of Apopka and code enforcement officer Da-



Photo by Sarah Merly

The owner of Just Like Momma's is suing the city of Apopka.

vid Whitty as defendants and seeks damages exceeding \$50,000, court records show.

According to the filing, Sparkman signed a commercial lease with the city in March 2024 to open the restaurant, which is now located at 44 E. Fifth St. at the

Fifth Street Plaza. The complaint alleges that Whitty entered the premises on March 19, 2024, and about one week later, returned citing a noise complaint.

On April 16, 2024, Whitty allegedly told Sparkman that a stop-work order had been issued and that all construction and renovation activity had to cease until a permit was obtained, according to the filing.

"By unilaterally fabricating and enforcing a Stop Work Order, Defendant Whitty exercised authority he did not and could not lawfully possess, causing Plaintiffs to suspend lawful business operations under color of official power," the lawsuit states.

Relying on those statements, the plaintiffs said they halted work, hired a new con-

tractor and retained an architect to meet what they believed were city requirements. The city later approved a permit on May 29, 2024, after what the plaintiffs describe as more than two months of delay.

The complaint further alleges that in June 2024, city officials informed Sparkman that code enforcement officers do not have the authority to issue stop-work orders and that no such order had been issued against the restaurant. The city's building director, John Hanson, also confirmed that only a licensed building inspector or the building director may issue a stop-work order, according to the lawsuit.

The plaintiffs cite a September 2024 administrative investigation by the Apopka Police Department that con-

cluded Whitty acted beyond the scope of his legal authority and that the work being done at the restaurant did not require a permit.

The suit also notes that the city later recognized Whitty as its 2024 "Civilian of the Year" after the investigation had concluded.

The complaint makes multiple claims, including negligence against the city, fraudulent and negligent misrepresentation against Whitty, due process and equal protection violations, and tortious interference with business relationships.

The plaintiffs seek compensatory damages, costs, and other relief, including a jury trial.

Attorney Tyne' Michelle Evans, Sparkman's daughter, declined to give an interview on the pending lawsuit. How-

ever, she emailed a statement for this story.

"This case centers on government accountability," Evans wrote in the email.

"As detailed in the filed complaint, we allege that actions taken by a City of Apopka employee, acting under color of law and without lawful authority, caused significant financial harm to a local small business and its owner by delaying the business's ability to open and operate, and caused significant emotional harm to the business owner. The complaint further alleges that the City of Apopka bears responsibility for these actions and the resulting harm. We look forward to the facts being evaluated through the judicial process."

The Apopka Police Department declined to comment for this story.

Seminole County Chamber launches Apopka area council

New council held inaugural meeting Monday

By Sarah Merly
Reporter

The West Seminole Council, a local branch of the Seminole County Chamber, launched Monday at Bahia Shriners on Semoran Boulevard.

"We're really proud of the way the community has welcomed this new council and how many people came out for the first meeting," said Rebekah Arthur, president and CEO of the Seminole Chamber.

The West Seminole branch is the newest of the chamber's eight councils and serves the Semoran Boulevard corridor, spanning downtown Apopka to the intersection of State Roads 434 and 436. The Seminole Chamber decided to expand into the city after noticing an influx of Apopka businessmen and women at-

tending the Altamonte Springs Council.

"We've had a lot of businesses from the Apopka area over the past year looking for another way for them to connect with more businesses and community leaders," Arthur said in a Dec. 1 interview with The Apopka Chief.

The council meets on the first Monday of each month from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. for lunch and to listen to a guest speaker. Council chair Laura Meyers Blair said the council was planning to host 80 to 100 guests at its first meeting, and 117 guests registered.

"Because of that, we would normally have time where each guest would get to introduce themselves and have 15 seconds to get their elevator pitch," Blair said. "Because of the number of people, we had to shorten it just to their name and company name, but other than that, I think it went off pretty well."

Jessica Rosario-Fortis of the Seminole State College Center of Business Develop-

ment served as the council's first guest speaker, discussing three "steps to strategic business momentum": strategic clarity, intentional partnerships, and purposeful networking.

"Partnerships are the fastest ways to help you grow momentum," Rosario-Fortis said. "The right partner will build with you. They won't take away from you in any way.

They want to build with you. That's why we're here today."

Two pairs of guests shared brief testimonials about their partnerships through the chamber after Rosario-Fortis' talk, including William Varney of Platinum Roofing Services and Jet Set Printing & Signs' Brian Stanley.

"Because of him, we have our banner today," Varney said of Stanley. "It's taken

a couple months for us to get the design right. He helped me from beginning to end... I really appreciate everything you did for me."

Platinum Roofing Services was one of four businesses to sign up for a table spotlight at the meeting, which enabled them to share promotional literature at the meeting and present for a minute each. Attendees who visited each table

were registered for a chance to win one of several door prizes sponsored by member businesses.

"We have so many great businesses here in Apopka, and I heard a lot of people say coming here, they're like, 'Oh, I drove by there, and I didn't even know it was there,'" Blair said. "So we want people to know what businesses are here and what they do so we can support one another and help each other grow businesses."

Attendee Christine Horvay of FirstCard Merchant Services said she was excited to see the chamber branch into Apopka, pointing to the chamber's status as Florida Chamber of the Year.

"It looks like it's very dynamic — a lot of interaction amongst the members," Horvay said. "This is a good hand-in-hand for me — one chamber member over in Apopka, and then now Seminole. I'm excited. I'm very excited."

The next Lunch & Learn is scheduled for March 2.



Photo by Sarah Merly

Guest speaker Jessica Rosario-Fortis, director of the Florida SBDC at the Seminole State College Center of Business Development, shares the three steps to making businesses thrive.



Photo by Sarah Merly

West Seminole Council chair Laura Meyers Blair welcomes guests to the first council meeting.



Photo by Sarah Merly

Seminole County Chamber president and CEO Rebekah Arthur shares remarks at the inaugural West Seminole Council meeting.

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MAYORAL DEBATE

FROM A1

Moore took aim at the city's approach to growth, saying it has been fragmented. She and Nesta expressed concern that Apopka's infrastructure maintenance is "a bit of a Ponzi scheme," where new development fees are used to pay for old debts while existing roads and sidewalks crumble.

She highlighted her experience as chair of Metro-Plan Orlando, which coordinates transportation projects across Osceola, Seminole and Orange counties.

"I will tell you, you cannot fix these roads without partnerships," she said.

All three candidates spoke about a proposed charter amendment that could, if approved by voters, change the mayoral role to more ceremonial and shift much of its authority to a new city manager. Each candidate pledged to serve the full four-year term, regardless of the outcome of the charter amendment vote.

The candidates took different approaches on the subject of annexation for south Apopka. Moore said she supported annexation, while Nesta said he thinks the people should decide, while Nelson said he does not support it, citing studies that showed it would not make financial sense for residents.

Toward the end of the debate, the discussion turned contentious as it touched upon candidates' legal issues.

When asked about the lawsuit Nelson filed against Moore alleging she didn't live within the city proper in time to run for mayor, Moore



Photo by Dana O'Connor

All three mayoral candidates presented their visions for Apopka's future during Tuesday's debate at Apopka High School.

said she did what she needed to do to qualify properly.

"I wanted to be part of the solution," Moore said. "I'm in the historic district."

Nesta said a recently dismissed ethics complaint against him was politically motivated. The ethics complaint alleged a conflict of in-

terest in which he advocated for a \$50,000 city grant to a nonprofit executive run by a real estate client of his, and that he should have recused himself from council votes.

"I wasn't worried about [the complaint] to begin with, and I'm not worried about it now," Nesta said, adding that

his client never took a salary from the nonprofit.

Nelson echoed that political motivation was behind the censure vote against him in 2023 for allegedly lying about former city attorney Michael Rodriguez's employment status. Nelson cited four presidents in U.S.

history that were also censured, including Abraham Lincoln.

"Abraham Lincoln was one I feel pretty proud to be associated with," Nelson said.

On the ballot this election cycle is mayor, City Council seats 1, 2 and 4 and

eight proposed city charter amendments.

The municipal general election is March 10 with potential runoff on April 14. The last day of voter registration is Feb. 9.

To watch the full debate, go to www.wesh.com and search for "Apopka debate."



Photo by Dana O'Connor

Mayor Bryan Nelson and Commissioner Christine Moore draw straws to decide the order of opening statements.



Photo by Dana O'Connor

Commissioner Christine Moore responds to a question during Tuesday's debate.

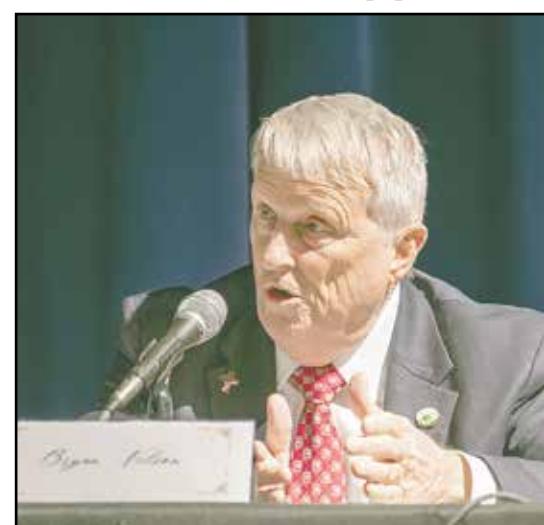


Photo by Dana O'Connor

Mayor Bryan Nelson responds to a question from the moderators during the debate.

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LARRY MEREDITH

79, of Apopka, Florida, passed away December 10, 2025

He was born August 21, 1946, in Painesville, Ohio.



Larry moved with his family to Orlando in 1958 and attended Edgewater High School. Athletic from a young age, he played junior league baseball with the Orioles and later became a competitive swimmer at the national level. He proudly served his country in the United States Air Force, a commitment to service that remained important throughout his life.

As a young man, Larry worked as a lifeguard at Lake Fairview, where he spent countless hours swimming, fishing, and skiing. He loved the outdoors and especially cherished time on the water. Music was one of his greatest passions. A talented drummer, Larry played in numerous bands over the years, including Rocking Renegades, Rick Martin's Backyard Society, Caught in the Act, The Martin Air Force Base Band, American Pie, Second Guessin, and Caribbean Chillers. He loved the music of Chicago, Boston, and Journey, and his favorite song, Footloose, reflected his energetic spirit.

In 1992, Larry married the love of his life, Shirley. Together they built a life rooted in love, generosity, and joy. Known for their open hearts and open doors, they welcomed many into their home, making everyone feel like family.

Larry worked for many years as a mechanic before transitioning into a career as an insurance agent. Through his involvement with the VFW, he proudly supported fellow veterans by organizing fundraising dinner shows that combined his love of music with his dedication to service. He also enjoyed cooking, especially seafood, and sharing meals, stories, and laughter.

Larry is survived by his wife, Shirley; his children, Dustin (Amy) Meredith and Ashley (Justin) Zembower; his grandchildren, Karissa (Branden), Brennen, Devon (Abigail), Christian, Jameson, Kylie, Dalton (Elizabeth), Kenzie, Parker, Malachi, Logan, Kendall (Alex), Luke (Taylor), Seth, Van, and Brittany (Mark); and his great-grandchildren, Rowan, Riley, Everett, and Sutton. He was preceded in death by his parents, John Paul, and Evelyn; his brother, Daniel; and his stepson, Donald.

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FREEZING TEMPS

FROM A1

"People from Renewal Church came and stayed until midnight, maybe a little after," Fisher said.

Temperatures began rising slightly on Monday, so the city does not plan to open any more shelters this week, according to Mayor Bryan Nelson. However, Duke Energy did encourage customers to conserve energy from 5 to 9 a.m. Monday morning.

"We know power is an essential part of our customers' everyday lives, and we recognize that reducing electricity usage isn't an easy ask," Melissa Seixas, Duke Energy Florida state president, said in a Sunday Duke

Energy news release. "We appreciate our customers' cooperation and understanding as we work to continue providing safe, reliable service for our more than 2 million customers during this cold spell."

The company suggested ways customers can lower their energy use in the news release. Recommended ways are reducing the thermostat, avoiding appliance use between the recommended times, shutting off unnecessary devices, and, for electric vehicles owners, charging their vehicles midday when demand is lower.

The Apopka Police De-

partment reported no cold weather-related distress calls over the weekend.

However, Matthew's Hope founder Scott Billue told the Chief that the unprecedented weather has caused his homeless ministry to use a week's worth of supplies every day and a half.

"We are literally hemorrhaging money," Billue said.

Matthew's Hope provides sleeper buses for those experiencing homelessness and has two outreach centers located in Winter Garden and Cocoa, although Apopka is the ministry's "biggest single market." Billue



Courtesy of Scott Billue

Homeless men and women at the Matthew's Hope outreach center in Winter Garden gather around the TV.

said Matthew's Hope opens weather shelters when the its outreach centers as cold wind chill factor is 39 de-

grees or below for at least two days in a row.

"The first day, your body is doing okay," Billue said. "The second day, your body starts to dehydrate."

Billue said he has never seen cold weather so persistent since founding Matthew's Hope in 2010.

"Any place that we have floor space, we have cots," Billue said of the Winter Garden center. "We've outgrown our facility."

Billue appreciates the community's provision of bedding and food, though he said the ministry urgently needs financial support.

ATTENDEES

FROM A1

publisher J.C. Derrick served as moderators, covering such topics as growth and infrastructure, property tax reform, utility hikes and even the legal matters each of the three candidates have faced ahead of the March 10 election.

In addition to mayor, voters will also decide who will occupy City Council seats 1, 2 and 4, and the proposed eight city charter amendments. Potential runoff is April 14.

The Apopka Mayoral Debate was a lesson in civic discourse for students, said Principal Lyle Heinz of Apopka High School.

"What a great experience for our kids," Heinz said. "They ran all the sound and lights, and it went spectacular in that sense, so we're happy to help the community."

Arthur Foran, an AHS student who came to the stage to draw the candidates' names



Photo by Dana O'Connor

Commissioner Nick Nesta greets arriving guests.



Photo by Dana O'Connor

Attendees lined up outside the auditorium ahead of the event.

for the order of closing statements, said the debate was a volunteer opportunity. Foran said he's not old enough to vote yet, "sadly," but he still found the debate beneficial.

"I got to learn a lot about ... the political process and the political atmosphere, too, of Apopka," Foran said.

Another attendee, Cosmo Wilson, said Tuesday marked the first time he had been to a mayoral debate since 2018.

"It was nice to see, especially when I found out it was here at the Apopka High School in the theater because I knew it was much bigger," Wilson said. "I just wanted to

see them in person and I was looking forward to the questions and their responses."

Wilson praised Derrick and Fox for asking the candidates questions that "put them on the spot a bit."

"It was great to see them uneasy with each other because that's what this is all

about," Wilson said. "I've got to hand it to all three candidates. They all, I thought, handled themselves [well]. I thought some answers were better than others, but it was definitely educating me on certain things and, just to see them interact together on stage was interesting."

Wilson was surprised by the number of attendees, which the high school more easily accommodated than the previously planned venue Highland Manor, where the cap was 100.

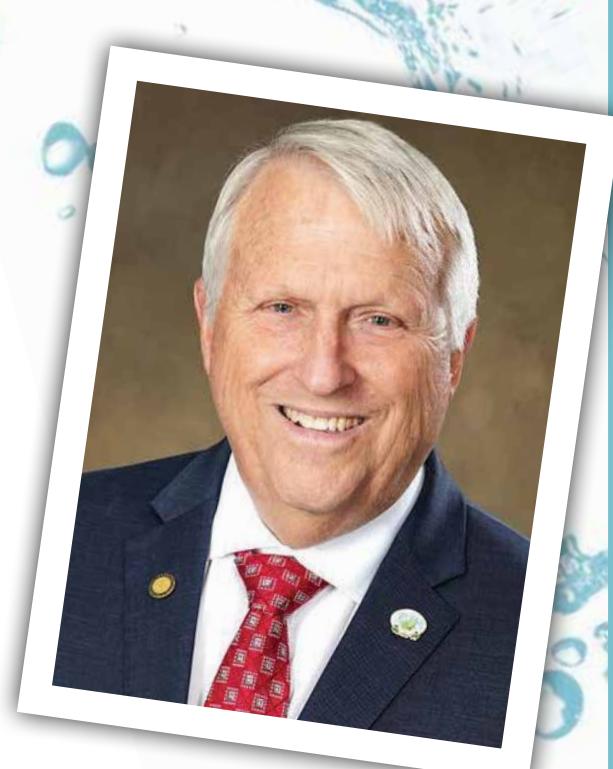
"I was pleased to see the turnout," he said.

Cathy Brown, who lives outside the city limits, said she attended the debate as an observer rather than a voter, to witness the candidates' decorum and engagement.

"Even when it got — you want to say — a little bit heated maybe, it was still within bounds," Brown said. "It made me feel hopeful that even candidates who have such big differences at times can be civil and can engage to where the audience can make a decision very easily, because they could really hear where all of the candidates were coming from."

MAYOR BRYAN NELSON CUTS WATER RATES BY 5.5%.

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- ✓ Implementing updated procedures and penalties to prevent meter tampering.

“

"We've made the necessary changes that allow us to reduce water rates by 5.5%, with plans for additional reduction in the future. The meter issues should not have happened, and once we learned about them, we moved quickly to address the problem."

— BRYAN NELSON

COUNCIL

FROM A1

Velazquez originally supported the measure in a 3-1 policy vote at the Jan. 21 meeting.

Since that day, constituents contacted Velazquez in multiple ways asking her to "reconsider" her vote.

City attorney Cliff Shepard explained to Velazquez that there would first be a motion to reconsider the issue, which, if approved, could be followed by a motion to overturn the policy.

Velazquez's motion to reconsider was met with immediate resistance from Commissioner Nadia Anderson, who suggested the reversal was a reaction to "online hate groups" and "reactionary pressure," rather than new information.

Anderson, who is currently facing a lawsuit challenging her



Photo by Dana O'Connor
Commissioner Nadia Anderson

strongly opposed reconsidering the legal fees policy.

residency, showed many social media posts and text messages directed at Velazquez. One message Anderson read into the record attacked Velazquez for "selling her soul to the devil" by supporting Anderson,

while also attacking her relationship with Orange County Commissioner Christine Moore.

Moore and City Commissioner Nick Nesta are running against incumbent Bryan Nelson for mayor or in an election now less than five weeks away.

"Changing the vote should be grounded in new information, not [reactionary] pressure," Anderson said. "I respect that every commissioner has the right to reflect on their vote at the same time. Our responsibility is to make decisions based on facts, law and what is in the best interest of the entire community, not pressure from online hate groups. Leadership requires the courage to stand by informed decisions even when they're unpopular."

Velazquez defended her decision, noting that while she received "upsetting" and "angry" messages, her change of mind was based on conversations with long-term supporters and "regular, everyday people" who disagreed with the policy on principle.

The discussion took a sharp turn when Anderson accused Nesta of "conspiring" with residents to remove her from her commissioner seat via legal action.

Anderson presented emails from January 2024 involving Nesta and a local resident, Kelly Butcher, that appeared to show Nesta assisting in the drafting and formatting of a legal complaint against Anderson regarding her residency.

According to the transcript Anderson read, Nesta allegedly wrote,

"Please do not share this doc with anyone or tell anyone that I assisted you in this effort."

"It is a shame that a sitting commissioner would conspire with the residents to try to draft a legal document to try to get someone removed," Anderson said, labeling the behavior "cowardly" and lacking integrity.

Nesta, who remained largely silent during Anderson's presentation, eventually seconded Velazquez's motion to reconsider the legal fee resolution.

When Mayor Bryan Nelson called for the vote, only Velazquez and Nesta voted in favor of reconsidering the prepayment policy. The motion failed 3-2, leaving the current legal fee advancement policy in place.

UTILITY RATES

FROM A1

ty operating operations provided in the FY26 budget in an effort to improve revenues and identify operating efficiencies aimed at reducing the rate increase planned for the years FY26 to 2029," she said.

Through this effort, the staff identified savings in overtime, outside contracting for the meter replacement program, rentals and leases, and other operating expenses in the utility fund. The city is also trending above projected revenue and below projected expenditures for the current fiscal year, Sherman told the City Council.

The utility system realized about \$3.1 million per year in net benefit, according to Shawn Ocasio, senior consultant with Raftelis Financial Consultants.

"It would be our recommendation to consider adopting the proposed revised rate program," Ocasio said. "It'll still maintain all your cash flow targets, it'll maintain coverage requirements for on your loan agreements, and you'll be building that sufficient operating reserves for liquidity for credit rating purposes."

Ocasio said revenues for fiscal year 2025 also came in higher than originally projected, allowing the city to revise its forecast. He said capital improvement costs increased by about \$40 million, but nearly \$37 million is expected to be offset by principal forgiveness through the State Revolving Fund loan program.

Interim city administrator Radley Williams said

city staff have been working since late summer to fix meter and billing problems, expand meter-reading coverage, tighten spending and improve collections.

Williams reported that estimated bills are dropping toward industry norms, a new base station is online, fee changes are in place, and a new email notification system is already helping collect on delinquent accounts.

"A lot of hard work and effort and dedication has been going on with our utility operations department and our utility billing department to continue working through those issues and getting those meters back up and running," he said.

Residents such as Rod Olsen urged caution and stressed the importance of

basing rate decisions on verified numbers.

"This is something that is controllable," Olsen said. "It's controllable by a factual, fact-based, historical-based budget. And you look

at that budget every month."

Mayor Bryan Nelson said the adjusted plan will meet debt and operational needs while easing the impact on customers.

"We can be confident

that the rate we've got now is adequate to meet the needs of our public services department," Nelson said. "We won't have to come back next year and raise the rates."

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ACROSS

- Action word
5. Sierra Nevada, e.g.
8. Do like Lindsey Vonn
11. Sheltered, nautically speaking
12. a.k.a. Daminozide
13. a.k.a. tangelos
15. Ladder crosspiece
16. Rigatoni relative
17. Earth tremor
18. Buchanan's or Lincoln's birth place (2 words)
20. Odds' partners
21. Completely dedicated (2 words)
22. Street in France
23. *The Era of Good Feelings president
26. Ground red peppers spice
30. Paleozoic or Victorian, e.g.
31. Talking pet
34. Flock's affirmation
35. Phonograph media
37. It doesn't mix with water
38. Key, in Spanish

39. Letter before kappa

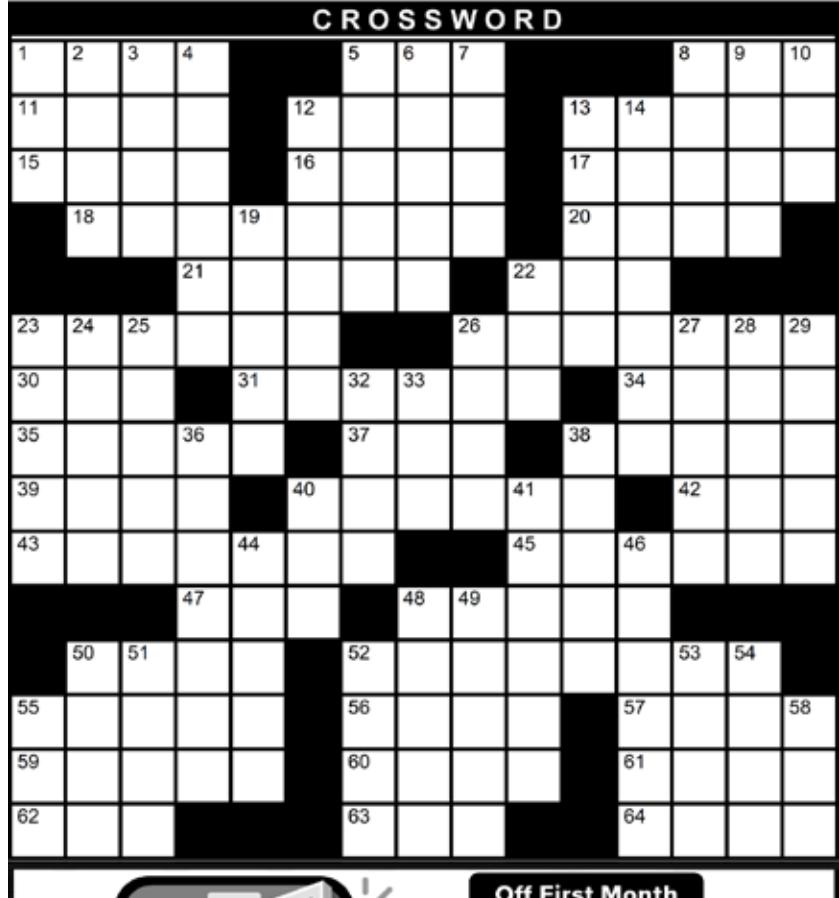
40. Conjured
42. Bathtub hooch
43. "You don't bring me flowers ____"
45. Silvery-white, in heraldry
47. The night before
48. Add something extra (2 words)
50. Eye rakishly
52. *Millard's last name
55. Unwelcome software message
56. Double reed woodwind
57. Actress Sorvino
59. Carell on "The Office"
60. Falling out
61. Grand in scale
62. *Buchanan who ran for president in 1992 and 1996
63. Dental school alternative to MCAT
64. Tiresias in "Oedipus Rex," e.g.

DOWN

1. Variable, abbr.
2. Twelfth month of Jewish civil year

3. *Attorney General under Bill Clinton

4. Panhandler
5. "My wife can vouch for me," e.g.
6. Ancient Romans' language
7. Julia Roberts' Academy Award-winning role
8. Went down slippery slope
9. Gene Simmons' rock band
10. Belief or philosophy
12. Popular flowering shrub
13. Deplete (2 words)
14. *Eisenhower or Grant, pre-presidency
19. Horse hoof sounds
22. One in Dean Martin's pack?
23. Means of mass communication
24. Belted starman
25. Highly unpleasant
26. *Between Tyler and Taylor
27. Visual representation
28. Macaulay Culkin's famous character
29. Beside, archaic
32. "Karl ____," "The Architect" of George W. Bush's campaigns
33. Grande or Bravo, e.g.
36. *Nickname for Kennedy's presidency
38. Read-only memory device
40. Before, old-fashioned
41. Aerie baby
44. Blatant
46. Mythological garden guardians
48. Fibula's partner
50. "Blackfish" (2013) subject
51. Small cave
52. *Model T namesake or U.S. President
53. Ready for picking
54. Lake north of Cleveland
55. Clairvoyance
58. Acronym, abbr.



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POLICE BEAT

APD arrests 29 Jan. 25-31

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In the period from January 25-31, 2026, the Apopka Police Department received 1,492 calls for service, responded to 28 crashes, issued 69 citations, and made 29 arrests. Burglaries: 1 vehicle, 2 residences, 2 businesses. Juveniles were charged with burglary of unoccupied dwelling unarmed (X2); larceny-other theft (X2); flee/elude police failure to obey law enforcement officers order to stop; vehicle theft-grand theft of motor vehicle (X2); burglary-unoccupied structure unarmed (X2); resist officer obstruct without violence; damage property-criminal mischief damage property \$1,000+.

The following adults were arrested and charged:

Alex Gabriel Almodovar Jaramillo, 23, 1663 Hogue Ave., Apopka, aggravated battery-cause bodily harm or disability.

Sofia Asano, 34, 202 M.A. Board St. #4, Apopka, out-of-county warrant.

Christopher James Baity, 22, Apopka, obstructing justice-hinder witness communication information to law enforcement officers/judge misdemeanor proceeding; battery-touch or strike.

DebraLynn Bell, 46, 7813 Delphia St., Orlando, battery by strangulation.

Darius Rashard Brown, 38, 219 Devault St., Umatilla, possession of weapon or ammo by convicted Florida felon.

Stanley Dean Carter, 31, Apopka, battery-touch or strike.

Robert Paul Deluca, 62, 2428 W. Orange Blossom Trl., Apopka, trespassing-failure to leave property on order of owner.

Andrew Mikal Gibson, 27, general delivery, Orlando, aggravated assault-weapon with deadly weapon without intent to kill.

RobertLee Griffin, 59, 201 W. 12th St., Apopka, other agency warrant.

Joseph Ettiene Guillette, 43, Apopka, battery-commit domestic battery by strangulation; battery-touch or strike.

Kaliyah Gloria Gustave, 18, Apopka, battery-touch or strike.

Marc Guerhy Gustin, 33, 161 Lancer Oak Dr., Apopka, DUI-unlawful blood alcohol, DUI-influence of alcohol or drugs; DUI-unlawful blood alcohol, refusal submit DUI testing.

Trevor Jordan Harper, 36, 203 S. Christiana Ave., Apopka, drug equipment-possession and/or use; drugs-possession of controlled substances without prescription; stolen property-deal in dealing traffic stolen property.

Justice Unique Henry, 30, 553 Morgan Meadows Dr., Apopka, moving traffic violation-driving while license suspended revocation equivalent status 3rd subsequent violation.

Thomas Christopher Laurito, 39, Apopka, sex assault by 18 years older, victim 18 year older no physical force violation.

Venessa Ann Martin, 26, 3220 Lincoln St., Sanford, robbery-reside home invasion with weapon; robbery-sudden snatch without firearm/weapon; aggravated assault-weapon with deadly weapon without intent to kill; damage property-criminal mischief, damage property \$1,000+.

Julio Cesar Murcia Perez, 29, Apopka, battery-touch or strike.

Tyler Isaac Pastrana, 18, 1 E. Hammon Dr., Apopka, burglary-unoccupied structure unarmed; resist officer-obstruct with-

out violence; larceny-other theft; damage property-criminal mischief, damage property \$1,000+.

Narkeith Keon Payne, 35, 3200 W. Colonial Dr., Orlando, other agency warrant.

Tammy Joanne Pecor, 48, 9446 NE 305th Ave., Fort McCoy, other agency warrant.

Hanna Kate Alexis Reische, 29, 6222 Courtney Cove, Apopka, larceny-other theft.

Marco Rodriguez Valladares, 26, 2356 Old Dixie Hwy, Apopka, crash driver's license-no driver license-never had one issued; other agency warrant.

Anthony Gabriel Santos-Contreras, 18, 1416 Green Ridge Dr., Apopka, weapon offense-missile into dwelling/vehicle/building or aircraft; aggravated battery-cause bodily harm or disability; homicide-murder dangerous depraved without pre-meditation.

Sharon Christine Strother, 46, 558 Sparrow Ct., Apopka, drugs-possession of controlled substance without prescription; drugs-possession of controlled substance without prescription (cocaine); drug equipment and/or use.

Jenna Marie Thorogood, 32, Apopka, battery-touch or strike (domestic violence).

Tanay Monique Tillman, 27, 1030 Browning Rd., Lakeland, robbery-residence home invasion with weapon; robbery-sudden snatch without firearm/weapon.

Diana Valdez, 32, 22 W. Michael Gladden Blvd., Apopka, other agency warrant.

Tuesday Lynn West, 46, 803 E. Magnolia St., Apopka, larceny-petit theft merchandise farm transit prior conviction.

Jeremiah Jacob Wilson, 39, 9446 NE 305th Ave., Fort McCoy, other agency warrant.

Entrepreneur brings first-of-its-kind Cajun seafood boil to Apopka



Photo by Sarah Merly

Captain Jack's Crab House is scheduled to open later this month.

Restaurant to open Feb. 17

By Pedro Rodriguez
Correspondent

petitive pricing, and a value for their time" at his new location.

"That's what I want people to experience when they walk into Captain Jack's," he told Business Debut.

The fast-casual place with a takeout option is the only seafood boil within a 30-minute drive of Apopka and will feature a decor and theme, with some menu items even having nautical names to match the vibes of the movie that motivated To.

"We're going to be offering a Southern-style Cajun seafood boil. It's family dining with a takeout focus service," restaurant owner Huy To told Business Debut in an interview.

The restaurant named after Captain Jack Sparrow from the notorious movie series, will serve seafood and Latin-style dishes. To's first solo restaurant, located at 2107 E Semoran Blvd, Suite, Apopka, FL 32703, will serve a diverse menu to customers inside the facility and about 40 customers in the restaurant's outdoor patio from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Sunday.

The 30-year veteran of the food industry will focus on giving customers "great food, com-

To did not respond to The Apopka Chief's request for an interview.

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Wekiva boys blow out Lake Minneola by 42 points

Mustangs 55-point first half triggers running clock in district quarterfinal

By Vinnie Cammarano
Reporter

Wekiva wasted no time setting the tone in its Class 6A District 5 quarterfinal matchup against Lake Minneola on Tuesday night, racing out to a commanding first-half lead and never looking back in a 78-36 playoff victory.

The Mustangs (19-6) came out with energy on both ends of the floor, using suffocating defense and great shooting to overwhelm the Hawks (2-15) from the opening tip. Ameer Garland opened the scoring with a basket inside, then immediately forced a turnover and pushed the ball ahead to Eric Nichols, who drilled a 3-pointer to ignite their momentum.

Kenny Diejuste followed with a strong finish in the paint, and Garland con-

tinued to pressure Lake Minneola into mistakes, converting another turnover into free throws to make it 9-2 early. Diejuste went to work inside from there, spinning through defenders for back-to-back buckets. Garland fed him again on the next possession, and Diejuste completed the three-point play.

Wekiva's ball movement and defensive intensity quickly turned the game into a rout. Diejuste kicked out to Louvens Saint Pierre for an open trey, then Saint Pierre

found DJ Thomas in the corner for three more following another forced turnover.

Jasen Francillon added to the momentum with a steal and pull-up jumper, then capped off the quarter in style when the Mustangs pushed the ball in transition and threw an alley-oop to Francillon at the buzzer. By the end of the first quarter, Wekiva held a commanding 30-8 lead.

Francillon opened the

WEKIVA BOYS, B3



Photo by Vinnie Cammarano

Jasen Francillon muscles through two defenders for the basket.

Wekiva wrestler wins gold



Elijah Jean (top) catches his opponent's takedown attempt during Saturday's Wolfpack tournament at Timber Creek.

Elijah Jean
dominates the
215-weight class

By Vinnie Cammarano
Reporter

The Wekiva Mustangs wrestling team competed in the Wolfpack tournament on Saturday, and their 215-pound captain Elijah Jean captured gold. They also

had newcomer Adrian Jackson break a school record.

Wekiva entered the Wolfpack tournament at Timber Creek with 15 other schools. This was an individually bracketed tournament, so team statistics did not matter. As a whole, they struggled early as their unranked wrestlers were facing others who were ranked.

The Mustangs had one of their wrestlers pull off an in-

credible accomplishment. Junior newcomer Adrian Jackson, in what the coaches said was his first tournament ever, beat his opponent in the first round of the consolation bracket in school record time.

On the opening whistle, he blitzed and planted his opponent on his back, forcing a pin in eight seconds. This was one second faster than Elijah Jean's record, which he set earlier this season.

Coach Lenin Vazquez was shocked by what Jackson showed in his first tournament.

"This kid has a lot of potential," he said. "You even saw it in his first fight against that monster of an opponent he faced. I'm so happy he finally decided to join the team."

Jean (23-3) also had

WRESTLING, B3

Wekiva girls suffocate Lake Minneola in district semifinal

Lady Mustangs
follow up the boys,
beat Hawks by 42

By Vinnie Cammarano
Reporter

Wekiva went wire-to-wire in the Class 6A District 5 semifinal Wednesday night, overwhelming Lake Minneola from the opening tip and cruising to a dominant 68-26 victory to punch their ticket to the district championship game.

After the game, head coach Middleton emphasized focus and consistency as his team prepares for the district final.

"Just one point at a time," Middleton said. "Staying focused, understanding the task at hand, not letting the moment be too big, and standing on the nine principles that they as a team came up with today. Just one game at a time."

From the very first pos-



Makayla Bell locks onto a Hawk in the first quarter.

session, the top-seeded Mustangs (15-9) set the tone with relentless pressure defense and lightning-fast transition offense against the fourth-seeded Hawks (13-8). Jakayla Johnson opened the scoring with a steal that led to a Makayla Bell layup, and Bell followed with another strong finish inside after a defensive stop.

Jasmine Pooler quickly turned the game into a track

meet. She recorded back-to-back steals and fast-break layups. Paris Blackwood joined the defensive party with a steal of her own, and Johnson followed with another bucket in the paint before finding Alexis Hill cutting to the rim for an easy score. Pooler swiped another steal and finish to push the lead to 14-0 before Lake Minneola finally got on the board five minutes into the quarter.

Wekiva's defense continued to suffocate the Hawks. Pooler found Hill again on a cut to the basket, then knocked down a corner 3 from a Bell assist. On the next trip, Pooler picked off another pass and fed Johnson for a fastbreak layup. By the end of the first quarter, the Mustangs had built a commanding 22-2 lead, forcing Lake Minneola into constant turnovers.

Wekiva finished the opening quarter alone with nine steals, setting the tone for what became a defensive clinic.

The second quarter followed the same script. Pooler and Johnson each opened with steals and layups, and Bell intercepted a pass and found Pooler cutting for two more points to make it 30-4. Tiana Washington added a strong interior basket, and Bell and Washington connected on a perfectly executed pick-and-roll sequence.

WEKIVA GIRLS, B3

Apopka girls upset Lake Brantley in district playoff

Mikayla Wiggins,
Amari Dillon lead
Blue Darters to
57-47 win

By Vinnie Cammarano
Reporter

The Apopka Blue Darters walked into hostile territory Monday night and walked out with their biggest win of the season.

Facing Lake Brantley on the road in the first round of the Class 7A District 3 playoffs, Apopka (6-16) stunned the Patriots (11-12) with a 57-47 upset victory, using tough defense and dominance in the paint to advance to the next round.

From the opening tip, the game had the feel of a playoff battle. The Blue Darters traded baskets early with Lake Brantley before beginning to assert themselves inside. Elyse Pringle knocked down a 3-pointer and Mikayla Wiggins followed with a finish in the paint to give Apopka a 7-6 edge midway through the quarter.

Amari Dillon added an inside basket moments later, and the Darters began to control the glass. With under a minute left in the quarter, Apopka scored on back-to-back possessions in the paint before Abigail Henry cleaned up an offensive rebound for another bucket. Dillon capped the quarter with a momentum-swinging sequence, blocking a shot on one end and pulling up for a long two just before the buzzer.

Apopka closed the first quarter with a 17-9 lead.

The Blue Darters continued to punish Lake Brantley inside in the second quarter. Henry remained a force around

the rim, scoring off another offensive rebound, while Pringle found Derion Brinson for a midrange jumper. Destiny Gelin added points by cleaning up her own miss, and Brinson calmly converted two free throws to keep the Darters in control.

Lake Brantley answered with a pair of deep 3-pointers, but Apopka's zone defense slowed the Patriots' rhythm. Gelin spun into the lane for a floater late in the half, and Apopka went into the locker room with a 31-22 advantage.

Lake Brantley attempted to make a push early in the third, scoring three straight baskets to cut the lead to five. Apopka responded with poise.

Gelin stopped the run at the free-throw line, and Henry once again muscled in a putback. Wiggins then took over. She hit a 3 from the wing, flew in for a steal, and found Dillon for an and-one finish through contact. The surge pushed Apopka's lead to 15.

Dillon added another strong post move late in the quarter, and Wiggins closed the period at the free-throw line as Apopka took a commanding 48-31 lead into the fourth.

The Patriots opened the final quarter with free throws, but Wiggins answered with a pull-up jumper. She then dominated the glass, grabbing multiple offensive rebounds and scoring to stretch the lead to 19 and force a Lake Brantley timeout.

Apopka's defense stayed relentless down the stretch. Gelin forced a turnover and delivered a bounce pass to Wiggins for

APOPKA GIRLS, B2



Photo by Vinnie Cammarano

Blue Darters break from the 2nd quarter intermission.

Specks keep biting despite cold temps

Hello Folks,
I hope all y'all enjoyed the latest Arctic blast we had. Good gracious, it was cold! They said that it was the coldest few days that we've had in 10 years. I believe it. I hope everyone stayed warm, and if you went fishin' like a few of my friends did, I hope you caught some fish for your trouble!

Believe it or not, the specks were bitin' like crazy. Folks are still catchin' their limit of specks in Lake Woodruff, the St. Johns River and Lake Monroe. Most of the specks are bein' caught on a variety of baits.

Of course, minnows is one of the ol' favorites, and



**GOIN'
FISHIN'**

Jim Keck
Correspondent

speck tournament, too. Last weekend's weather conditions were brutal to fish in, but when the goin' gets tough, the tough get goin'! Lots of specks were caught this past weekend, and some folks really caught some big'uns, too.

Folks were catchin' some specks in the Harris Chain over the weekend. I got some reports that the specks were still in deeper water, and folks were driftin' over 'em just to catch 'em! Most of those specks were caught on jigs tipped with a minnow.

The bass fishin' was good on the Harris Chain last week as well as over the

weekend. The big bass tour held a tournament last weekend, and lots of big bass came to the scales for the weigh-in. You could weigh in your biggest bass each hour.

Congrats to Clayton Wiggins who weighed in the biggest bass of the tournament which hit the scales at 10.41 pounds. The top ten bass each hour won money. So, congrats to all the anglers who fished and got a check.

The bass fishin' on the Kissimmee Chain was hot last week. That's where Bassmaster held their Turtlebox Bassmaster Open. They put in at West Lake Toho, and there were around 170

anglers who took part.

Congrats to Cody Stahl from Georgia who won the tournament by fishin' an offshore spot he found in practice. Cody caught most of his fish on a Lipless Crankbait. He used a Berkley Jack in a silver color and one in a gold color.

Cody was rippin' his 3/4-ounce baits through the offshore grass, and he weighed in five bass on each day of the tournament. On day No. 1, he weighed in a 9-pound-6-ounce bass in his 5-bass limit. On day No. 2, he weighed in an 8-pound-14-ounce bass with his 5-bass limit. Cody weighed in a total of 74 pounds, 6 ounces

over the three days of competition. He won by more than 22 pounds, 1 ounce over second-place Stephan Browning. This win for Cody clinched him a check for \$38,731! He also punched his ticket to the 2027 Bassmaster Classic. It was a great tournament for most of these anglers. They fought off some terrible weather conditions, which, in Florida, makes for an unusually tough day of fishin'.

Well folks, please stay warm, and I'll see ya next week.

Tip of the week: Lipless Crankbaits!

SAVE A FEW AND GOOD LUCK!

APOPKA GIRLS

FROM B1

an easy layup. Lake Brantley made a late push, but the outcome was sealed as Apopka secured the 10-point victory.

Wiggins poured in 12 of her 14 points in the second half to ice the game. Dillon dominated throughout with 13 points. Gelin finished with nine, and Brinson added eight in a balanced team effort.

After the game, head coach Brittany Hardy praised her team's energy.

"I'm glad they were able to secure the win here, and we're going on," Hardy said. "What worked was moving the ball, they really got it together and brought the energy in the second and third."

With the upset victory, Apopka went into the semi-finals Wednesday against Ocoee (19-5), which is the top team in the district and ranked No. 14 in Florida. The Blue Darters struggled as Ocoee dominated through its press defense, 73-18, to end the Apopka season.

"Looking at our record, it looks like it was bad," Hardy said. "But I could say the growth of these young ladies and the drive was tremendous. They never missed practice, and now I get all of them back next year except two. If they stay in the gym and do what they're supposed to, I think we're going to have a big season."



Destiny Gelin at the free throw line in the second half.



Photo by Vinnie Cammarano

Amari Dillon makes a move past a Patriot defender.

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WRESTLING

FROM B1

a big day. In his first match, he set the tone against East River with a 28-second slam and pin. He took that energy into the quarterfinals against Timber Creek, as the match coasted into the second period. He found his pin after four takedowns and entered a tough semifinal matchup with 31-win Braedon McGuigan from Buchholz.

This bout extended into the third period, with Jean down 1 point after letting his opponent escape. Forty-five seconds into the period, Jean found his shot. He made a quick move for a single-leg sweep takedown for the lead. He worked in a pin 30 seconds later to send him to the 215 lb. championship.

In the title bout against Joshua Ramirez (25-8) from Freedom, he took his moment and ran with it. After a minute of hand fighting and feeling out his lighter opponent, he blitzed and



Photo by Vinnie Cammarano

Adrian Jackson topples his opponent and works a pin.

tripped him easily. In one minute and 27 seconds, Wekiva gained a new gold medalist.

Jean made Wekiva's long day worth it and was ecstatic to finally grab gold.

"It feels amazing," he said. "I'm just in my own head right now, but I feel real good about this."

Now that he's proven he can do it, his goal is to pile on gold medals for the rest of the season.

"Metros, I go for everything now," he said. "I gotta win it all, and after that, I'm gonna go for districts, regions, and then states. I'm not stopping."

Coach Tony Imbrani praised Jean's focus on being great.

"He comes out here always focused and he puts in all the work necessary to be great," Imbrani said. "He told me that last night he went to bed at 9, and he needed it for today. He has the ability to beat anybody. He just has to allow himself to be eating and sleeping right. This kid's a beast, man. Today was his best day ever."

The Mustangs wrestling team next competes in the Metro Championship on Saturday morning at East River High School.

WEKIVA GIRLS

FROM B1



Photo by Vinnie Cammarano

Coach Jerry Middleton talks with his starting lineup before the game.



Photo by Vinnie Cammarano

Jakayla Johnson makes a layup driving past two Hawk defenders.

Jaydalis James joined the scoring surge with a steal that led to a Ja'Niya Poole layup. She added another steal and fast-break finish with two minutes left in the half, while Pooler capped the run with yet another steal and layup.

By halftime, Wekiva had built a staggering 44-12 lead, fueled by 22 total steals. Pooler led the way with 17 first-half points, while Bell collected six steals.

The Mustangs wasted no time putting the game away in the third quarter. After a defensive

stop, Pooler threw a full-court pass that found Bell for a layup, looking like a quarterback launching a touchdown strike. Johnson followed with another basket off a turnover, and the lead quickly triggered a running clock.

Hill muscled in a basket inside, Pooler assisted Blackwood for an easy finish and then scored herself off another steal. Wekiva closed the third quarter ahead 62-21.

The fourth quarter blew by quickly as the Mustangs coasted to a 68-26 win.

Pooler finished with a sensational performance of 19 points, four assists, and six steals. Bell was also everywhere with 11 points, six assists and seven steals. Johnson added 10 points and five steals, highlight-

ing the complete team effort on both ends of the floor.

Middleton feels that the girls are ready for the upcoming task.

"They're understanding all the lessons we learned through the good and the bad this year, and how it can mold you to get all the way to the state championship. We look forward to the challenge of playing in the district final."

Wekiva will host the 2 seed Edgewater (17-6) in the district championship game at 6:30 p.m. Friday.

WEKIVA BOYS

FROM B1

second quarter the same way he closed the first, stealing the ball and going coast-to-coast for a layup. Moments later, Markel Anderson fired a cross-court pass to Khai Orr in the opposite corner to bury a 3 off the bench.

Francillon added two free throws, and Saint Pierre and Thomas cleaned up the glass for back-to-back second-chance baskets, forcing a Lake Minneola timeout with Wekiva up 41-10.

Dieujuste continued to dominate inside, grabbing multiple offensive rebounds and finishing strong. He later stepped out and knocked down a 3-pointer of his own. Orr kept pushing, slicing into

the lane for a crafty reverse layup through contact and completing the three-point play. He followed that with two free throws after another foul and then scored again on the Mustangs' final possession before halftime.

By the break, Wekiva had built a massive 55-19 advantage, triggering a running clock for the entire second half.

Lake Minneola scored first in the third quarter, but Saint Pierre answered with a wing 3. After another Hawks basket, Dieujuste converted on third-chance points following two offensive rebounds. Saint Pierre then jumped a passing lane and



Photo by Vinnie Cammarano

Kaiden Jean Louis swipes the loose ball and runs with it.

went coast-to-coast for a layup, while Nichols closed the quarter by sinking two free throws. Wekiva carried a 64-25 lead into the fourth.

With the outcome well in hand, the Mustangs continued to spread the scoring around. Orr added two more baskets, Francillon scored off

strong rebounding, and Kaiden Jean Louis and Jace Moore each finished inside. Wekiva coasted through the final period to seal the 42-point win.

Five Mustangs scored in double figures, led by Orr, who sparked the team off the bench with 16 points, three rebounds, three assists, and three steals. Francillon stuffed the stat sheet with 14 points, nine rebounds, and two steals, while Diejuste added 12 points, nine rebounds, and three assists in a dominant interior performance.

After the game, head coach Gersino Lubin emphasized the importance of using the win as preparation rather

than celebration.

"The main thing for us was to build the right momentum, so do all the little things correct," Lubin said.

"We didn't want to create any bad habits or stack bad habits to bring Thursday. I get to watch film tonight, have a film session tomorrow, and have a really good practice in preparation for Edgewater. Hopefully we didn't do too many numbskull things to where we can clean it up tomorrow and bring our best selves on Thursday."

With the decisive first-round win, Wekiva advanced to the district semifinals to take on Edgewater Thursday night after press time.

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VERSE OF THE WEEK

"For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you."
—Isaiah 41:13

Visit us online for all the Apopka area church listings



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

To submit an event, you can email them to news@theapopkachief.com.

Friday, Feb. 6

Emergence: Solo Exhibition by Jessica Brackett

6 p.m. at 221 S. Bumby Ave., Unit 102, Orlando
An opening reception for a solo exhibition exploring nature and transformation.

Men of Motown

7 p.m. at 4851 S. Apopka Vineland Road, Orlando
A concert celebrating classic Motown music.

The Janzen Boys

7 p.m. at 1001 E. Princeton St., Orlando
A folk-country concert by the Canadian trio.

Arts Weekend Community Concert

7 p.m. at 251 S. Park Ave., Winter Park
A free outdoor concert featuring Jasmine Forsberg.

Theatre UCF presents One Man, Two Guvnors

7:30 p.m. at 12700 Pegasus Dr., Bldg. 6, Orlando
A fast-paced farce filled with physical comedy.

Flying Horse Big Band Concert

8 p.m. at 4000 Central Florida Blvd., Orlando
A jazz concert by UCF's premier big band ensemble.

Saturday, Feb. 7

The Rebel Run 5K

7 a.m. at Hannibal Square Jr. Park, Winter Park
A Black History Month 5K celebrating community and culture.

Parkinson's Symposium
9 a.m. at 3000 S. John Young Parkway, Orlando
Focused on Parkinson's care, research, and local resources.

Paws in the Park Pet Festival

10 a.m. at 195 N. Rosalind Ave., Orlando
Florida's largest pet festival benefiting animal welfare.

History Alive: Soul of the Sunshine State

10 a.m. at 65 E. Central Blvd., Orlando
Celebration featuring exhibits, tours, and activities.

Gardening workshop

10 a.m. at 1920 N. Forest Ave., Orlando
Growing flowers for home bouquets.

Art's the Spark

10:30 a.m. at 2416 N. Mills Ave., Orlando
A museum program for adults with memory or neurological impairments and caregivers.

3rd Annual Pink Pop-Up Shop

11 a.m. at 5200 W. South St., Orlando
A Black History Month pop-up shopping event.

OCLS Chinese New Year Celebration

11 a.m. at 101 E. Central Blvd., Orlando
A celebration of Chinese New Year traditions and culture.



Participants will don high heels as the 13th Annual Walk a Mile in Her Shoes will take place at 5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 12, at the Orange County Courthouse West Courtyard to raise awareness about domestic violence.

TRC Night Meet at OSW

Noon at 19024 Nash St., Orlando
A motorsports event featuring racing, car shows, and live entertainment.

Nexgen Car Show at Dezerland Park

1 p.m. at 5250 International Drive, Orlando
A car show featuring custom vehicles, trophies, and cash prizes.

Galentine's Girls Night

2 p.m. at 975 W. Fairbanks Ave., Orlando
A creative workshop featuring candle-making and painting.

Watercolor Valentine's Day Cards

4 p.m. at 7391 W. Colonial Drive, Orlando
Art program creating watercolor Valentine cards.

Saturday Sounds Concert Series

5 p.m. at 3710 Jason Dwellley Parkway, Apopka
A live outdoor concert.

Sunday, Feb. 8

Bad Bunny Yoga

11 a.m. at 805 W. Central Blvd., Suite A, Orlando
Yoga class set to Bad Bunny's music.

Javier Pérez

1 p.m. at 4939 Rock Springs Road, Apopka
Live performance.

Macramé Plant Hanger

2 p.m. at 1920 N. Forest Ave., Orlando
A hands-on workshop creating a macramé plant hanger.

Ikebana: Valentine's Day Flower Arrangements

2 p.m. at 1920 N. Forest Ave., Orlando
A class focused on Japanese flower-arranging techniques.

Brechner Speaker Series: Entangled Histories

2 p.m. at 65 E. Central Blvd., Orlando
A talk exploring family history, slavery, and the legacy of Black freedom.

The Big Game Bash at Grove Resort & Water Park

5 p.m. at 14501 Grove Resort Ave., Winter Garden
A Super Bowl watch party with food and drink specials.

Super Bowl LX Watch Party

5 p.m. at 13 W. Pine St., Orlando
A downtown watch party for the Super Bowl.

"The Big Game" at Stadium Club

5:30 p.m. at 8101 World Center Drive, Orlando
A ticketed Super Bowl watch party with buffet, open bar, and stadium-style viewing.

Thursday, Feb. 12

Walk a Mile in Her Shoes

5 p.m. at 425 N. Orange Ave., Orlando
Awareness walk supporting survivors and standing against domestic violence.

Polasek Nights (Valentine's Edition)

6 p.m. at Albin Polasek Museum & Sculpture Gardens, Winter Park
After-hours access to the gardens and galleries with themed activities and a cash bar.

Easy BBQ, savory grits, and sweet memories in every bite

Bob Warden says his recipe for BBQ Beef Tips in his book "Great Food Fast," is about as simple as barbecue gets! With such tender cuts of beef in a homemade sauce, you'd never believe it was cooked in only 15 minutes. It is best served over rice (but he says, "mashed potatoes are good, too."). I am thinking, for those of us with venison languishing in our freezer, that perhaps that can be used in BBQ recipes to replace the more expensive beef from the grocery store. The website "theitalianchef.org" recommends using venison backstrap loin (the most tender cut of venison), tenderloin, or sirloin along with other portions of the venison to replace the sirloin steak called for in some original BBQ recipes.

From *Treasures and Pleasures* cookbook, here is a recipe for Sweet and Sour Carrots contributed by Irene Ustler. It can be served either hot or cold. In case you are wondering how many carrots are in a pound, one pound of carrots is around 5 medium-sized carrots, no longer than 6 inches and no wider than an inch.

Marvin Woods gives instructions in his book, *The New Low-Country Cooking*, for a very basic food that we love and use in so many of our dishes: White Rice! He says, "Cooking rice can be tricky sometimes. Since this book calls for rice often, I've included a basic rice recipe. This dish can be eaten quite simply as white rice, or you can prepare the rice ahead of time and use it for other dishes like Hoppin' John."

In *Hearty Country Cooking*, Mark Sohn says, "We use the short and simple term grits for the ground hominy grits our mills make from white corn hominy. This recipe calls for old-fashioned grits that cook for twenty to thirty minutes. Old-fashioned grits are stone-ground, whole kernel grits (such as Callaway Gardens Speckled Heart Grits), are more robust, fuller, coarser, and less smooth than quick grits."

I will include herein for our more venturesome culinary artists a recipe I found in *The Original Country Cookbook* for Alice's Pork Sausage. You really don't need to butcher your own hog for sausage! You

can buy fresh, coarsely-ground, lean pork, such as pork shoulder, from a butcher shop or special-order it from your grocery store meat market. Combine the seasonings with the ground pork, being careful to *not* overmix and make mush! You might wish to use cayenne, black pepper, and (ground) sage, but also consider adding (according to your taste) Italian herb seasoning or orange zest for additional flavor. Be sure to wear rubber gloves while doing this job.

My (maternal) Grannie's recipe for baked rice pudding comes from her Y.W.C.A. Cooking School of New Haven, Connecticut, class daybook of recipes and procedures, (right around 1900). Because the recipe doesn't list the oven temperature, I suggest baking this dish at around 300 to 325 degrees in our modern-day ovens. In Grannie's era, I believe they would say "slow" or "warm" or "low" for a 300- to 325-degree F oven. When I make this pudding, I will probably double the recipe, and, since it is not prohibitively expensive, I will add about a teaspoon of Kirkland Signature Pure Vanilla Extract. Also, since I love raisins in rice pudding, I will add 1/3 to 1/2 cup raisins. If you research, you may learn that vanilla possesses anti-inflammatory properties, helps to reduce sugar intake, and may even contribute to brain health.

BBQ BEEF TIPS

Moist and Tender BBQ in Minutes
Recipe from *Great Food Fast*
by Bob Warden

1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1 pound sirloin steak, cubed
1 yellow onion, diced
1 (6-ounce) can tomato paste
1/4 cup white vinegar
1 tablespoon yellow mustard
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
3 tablespoons water
2 tablespoons light brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper

1) With the cooker's lid off, heat oil on HIGH or "Brown," until sizzling. 2) Place the steak and onion in the cooker, and cook until steak is lightly browned, about 5 minutes. 3) Add remaining ingredients and stir

until combined. 4) Securely lock the pressure cooker's lid and set for 15 minutes on HIGH. 5) Let the pressure release naturally for 10 minutes before performing a quick release for any remaining pressure. 6) Add any additional salt and pepper to taste before serving.

Make it Easier: This dish can also be made with 1-1/4 cups of your favorite prepared BBQ sauce and 1/4 cup water in place of all the ingredients added in step 3.

IRENE USTLER'S SWEET AND SOUR CARROTS

Recipe from *Treasures and Pleasures* cookbook

1 pound carrots, peeled and cut diagonally

1 medium green pepper, seeded and cut into strips

1 8-ounce can pineapple chunks, save juice

1 cup sugar
1 teaspoon cornstarch
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons vinegar
2 tablespoons soy sauce

Cook carrots, covered, in a small amount of water, until tender, about 15 minutes. Add green pepper and cook 3 minutes longer. Drain. Drain pineapple and save juice. Add water, if necessary, to make 1/3 cup liquid. Combine sugar, cornstarch, and salt in saucepan. Stir in pineapple juice, vinegar and soy sauce. Cook until thick, stirring constantly. Add sauce and pineapple to vegetables. Heat and serve either hot or cold.

MARVIN WOODS' WHITE RICE

Recipe from
The New Low-Country Cooking
by Marvin Woods

3-1/3 cups water
3/4 tablespoon salt
1-1/2 cups uncooked long-grain white rice

In a large saucepan, bring the water to a boil over high heat. Stir in the rice and salt. Cover and reduce the heat to medium-low. Simmer for 20 minutes. Remove from the heat. Let stand, covered, for 5 minutes or until the water is completely absorbed. Fluff with a fork.

COUNTRY BREAKFAST GRITS

Recipe from Mark F. Sohn's *Hearty Country Cooking*

4 cups water
1 cup old-fashioned grits
1 tablespoon butter
1 teaspoon salt
Additional milk or water, as needed
Yield: 6 servings

In a medium saucepan, bring the water to a boil and whisk in the grits gradually – don't dump them in all at once. Then add the butter and salt. Reduce the heat to a low simmer and cook, covered for 20 minutes. Add water or milk as needed. The grits should have the stiffness of mashed potatoes. To avoid sticking, stir often.

Healthy Choice Alternative: This dish is an example of healthy old-fashioned mountain country cooking. If you need to, you may reduce the salt and butter.

ALICE'S PORK SAUSAGE

Recipe from Paragon Products, Inc., *The Original Country Cookbook*

4 pounds lean pork
3 tablespoons backbone fat
2 teaspoons ground black pepper
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
4 tablespoons leaf sage

Grind together. Package and refrigerate.

GRANNIE'S BAKED RICE PUDDING

Recipe from Miss Nettie Isabel Hill's class daybook of recipes, around 1900
Y.W.C.A. Cooking School of New Haven, Connecticut

2 cups milk
4 tablespoons (1/4 cup) rice
4 tablespoons (1/4 cup) sugar
Sprinkle of salt
Sprinkle of nutmeg or cinnamon

1) Pick over and wash the rice and put it into a shallow earthen dish. 2) Dissolve the sugar and salt in the milk, add the spice, and pour all over the rice. 3) Bake about 2 hours or until the rice is tender. Stir often.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE:
BARTLETT TOWING, INC gives notice that on **02/27/2026** at 08:30 AM the following vehicle(s) may be sold by public sale at **2252 APOPKA BLVD, STE B, APOPKA, FL 32703** to satisfy the lien for the amount owed on each vehicle for any recovery, towing, or storage services charges and administrative fees allowed pursuant to Florida statute 713.78.

2022 MULQ
3AUBC1211NM010773
Publish: The Apopka Chief
February 6, 2026

Public Notice
 is hereby given that **Johnsons Wrecker Service**, will sell at PUBLIC AUCTION, free of all prior liens, the following vehicle(s)/vessel(s) that remain unclaimed in storage, with charges unpaid, pursuant to Florida Statutes, Sec 713.78, to the highest bidder. The sale will be held at 580 Wilmer Avenue, Orlando, FL 32808.

The following vehicle(s) will be sold on 02/19/2026 at 0700.

Year Make VIN
2008 Mitsubishi
4A4MM21S78E017287
2015 Nissan
5N1AT2M6FC925186

2013 Buick
1GAGF5E39DF176900

2011 Ford
1FMCUDGXBXA03905

2004 Honda
2HKY18594H535876

2015 Ford
1FA6P0HD6F5122778

2020 Kia
KNDJ53AF5L7118888

2014 Infiniti
JN1BV7AP5EM684934

2023 Hyundai
KMHL14JA7PA329089

2011 Lexus
JTHBF5C20B5135906

2002 Toyota
4T1BF3K42U014059

1997 Honda
1HGEJ7126VL031675

2018 Ford
3FA6P0G71JR195123

2018 Ford
3FADP4GX2JM131801

2019 Honda
MLHJC7516K5103965

2023 Fanyuan
HDTABF52PX037902

2024 Honda
MLHRH155XR5001163

2027 Nissan
3N1A861E47L659081

2017 Volkswagen
1VWDT73XHC064791

2010 ZNEN
LSYTCPKA31101018

2023 Kia
KNDJ3AUP37860929

2002 Chevrolet
1GNCS18W52K215068

Terms of the sale are CASH. No checks will be accepted. Seller reserves the right to final bid. ALL SALES ARE FINAL. No refunds will be made. Vehicle(s)/vessel(s) are sold "AS IS"; "WHERE IS"; with no guarantees, either expressed or implied. February 6, 2026

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA PROBATE DIVISION
File No. 2026-CP-000226-O

Division
IN RE: ESTATE OF CHARLES GLENN GUTHRIE
Deceased.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

The administration of the estate of Charles Glenn Guthrie, deceased, whose date of death was December 8, 2025, is pending in the Circuit Court for Orange County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is Clerk's Office / Probate, Orange County Courthouse - #355, P.O. Box 4994, Orlando, FL 32802-4994. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.

All creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate on whom a copy of this notice is required to be served must file their claims with this court ON OR BEFORE THE LATER OF 3 MONTHS AFTER THE TIME OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR 30 DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM.

All other creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate must file their claims with this court WITHIN 3 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.

ALL CLAIMS NOT FILED WITHIN THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH IN FLORIDA STATUTES SECTION 733.702 WILL BE FOREVER BARRED.

NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED.

The date of first publication of this notice is February 6, 2026.

Personal Representative:
Maryann M. Guthrie
517 Sand Wedge Loop
Apopka, Florida 32712

Attorney for Personal Representative:
William J. McLeod

Attorney
 Florida Bar Number: 322024

MCLEOD MCLEOD & MCLEOD PA

48 E. Main Street

APOPKA, FL 32703

Telephone: (407) 886-3300

Fax: (407) 886-0087

E-Mail: wjm@mcleodlawfirm.com

Secondary E-Mail:

sallen@mcleodlawfirm.com

February 6, 13, 2026

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA PROBATE DIVISION
File No. 2025-CP-4077

Division
Probate

IN RE: ESTATE OF JOSEPH VINCENT D'ORSO A.K.A.

JOSEPH V. D'ORSO

Deceased.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

The administration of the estate of Joseph Vincent D'Orso a.k.a. Joseph V. D'Orso, deceased, whose date of death was October 11, 2025, is pending in the Circuit Court for Orange County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 425 N. Orange Ave., Orlando, FL 32801. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.

All creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate on whom a copy of this notice is required to be served must file their claims with this court ON OR BEFORE THE LATER OF 3 MONTHS AFTER THE TIME OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR 30 DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM.

All other creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate must file their claims with this court WITHIN 3 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR THIRTY DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM.

All other creditors of the decedent and persons having claims or demands against the decedent's estate must file their claims with this court WITHIN THREE MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.

ALL CLAIMS, DEMANDS AND OBJECTIONS NOT SO FILED WILL BE FOREVER BARRED.

The date of first publication of this notice is February 6, 2026.

Ashley Schanck,

Personal Representative

351 Edison Pl,

Hope Mills, NC 28348

Andre T. Young, ESQ..

Attorney for Personal Representative,

The Young Law Firm of

Florida LLC,

815 N. Magnolia Ave,

Suite 200,

PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.
 The personal representative has no duty to discover whether any property held at the time of the decedent's death by the decedent or the decedent's surviving spouse is property to which the Florida Uniform Disposition of Community Property Rights at Death Act as described in ss. 732.216-732.228, Florida Statutes, applies, or may apply, unless a written demand is made by a creditor as specified under s. 732.221, Florida Statutes. The written demand must be filed with the clerk.

ALL CLAIMS NOT FILED WITHIN THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH IN FLORIDA STATUTES SECTION 733.702 WILL BE FOREVER BARRED.

NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED.

The date of first publication of this notice is February 6, 2026.

Personal Representative:

Christopher D'Orso

9660 Castle Way Dr

Windermere, Florida 34786

Attorney for Personal Representative:

/s/ Michelle A. Berglund-Harper, Esq.

Michelle A. Berglund-Harper, Esq.

Attorney

Florida Bar Number: 0084028

Murphy & Berglund, PLLC

1101 Douglas Avenue,

Suite 1006

Altamonte Springs,

FL 32714

Telephone: (407) 865-9553

Fax: (407) 665-5742

E-Mail:

Michelle@murphyberglund.com

Secondary E-Mail:

debra@murphyberglund.com

February 6, 13, 2026

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA PROBATE DIVISION

File No. 2025-CP-001729-O

Division Probate

IN RE: ESTATE OF RAFAEL BAEZ SOTO

Deceased.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

The administration of the estate of RAFAEL BAEZ SOTO, deceased, whose date of death was January 1, 2025, is pending in the Circuit Court for ORANGE County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 425 North Orange Avenue, Orlando, FL 32801. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.

All creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate on whom a copy of this notice is required to be served must file their claims with this court ON OR BEFORE THE LATER OF 3 MONTHS AFTER THE TIME OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR 30 DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM.

The date of first publication of this notice is February 6, 2026.

Personal Representative:

/s/ Michelle A. Berglund-Harper, Esq.

Michelle A. Berglund-Harper, Esq.

Attorney

Florida Bar Number: 0084028

Murphy & Berglund, PLLC

1101 Douglas Avenue,

Suite 1006

Altamonte Springs,

FL 32714

Telephone: (407) 865-9553

Fax: (407) 665-5742

E-Mail:

Michelle@murphyberglund.com

Secondary E-Mail:

debra@murphyberglund.com

February 6, 13, 2026

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA PROBATE DIVISION

File No. 2025-CP-001729-O

Division Probate

IN RE: ESTATE OF RAFAEL BAEZ SOTO

Deceased.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

The administration of the estate of RAFAEL BAEZ SOTO, deceased, whose date of death was January 1, 2025, is pending in the Circuit Court for ORANGE County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 425 North Orange Avenue, Orlando, FL 32801. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.

All creditors

Judgment of Foreclosure dated JANUARY 29, 2026, in Case No.: 2025-CA-004914-O of the Circuit Court in and for Orange County, Florida, wherein THE SANCTUARY CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION, INC., is the Plaintiff and EUGENE JACKSON BAZEMORE, SR. CO-TRUSTEE OF THE BAZEMORE FAMILY TRUST DATED OCTOBER 13, 2022, et al., is/are the Defendant(s). Tiffany Moore Russell, the Clerk of Court for Orange County, Florida will sell to the highest and best bidder for cash on March 31, 2026 at 11:00 a.m., online at www.myorangerclerk.realforeclose.com, in accordance with Section 45.031, Florida Statutes, the following described property set forth in the Final Judgment of Foreclosure:

Unit 608, Phase VI, of the Sanctuary at Ventura, a Condominium according to the Declaration of Condominium of the Sanctuary, recorded December 27, 1993, in Official Records Book 4672, Page 1353, and as subsequently amended in Official Records Book 4715, Page 2263, Official Records Book 4832, Page 133, and Official Records Book 4850, Page 4677, of the Public Records of Orange County, Florida.

Any person claiming an interest in the surplus from the sale, if any, other than the property owner as of the date of the lis pendens must file a claim before the clerk reports the surplus as unclaimed.

DATED: February 2, 2026

By: /s/Jennifer Sinclair

Jennifer Sinclair, Esquire

Florida Bar: 29559

IF YOU ARE A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY WHO NEEDS ANY ACCOMMODATION IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROCEEDING, YOU ARE ENTITLED, AT NO COST TO YOU, TO THE PROVISION OF CERTAIN ASSISTANCE. PLEASE CONTACT COURT ADMINISTRATION AT 425 N. ORANGE AVENUE, ROOM 2130, ORLANDO, FLORIDA 32801, TELEPHONE: (407) 836-2303 WITHIN TWO (2) WORKING DAYS OF YOUR RECEIPT OF THIS DOCUMENT, IF YOU ARE HEARING OR VOICE IMPAIRED, CALL 1-800-955-8771.

ARIAS BOSINGER, PLLC
280 W. Central Avenue,
Suite 330
Winter Park, Florida 32789
(407) 636-2549

February 6, 13, 2026

STORAGE SENSE SELF STORAGE NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Storage Sense Apopka Located at 2208 Stillwater Ave., Apopka, Florida 32703 Phone 407-703-8854 intends to sell the personal property described below to enforce a lien imposed on said property Under the Florida Facility Act Statutes. The Sale shall take place online at www.lockerfox.com and closes on the 18th Day of February, 2026 at 10:00 AM. Property will be sold for cash only. Unit must be cleaned out within 72 hours of purchase with a \$100 cash cleaning Deposit.

Vanessa Medina -Unit 2087- Personal Property Darius Johnson -Unit 1001- Personal Property Sugey Cuellar/GP Painting LLC -Unit 3016- Personal Property Kimberly Dixon -Unit 2032- Personal Property Abigail Putnam -Unit 2005- Personal Property Christy Cider -Units 1008 and 4001- Personal Property

January 30, February 6, 2026

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA CASE NO.: 2025-CA-002570-O DIV NO.: 36 MARRIOTT RESORTS HOSPITALITY CORPORATION, a South Carolina Corporation, Management Agent on behalf of HAO CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION, INC., a Florida not for profit corporation, and All Owners as Agent, Plaintiff, vs.

MICHAEL J. GREEN, et al., Defendants.

NOTICE OF SALE AS TO COUNT VI

TO: RIENTS A. HOFSTEDE

PERCPECTIEF 12

ZEEWOLDE 3892GD NETHERLANDS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to the Final Judgment of Foreclosure entered on January 28, 2026, in the cause pending in the Circuit Court, in and for Orange County, Florida, Civil Case No. 2025-CA-002570-O, the Office of Tiffany Moore Russell, Orange County Clerk of the Court will sell the property situated in said County described as:

COUNT VI

Unit Week 36 in Unit 3036, in HAO CONDOMINIUM, according to the Declaration of Condominium thereof, as recorded in Official Records Book 6017 at Page 0143 in the Public Records of Orange County, Florida, and any amendments thereof.

TIFFANY MOORE RUSSELL, The Clerk of the Circuit Court, will sell to the highest bidder for cash, at www.myorangerclerk.realforeclose.com, at 11:00 AM, on the 31st day of March, 2026, the following described real property as set forth in said Judgment, to wit:

LOT 44, NEW HORIZONS, ACCORDING TO THE MAP OR PLAT THEREOF, AS RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 94, PAGES 63 THROUGH 66, OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA.

If you are a person claiming a right to funds remaining after the sale, you must file a claim with the clerk before the clerk reports the surplus as unclaimed. If you fail to file a timely claim you will not be entitled to any remaining funds. After the funds are reported as unclaimed, only the owner of record as of the date of the Lis Pendens may claim the surplus.

If you are a person with a disability who needs special accommodation, you are entitled to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact the ADA Coordinator at the address or phone number below at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance or immediately upon receiving an official notification if the time before the scheduled appearance is less than 7 days. If you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711.

Ninth Circuit Court Administration ADA Coordinator

Edward M. Fitzgerald

FLORIDA BAR NO. 0010391

HOLLAND & KNIGHT LLP

If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact ADA Coordinator, Human Resources, Orange County, Courthouse, at 425 North Orange Avenue, Suite #510, Orlando, Florida 32801; Telephone: (407) 836-2303, at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance, or immediately upon receiving this notification if the time before the scheduled appearance is less than 7 days; if you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711.

OUR FILE #110528.0807

MRHC #ORANGE

January 30, February 6, 2026

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA CASE NO.: 2025-CA-002570-O DIV NO.: 36 MARRIOTT RESORTS HOSPITALITY CORPORATION, a South Carolina Corporation, Management Agent on behalf of HAO CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION, INC., a Florida not for profit corporation, and All Owners as Agent, Plaintiff, vs.

MICHAEL J. GREEN, et al., Defendants.

NOTICE OF SALE AS TO COUNT V

TO: ROBERT L. HOFSTEDE

PERCPECTIEF 12

ZEEWOLDE 3892GD NETHERLANDS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to the Final Judgment of Foreclosure entered on January 28, 2026, in the cause pending in the Circuit Court, in and for Orange County, Florida, Civil Case No. 2025-CA-002570-O, the Office of Tiffany Moore Russell, Orange County Clerk of the Court will sell the property situated in said County described as:

COUNT V

Unit Week 36 in Unit 3114, in HAO CONDOMINIUM, according to the Declaration of Condominium thereof, as recorded in Official Records Book 6017 at Page 0143 in the Public Records of Orange County, Florida, and any amendments thereof.

at Public sale to the highest and best bidder for cash starting at the hour of 11:00 a.m. 12th day of March, 2026 online at www.myorangerclerk.realforeclose.com.

Any person claiming an interest in the surplus from the sale, if any, other than the property owner as of the date of the lis pendens must file a claim within 60 days after the sale. Submitted for publication to The Apopka Chief on January 28, 2026.

DATED January 28, 2026.

/s/ Edward M. Fitzgerald

EDWARD M. FITZGERALD

FLORIDA BAR NO. 0010391

HOLLAND & KNIGHT LLP

If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact ADA Coordinator, Human Resources, Orange County, Courthouse, at 425 North Orange Avenue, Suite #510, Orlando, Florida 32801; Telephone: (407) 836-2303, at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance, or immediately upon receiving this notification if the time before the scheduled appearance is less than 7 days; if you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711.

OUR FILE #110528.0808

MRHC #ORANGE

January 30, February 6, 2026

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA CASE NO.: 2025-CA-002596-O DIV NO.: 36 NEWREZ LLC D/B/A SHELLPOINT MORTGAGE SERVICING, Plaintiff, vs.

FELIX DIAZ MARTINEZ; UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF FELIX DIAZ MARTINEZ; SOMERSET PARK HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION, INC.; GOODLEAP, LLC; JPMORGAN CHASE BANK, N.A.; UNKNOWN TENANT (S) IN POSSESSION #1 and #2, and ALL OTHER UNKNOWN PARTIES, et al., Defendants.

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to a Final Summary Judgment of Foreclosure dated January 27, 2026, entered in Civil Case No.: 2025-CA-002956-O of the Circuit Court of the Ninth Judicial Circuit in and for Orange County, Florida, wherein NEWREZ LLC D/B/A SHELLPOINT MORTGAGE SERVICING, Plaintiff, and FELIX DIAZ MARTINEZ; UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF FELIX DIAZ MARTINEZ; SOMERSET PARK HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION, INC.; GOODLEAP LLC; JPMORGAN CHASE BANK, N.A.; UNKNOWN TENANT(S) IN POSSESSION #1, are Defendants.

TIFFANY MOORE RUSSELL, The Clerk of the Circuit Court, will sell to the highest bidder for cash, at www.myorangerclerk.realforeclose.com, at 11:00 AM, on the 26th day of February, 2026, the following described real property as set forth in said Judgment, to wit:

LOT 306, SOMERSET PARK PHASE 3, ACCORDING TO THE MAP OR PLAT THEREOF, AS RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 91, PAGES 87 THROUGH 95, INCLUSIVE, OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA.

If you are a person claiming a right to funds remaining after the sale, you must file a claim with the clerk before the clerk reports the surplus as unclaimed. If you fail to file a timely claim you will not be entitled to any remaining funds. After the funds are reported as unclaimed, only the owner of record as of the date of the Lis Pendens may claim the surplus.

If you are a person with a disability who needs special accommodation, you are entitled to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact the ADA Coordinator at the address or phone number below at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance or immediately upon receiving an official notification if the time before the scheduled appearance is less than 7 days. If you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711.

Ninth Circuit Court Administration ADA Coordinator

Edward M. Fitzgerald

FLORIDA BAR NO. 0010391

HOLLAND & KNIGHT LLP

If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact ADA Coordinator, Human Resources, Orange County, Courthouse, at 425 North Orange Avenue, Suite #510, Orlando, Florida 32801; Telephone: (407) 836-2303, at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance, or immediately upon receiving this notification if the time before the scheduled appearance is less than 7 days; if you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711.

OUR FILE #110528.0805

MRHC #ORANGE

January 30, February 6, 2026

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA CASE NO.: 2025-CA-002596-O DIV NO.: 36 NEWREZ LLC D/B/A SHELLPOINT MORTGAGE SERVICING, Plaintiff, vs.

ROBERT L. ROSALER; UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF ROBERT L. ROSALER; UNKNOWN TENANT (S) IN POSSESSION #1, and ALL OTHER UNKNOWN PARTIES, et al., Defendants.

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to a Final Summary Judgment of Foreclosure dated January 27, 2026, entered in Civil Case No.: 2025-CA-002956-O of the Circuit Court of the Ninth Judicial Circuit in and for Orange County, Florida, wherein NEWREZ LLC D/B/A SHELLPOINT MORTGAGE SERVICING, Plaintiff, and ROBERT L. ROSALER; UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF ROBERT L. ROSALER; UNKNOWN TENANT(S) IN POSSESSION #1, are Defendants.

TIFFANY MOORE RUSSELL, The Clerk of the Circuit Court, will sell to the highest bidder for cash, at www.myorangerclerk.realforeclose.com, at 11:00 AM, on the 26th day of February, 2026, the following described real property as set forth in said Judgment, to wit:

LOT 306, SOMERSET PARK PHASE 3, ACCORDING TO THE MAP OR PLAT THEREOF, AS RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 91, PAGES 87 THROUGH 95, INCLUSIVE, OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA.

If you are a person claiming a right to funds remaining after the sale, you must file a claim with the clerk before the clerk reports the surplus as unclaimed. If you fail to file a timely claim you will not be entitled to any remaining funds. After the funds are reported as unclaimed, only the owner of record as of the date of the Lis Pendens may claim the surplus.

If you are a person with a disability who needs special accommodation, you are entitled to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact the ADA Coordinator at the address or phone number below at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance or immediately upon receiving this notification if the time before the scheduled appearance is less than 7 days. If you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711.

Ninth Circuit Court Administration ADA Coordinator

Edward M. Fitzgerald

FLORIDA BAR NO. 0010391

HOLLAND & KNIGHT LLP

If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact ADA Coordinator, Human Resources, Orange County, Courthouse, at 425 North Orange Avenue, Suite #510, Orlando, Florida 32801; Telephone: (407) 836-2303, at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance, or immediately upon receiving this notification if the time before the scheduled appearance is less than 7 days; if you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711.

OUR FILE #110528.0808

MRHC #ORANGE

January 30, February 6, 2026

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA CASE NO.: 2024-CC-010799-O ALFONSO CONTRERAS, Plaintiff, vs.

LUIS GERARDO MONCADA GOMEZ and MARIA DANIELA VARGAS, Defendants.

NOTICE OF ACTION

To: LUIS GERARDO MONCADA GOMEZ

11823 Chateaubriand Ave., Orlando, FL 32836

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that an action for Damages for Breach of Contract and Property Damage has been filed against you and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it, on John A. Morey, Esq., of the Morey Law

Firm, P.A., the Plaintiff's attorney, whose address is 250 N. Orange Ave., Suite 1220, Orlando, FL 32801, on or before March 9

Household Goods;
Anna Aguilar-739-
Household Goods;
January 30, February 6, 2026

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE
NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR
ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA
CASE NO. 2025-CA-0012379-O
DIV NO. 37

MARRIOTT RESORTS
HOSPITALITY CORPORATION, a South
Carolina Corporation, Management
Agent on behalf of HAO CONDOMINIUM
ASSOCIATION, INC., a Florida not for
profit corporation, and All Owners as
Agent,

Plaintiff,
vs.
TONY WANYIU CHENG,
et. al.,
Defendants.

NOTICE OF ACTION BY PUBLICATION
AS TO COUNT IV

TO THE FOLLOWING DEFENDANT
WHOSE RESIDENCE IS UNKNOWN:

TO: DONNA M. CONQUEST

7251 NE 92ND CT
BRONSON, FL
32621-0722

The above named Defendant is not
known to be dead or alive and, if dead,
the unknown spouses, heirs, devisees,
grantees, assignees, heirs, creditors,
trustees, or other claimants, by, through
under or against said Defendant and all
parties having or claiming to have any right,
title or interest in the property described
below.

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED of
the institution of the above-styled
foreclosure proceedings by the Plaintiff,
MARRIOTT RESORTS HOSPITALITY
CORPORATION, upon the filing of a
complaint to foreclose a lien and for other
relief relative to the following described
property:

COUNT IV
Unit Week 06 in Unit 1019, in HAO
CONDONIUM, according to the
Declaration of Condominium thereof,
as recorded in Official Records Book
6017 at Page 0143 in the Public Records
of Orange County, Florida, and any
amendments thereof.

AND you are required to serve a
copy of your written defenses, if any,
to the complaint, upon EDWARD M.
FITZGERALD, ESQUIRE, Holland & Knight
LLP, 200 S. Orange Avenue, Suite 2600,
Orlando, Florida 32801, attorneys for the
Plaintiff, on or before thirty (30) days from
the first day of publication herein and file
the original with the Clerk of the above-
styled Court either before service on
Plaintiff's attorney or immediately thereafter,
otherwise a default will be entered
against you for the relief demanded in the
complaint.

DATED on this 29th day of January, 2026.
Tiffany Moore Russell
Clerk of the Court
By: /s/ Nancy Garcia
Deputy Clerk

CIRCUIT COURT SEAL
CONFORMED COPY TO:
EDWARD M. FITZGERALD
HOLLAND & KNIGHT, LLP
200 S. Orange Avenue,
Suite 2600
Orlando, Florida 32801
Ph. (407) 244-5198

ATTORNEYS FOR PLAINTIFF
If you are a person with a disability who
needs any accommodation in order to
participate in this proceeding, you are
entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision
of certain assistance. Please contact the
ADA Coordinator, Human Resources,
Orange County Courthouse, 425 North
Orange Avenue, Suite #510, Orlando,
Florida 32801; Telephone (407) 836-2303,
at least 7 days before your scheduled
court appearance, or immediately upon
receiving this notification if the time before
the scheduled appearance is less than 7
days; if you are hearing or voice impaired,
call 711.

THIS DOCUMENT IS AN ATTEMPT
TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY
INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE
USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

HK#110528.0814/HO21

February 6, 13, 2026

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE
NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR
ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA
CASE NO. 2025-CA-004346-O
DIV NO.: 40

MARRIOTT RESORTS HOSPITALITY
CORPORATION, a South Carolina
Corporation, Management Agent
on behalf of MVC TRUST OWNERS
ASSOCIATION, INC., a Florida not for
profit corporation, and All Owners as
Agent,

Plaintiff,

vs.
JOHN S. TOMASELLO, et
al.,
Defendants.

NOTICE OF SALE AS TO COUNT X
TO: DUSTIN EARL SOLT
174 COTTAGE LN
LODI, CA 95242-9716
JENNIFER NICOLE SOLT
174 COTTAGE LN
LODI, CA 95242-9716

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant
to the Final Judgment of Foreclosure
entered on January 29, 2026, in the cause
pending in the Circuit Court, in and for
Orange County, Florida, Civil Case No.
2025-CA-004346-O, the Office of Tiffany
Moore Russell, Orange County Clerk of the
Court will sell the property situated in said
County described as:

COUNT II

6 Interests (numbered for administrative
purposes: P60501 & P60502 & P60503 &
P60504 & P60505 & P60506 & P60507 &
P60508) in the MVC Trust ("Trust")
evidenced for administrative, assessment
and ownership purposes by 2000 Points
(250 Points for each Interest), which
Trust was created pursuant to and
further described in that certain MVC
Trust Agreement dated March 11, 2010,
executed by and among First American
Trust, FSB, a federal savings bank, solely
as trustee of Land Trust No. 1082-0300-
00, (a.k.a. MVC Trust), Marriott Ownership
Resorts, Inc., a Delaware corporation,
and MVC Trust Owners Association, Inc.,
a Florida corporation not-for-profit, as
such agreement may be amended and
supplemented from time to time ("Trust
Agreement"), a memorandum of which is
recorded in Official Records Book 10015,
page 4176, Public Records of Orange
County, Florida ("Trust Memorandum").
The Interests shall have a Use Year
Commencement Date of April 01, 2017
(subject to Section 3.5 of the Trust
Agreement).

at Public sale to the highest and best
bidder for cash starting at the hour of 11:00
a.m. on the 12th day of March, 2026 online
at www.myorangeclerk.realforeclose.com.
Any person claiming an interest in the
surplus from the sale, if any, other than
the property owner as of the date of the lis
pendens must file a claim within 60 days
after the sale. Submitted for publication to
The Apopka Chief on January 30, 2026.

DATED January 30, 2026

/s/ Edward M. Fitzgerald

EDWARD M. FITZGERALD

FLORIDA BAR NO. 0010391

HOLLAND & KNIGHT LLP

If you are a person with a disability who
needs any accommodation in order to
participate in this proceeding, you are
entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision
of certain assistance. Please contact
ADA Coordinator, Human Resources,
Orange County Courthouse, at 425 North
Orange Avenue, Suite #510, Orlando,
Florida 32801; Telephone (407) 836-2303,
at least 7 days before your scheduled
court appearance, or immediately upon
receiving this notification if the time before
the scheduled appearance is less than 7
days; if you are hearing or voice impaired,
call 711.

OUR FILE #129710.0115

MRHC #ORANGE

February 6, 13, 2026

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE
NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR
ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA
CASE NO. 2025-CA-004346-O
DIV NO.: 40

MARRIOTT RESORTS
HOSPITALITY CORPORATION, a South
Carolina Corporation, Management
Agent on behalf of MVC TRUST
OWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC., a Florida

not for profit corporation, and All
Owners as Agent,

Plaintiff,

vs.
JOHN S. TOMASELLO, et
al.,
Defendants.

NOTICE OF SALE AS TO COUNT X
TO: DUSTIN EARL SOLT

174 COTTAGE LN

LODI, CA 95242-9716

JENNIFER NICOLE SOLT

174 COTTAGE LN

LODI, CA 95242-9716

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant
to the Final Judgment of Foreclosure
entered on January 29, 2026, in the cause
pending in the Circuit Court, in and for
Orange County, Florida, Civil Case No.
2025-CA-004346-O, the Office of Tiffany
Moore Russell, Orange County Clerk of the
Court will sell the property situated in said
County described as:

COUNT X

8 Interests (numbered for administrative
purposes: P60501 & P60502 & P60503 &
P60504 & P60505 & P60506 & P60507 &
P60508) in the MVC Trust ("Trust")
evidenced for administrative, assessment
and ownership purposes by 2000 Points
(250 Points for each Interest), which
Trust was created pursuant to and
further described in that certain MVC
Trust Agreement dated March 11, 2010,
executed by and among First American
Trust, FSB, a federal savings bank, solely
as trustee of Land Trust No. 1082-0300-
00, (a.k.a. MVC Trust), Marriott Ownership
Resorts, Inc., a Delaware corporation,
and MVC Trust Owners Association, Inc.,
a Florida corporation not-for-profit, as
such agreement may be amended and
supplemented from time to time ("Trust
Agreement"), a memorandum of which is
recorded in Official Records Book 10015,
page 4176, Public Records of Orange
County, Florida ("Trust Memorandum").
The Interests shall have a Use Year
Commencement Date of April 01, 2017
(subject to Section 3.5 of the Trust
Agreement).

at Public sale to the highest and best
bidder for cash starting at the hour of 11:00
a.m. on the 12th day of March, 2026 online
at www.myorangeclerk.realforeclose.com.
Any person claiming an interest in the
surplus from the sale, if any, other than
the property owner as of the date of the lis
pendens must file a claim within 60 days
after the sale. Submitted for publication to
The Apopka Chief on January 30, 2026.

DATED January 30, 2026

/s/ Edward M. Fitzgerald

EDWARD M. FITZGERALD

FLORIDA BAR NO. 0010391

HOLLAND & KNIGHT LLP

If you are a person with a disability who
needs any accommodation in order to
participate in this proceeding, you are
entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision
of certain assistance. Please contact
ADA Coordinator, Human Resources,
Orange County Courthouse, at 425 North
Orange Avenue, Suite #510, Orlando,
Florida 32801; Telephone (407) 836-2303,
at least 7 days before your scheduled
court appearance, or immediately upon
receiving this notification if the time before
the scheduled appearance is less than 7
days; if you are hearing or voice impaired,
call 711.

OUR FILE #129710.0115

MRHC #ORANGE

February 6, 13, 2026

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE
NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR
ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA
CASE NO.: 2025-CA-007841-O

SELECT PORTFOLIO
SERVICING, INC.,
Plaintiff,
vs.
CARMEN AQUINO A/K/A CARMEN M.
AQUINO; ROBERTO AQUINO BARRETO;
FIFTH THIRD BANK, NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION; UNKNOWN TENANT(S)
IN POSSESSION #1 and #2, and ALL
OTHER UNKNOWN PARTIES, et.al.,
Defendant(s).

NOTICE OF
FORECLOSURE SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to a

Final Summary Judgment of Foreclosure
dated January 27, 2026, entered in Civil
Case No.: 2025-CA-007841-O of the Circuit
Court of the Ninth Judicial Circuit in and for
Orange County, Florida, wherein SELECT
PORTFOLIO SERVICING, INC., Plaintiff,
and CARMEN AQUINO A/K/A CARMEN M.
AQUINO; ROBERTO AQUINO BARRETO;
FIFTH THIRD BANK, NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION; UNKNOWN TENANT(S)
IN POSSESSION #1 N/K/A STURGEON
TIMOTHY, are Defendants.

TIFFANY MOORE RUSSELL, The Clerk
of the Circuit Court, will sell to the highest
bidder for cash, at www.myorangeclerk.
realforeclose.com, at 11:00 AM, on the 10th
day of March, 2026, the following described
real property as set forth in said Judgment,
to wit:

**LOT 1, BLOCK B, SKY ACRES,
ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF,
AS RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK V, PAGE
37, PUBLIC RECORDS OF ORANGE
COUNTY, FLORIDA.**

If you are a person claiming a right to funds
remaining after the sale, you must file a
claim with the clerk before the clerk reports
the surplus as unclaimed. If you fail to file
a timely claim you will not be entitled to
any remaining funds. After the funds are
reported as unclaimed, only the owner of
record as of the date of the Lis Pendens
may claim the surplus.

If you are a person with a disability who
needs special accommodation, you are
entitled to the provision of certain
assistance. Please contact the ADA
Coordinator at the address or phone
number below at least 7 days before
your scheduled court appearance or
immediately upon receiving an official
notification if the time before the scheduled
appearance is less than 7 days. If you are
hearing or voice impaired, call 711.

Ninth Circuit Court
Administration
ADA Coordinator
Orange County Courthouse
425 N. Orange Avenue,
Suite 510,
Orlando, Florida, 32801
(407) 836-2303

Dated: January 28, 2026
/s/ Brian L. Rosaler

By: Brian L. Rosaler
Florida Bar No.: 0174882

Attorney for Plaintiff:

Brian L. Rosaler, Esquire
1701 West Hillsboro
Boulevard
Suite 400
Deerfield Beach, FL 33442

Telephone: (954) 360-9030

Faxsimile: (954) 420-5187
25-52179

Published in:

THE APOPKA CHIEF

February 6, 13, 2026

IN THE COUNTY COURT IN AND FOR
ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA
CASE NO.: 2025-CC-005977-O

RTE TITLE COMPANY, a Florida
corporation;
WALDEN PALM CONDOMINIUM
ASSOCIATION,
INC., a Florida not for profit corporation
and WALDEN
CIRCLE LLC, a Delaware limited liability
company,
Plaintiffs,
vs.

RIRY PROPERTIES LLC, a Florida
limited liability company and
MIDAS AMERICA LLC, a Florida limited
liability company,
Defendants

NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that I, JOHN
W. MINA, as Sheriff of Orange County,
Florida, under and by virtue of a Judgment
and Writ of Execution, therein issued out of
the above entitled Court in the above styled
cause, dated the 16th day of October,
2025, and have levied upon the following
described real property, situated, lying and
being in Orange County, Florida, to wit:

Any and all of the right, title and interest of
MIDAS AMERICA LLC, a Florida limited
liability company, in and to the following
described real property, to wit:

CANDLEWYCK VILLAGE 10/76 LOT 75A

CANDLEWYCK VILLAGE 10/78 LOT 75B
also described as Lot 75A and 75B,
Candlewyck Village, according to the
plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book
10 page(s) 78, of the Public Records of
Orange County, Florida; with a physical
address of 1476 and 1478 HENDREN
DR., ORLANDO, FL 32807 SUBJECT TO
ALL TAXES, JUDGMENTS, LIENS OF
RECORD OR OTHER ENCUMBRANCES.
PURCHASER TO PAY FOR DEED.

as the property of the above named
defendant, of MIDAS AMERICA LLC, a
Florida limited liability company, and that on
the 18th day of February 2026, beginning
at ten thirty o'clock in the forenoon or soon

CLASSIFIEDS

CLASSIFIED DEADLINE: MONDAY 5 P.M.
classifieds@theapopkachief.com

Call 407-886-2777
Fax 407-889-4121

21. HEALTH AND NUTRITION

HEALTH CARE FOR entire family: Pediatrics, Family, Internal, OB/GYN, Dental, and Pharmacy. www.chcf.org. Community Health Centers throughout Central Florida. 225 E 7th Street, Apopka. 407-905-8827. JT 0116-0206 TFN 21

65. FURNITURE

CLOTH LOVE SEAT and couch, cream in color, like new \$200. Text only 321-370-6144. B0206-0227 THO 65

81. AUTOS FOR SALE

USED CARS. NEW cars. Low upfront pricing. No dealer fees. 407-972-1678. Mullinaxfordfl.com JT 0130-0220 MUL 81

136. MOBILE HOMES. RV'S FOR SALE

2BD/2BA VALENCIA Estates 55+, 557 Hawkins Cir., Apopka Close to bus line, \$18,000 OBO. 407-808-4499. cc0206-0227 KEL 136

142. ROOMS FOR RENT

ROOMMATE WANTED: furnished room, \$700 monthly. Non-smoker. Apopka/Mt. Dora line, private bath, senior community. A plicant 4 5 + 407-747-4410



WE ARE HIRING!
Join us!

Sales Specialists
Service Advisors
Service Valet
Service Technicians
(Line, Master, Express, and Diesel)

32. HELP WANTED

UPS PACKAGING & receiving PT M-F. Sales clerk, telephone orders. Must live in Apopka. Spanish helpful. 407-889-0002 Ask for Jay. B0206-0227 APO 32

61. LARGE APPLIANCES

APOPKA APPLIANCE offers in home service on washers, dryers, stoves, refrigerators, dishwashers installed. \$50 off service calls with installation. All help vaccinated for virus. Be safe! Free haul away (no matter where you bought your new one). Used appliances available. Service call \$39.99 with repairs. 407-886-2255 or 407-497-7458. CC 1016-0206 APO 61

LEATHER COUCH and reclining chair. Like new \$400 Text only 321-370-6144. B0206-0227 THO 65

70. MERCHANTISE MISC.

TRAILER PARTS FOR sale. Largest stocking dealer in NW Orange County (Apopka). 407-293-5788. www.surplus-steel.com. B0206-0227 SUR 70

OVER 400 LP ALBUMS for sale. \$400 OBO. You pick up! 407-399-6359. CA 0123-0213 BLA 70

First 15 words \$12, each additional word \$.50 each.

Special 3/4:
Pay for 3 weeks
get the 4th week
free.

81. AUTOS FOR SALE

2004 JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE in good condition. Runs and drives well. Great for daily driving. \$4,000 239-633-3968 cc0130-0220 REA 81

130. REAL ESTATE

131. VACANT LAND

5 ACRE PLOT: 541 E. Osceola Rd., \$250k "no Realtors" 407-682-7898 leave message, financing available. B0109-0130 IRV 131

140. HOMES / DUPLEXES FOR RENT

TWO STORY HOUSE 3BD/2.5BA. 30527 Brae Burn St., Sorrento, Barbara DeLoach, Black Tie Realty. 321-229-5968 cc1226-0116 DEL 142

DUPLEX FOR RENT: 2bd/2 full baths, utilities included. \$2,000 a month, \$2,000 security. call Larry 407-947-6041 cc0130-0220 CLA 140

142. ROOMS FOR RENT

SWEENEY'S ROOMS Cleanest. Quietest. WIFI, Internet. Multiple locations. Call Dwayne 321-271-6773. sweeneyrooms4rent.com CC 0116-0206 JAC 142

133. HOMES FOR SALE

Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. 2Corinthians 12:19

VALENTINE'S IS NEXT WEEKEND ARE YOU READY

Tell Them You Saw It In The Classifieds

FLORIDA STATEWIDE

STATEWIDE CLASSIFIED ADS FOR WEEK OF: 02/02/2026 - 02/08/2026

1. Home Improvement/Service

PROTECT YOUR HOME from pests safely and affordably. Roaches, Bed Bugs, Rodent, Termite, Spiders and other pests. Locally owned and affordable. Call for a quote or inspection today 1-833-542-1732 Have zip code of property ready when calling!

2. Miscellaneous

Donate your vehicle to help find missing children and prevent abduction. Fast free pickup, running or not, 24 hr response. No emission test required, maximum tax deduction.

3. Medical

ATTENTION OXYGEN THERAPY USERS! Discover Oxygen Therapy That Moves with You with Ingén Portable Oxygen Concentrators. FREE information kit. Call 1-833-661-3729

4. Medical

Attention: VIAGRA and CIALIS USERS! A cheaper alternative to high drugstore prices! 50 Pill Special - Only \$99! 100% guaranteed. CALL NOW: 1-877-349-1243

5. Medical

STOP OVERPAYING FOR HEALTH INSURANCE! Reduce premiums and out-of-pocket costs while getting the coverage you need! Call now for a competitive free quote.

6. Home Improvement/Service

BATH & SHOWER UPDATES in as little as ONE DAY! Affordable prices - No payments for 18 months! Lifetime warranty & professional installs. Senior & Military Discounts available. Call: 1-833-2465

7. Wanted to Buy

We Buy Houses for Cash AS-IS! No repairs. No fuss. Any condition. Easy process: Call, get cash offer and get paid. Call today for your fair cash offer: 1-321-603-3026

8. Wanted to Buy

We Buy Vintage Guitar's! Looking for 1920-1980 Gibson, Martin, Fender, Gretsch, Epiphone, Guild, Mosrite, Rickenbacker, Prairie State, D'Angelico, Stromberg, and Gibson Mandolins & Banjos. These brands only! Call for a quote: 1-833-641-6789

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REACH FLORIDA

February 02, 2026

ADVERTISE YOUR WEEKEND. Garage, Yard or Estate Sale

#66 "CLIP 'n SAVE"
Friday - Sunday

Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. 2Corinthians 12:19

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REACH FLORIDA

February 02, 2026

SERVICE DIRECTORY



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- Domestic
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Apopka, FL, 32703

407-880-9300

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Lake Apopka Natural Gas District

ENERGY CHOICE

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F: 407.877.3893

www.LANGD.org

811

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• Deck Railing

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• Electrical

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(740) 508-2354

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Fill Dirt * Mulch

Tree Trimming

Pressure Wash

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Larkin45@yahoo.com

407-739-7334

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WORKPLACE SCREENING INTELLIGENCE

Helping Employers and Employees Get Back to Work Safely and Stay COVID Free