

Induction

Trinity Christian School inducts new members into beta clubs. See page 3A.



Sports

Another undefeated week for Apopka boys basketball! See page 1B.



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High school cadets attend Military Ball 2024



Cadets from the Wekiva High School Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFJROTC) program and Apopka High School Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (MCJROTC) programs had their Military Ball 2024 at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2093 on Edgewater Drive in Orlando on Friday, December 20. Pictured are the Wekiva High School Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps key staff and the Apopka High School's Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps members. Pictured in the first row (l to r) are Cadet 1st Sgt Gavin Conner, Cadet 2nd Lt. Matthew Theriot, Mayor Bryan Nelson, Cadet Capt. Walker Mathis, Cadet Lt. Col. Ethan Kirtley, and Cadet Captain James Rabinek. Pictured in the second row (l to r) are Cadet 1st Lt. Riverd, Cadet/Major Trinity Eckhart, Cadet/Major Sarah Lefkowitz, Cadet/Lt. Col. Prince and Cadet Capt. Diego Hernandez.

Photo courtesy of Mia Rodriguez.

Cities, OCPS at odds over current SRO negotiation

By Teresa Sargeant
Apopka Chief Staff

Following the December 16 Wisconsin school shooting tragedy, the city of Apopka is asking Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) to reconsider its pending negotiation for School Resource Officers (SROs) on several OCPS campuses in municipalities, including Apopka.

OCPS currently has a one-year contract with the law enforcement agencies in Apopka, Ocoee, Winter Garden, Winter Park, and Windermere, which secures SROs on campuses for the 2024-25 school year in compliance with the Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act.

The district has a three-year contract with the remaining four agencies: Orange County Sheriff's Office, Orlando Police Department, Maitland Police Department, and Eatonville Police Department.

The Orange County School Board conducted a Tuesday, December 10, work session to discuss

the possible use of school guardians on campuses located in the five municipalities.

The school board provided direction for staff to continue contract negotiation on January 14, 2025, with the hopes that a deal can be reached to maintain SROs on the 30 school campuses served by the five municipalities.

If an agreement cannot be reached, the Guardian Program is the only option allowed by Florida law to provide the added security to school campuses, according to OCPS in a news release from early December.

The email that OCPS drafted and scheduled for sending to families on December 17 preceded the tragedy in Madison, Wis., according to OCPS spokesman Michael Ollendorff.

On December 16, a 15-year-old girl at Abundant Life Christian School shot and killed a teacher and a student as well as wounding six others before

See SROs Page 9A

City extends its current roadway resurfacing project to end of January

The city of Apopka extended the last date of the roadway resurfacing project from January 10 to January 24, 2025, for three subdivisions: Meadows of Maudehelen, Pines of Wekiva, and Spring Ridge.

Roadway resurfacing began on December 2.

The city will use the following methods in this year's resurfacing program: mill and overlay, and cape/micro seal in this year's resurfacing program.

Maintenance of transportation will be setup with one lane closures. Drivers are advised to plan accordingly for any traffic delays.

Homeowners are asked to remove any vehicles on the road, trash bins, and any other debris that can hinder the paving process. Delays on the start time may occur due to weather or storm events.

The Apopka City Council voted 5-0 on November 6 to approve a \$1.7-million budget for fiscal year 2024-2025 roadway resurfacing pro-



As found on the city of Apopka website, this map depicts all the roads within Meadows of Maudehelen that are due to undergo resurfacing in this year's resurfacing program.

gram pavement improvements to cover about 9.4 miles of roadway in the three subdivisions.

The \$1.7-million budget comes from this fiscal year's street improvement fund, and is a decrease from the fiscal year 2023-2024 roadway budget of an

allocated \$2 million. That fiscal year's program encompassed 218 miles of roadway.

The resurfacing will be for the following subdivisions:

Mill and Overlay (three weeks to complete from

January 6, 2025 to January 24, 2025)

Meadows of Maudehelen Subdivision

*Blue Meadows Court (Johns Road to end)

*Johns Road (Beardsley Drive to end)

See ROADS Page 10A

Water meter maintenance to take place

The city of Apopka will be utilizing Aqua Water to help provide maintenance on the city's reuse and potable meters in designated subdivisions. This work will occur periodically over the next six to eight weeks in designated subdivisions. Aqua Water representatives may be in the areas, and will appreciate understanding and patience as they help ensure the reliability of water services.

Due to the meter maintenance/replacement program, the actual water consumption may be higher than the estimated water consumption previously billed. Utility Billing will

be reviewing each account to provide a billing adjustment, if necessary.

If any additional assistance is needed with the adjusted bill, contact Utility Billing to discuss a payment plan at 407-703-1727.

For any questions or concerns regarding the maintenance process, reach out to Public Services at 407-703-1731.

Locations/Subdivisions

- *Alexandria Place
- *Ambergate
- *Apopka Hills
- *Apopka Terrace
- *Arbor Ridge
- *Bentons Rep
- *Bluegrass Estates

- *Breckenridge
- *Breezy Heights
- *Bridle Path
- *Chandler Estates
- *Charleston Park
- *Charter Oaks
- *Chelsea Park
- *Christiana Gardens
- *Cimarron Hills
- *Clayton Estates
- *Clear Lake Estates
- *Clear Lake Landing
- *Cobblefield
- *Country Address
- *Country Landing
- *Cutter Corner
- *Deer Lake Chase
- *Deer Lake Run
- *Dovehill
- *Dream Lake
- *Dunbridge
- *Emerson Park

- *Errol
- *Errol/Dunhill
- *Forrest Cove
- *Golden Estates
- *Greenbrook/Errol
- *Hackney Property
- *Hawthorne Oaks
- *Hidden Lakes
- *Hilltop Reserve
- *Holly Creek
- *Holly Estates
- *Kelly Park Hills
- *Lake Doe
- *Lake Francis/Errol
- *Lake Hammer
- *Lake Heiniger
- *Lake Jewell
- *Lake Opal
- *Lake Pleasant Cove
- *Lake Pleasant Estates
- *Lakeside
- *Landings at Rock

- Springs
- *Las Alamedas
- *Lovell Terrace
- *Magnolia Oaks
- *Magnolia Park Est.
- *Magnolia Woods
- *Maine Ave Villas
- *Mainline Villas
- *Marbella Reserve
- *Marden Meadows
- *Martin Place
- *Maudehelen
- *Morrison
- *Mount Plymouth
- *Mt. Plymouth Lakes
- *Northcrest
- *Northcrest/Fairfield
- *Oak Acre
- *Oak Hill Reserve
- *Oak on the Lake

See WATER Page 5A

This week

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Apopka Event of the Week

Built by the Apopka High School Engineering Class with funding by the Rotary Club of Apopka, the New Year's Ball will be dropped at the strike of midnight on December 31-January 1 at 2209 E. Semoran Blvd., Apopka. The celebration is from 8 p.m. to midnight, with live music, champagne toast and more.

Quotable

"This edition of The Chief was issued from the new plant. Do you wonder why Miss Apopka smiles? Let's all smile with her, and go forward to make Apopka a better town."

As shared in our last issue, the editorial reflects on the past, but expresses hope for the future.

Opinion

The Apopka Chief

A weekly newspaper founded in 1923

Publisher Emeritus John Ricketson Mar. 5, 1940 - July 16, 2024

Publisher T. Jerrod Ricketson

Marketing Director Jackie Trefcer

Consultant Emeritus John Peery Mar. 28 1956 - Oct. 12, 2023

Reporters Teresa Sargeant Marshall Tempest Neal Fisher

General Mgr Emeritus Neoma Knox Feb. 12, 1929 - Sept. 18, 2021

Our position

From 1921 to the present time, The Apopka Chief continues

The following copy was taken from the front page of an Apopka, Orange County, Fla., March 7, 1921 issue of The Apopka Chief. The cost back then was \$2.00 per Year. The top banner had a box on the right that included the following copy: STAND FOR GOOD CITIZENSHIP THEN YOU STAND WITH THE CHIEF and the slogan under the picture of a head of an Indian Chief said "WHERE ALL THE TIME IS SUMMER AND THE FLOWERS NEVER DIE." In addition, there was a box of copy on the left side of the banner that can be partially read that includes the words ...LIVE COMMUNITY ... PER THAT COVERS ... FIELD AND WILL ... WIN ITS WAY.

As we are about to begin a new year, we wanted to share what it was like back in 1921 for The Apopka Chief. The copy below was included in a frame on the bottom right side of the front page with a full-page drawing of a Miss Apopka holding a pencil drawing of the new building. The copy reads as follows:

"The beautiful Miss Apopka, whose permanent dwelling place is in the heart of Summerland, where the flowers never die, presents for public inspection and favor today, the new wigwam of The Apopka Chief and home of the Apopka Printing Company, Incorporated.

You can tell from the expression on the young woman's face that she is pleased and proud of this fine new acquisition to her resources. The picture she holds in her hand does not do the building justice, as it was made from a pencil drawing before the building was finished. The plant was built in record time, under the supervision of

Lee F. Lovell, of Apopka, and is 80 feet long and 35 feet wide. It has a handsome front of pressed brick and heavy plate glass. It is of tile, brick and concrete construction.

As it stands today, finished, with all equipment installed, it is the most complete printing establishment in Orange County and one of the very best in the State. It is a credit to Apopka and this is why the lady smiles.

The equipment includes a Single Keyboard Model, 14 Linotype, with sufficient magazines to carry seven faces of type. This is the finest machine ever turned out by the Mergenthaler Linotype Company and cost upwards of \$5,000. It was delivered through the New Orleans agency.

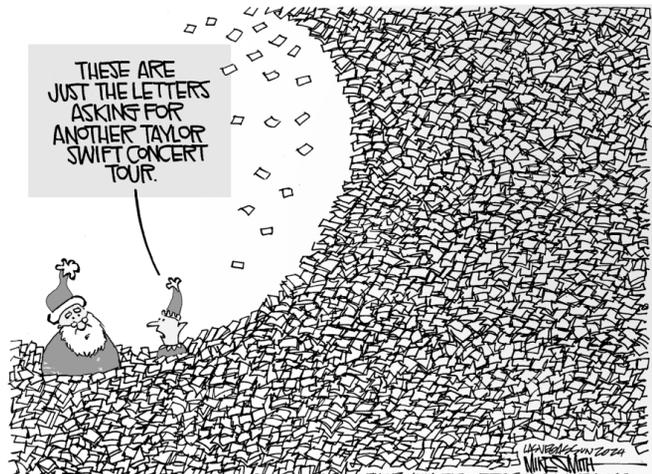
The balance of the equipment came from the Atlanta agency of American Type Founders Company and is of the very highest class. It includes an improved Campbell cylinder press for newspaper work; a Lee cylinder press for book and pamphlet work, a Chandler and Price jobber; an Eclipse folding machine, which cuts, folds and pastes 8, 10 and 12 page newspapers, and a Wire Stitcher, Fal-mouth Punching machine, Miller Saw Trimmer, etc.

Each machine is operated by direct drive from its own individual electric motor.

The job printing department carries more than 100 popular faces of new type, with the latest improved cabinets, cases and all necessary accessories.

This edition of The Chief was issued from the new plant.

Do you wonder why Miss Apopka smiles? Let's all smile with her, and go forward to make Apopka a better town."



As we grow, we must manage growth

I've written about Vision 2050 many times this past year and I am always looking for a way to best sum up the goal of the county's new, long-term comprehensive plan. Simply put, as we prepare for the next 30 years in Orange County, we must change the way we manage growth.

Vision 2050 as proposed right now will focus on five key P's:

- Preserve established neighborhoods.
• Protect natural places and rural spaces.
• Promote walkability.
• Prioritize affordable housing.
• Practice smart, sustainable, and responsible growth.

County Commissioner District 2



Christine Moore

A change in the comprehensive plan is needed because it hasn't been updated since the 1950s when development was based on how land is used. The outdated practice doesn't work now for several reasons. For example, homes, shops, offices, and restaurants were kept separate from each other. It's why we have such sprawling communities and why it

feels for so many of us that we can't do anything without a vehicle!

With Vision 2050, the county is looking to change old zoning rules. The new development rules are called simply Vision 2050. Think of Vision 2050 as the end destination, and Orange Code as the road map to get the county there.

A key element of the plan is to direct growth to the right places. This means preserving established suburban neighborhoods, rural places, and natural spaces. It also means steering most new development to the urban sector, which is where 44 percent of the future population growth in

See MOORE Page 4A

How medicare premiums are determined

Dear Rusty: Please explain the Medicare premium increase based on income reported to Social Security? For those of us that waited to draw Social Security until age 70, and who are still working - drawing a salary, and planning to retire at age 75 after RMDs kick in at age 73 - how do we make sure that Social Security reports our earnings accurately, so we don't wind up with increased Medicare premiums? Why not charge increased Medicare premiums when we are younger, instead of waiting to sneak up on us when we are older? Signed:

Confused about Medicare Premiums

Dear Confused: I believe you are referring to Medicare's "Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount," or "IRMAA." IRMAA increases the Medicare Part B (and Part D) premium amounts for those whose combined income from all sources exceeds specified levels for their IRS tax filing status. Social Security (and Medicare) get your earnings information from the IRS and use your reported IRS income (on your income tax return) to calculate your Medicare premium each

year. But there is a twist - they use your reported combined income (also known as your "MAGI" or "Modified Adjusted Gross Income") from 2 years ago to determine your current year's Medicare premium. For example, they will use your 2023 MAGI to determine your 2025 Medicare Part B premium (and your Part D premium if you have Part D). So, if your income reported to the IRS on your tax return in 2023 is correct, Social Security will use that amount to determine next year's Medicare

See PREMIUMS Page 4A

This Week In God's Word

Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. - 2 Corinthians 13:11

Mema Says

The greatest tribute to the dead is not grief, but gratitude.

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We need the circus clowns to come help our confused politicians

Remember when the circus was the up and going thing? Barnum & Bailey had one of the largest shows ever presented. It was amazing to see the "Flying Trapeze," the Lion & Tiger Tamer in the cage with those beasts that could easily tear him to pieces; the elephants parading around just inside the center ring; and everything happening at one time, in the center arena! If something unusual happened that might be detrimental to the performances, or



Ike Hayden

the performers, the lights would switch to the first ring, and out would burst the clowns, as a distraction, and diversion.

Well, something unusual has happened in the form of unidentified

drones, and behold; HERE COME THE CLOWNS!!

U.S. Senators Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Cory Booker (D-NJ), and Andy Kim (D-NJ) are panicking; surely, we are being invaded (finally). These are those who watched (with their boss "Uncle Joe") as a Chinese Spy balloon drifted across our nation slowly gathering, and sending information to those Chinese who were monitoring, and recording it all. "No problem," they told us. Just a

weather balloon that got loose and broke away.

The spying technology on board that balloon, and the steering capability told another story. If the politicians in charge of transparency were Pinocchio's, we would have a forest of noses! The drones they are hyperventilating over are following all the requirements for night flying (lighting, and so on), and I can't believe Chinese, or Russian spy drones would want to be that bold with who they are (see spy description in

Wikipedia).

Now, our beloved N.J. leaders are telling us they are missing radioactive waste! May I ask, why would anyone steal radioactive waste, put it on, or in drones, and then give us a light show in the sky to show us where they are? I'm sure this administration and their cohorts know exactly what they are, and who they are, and if this were the Trump administration, our beloved, patriotic General Mark Milley would have called Commu-

nist China to warn them of any planned aggressive action toward them.

Mark Milley also said, "U.S. troops take an oath to the Constitution and not a 'wannabe' dictator," an apparent swipe at former President Donald Trump. We do not take an oath to the Constitution! Our oath is taken to protect the Constitution of the United States of America, and to follow the commands of our officers. "Ours is not to

See HAYDEN Page 4A

Trinity Christian School inducts new members into beta clubs

The Elementary, Jr. and Sr. Beta Clubs at Trinity Christian School recently held a combined induction ceremony to welcome new members into the three clubs.

The National Beta Club is the largest independent, non-profit, educational organization in America. For more than 80 years, it has prepared today's students to be tomorrow's leaders.

The ceremony was called to order by Lauren Johnson, Sr. Beta Club President. Elementary Beta Club officers, Tessa Schanne, Kaylin Muniz, and Troy Risner, led the pledges. Mrs. Beverly Lunneen, Sr. Beta Club Spon-

sor, introduced the officers and guests while Mrs. Cindy Skeen, Elementary Beta Club sponsor, and Mrs. Edie Bentley, Jr. Beta Club sponsor, presented the annual service reports for the respective clubs. Ms. Nicole Mutters, school administrator, presented service awards to students and sponsors.

The fourth and fifth grade inductees who took the Beta pledge and were presented their credentials by Elementary Beta Club president Eliana Claudio included: Zoe Ajani, Joanna Bass, Alexa Bigelow, Alia Bigelow, Evangeline Busch, Arthur DeSouza,

See BETA Page 12A



Trinity Elementary School held a combined induction ceremony to welcome new members into three Beta Club Schools, including Elementary Beta Club (pictured).

Photo courtesy of Trinity Christian School

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Time and guidance is best

Dear Editor:

"Oh Boy! What a waste of time and money that sports is, especially for kids in school!" THAT is what I used to believe.

Let me explain: I am a person who can remember being curious about "why is everyone jumping up and down and being happy?" They were celebrating the fact that *THE WAR* (World War II) was finally over. For me, I was just learning that bubble gum was finally available!

I was raised when sports for girls was pretty much playing dodge ball at recess in third grade. Climbing trees and riding my bike - after I finally got one at nine years old - were the only sports I ever took part in.

After reading about the accomplishments of people like Bruce McMil-

lian and Sheronda Wright in last week's *Apopka Chief* newspaper, I realize: THEY - and people like them - are the heroes of our developing generation of children.

Just think: Hundreds, perhaps thousands of children's lives have been steered in a much better direction as a result of their interactions with coaches of the caliber of McMillian and Wright. And these coaches actually CARE about the children they coach, possibly more so than any other person in the kids' lives. Yep. THEY are the heroes in our culture.

I now realize that group sports teaches children to work together; it teaches kids organizational skills: "Well, first I must catch it. Then, I must... not even think about it... just throw it to the right person." This takes them to the

skill they have developed because of their activities in sports that they were introduced to at an even younger age.

All these things that are part of making decisions in group sports are preparatory to the decisions made later in life, such as, "Should I go to college?" "Should I marry this person?" "Should we have kids?" "Should I buy this car... or that house?" All this thinking that is developed during sports activities can be a part of the stepping stones for a life of making decisions.

Kids in sports, I now realize, absolutely have a leg up on life when comparing their abilities to people who are not exposed to sports at a young age.

Just my opinion.
Nancy Thomas
Apopka

Premiums: Income determines cost

Continued from page 2A

premium.

IRMAA uses a sliding income scale to determine your Medicare premium. If you filed your 2022 taxes as "married/jointly" and your combined income for that year was \$206,000 or less, for 2024 you are paying the standard Medicare Part B premium of \$174.50, and there is no additional amount added to your Part D premium. But if your MAGI as a married couple was over \$206,000 your Medicare premiums will be more - e.g., MAGI up to \$258,000 makes your Part B premium \$244.60 and results in a Part D supplement of \$12.90 per month. And so on - as your

MAGI further increases, so will your Medicare premiums until you reach the maximum. MAGI over \$750,000 means a Part B premium of \$594/month and a Part D supplement of \$81/month. Thus, Medicare premiums are "means-tested" (those with higher income pay higher premiums).

A word about "MAGI" - MAGI starts with your Adjusted Gross Income on your tax return, to which is added any non-taxable interest you may have had, and 50% of the Social Security benefits (if any) you received during the income tax year. The total of those three amounts is your MAGI, from which your Medicare premium is de-

termined for the forthcoming year.

So, if your 2023 combined income (your "MAGI") as a couple was under \$206,000 you will pay the standard 2025 Medicare premium which, for Part B, will be \$185/month. If your 2023 MAGI as a married couple is more than \$206,000, you will pay higher Medicare premiums in 2025 due to IRMAA.

Why not pay higher Medicare premiums when we are younger?

Well, that's because IRMAA only applies when you are enrolled in Medicare, and your premium relates to your income while receiving Medicare benefits.

Moore: Vision 2050 offers guidance

Continued from page 2A

Orange County is expected to go.

Vision 2050 identifies six distinct areas within Orange County that are defined by their existing characteristics and development potential. These areas or sectors serve the purpose of addressing new

development, where the development should be limited, and areas that should be protected or preserved. A guiding principle of Vision 2050 is to protect and strengthen existing neighborhoods while creating healthy and sustainable new communities.

In Spring of 2025, we the commissioners are ex-

pected to be asked to vote on the new Vision 2050 plan.

I am asking all of you to please look at what is proposed at: <https://www.ocfl.net/PlanningDevelopment/ComprehensivePlanning/Vision2050.aspx>

Thank you and Happy 2025!



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Hayden: Our nation is a blessing

Continued from page 2A

question why; ours is just to do or die!" Anyone that has served has heard that ditty more than once. On top of all the distractions and misinformation being promoted, we have terrorist activities that are taking lives and disrupting family celebrations over the birth of the "Prince of Peace."

The secular world is doing all it can to dampen our outlook for a new year and ruin our expectation of the triumph of the American Spirit. America is not our government, nor any political bias; America is every man, woman, schoolboy or girl that has a heart that beats a little faster when "Old Glory" is paraded by, and when standing and covering their heart when "The Star-Spangled Banner" is played.

America is helping a

fallen neighbor with a hand up, protecting those that cannot protect themselves, standing for righteousness, and ethical living as an example to the young people in all communities. When called upon to stand between Americans and all the "isms" that would enslave our populace, to stand fast and not back down!

Every day I give thanks to GOD for allowing me to be born in this magnificent nation. Not only during this season, but throughout this year I've been privileged to see people helping people.

There is the story of an old man who had just lost his wife of 65 years and was sitting on his back porch, and on the porch with him was the neighbor's little girl. The mother was upset when the little girl came home, and she chided the little girl for dis-

turbing him in his grief. The little girl responded with, "but Momma, all I was doing was crying with him."

Sometimes we need to remember that someone just needs a shoulder to cry with, or when a reason for rejoicing appears, we need to rejoice with them. There was a Sunday School Class I was so encouraged by, in the Rock Springs Baptist Church. The name of the class was "JOY," and it was an anagram for, Jesus first, Others second, and Yourself last. When I think of being an American neighbor, I think of that class of older ladies that practiced what they preached and exemplified what being a Christian and an American is all about!

My hope and prayers for everyone is for health and a HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

Everybody has an opinion. Why not share yours?

Send, bring or email your signed letters of approximately 250 words to the Editor,

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Established 1923
(USPS 545-440)

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

www.theapopkachief.com, news@theapopkachief.com



City of Apopka Telephone Numbers

City Hall	407-703-1700
Mayor's Office	407-703-1701
City Administrator	407-703-1649
City Clerk	407-703-1704
Community Devel.	407-703-1712
Code Enforcement	407-703-1738
Finance Dept.	407-703-1725
Fire (non-emerg.)	407-703-1756
Parks and Rec. Dept.	407-703-1741
Police Chief	407-703-1769
Police (non-emerg.)	407-703-1771
Job Line	407-703-1743
Solid Waste Collect.	407-703-1731
Street Maintenance	407-703-1731
Utility Billing	407-703-1727
Medical, fire emergency	911

The city of Apopka was chartered in 1882. It is located at 28°30 north latitude and is 150 feet above sea level. Its population is about 48,000 and its total area is more than 30 sq. mi. www.apopka.net

Orange County Telephone Numbers

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

www.orangecountyfl.net

Other Area Numbers of Note

U.S. Senators	
Rick Scott (Rep.)	202-224-5274
Marco Rubio (Rep.)	407-254-2573
U.S. Representative	
Daniel Webster (Dist. 11)	352-241-9220
State Representatives	
Doug Bankson	407-476-6787
Carolina Amesty (Dist. 45)	unknown
State Senators	
Geraldine Thompson (Dist.11)	407-297-2045
Orange County Commissioner	
Christine Moore	407-836-7350
Orange County Public Schools	
Pupil assignment	407-317-3233
Bus routes	407-317-3800
Superintendent	407-317-3200
School Board	407-317-3200
Miscellaneous	
The Apopka Chief	407-886-2777
Museum of the Apopkans	407-703-1707
Chamber of Commerce	407-886-1441

Watch the ball drop on New Year's Eve

The Apopka High School Engineering Class, with funding provided by The Rotary Club of Apopka, will do the honorary drop at this year's New Year's Eve Ball Drop at the Party in the Plaza. The event will take place December 31, 8 p.m. to midnight, at Hurricane Grill and Wings Apopka, 2209 E. Semoran Blvd., Apopka. Admission is free.

Anna Samuel named to fall 2024 dean's list

Anna Samuel of Apopka was named among the students who qualified for Belmont University's fall 2024 dean's list, according to a Friday, December 20 press release from the university.

In Belmont University's recently released dean's list for the fall 2024 semester, approximately 53 percent of the university's 7,175 undergraduate students qualified for the achievement.

Dean's list eligibility is based on a minimum course load of 12 hours and a quality grade point average of 3.5 with no grade below a C.

Belmont University is located two miles from downtown Nashville, Tenn.

Water: Maintenance will be for 6-8 weeks

Continued from page 1A

- *Oak Ridge
- *Oaks at Wekiwa
- *Oakwood Estates
- *Overlook at Parkside
- *Parkside at Errol
- *Parkview Preserve
- *Partnership Hills
- *Piedmont Lakes
- *Piedmont Park
- *Pines of Wekiwa
- *Pitman Estates
- *Plymouth Heights
- *Plymouth Hills
- *Pros Ranch
- *Rock Springs Homesites
- *Rolling Green
- *Royal Oaks
- *Rock Springs Ridge
- *Savannah Oaks Lane
- *Sheeler Hills
- *Sheeler Oaks
- *Silver Oaks
- *Silver Oaks
- *South Apopka
- *Spring Ridge
- *Stonewood Reserve
- *Stonewood/Errol
- *Surrey Park
- *Tildens
- *Valeview
- *Victor Heights
- *Vineyard
- *Vista Reserve
- *Votaw Village

- *Wekiwa Village
- *Whispering Winds
- *Woodfield Oaks

REGAL

Fri., Dec. 27, 2024 thru
Sun., Dec. 29, 2024

3D SHOWINGS

MUFASA: THE LION KING
(PG) 9:50A

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 3 (PG) 9:40A;
10:40A; 12:50; 1:40; 4:00;
4:40; 7:10; 7:40; 10:00;
10:40

MUFASA: THE LION KING (PG) 10:30A; 12:40;
1:30 3:50; 4:30; 7:00;
7:30; 9:50

NOSFERATU (R) 10:00A;
1:10; 4:10; 7:20; 10:20

MOANA 2 (PG) 10:10A;
1:00; 3:40; 6:30; 10:30

WICKED (PG) 11:30A;
3:10; 6:40; 9:40

A COMPLETE UNKNOWN (R) 11:40A;
3:20; 6:50; 10:10

KRAVEN THE HUNTER
(R) 10:30A

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BUSINESS PROFILE

Your Guide to Local Businesses

NEW Home Construction is exploding in Apopka. But is it a better value for you than buying a resale home?

It's no secret, new construction subdivisions are popping up everywhere throughout the Apopka market. Currently, there are an equal number of new construction homes (single-family and townhomes) as there are resale home listings on the market; this is creating unique opportunities for home buyers.

The Apopka and Central Florida real estate market has continued to soften, and monthly sales levels have dropped again by 8.6 percent as of the end of July. Inventory is continuing to rise, signaling more competition that's requiring builders and resale sellers to get creative with pricing and incentives if they want to get their homes sold. In addition, interest rates are still at high levels, and there's always uncertainty regarding our future economy.

All of these factors have created tremendous opportunities for any buyer comfortable enough to make the commitment to buy now, instead of waiting for the market to improve. "I'm seeing extreme builder incentives, below-market loan interest rates, and \$10,000.00-plus closing cost contributions... more than I've seen in years," stated Joe Bornstein, Rock Springs Realty Broker/Owner.

In addition, Bornstein noted that many people are not aware of the dramatic change



Do you need a Realtor® when buying a brand-new home from a builder? "ABSOLUTELY" Visit www.RockSpringsRealty.com or call toll free at 877-333-2811 today to learn how they can help with your real estate needs. Pictured above is Rock Springs Realty Broker/Owner Joe Bornstein, Realtors Dawna Hosier, Joanne Montchal, and Christine Nejame-Evans.

that has just taken place in the real estate industry where buyers are now obligated to pay their own Realtor® fees. All of these factors offer a compelling reason to explore the NEW construction option and be represented by an experienced Realtor® to guide you through the home-buying process.

When you walk into a builder's model home and are greeted by the salesperson, it's important to remember: they work "FOR" the builder and have the builder's best interest in mind... NOT YOURS! That salesperson is not going to fight to get you the lowest possible price, best terms, incentives and discounts available. The salesperson working for the builder makes an extra commission if you don't utilize a Realtor®. The odds are truly stacked against you in this situation," stated Bornstein.

Bornstein also cautions any buyer considering new construction to "never" go into a model home or community

for the first time without your Realtor® present.

In most cases, the builder will register you directly and then "deny" to pay the Realtor® commission if you should purchase a home in that community. This common builder practice can add thousands of dollars of extra cost to your purchase, while penalizing you for having independent representation intended to protect your best interest when negotiating in the home-buying process.

The great news is that when you work with Rock Springs Realty, they bring years of experience as a Buyer's Agent in new construction. So, never buy "WITHOUT" representation.

Thus, if you're looking to sell or buy anywhere in the Central Florida area, you need the knowledge and experience of the seasoned team at Rock Springs Realty to guide you through all the complexities of the real estate market.

Voted one of the

top real estate offices in Apopka for nine years in a row simply validates why they're the professionals you can count on for making your dreams a reality.

Rock Springs Realty services include new home construction, lakefront homes, golf and resort communities residential selling agent, buying agent, luxury and vacation homes, investment properties, second home purchases, condos, villas, and townhomes. Also, bank-owned foreclosures, relocations, vacant land and lots, down payment assistance programs and consulting, along with a full range of commercial real estate services.

Always delivering results, you can visit them at www.RockSpringsRealty.com or call toll free (877) 333-2811 to find out how they can assist you with your specific real estate needs in this rapidly changing market. "It's all about results," stated Bornstein.

Advertisement



The Way I See It

Patti Bankson

Looking Ahead

Does anyone feel like I do, that the longer I live, the shorter the years get? Before we've had a chance to gather all the gift boxes, shiny wrapping paper and bows, and take them out to the curb ... before we've had a chance to put our feet up to relax and adjust to the quiet our departed company has left behind ... before we're ready to even think about taking the decorations down and packing them away for the year, we're rushed into the next holiday. We're caught up in reviews of what's happened throughout the year that was newsworthy, followed by Fireworks, the Times Square Ball Drop, and Auld Lang Syne. And, of course, there's the inevitable, never-ending talk about New Year's Resolutions.

Although there have certainly been times when some areas of my life could have benefited from resolve and resoluteness, I've never made New Year's resolutions. Maybe it's because I'm as aware as the next person that the success rate for them is pretty dismal. I've known a few who have followed through on their resolutions for the first couple of weeks in January. Maybe.

I'm not sure many people actually intend for them to last very long anyway. It just seems to be a thing to do. A kind of wishful thinking. Or an ice-breaker ... "Have you made any resolutions for the new year?" "Yes, I did. I'm going to quit _____; I'm going to start _____, I'm going to stop

_____." Uh huh. Then, in spite of all their good intentions, life happens, and resolutions are forgotten. Then, before they know it, another year is ending, and looking back, they realize it looks very much like all the years before. Nothing much has changed. They're still going to quit _____, stop _____ and still mean to start _____.

Actually, I wrote the above in December, three years ago. I was talking about taking a pro-active approach to the coming new year. Little did I know that in two more years, I would find myself needing to take my own "advice", that I would be a widow ... that I would find myself frozen in time ... unable to envision my own future ... a future in which I would be, suddenly, half of the whole that had been "me" for my entire adult life. My suggestion was to not say, "Here comes the new year", but, instead, to say, "New Year here I come!" Because the first is so passive. It's wondering what's going to happen, over which you have no control ... wondering whether it will be a good year or a bad year. Reading my own words now, I'm tempted to take those words back, and say, "Duh!", Apologize for my arrogance, born out of ignorance. At the same time, I can't help thinking it's probably not bad thinking, and something from which I could probably benefit. Songs and music have always been a large part in my life, and this brings an old country song to mind, I've Got A Tiger By The Tail. Do I? Maybe not at this moment, but isn't that, resolutions or not, what a new year is about

We'd like to know What YOU think?
barefootwahine1@yahoo.com
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 At Year's End
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To our friends and customers

who bring so much pleasure to every day, we wish you a meaningful season. May you find peace, prosperity and plenty of reasons to celebrate throughout the new year!

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Rewarding resolutions that won't require a major commitment of time

Much like money, time does not grow on trees. That reality is all too familiar to busy adults juggling multiple responsibilities at work, at home and other places where they spend their time.

A time crunch can make it hard to commit to a New Year's resolution. But resolutions, which are often focused on self-improvement, can be worthwhile endeavors. So what are busy adults to do? Perhaps the best approach is to choose resolutions that don't necessarily require much time.

• Read more:
 Adults across the globe lament a lack of time to curl up with a good book. But some brief reading before bed each night can help adults achieve this goal and can even improve their quality of sleep. In fact, a 2021 study pub-

lished in the peer-reviewed medical journal *Trials* found that reading in bed before going to sleep improved sleep quality compared to not reading a book in bed.

• Exercise more:
 A commitment to getting fit and being more physically active is a popular New Year's resolution. Though choosing such a path may seem like it requires a significant time commitment, the Physical Activity Guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommend that adults perform at least 150 to 300 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 to 150 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity each week. That might seem like a lot, but it can be combined with other leisure activities you already engage in. For example, a sports fan

can watch the big game while on a treadmill or elliptical, while readers can swap the couch with an exercise bike as their go-to reading spot. Doing so for as little as a half hour per day can help you get the recommended amount of daily exercise without taking up a large chunk of your time.

• Journaling:
 Journaling is another worthy resolution that won't take up much time. Individuals can take 15 minutes out of their day to write down their thoughts and feelings and reflect on the day's comings and goings. That simple activity can produce profound results, as the University of Rochester Medical Center notes that journaling helps people prioritize their problems, fears and concerns; reduce stress; cope with depression; and identify nega-

tive thoughts and behaviors.

• Become more organized:
 This resolution won't take up much of your time. In fact, becoming more organized should free up time. A lack of organization can make it harder to meet work deadlines, keep a house clean, tackle everyday tasks, and keep a clear mind. By taking steps to be more organized, whether that's through using a daily organizer, avoiding procrastinating in regard to cleaning up around the house or other means, individuals will gradually discover they have more free time to use as they see fit.

New Year's resolutions need not take much time. Busy individuals can keep that in mind as they look for ways to improve their lives in the year ahead.



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'Auld Lang Syne' is a New Year's tradition

New Year's Eve festivities peak when the official countdown of the clock begins. After the ball drops and midnight has arrived, revelers

cheer to the new year and exchange kisses and well wishes.

Once such wishes have been exchanged, many people begin to

sing "Auld Lang Syne." But few know what "Auld Lang Syne" means or why it is sung on New Year's Eve. Confusion regarding this song is almost as notable as the tradition of singing it. Many people mumble through the lyrics because they never bothered to learn them.

"Auld Lang Syne" is a Scottish composition that is well over 200 years old. Written by Robert Burns in the 1700s, the author never intended for the song to become a staple of the holiday season. It was originally a poem that was later put to the

tune of a traditional folk song. The title translates roughly in English as "old long since," or "long, long ago." The song pays homage to times gone by and past experiences.

The song has been performed at group jamborees, funerals and other special occasions all over the world, but it is best known for its affiliation with New Year's festivities. The man behind that affiliation may be Canadian musician Guy Lombardo, whose band used "Auld Lang Syne" as a bridge between two radio programs during a live New Year's Eve performance in 1929. Coin-

centally, the song was played directly after the clock struck midnight, laying the groundwork for a New Year's Eve tradition. Now "Auld Lang Syne" has forever been tied to well-intentioned resolutions and sappy slaps on the back. Despite selling millions of records, Lombardo became more famous for his New Year's Eve song than anything else.

Confusion over "Auld Lang Syne" remains to this day. It has been the butt of jokes in popular culture, even earning a nod in the movie "When Harry Met Sally." Harry laments to Sally that he

never quite understood what the song meant and ponders whether it is about forgetting about friends or remembering them. Sally sums it up by saying the song is simply about old friends.

That is the interpretation many New Year's Eve celebrants embrace as they toast to the new year and sing their hearts out. For those who never bothered to learn or have forgotten the words to this staple of New Year's celebrations, below is the popularized English translation sung most often.

New adventures are just around the corner.
Happy New Year!



Wishing you a Happy New Year.

May the joy of the season bring you love and peace. Happy New Year to a wonderful community!

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"Auld Lang Syne"

*Should old acquaintances be forgotten, and never brought to mind?
Should old acquaintances be forgotten, and days of old lang syne.*

Chorus:

*For auld lang syne, my dear
For auld lang syne,
We will take a cup of kindness yet
For auld lang syne.*

*We two have run about the hillsides and pulled the daisies fine,
But we have wandered many a weary foot for times gone by.
We two have paddled (waded) in the stream from noon until dinner time,
But seas between us broad have roared since auld lang syne.*

*And there is a hand, my trusty friend,
And give us a hand of yours,
And we will take a goodwill drink
For auld lang syne.*

*And surely you will pay for your pint, and surely I will pay for mine!
And we will take a cup of kindness yet for auld lang syne.*



**With Kind Thoughts
this New Year**



MAY THIS NEW YEAR BRING YOU MANY HAPPY MOMENTS, SAFE AND JOYFUL REUNIONS, AND ENOUGH CHEER TO LAST THROUGHOUT THE NEW YEAR!

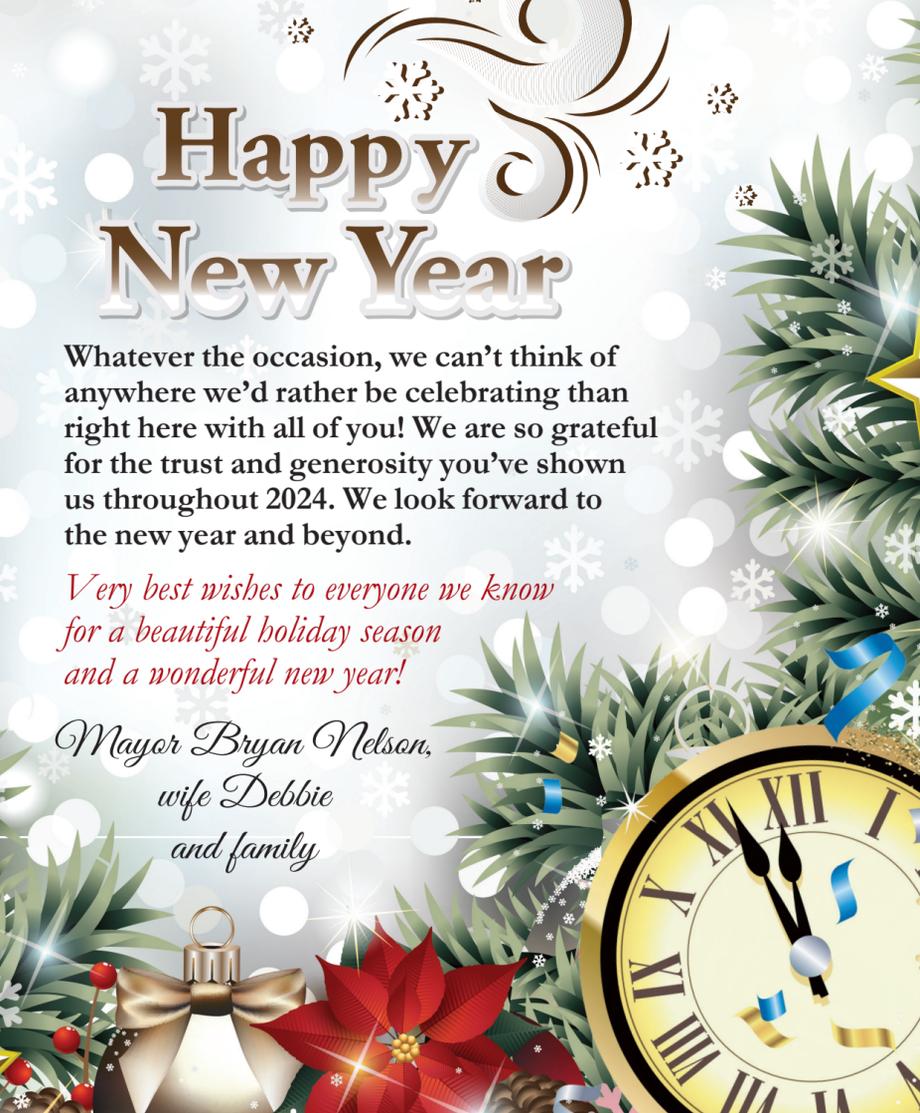
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The magic in new beginnings is the most powerful of them all.
Don't drink and drive!

Happy New Year & Many Thanks,
With best wishes & gratitude from all of us at

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Happy New Year

Whatever the occasion, we can't think of anywhere we'd rather be celebrating than right here with all of you! We are so grateful for the trust and generosity you've shown us throughout 2024. We look forward to the new year and beyond.

Very best wishes to everyone we know for a beautiful holiday season and a wonderful new year!

*Mayor Bryan Nelson,
wife Debbie
and family*



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With Kind Thoughts this New Year



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*Mayor Bryan Nelson,
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and family*

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Roads: Pines of Wekiwa roads are affected

Continued from page 1A

- *Beardsley Drive (from South Binion Road to Scrub Jay Road)
- *Sanderline Point Loop (from Beardsley Dr to Maudehelen Street)
- *Maudehelen Street (from Sanderline Point Loop to Blackbird Drive)
- *Scrub Jay Road (from Maudehelen Street to end)
- *Willet Avenue (from Maudehelen Street to end)
- *Chickadee Drive (from Willet Avenue to Maudehelen Street)
- *Clapper Trail (from Willet Avenue to Maudehelen Street)

- *Scrub Jay Road (from Willet Avenue to Maudehelen Street)
 - *Blackbird Drive (from Willet Avenue to end)
 - *White Bird Way (from Willet Avenue to Blackbird Drive)
- Pines of Wekiwa Subdivision (two weeks to complete from December 2, 2024 to December 11, 2024)*
- *Wekiwa Pines Boulevard (from Osprey Way to Rock Springs Road)
 - *Pine Forest Place (from Wekiwa Pines Boulevard to end)
 - *Pineview Place (from

- Pineforest Place to end)
 - *Wyndham Pine Drive (from Wekiwa Pines Boulevard to Foxforrest Circle)
 - *Foxforrest Circle (from Wyndham Pine Drive to Wyndham Pine Drive)
 - *Osprey Way (from Wekiwa Pines Boulevard to Loop)
- Cape/Micro Seal Spring Ridge Subdivision (one week to complete from December 9, 2024 to December 13, 2024)**
- *Spring Ridge Boulevard (from Mount Rainier Court to West Lester Road)
 - *Mount McKinley Court (from Spring Ridge

- Boulevard to end)
- *Mount Ranier Court (from Spring Ridge Boulevard to end)
- *Mount Logan Drive (from Spring Ridge Boulevard to end of old)
- *Mount Baker Court (from Spring Ridge Boulevard to end of old)
- *Carpathian Drive (from Spring Ridge Boulevard to end)
- *Stanvoy Street (from Spring Ridge Boulevard to Carpathian Drive)
- *Kilamanjaro Court (from Stanvoy Street to end)

See ROADS Page 12A

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Obituaries

ROSA LEE ONDICH, 99, of Zellwood, passed away Monday, December 23, 2024. Rosa was born on January 18, 1925, in Pee Dee, North Carolina to parents Curry and Martha Wilson. Rosa is predeceased by: daughter, Donna Korb. She is survived by: son, Philip Hale; daughter, Janet Ondich; two grandchildren.

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Rosa Lee Ondich

Rosa Lee Ondich, 99, a resident of Zellwood, passed away Monday, December 23, 2024.

Rosa was born January 18, 1925, in Pee Dee, North Carolina to parents Curry and Martha Wilson. Her sister was Betty Wilson/Bowles. Rosa Lee graduated from Leesburg High School, and then Florida Southern College with a BS in Business and Home Economics.

In 1950 she married Jack Hale, and had a son James Philip and a daughter Donna Louise. In 1958, Rosa Lee re-married and in

1960 with Michael Ondich Jr had a daughter Janet Lee.

She is survived by Philip Hale, son, Willcox Arizona, Janet Ondich, daughter, Orlando FL, Kevin Korb, grandson, Orlando FL, Megan Ford, granddaughter, Daytona Beach FL, and predeceased by Donna Korb, daughter, in 2021.



The Day After Christmas

When I was a child I remember getting the Sears "Wish Book" in the mail every year sometime in September. This was a hefty full-color Christmas catalog filled with toys, but also with clothing and all sorts of products to get everyone excited about Christmas. We may complain about Christmas decorations going up before Thanksgiving (or Halloween), but the Sears "Wish Book" literally came out in late Summer or early Fall, so selling Christmas earlier every year is nothing new. And as children we seemed to pine for those gifts for months. As adults we are more interested in spending time with loved ones and having some

time off from work. But most of us still approach the holiday season with childlike expectation, which is often followed by something approaching "letdown" the day after Christmas, or at least after the holidays are over and we're back at work or school. But if we really think about what Christmas celebrates, the days after Christmas should be the ones where we celebrate the joy of what Christmas really means. That is, the days after the original Christmas (the birth of Jesus) were days of nurturing our Saviour, days to enjoy the presence of God's gift to us, which is Emmanuel, or God with us.

-Christopher Simon

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

In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.
Matthew 5:16

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Proverbs 14:26

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Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding. Proverbs 4:7

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

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The Day After Christmas

(See message above.)

"All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel!" (which means "God with us")." Matthew 1:22-23 NIV



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- Bible**
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- Biblical Science**
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407-920-1757
10th Street Church of Christ
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- Church of God**
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Faithworks Church
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407-299-6311
Freedom Ministries
407-886-6006
Grace Gospel Church
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407-889-3383
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In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.
Matthew 5:16

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407-291-4816
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407-884-0595
- Templo Bíblico**
Templo Asamblea Bíblica Lake Howell Branch Chapel
407-814-4465
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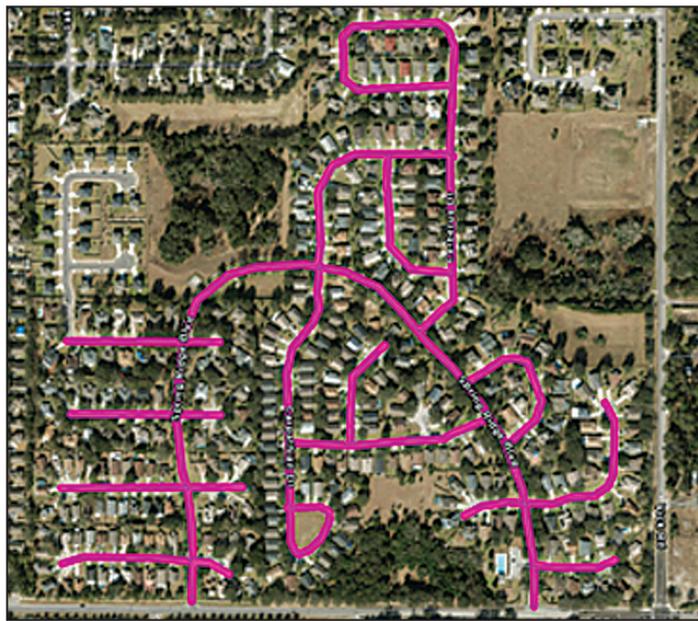
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Roads: Updates will be on city website

Continued from page 10A

- *Koryak Court (from Stanvoy Street to end)
- *Grand Sayan Loop (from Spring Ridge Boulevard to Spring Ridge Boulevard)
- *Khingon Court (from Spring Ridge Boulevard to end)
- *Grand Hughey Court (from Spring Ridge Boulevard to end)
- *Kamchatka Court (from Spring Ridge Boulevard to end of old)
- *Adirondack Court (from Spring Ridge Boulevard to end)
- *Olympic Court (from Spring Ridge Boulevard to end)
- *Himalayan Court (from Spring Ridge Boulevard to end)
- *Ozark Court (from Spring Ridge Boulevard to end)
- *Spring Ridge Boulevard (from W Lester Road to Olympic Court)
- *Pelinion Street (from Spring Ridge Boulevard to



As found on the city of Apopka website, this map depicts all the roads within Spring Ridge that are due to undergo resurfacing in this year's roadway resurfacing program.

Cerberus Drive) Drive) Cerberus Drive) For updates, visit the News Flash on apopka.gov.

*Caraquet Drive (from Pelinion Street to Cerberus Drive) *Cerberus Drive (from Spring Ridge Boulevard to Cerberus Drive)

Beta: Reception followed inductee program

Continued from page 3A

Nathalia Hutchinson, Mila Johnson, Mason Leicherling, Isaac Richards, Isaac Rojas, Jace Tahner, and Jordyn Washington. Milana Datilma, Jr. Beta Club president presented the membership card and pin to the following middle school students: Gisele Bennett, Audriana Camargo, Kris Donawa, Jayden Dunn, Amariah Gibson, Christian Lechuga, Luna Valen-

tina Matias, Eleazar Portalatin, Ethan Runyon, Skyler Smothers, Alice Underwood, and Miranda Zhu. High school students Jaxon Marshall and Sebastian Saldarriaga were inducted into the Sr. Beta Club.

Adilynn Roberts, Jr. Beta Club chaplain, gave the benediction to close the ceremony. Inductees and their guests were invited to a cake reception following the program.

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SUDOKU ANSWERS
PUZZLE CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 2B

1	5	8	7	4	2	6	9	3
2	7	3	6	9	5	1	8	4
6	4	9	8	3	1	5	7	2
7	2	4	9	5	6	8	3	1
8	9	6	1	7	3	2	4	5
3	1	5	2	8	4	7	6	9
9	3	2	5	6	8	4	1	7
4	8	1	3	2	7	9	5	6
5	6	7	4	1	9	3	2	8

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Puzzle Solution

		C	B	S		A	M	T	R	A	K						
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The Crossword Puzzle is found on page 2B