

Birthday

Captain/Commander U.S. Army Reserve celebrates birthday
See page 3A.



Sports

Apopka's Sarah Sosa was instrumental in keeping the game against Windermere in reach.
See page 1B.



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Volume 102 Number 15

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Friday, April 12, 2024 / 50 cents

Local historian wins community service award



Francina Boykin (second from right) is the recipient of the Foliage Sertoma Club of Apopka's 2024 Service to Mankind Award. With her are (l to r) Pat McGuffin (Chairman of the board), Foliage Sertoma Club President Lorena Potter, and member, Mayor Bryan Nelson.

By Teresa Sargeant
Apopka Chief Staff

The Foliage Sertoma Club of Apopka honored Francina Boykin with the Service to Mankind Award, which recognizes an individual for civic efforts reflecting the club's motto of "service to mankind."

Boykin was one of the 12 award nominees honored at the Service to Mankind Banquet that the Sertoma Club organized on Wednesday, April 10, at the Fran Carlton Center in Apopka.

Students of the Wekiva High School Culinary Arts Magnet Program catered the event, and the Apopka High School Beta Club served tables.

As the winner, Boykin received a plaque, was given \$250 for the club to donate to the charity of choice, and will ride in the annual Christmas Parade that the Sertoma Club organizes. The Foliage Sertoma Club of Apopka will also submit Boykin's name for nomination for the national Service to Mankind Award.

An Apopka native,

Boykin is well versed in Apopka history. She is a past president and a board member of the Apopka Historical Society, a writer for the *Orlando Times* newspaper, an editorialist, a member of Montsho's Writers Guild, a researcher of Apopka's African-American history, and member of the Reaching Out Prison and Jailhouse Ministry.

After the banquet, Boykin discussed what community service means to her: "Just being there for

See BOYKIN Page 6A

Festival vendor, a veteran, handcrafts charcuterie boards

At his home-based shop in Apopka, Dan Dempsey is unfazed by today's fast-paced digital era as he meticulously studies one of his custom hand-built charcuterie boards.

Exotic hardwoods from around the globe fused together in a distinctive composition of natural colors have been creating a buzz among his inner circle of friends and customers.

Brazilian cherry, Peruvian walnut, purple heart, maple, and mahogany are carefully curved, planed and sanded into aesthetically pleasing centerpieces, where simply being on display is enough to attract compliments (and possibly even jealously) from admiring houseguests.

Dempsey's cutting and charcuterie

boards are one-of-a-kind and never duplicated. They're all-natural and non-toxic with no staining and no artificial coloring. A work of art is tailored with individuality and authenticity, yet household utility. The boards are built of only the highest quality material that underwent careful hand selection and an inspection performed by the master wood craftsman who recently retired after 25 years of owning and operating a successful home remodeling business.

Dempsey's devotion to woodworking was inspired six decades ago in Georgetown, Mass., where he spent his childhood learning carpentry from his fa-



ther's. Dan Dempsey displays a few of his handcrafted cutting and charcuterie boards. He will be a featured crafter at the 62nd annual Apopka Art and Foliage Festival, which will take place April 27-28 at Kit Land Nelson Park.

Photo courtesy of Apopka Woman's Club

See DEMPSEY Page 3A

Woman's Club receives proclamation

Photo courtesy of city of Apopka

At the April 3 Apopka City Council meeting, Mayor Bryan Nelson gives the Apopka Woman's Club a proclamation about the 62nd annual Apopka Art and Foliage Festival. The Woman's Club and the city are organizers of the two-day event that will take place on Saturday, April 27, from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday, April 28 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Kit Land Nelson Park, 10 N. Forest Avenue, Apopka.

Total solar eclipse

This is the Monday, April 8, total solar eclipse, as glimpsed from the Orlando Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center in Lake Nona. This photo composite is the result of a pair of images captured with a Nikon D6, both at ISO-100, F-6.3, SS-125, with one using a welder's glass laid across the lens. They were combined to give the viewer a look at both the eclipse and its Orlando VA hospital surroundings. Photo by Scott Webb, lead medical media specialist at the Orlando Veterans Affairs Healthcare System.

Becker resigns from City Council Seat 3

By Teresa Sargeant
Apopka Chief Staff

Kyle Becker has resigned as city commissioner of Seat 3 and vice mayor, citing the sale of his Apopka home and moving out of the city as the reason. As such, he will miss what would have been his last City Council meeting, scheduled for Wednesday, April 17.

Becker submitted his letter of resignation dated Friday, April 5, to Apopka City Clerk Susan Bone. In the letter, he congratulated Commissioner Diane Velazquez as the new vice mayor, since after his resignation, she is currently the most senior commissioner.



Becker

The following is Becker's letter in full:

"Please accept and record this correspondence as my immediate and unconditional resignation as Commissioner of Seat 3. The nature of this action is the result of the sale of my homestead property earlier today, whereas I no longer have a legal address in which to claim residency in the City of Apopka.

"This letter represents the last official public record of my service, and as

See BECKER Page 5A

Wolf Lake Elem. recognized as a School of Excellence

Forty-five schools in Orange County Public Schools (OCPS), including Wolf Lake Elementary School in Apopka, earned the State Board of Education's Schools of Excellence designation for the 2022-23 school year. This includes 10 OCPS schools that were added to the list based on their 2022-23 informational baseline grades, OCPS announced on Tuesday, April 9.

To become a School

of Excellence, a school must score in the 80th percentile or higher of possible points earned in its school grade within the same grade groupings (i.e., elementary, middle, high and combination) for at least two of the last three school years.

The 35 OCPS schools that were designated as a School of Excellence for the 2021-22 school year retained their status for the 2022-23 school year.

This week

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Apopka Event of the Week

Tea Social Hour is Wed., April 17, from 5-6 p.m., at the North Orange Branch Library, 1211 E. Semoran Blvd., Apopka, in its meeting room. Do you need to unwind? Come, listen to music, snag a sweet treat with your cuppa, relax and chat while the library provides a creative art activity. Recommended for adults ages 18 and up. Food will be served at this event. Please see staff about specific needs concerning food allergies.

Quotable

These bills provide law enforcement with more tools to keep kids safe and ensure sexual predators and offenders are punished to the fullest extent of the law.

Why Governor DeSantis signed 5 pieces of legislation designed to protect children

Opinion

The Apopka Chief
A weekly newspaper founded in 1923

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Our position

Governor signs legislation to protect children from abuse

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. —

Today, (April 10) Governor Ron DeSantis signed five pieces of legislation to enhance and create additional criminal punishments for abusing children through grooming or other sexual offenses. These bills provide law enforcement with more tools to keep kids safe and ensure sexual predators and offenders are punished to the fullest extent of the law.

“In Florida, we let kids be kids, and we protect children from those who seek to harm them,” said Governor Ron DeSantis. “Today’s anti-grooming legislation punishes those who seek to prey on children and rob them of their innocence. Florida will continue to be the best state in the country to raise a family.”

“A child’s safety and innocence should never be compromised, but when it is, the laws of our state should provide swift and severe punishment,” said Executive of the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles Director Dave Kerner. “Our residents and law enforcement should have every tool to prevent these terrible people from ever having the opportunity of taking advantage of children. Parents in Florida can rest easier knowing that their children are safe and protected. Governor DeSantis has always been a strong supporter of families, and today’s bill signings are just another example of his dedication and leadership in putting the people of Florida first.”

“By criminalizing the repeated graphic and sexual speech to minors, child predators will now face felony charges before causing physical trauma to their victims,” said Senator Jonathan Martin. “This bill creates a first in the nation law that provides prosecutors another tool to prosecute those who seek to harm our youth.”

“As a retired Green Beret, I have always been and will always be a protector, and this bill continues that history,” said Senator Jay Collins. “HB 305 increases the maximum age of a child victim

from 16 to 17 whose out-of-court statements may be admissible, and ensures the first offense of specified sex trafficking offenses involving minors requires designation of the defendant as a sexual predator. We must always protect those at risk.”

The bills signed today include: HB 1545, which protects children from grooming activities and other sexual offenses.

HB 1131, which establishes a grant program within the Florida Department of Law Enforcement to create online sting operations to target sexual predators.

HB 1235, which creates stricter guidelines for sex offender registration.

SB 1224, which strengthens the role of the Statewide Guardian ad Litem Office and implements new training requirements to ensure law enforcement properly assesses a domestic violence situation.

HB 305, which expands the evidence that can be presented to a jury in sex-abuse cases where the victim is a minor and increases penalties on those who take part in sex trafficking of minors.

HB 1545 creates the criminal offense of harmful communication to a minor. This bill:

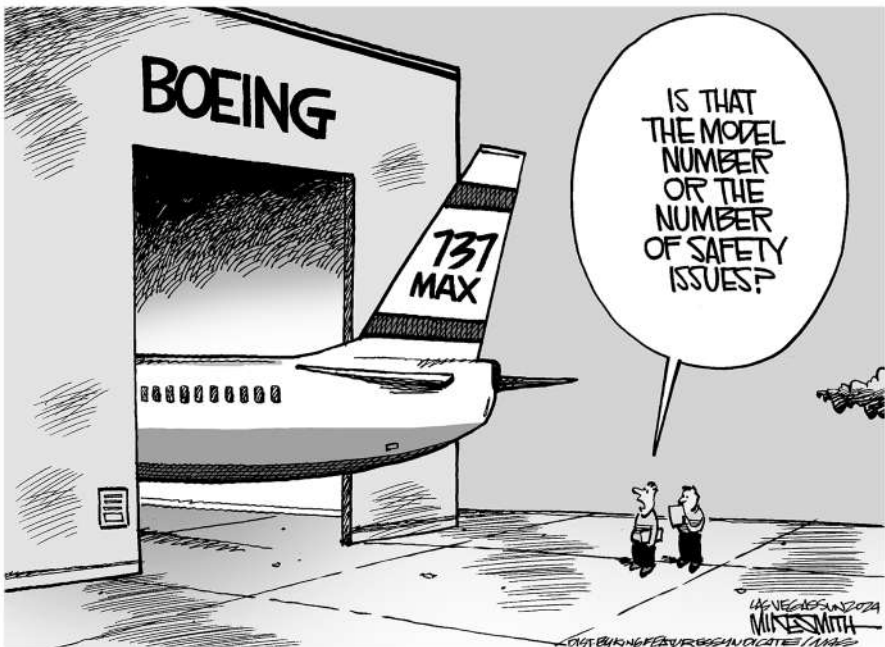
Prohibits an adult from engaging in a pattern of communication to a minor that includes explicit and detailed verbal descriptions of sexual activity.

Increases penalties for child exploitation crimes such as promoting sexual performances or possessing child pornography.

Establishes this conduct as a third-degree felony, strengthening the punishments associated with child exploitation and making them more severe.

HB 1131 creates an Online Sting Operations Grant Program within the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). This bill: Requires FDLE to award grant funding on an annual basis for sting operations. Allocates funding to

See LEGISLATION Page 4A



Agencies are in place to give assistance

Very often my staff and I are asked to assist a senior citizen who has either fallen on tough times financially, needs advice on avoiding fraudulent “actors”, or simply, the senior may want to know about places to visit where he or she can mingle with others. These are all valid reasons to contact my office at 407.836.5850 and ask for advice and a referral. The county’s Office on Aging at officeonaging@ocfl.net or 407.254.9277 is a great place to start as well.

Recently a constituent spoke of major safety issues in her home and she didn’t have the money

County Commissioner
District 2



Christine Moore

to address the concerns. That’s where Orange County’s Housing Rehabilitation Program can help. This program assists very low-income homeowners in correcting code violations and deteriorating conditions that affect basic health and safety. Homeowners are required to have lived

in the house for at least one year. The number to call for more information on this program is 407.836.5150. or email housing@ocfl.net. We truly wish, in Orange County Government, that we could cover every possible need a person encounters, but, that’s not realistic.

Next, as we approach warmer months, we hear about senior citizens unable to pay their electric bill. LIHEAP, (the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program), is a federally funded program which provides financial help a home’s water, heating, and/

See MOORE Page 4A

Wekiva, Lockhart create culinary event

There are a few areas that are not only critically important to the success of any organization, but if done well, they can significantly improve the outcomes. The two areas are communication and collaboration.

Our school district is working hard at improving in both of these areas and I want to highlight two great examples that happened recently.

The first was a collaboration between Lockhart Elementary and Wekiva High School Culinary Academy. The principal of Lockhart met Chef Bates, the director of our culinary magnet program at Wekiva, at a recent event and started a discussion with him about collaborating with

Orange County School
Board, District 7



Melissa Byrd

her school.

What resulted from this chance meeting and discussion was a wonderful event that benefited both the elementary students and the high school students in a significant way.

The culinary program began by getting Tijuana Flats to sponsor the event so that a delicious lunch could be served to the staff at Lockhart. So the entire event was graciously fund-

ed by Tijuana Flats and they even provided extra training in their restaurant for the culinary students ahead of the event.

The culinary students arrived early the day of the lunch and worked closely with the Lockhart Elementary “junior chefs” to teach them basic kitchen skills. The students worked together to prep, chop and cook all of the food while reinforcing important safety food prep skills.

The end result was a huge feast of fresh foods that was then served by the students to the entire staff at Lockhart Elementary. The looks of accomplishment on the faces of the young students as they

See BYRD Page 4A

This Week In God’s Word

Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.
1 John 3:18

Mema Says

None of my yoga pants have actually been to yoga.

The Apopka Chief is published every Friday and entered as Periodicals, postage paid at Apopka Post Office, under the Act of Congress of March 23, 1879. The Apopka Chief newspaper is published by Foliage Enterprises, Inc., every Friday at 400 N. Park Avenue, Apopka, Fla., 32712-3417. An annual subscription is \$25 in Orange County and \$30 outside Orange County, Phone 407-886-2777. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Apopka Chief, PO Box 880, Apopka, Fla., 32704-0880.



Choices we make will cause us to either laugh or cry, or maybe both

Sometimes, I feel as Dorothy did, thinking, “Toto, I don’t think we are in Kansas anymore!” as spoken in the movie, *Wizard of Oz*. As a young man, raised in the farming communities of the Midwest, I was taught early on that each day presented new opportunities or problems, and which one of those was not up to chance, but it was up to my choices.

I was raised in a home where singing was a part of daily life and common sense was taught as a



Ike Hayden

rule of thumb. It was not a chore to feed the chickens, but an opportunity to check the growth of the chicks, to check the overall health of the flock, and to check for any repairs that need-

ed to be made to the laying boxes.

I look around at today’s world and I see chaos and discontent, with the emphasis on discontent. We have changed from an outward-looking society to an inward-looking society, and we have changed from “What can I do to better someone else’s life?” to “What can be done for me to make my life better?” I just do not think I am in Kansas anymore!

Another thing I see lacking in today’s world is

laughter. The ability to see humor in things and in ourselves’ is non-existent. The woke culture is upon us, and our funny bones have turned into dried, dead bones. My sister was diagnosed with small cell lung cancer and given a year to live. She lived almost five years before she died and the doctor told her he was going to make her his poster child for being on chemotherapy for the longest period with her form of cancer. She replied, “I have a brother in Florida praying

for me.” He replied, “That is wonderful but something else has benefited you greatly – you laugh a lot!” He attributed her extended life to her sense of humor and the laughter she shared with those around her.

What has happened with our ability to laugh at ourselves and to allow others to laugh at our boo boos? We do not stop laughing because we get old; we get old because we stop laughing! Being offended seems to be our main goal, and our efforts

are spent watching for that opportunity.

There is a scripture that says, “When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” Somewhere in our journey we have failed to put away childish things. We cling to tantrums, throwing fits, hurting others, or whatever it takes to get our way. The one thing we need to retain

See HAYDEN Page 4A

Dempsey: He also runs a home construction business

Continued from page 1A

ther. Over the years, his talents have been showcased in restoring antique relics and building furniture. Three generations later, his son, Ryan, now continues the legacy at the helm of the family business after 15 years of one-on-one apprenticeship.

Merely a hobby, Dempsey's custom-made boards were never intended to be a business and any talk of the matter quickly drifts off into a conversation about what's really important in life. Dempsey may speak of woodwork as a passion, but one can hear in his voice that his true loves are

his wife of 35 years, Leslie, three children and, three grandchildren.

On the forefront of his mind is the enjoyment of a well-deserved retirement following an extraordinary and fulfilling life highlighted by 12 years of service in the U.S. Navy and over 20 years of raising a family in Maine.

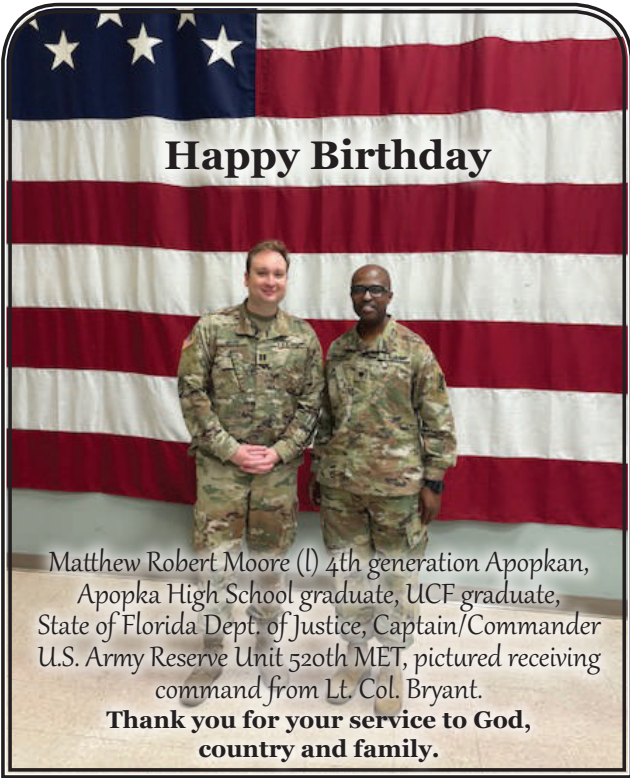
Outside of the workshop, his delicate touch and finesse are often on display while casting a fishing line, shooting a game of pool in his garage or handling a spatula on the backyard grill. He's easily hypnotized by a football game, any football game, much to the dismay of his adoring wife.

Dempsey's custom-made char-

cuterie boards are not sold online or in stores. A limited selection will be available for purchase (check or cash) at the upcoming Apopka Woman's Club Art and Foliage Festival two-day event on Saturday, April 27, from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday, April 28, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Kit Land Nelson Park, 10 N. Forest Avenue, Apopka.

Dempsey also runs a Longwood-based home construction business. To learn more about Dempsey Remodeling, Inc., visit facebook.com/dempseyremodelinginc/.

Tell them you saw it in The Apopka Chief



Happy Birthday
Matthew Robert Moore (l) 4th generation Apopkan, Apopka High School graduate, UCF graduate, State of Florida Dept. of Justice, Captain/Commander U.S. Army Reserve Unit 520th MET, pictured receiving command from Lt. Col. Bryant.
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Sidewalks are not needed

Dear Editor:

In response to Commissioner Moore’s recent letter.

I appreciate Commissioner Moore’s efforts to communicate with residents regarding the recent sidewalk installations in various residential communities, including Lake Mendelin Estates. While I understand the importance of infrastructure development for pedestrian safety, I must express some concerns on behalf of the residents of our district.

Firstly, it is crucial to acknowledge that just because the government can undertake certain projects, it doesn’t necessarily mean it should proceed without considering the sentiments and needs of the community it serves. As elected officials, it is imperative to prioritize the voices and concerns of the people in our district over personal agendas.

In the case of Lake Mendelin Estates, the proposed sidewalks will not only shorten driveways, hindering residents from parking their vehicles but also potentially pose safety risks by forcing them to park on the street, thus obstructing traffic flow and pedestrian pathways. This could exacerbate the already low volume of traffic in our small community, creating unnecessary hazards for residents.

Furthermore, the installation of sidewalks may necessitate the removal of trees, altering the aesthetic and ambiance of our neighborhood. Lake Mendelin Estates prides itself on its tranquil environment, and such changes could significantly impact the character of our community.

Additionally, while I understand your perspective on the necessity of rights-of-way for infrastructure projects, it is evident that many residents may not fully comprehend the implications of these regulations. Improved communication and transparency from the county regarding such projects are essential to ensure that residents are adequately informed and can participate in decision-making processes that affect their properties.

Moreover, it is disheartening to hear that

Lake Mendelin Estates has undergone multiple changes without proper notification to residents, such as the recent conversion of yield signs to stop signs and unnecessary repaving. The allocation of resources towards projects that do not address the immediate needs of the community, such as the impending septic to sewer conversion, is concerning and highlights the importance of prioritizing taxpayer funds effectively.

In conclusion, while I appreciate your dedication to enhancing safety and property values in our district, I urge you to reconsider the implementation of sidewalks in Lake Mendelin Estates and prioritize community feedback and needs in future decision-making processes. Together, we can work towards solutions that benefit all residents while preserving the unique character of our neighborhood.

Respectfully,
Randi Kaufman-Long
A concerned Lake Mendelin Estates and District 2 Resident

Moore: Office on Aging gives answers

Continued from page 2A

or cooling bill. For general program questions, call 407.836.7429 between 8:30 a.m. and noon, Monday through Friday. Questions will be answered during this time frame. You can receive one benefit from LIHEAP each year. An example is that if a person receives home energy help on April 10, 2024, he or she would be eligible again on April 11, 2025. Benefits range from \$200 to \$600.

The Orange County Senior Climate Efficiency Program provides yet another fantastic service for people over the age of 60 years who are considered low-income. These folks can get their air conditioning unit replaced, the a/c unit serviced, or a system upgrade if needed. An a/c unit would be automatically replaced if it is over 10 years old or if the outside and inside units are mismatched (different makes or different ages). For this information, call Ben Pa-

quin at 407.836.0918 or email him at: Ben.Paquin@ocfl.net

Maybe what’s most important to know about senior services in Orange County is that the Office on Aging can provide answers on everything from aging in good health to caring for your home, and where to go to enjoy fun and recreation.

And, if the county doesn’t have an answer, we will direct you to the right place to find it.

Hayden: Treat everyone the same

Continued from page 2A

from our childhood is the ability to see happiness in some of the simplest things, to feel comfort with making friends of people whom we have just met.

When was the last time you started a conversation with someone in line at the grocery store? Most people are looking for someone else to make the first move because they want to show their willingness to be friendly. We need to take time to *see* people, not just *look* at them.

When I look back at the opportunities I have missed – no, ignored, I feel a loss because that person I chose to ignore had a gem of wisdom to share with me, and I will never be able to know it. There are so many things that I do not know and so many people out there who have the information I need to fill my

curiosity. I will never find the answers until I am willing to tap the fountain of wisdom that rests in other people.

I believe being a part of any community carries with it a responsibility to contribute to the good of that community, and everyone has a contribution. The young people today have the exuberance of youth and many times a new approach to solving some of the problems we see around us.

Can we not discuss those solutions? Our elderly generation have had experiences and many times lived through tough times that have given them a special insight as to how to overcome different situations.

Our middle-aged people of today are working in everyday jobs that sharpen their skills in getting along with co-workers and boss-

es. Small business owners learn how to listen for ideas on keeping employees safe and happy in their jobs.

The point being is if we want to feel that we are back in Kansas again, it is going to take more than clicking our ruby red shoes together, and repeating, “There’s no place like home.” We need to start recognizing the people who surround us daily, knowing race or culture has nothing to do with their ability to give us something to help us grow.

Our growth as human beings and our ability to cope with daily opportunities are only hindered by our unwillingness to see others as teachers or instructors for our benefit in living fuller lives and contributing to our community.

Love, learn, and live with laughter in your heart to share with all! Are we back in Kansas yet?

Legislation: Guidelines are stricter

Continued from page 2A

be used on computers, electronics, software, and other digital assets to conduct online child predator sting operations.

HB 1235 establishes stricter guidelines for sexual offender registration. This bill:

- Prevents sex offenders from using a temporary residence to avoid registration; requires sex offenders to register vehicles and vessels used as living quarters with the state; requires international travel to be reported ahead of time; makes it more difficult to qualify for registration removal.

SB 1224 strengthens the State-wide Guardian ad Litem Office and helps law enforcement better assess domestic violence situations. This bill: creates a new role within the Guardian ad Litem Office to assist children aging out of foster care to successful independent living; es-

tablishes the Fostering Prosperity grant program for youth and young adults aging out of foster care to facilitate trade school opportunities and financial literacy instruction and to provide college preparation tools; creates a lethality assessment that requires responding law enforcement officers to a domestic violence incident to determine if a domestic violence victim is at risk of death or serious injury and respond appropriately. This was inspired by Gabby Petito who was tragically murdered by her fiancé Brian Laundrie.

HB 305 makes several changes to existing law pertaining to offenses involving children. This bill: allows a hearsay statement made by a minor, regardless of age, to be admitted as evidence; it also requires offenders convicted of human trafficking minors to be registered sex offenders on the first offense.

Byrd: Communication is answer

Continued from page 2A

served their own teachers food they had prepared was priceless.

The teachers all shared with me that the food was delicious!

This event was a perfect example of collaboration that can benefit multiple levels of students. Our younger students were exposed to a career or to skills that may have been their first experience with and may have sparked an interest that will reveal itself later in their academic career.

The older students experienced time in mentoring and teaching which further ingrains their own skills but also might spark a

desire to teach!

The second area that is vital to the success of our district and our students is communication. Since Dr. Vaquez has taken over as the Superintendent of OCPS, communication has been an area of focus for her.

She has continued her community town hall meetings that she started as soon as she was hired in her current position. In fact, she held 44 town hall meetings in her first 100 days in the position.

This week she held one of those town hall meetings at Apopka High School. These meetings are really important for a number of reasons, but one of the most

important things they do is allow families, students, community members and staff direct access to the Superintendent and her cabinet.

She and her staff share important information directly with stakeholders so there is no room for miscommunication, and they really listen to comments or concerns that the stakeholders might have. They also answer multiple questions that are asked. There is a sense of trust and confidence that comes when the public knows that they are being heard.

There is real power in that, and I applaud the Superintendent for making this a priority.

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The Apopka Chief

Established 1923
(USPS 545-440)

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

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

www.theapopkachief.com, news@theapopkachief.com



City of Apopka Telephone Numbers	Orange County Telephone Numbers	Other Area Numbers of Note
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	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	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

Becker: Vice Mayor transitions to senior City Commissioner, Diane Velazquez

Continued from page 1A

such, I would like to thank the residents and voters of the City of Apopka for entrusting me as their representative over the past eight years. "While I have never missed a City Council meeting during my tenure, I will unfortunately have to miss the last, for which I deeply apologize. I wish Apopka and her residents a positive and prosperous future.

"The distinction of Vice Mayor will now transition to the City Council's most senior Commissioner per Article II [Section] 2.04(f) of the Apopka City Charter. I've had the great privilege of serving with Commissioner Diane Velazquez over these many years, during which she has shown a great heart for this community. Let me now be the first to extend my congratulations to her on becoming Vice Mayor Diane Velazquez for the City of Apopka.

"Thank you, and farewell."

Last year, Becker announced his decision to not run for re-election on the City Council.

Nadia Anderson is the commissioner-elect for Seat 3, having won her first four-year term against rival Darryl Richardson in the March 19 City Council election. She and Nick Nesta, the Seat 4 incumbent who won his second term against challenge Eric Mock, will take their oath of office on Tuesday, April 30, at noon in the council chambers of Apopka City Hall, 120 E. Main St.

**REGAL**

Fri., April 12, 2024 thru Sun., April 14, 2024

CIVIL WAR (R) 1:00; 4:00; 7:00
KUNG FU PANDA 4 (PG) 1:10; 4:20; 7:10
DUNE: PART TWO (PG-13) 1:20; 3:40; 6:40
GODZILLA X KONG: THE NEW EMPIRE (PG-13) 1:30; 2:10*; 2:30*; 4:10; 4:50*; 5:10 **; 6:50; 7:40*; 8:00**
MONKEY MAN (R) 1:40; 4:40; 7:30
GHOSTBUSTERS: FROZEN EMPIRE (PG-13) 1:50; 4:30; 7:20
THE FIRST OMEN (R) 2:00; 5:00; 7:50
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BJ's Towing has been providing towing, transport, and recovery services to the motoring public and businesses in the Central Florida area since 1978. They've established a reputation for unsurpassed customer service, which has made them the towing service of choice for individuals and businesses alike. Their business roster alone reads like a "who's who" in the automotive industry. Just to name a few, their clients have included Collier Jaguar, National Imports, Mullinax Ford, J&K Automotive, Tuffy Auto Repair, A.O.K Tire, Sheeler Auto Repair, and Central Florida Auto Repair.

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Boykin: She was one of 12 honorees recognized at banquet

Continued from page 1A

the people in whatever way that you possibly can, lov-

ing one another. ... that's how I am with people, and this is an honor. There were so many other people more

deserving than me. I am so honored."

For her educational and written works, Boykin was previously honored with the Marvin C. Zanders Humanitarian Hero, Apopka Sports Hall of Fame Community Hero, and the Donald Cheney Historical Award from the Orange County Regional Historical Society.

She is a founding member of Democracy Forum's Ocoee Research Project and is featured as an authority in acclaimed documentaries produced by the University of Florida Film School as well as Public Broadcasting Television.

As an environmental justice advocate, Boykin has participated in an investigation of the number of sick and dying people in the South Apopka community. Her specific goal is to

find the impact on residents living in Lake Jewel estates who may be breathing hydrogen sulfide and methane gas. In this pursuit, she continues to meet with Environmental Protection Agencies and other local, state and national officials.

Between studying and speaking about Apopka's history and advocating for South Apopka's advancement, Boykin is passionate about storytelling about the local community.

"Someone has to be left behind to tell the story of the people, my people. And it has been a joy to do that, especially being born in Apopka, leaving and returning and becoming a person who was concerned about the needs of the people that I grew up with. People who taught me, people who provided for me, I give back what was given

unto me."

This is the Foliage Sertoma Club's fourth year doing the Service to Mankind Award. The three previous winners were Linda Laurendeau (2021) for her work in marking veterans' graves in the Edgewood-Greenwood Cemetery, Deborah Green (2022) for her help in getting the Apopka wildlife trail going, and Diane Haubner (2023) for implementing the Jingle Mingle event to benefit the Epilepsy Association.

Each honoree received a \$50 gift card from the Nauti Lobster seafood restaurant (one of the event sponsors) and the Foliage Sertoma Club.

For over 100 years the Sertoma Club, nationally, has honored individuals who contribute outstanding, selfless Service to Mankind. The Foliage Sertoma Club is continuing this tradition by searching for citizens who contribute outstanding service to the Apopka area.

"We serve our community as our foundation and our organization on that principal — nationally, locally and in all our clubs.

Here in Apopka, our club members have been building on the spirit of service for close to 50 years," said Beverly Winesburgh. "We produce the Christmas Parade with the city, and we give back to children and adults with hearing needs and do all kinds of community needs including the Service to Mankind Banquet."

Besides Boykin, the following nominees were Bill Arrowsmith, Joann Castillo, Sharon Fisher, Diane Harrison, Jerold Maynard, Flo Nelson, Gary Odom, Adele Owens, Bunny Shorejs, Patrick Tessier, and Charlotte White.

"Francina Boykin (is recognized) for her many years of service and specifically, for her dedication, writing, speaking and advocacy to documenting the historic founding and development of the black settlement of Apopka, the proud history of our Phillis Wheatley School and its alumnae and the growth of the city around the founding of that first community a century and a half ago," said Mayor Bryan Nelson.

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Gas district joins e-procurement system for bid, vendor management

The Lake Apopka Natural Gas District has joined the Florida Purchasing Group, an e-procurement system from Bidnet Direct that provides over 50 local government agencies throughout Florida a solution for bid and vendor management.

The district made the announcement on Thursday, April 4.

Moving forward into the digital era, the Lake Apopka Natural Gas District can publish all bid opportunities on the Purchasing Group site. By doing this, they will be able to track every step of the process and have a more transparent bid process. Participating government agencies utilizing the Purchasing Group can track ven-

dors interested in a specific bid, as well as finding out which ones download the documents.

“What a game changer it is to be able to track every step taken during the bid process, from publishing the bids and RFPs, to seeing which vendors are interested and who has downloaded the documents and addendums,” says Scott Minter, Director of Information Systems of the Lake Apopka Natural Gas District. “Joining the Florida Purchasing Group was a smart step for our agency in being able to track and streamline our bid process, and it’s also a benefit to our vendors as they have access to more bid opportunities and the information they need is readily available to

them.” The Lake Apopka Natural Gas District invites all local vendors to receive access to its upcoming solicitations by joining the Florida Purchasing Group. Vendor benefits of registering on bidnetdirect.com/florida/langd include centralized Location to Opportunities from all 64 participat-

ing agencies, notification of term – contract expiration, bid alerts customized to the vendors’ products or services provided, and full customer service support.

The Lake Apopka Natural Gas District invites all potential vendors to register online with bidnetdirect.com/florida/langd to access its upcoming solicitations.



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The BCME Awards program, now in its 25th year, celebrates school districts and individual schools that prioritize music education as an essential component of a well-rounded education.

"We are thrilled to receive the Best Communities for Music Education Award for the eighth year in a row," said Dr. Maria Vazquez, OCPS superintendent, in a news release. "This recognition is a testament to the dedication and hard work of our music educators, administrators and the entire community. We firmly believe in the power of music to inspire, educate and transform lives, and we are committed to ensuring that every student has access to a high-quality music education."

The district's music programs have consistently demonstrated excellence, offering a wide range of opportunities for students to explore their musical interests and passions. From instrumental ensembles to choral groups, OCPS provides a comprehensive music education that enriches the lives of its students and contributes to their overall academic success.

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- Apopka Chief rack, 400 N. Park Ave.
- Apopka High School
- Apopka Quick Mart (BP), Hwy 436 & Lake Cortez Dr.
- Argos Family Diner, 3346 E. Semoran Blvd.
- Apopka Vape, N. Park Ave. (across from the old Fla. Hosp. location)
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Obituaries

ROBERT NOLAN LEFFEW, 62, of Apopka passed away on April 1, 2024 at his home. He was born on January 15, 1962 in Chicago, Illinois to Nolan & Joanne Leffew. He is survived by his mother Joanne; sisters Diana Rowan, Kim & Carl Ginther, Linda & Scott Cairo; brother Thomas; 4 nieces; 6 nephews; 11 great nieces & nephews. Predeceased by his father Nolan.

JOHN M. JENSEN, 79, of Apopka, passed away on April 6, 2024. He was born January 10, 1945, in Ketchikan, Alaska, to John Hensen and Betty Wickersham. He is predeceased by his grandson Logan; Survived by his wife Patricia; stepchildren, Tamara (husband Shayne), Rhonda (husband Jeff); daughter Lisa; sons Sean, John III (wife Caity); 5 grandchildren; 4 great grandchildren.

SARA J. SULLIVAN, 87, of Townsend, GA, passed away on Monday, April 1, 2024. Born January 24, 1937 in DeLand, to Henry William Land and Abby Josephine Land. She was preceded in death by her father, Henry William Land and mother, Abby Josephine Land and daughter, Catherine Elizabeth Sullivan Biehle. Survived by husband, Payson Nesbitt Sullivan; her children, Thomas Scott Sullivan (Kristy), Samuel Winslow Sullivan (Susan), William Murphy Sullivan (Clara), David Russell Roberts (Tracy), Markus Gensch (Linda); 8 grandchildren; 5 great grandchildren; son in law Erich Biehle.

See Obituary on page 10A

John M. Jensen

January 10, 1945 • April 6, 2024.



John M. Jensen, 79, of Apopka, passed away on April 6, 2024. He was born January 10, 1945, in Ketchikan, Alaska, to John Hensen and Betty Wickersham. He was a veteran, having served in the Navy and NATO, an author, and in sales. Jensen produced Pulp and Paper Machine Training Manuals.

Jensen married Patricia (McKinney) Jensen. He enjoyed researching ancient civilizations and was author of Earth Epochs.

He is survived by his wife Patricia, stepchildren Tamara (husband Shayne), Rhonda (husband Jeff), his daughter Lisa, sons Sean, John III (wife Caity); Grandchildren Greg (wife Cheryl) Olivia (husband James) Jordan (wife Miranda), Cassidy, and Remy.

Great Grandchildren Jacob, Sadie, Madalynn, Adalyn Jensen is predeceased by his grandson Logan Jones who passed away on June 8, 2015.

The World is The Word of God

If we consider that words are the visible or audible manifestation of ideas, then it makes sense to consider that the world, as God's creation, is the visible manifestation of God's plan or design. And thus we might consider the world to be the word of God.

Throughout the ages philosophers and religious thinkers have made this connection. The Gospel of John begins with these words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." (John 1:1-3 NIV)

These verses make clear that the creative power of God is linked to this primeval "Word," which in Greek is "Logos," and which has the sense of a rational design or plan.

Referring to Jesus as the "Word" or "Logos" thus has the sense that Jesus is the visible manifestation of God. If God were to become human He would manifest Himself as Jesus did, doing and saying those things, i.e., living as Jesus lived. But this also has a deeper, more metaphysical meaning, which is that Jesus, as the Logos of God, is the thought in God's mind which became the physical world.

— Christopher Simon

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Matthew 5:16

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(See message above.)

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Sara J. Sullivan

Sara J. Sullivan, 87, of Townsend, GA, passed away on Monday, April 1, 2024. Born January 24, 1937 in DeLand, FL to Henry William Land and Abby Josephine Land, she married Payson Nesbitt Sullivan on September 19, 1953, in Folkston, GA.

She was a 1973 graduate of the Orange Memorial Hospital School of Nursing, and a summa cum laude graduate with a bachelor of science in 1988 at Florida Southern College. Her career as a Registered Nurse included roles at Orlando Regional Medical Center, a Certified Diabetic Nursing Educator, Meadows Memorial Hospital in Vidalia, Georgia, and as a Clinical Nursing Educator at South Georgia College.

Her passion for nursing and dedication to helping others left a lasting impact on all who knew her.

Over her lifetime she resided in Tangerine, Gainesville, Orlando, Ailey, GA, and Townsend, GA. Throughout her lifetime, Sara Jo was involved in many activities such as Junior Sorosis of Orlando, taught Sunday School at the Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit in Apopka, Florida, the Daughters of the American Revolution of Eustis, Florida, Habitat for Humanity of Vidalia, Georgia and several area garden clubs. She became an avid golfer in retirement, was involved in several bridge groups and was a devoted member of the



St. Andrews Episcopal Church in Darien, GA.

Sara Sullivan's legacy will endure in her family for generations to come. She embodied grace and elegance in every aspect of her life – from her steadfast commitment, to her 70-year marriage, and to her carefully curated relationship with each of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She taught her family the importance of one another. The continuing dedication they have for each other today is a testament to the mark that she left on this world. She was loved by so many and forgotten by none.

Sara Jo leaves behind her loving husband, Payson Nesbitt Sullivan; her children, Thomas Scott Sullivan (Kristy), Samuel Winslow Sullivan (Susan), William Murphy Sullivan (Clara), David Russell Roberts (Tracy), Markus Gemsch (Linda); her siblings, Catherine Land Romano (George), Henry William Land (Jackie), David Bennett Land (Shandon), Albion Winslow Land, Thomas Milton Land (Jana); her grandchildren, Patrick William Biehle (Sophie), Anne Catherine Biehle (Martin), Caroline Elizabeth Sullivan (Nick), Anna Ryan Hepburn (Sam), Virginia McLean Sullivan, Abby McLaughlin Sullivan, Sara Katherine Sullivan, William Payson Sullivan; great grandchildren, Amelia Louise Biehle, Villads Maltha Biehle, Alice Kennedy Hepburn, Viggo Maltha Biehle, and Quinn George Biehle; and son-in-law Erich Biehle.

She was preceded in death by her father, Henry William Land and mother, Abby Josephine Land and daughter, Catherine Elizabeth Sullivan Biehle.

A service to celebrate Sara's life will be held at St. Andrews Episcopal Church in Darien, GA on April 15th at 11 a.m.

Memorial funds established: In lieu of flowers, contributions in her memory can be made to the Children's Tumor Foundation, by going online to ctf.org or to the St. Andrews Episcopal Church in Darien, GA.

DeSantis signs legislation that increases penalties for retail theft, porch piracy

On Tuesday, April 9, Governor Ron DeSantis signed House Bill (HB) 549, which increases penalties for retail theft, porch piracy, and inciting looting via social media.

Retail theft is rampant in blue jurisdictions and a growing problem throughout the country because of social media-organized looting incidents. Retailers nationwide have reported losing \$112 billion in 2022 alone. Locations with the sharpest increases in theft include New York, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C. Meanwhile in Florida, shoplifting has decreased by 30 percent since Governor DeSantis first took office.

"Florida is taking another step to distinguish ourselves from lawless jurisdictions and keep our residents and businesses safe," said DeSantis. "If you steal in Florida, we will catch you and we will prosecute you."

"Florida is a law-and-

order state, and our policies combating organized retail theft are another shining example of how we are leading the nation," said Attorney General Ashley Moody. "Grateful for Governor DeSantis signing this important piece of legislation into law, as well as for the work of Rep. Rommel and Sen. Trumbull this Session to keep building a Stronger, Safer Florida."

"Some of our most iconic cities in our country turn a blind eye to retail theft and allow it to continue, costing jobs and higher prices," said Representative Bob Rommel. "We have also seen porch pirates target residents by stealing packages, often containing important medications, right off their property. In Florida, we are holding these criminals accountable for their lawlessness."

HB 549 institutes the following:

*A third-degree felony, punishable up to five years in prison, if criminals com-

mit retail theft with five or more individuals.

*A second-degree felony, punishable up to 15 years in prison, if criminals commit retail theft with five or more individuals and use social media to solicit others to participate in the theft.

*A first-degree felony, punishable up to 30 years in prison, if a criminal commits retail theft with a firearm or with two or more prior convictions of retail theft.

*The ability to charge a felony for multiple retail thefts occurring in the span of 120 days, which is an increase from 30 days.

HB 549 also increases the punishments for porch piracy as follows:

*Theft of property in an amount less than \$40 is a first-degree misdemeanor.

*A subsequent violation is a third-degree felony.

*Theft of property valued at \$40 or more is a third-degree felony.

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PUZZLE CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 2B

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

The Crossword Puzzle is found on page 2B

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Imagine how good the kitchen smells when making Baked Spaghetti

The baked spaghetti recipe from Amanda Thomas-Henke is very good, especially for leftover sauce and noodles.

You have the option of using cottage cheese instead of the more expensive ricotta. Amanda is a reader from North Georgia!

Looking back at my 1996 *Southern Living Annual Recipes*, I came across Patsy Hobson's Pepper-Sage Chicken. Southern Living pictured it served it with roasted sweet potatoes and mustard greens. They say, "While the chicken marinates, wash a bunch of your favorite greens and put them on to boil. Peel, chop, and roast a few sweet potatoes, and you've got a meal your whole family will enjoy."

From *Savannah Style*, there is Orange Cheesecake with Orange Cheese Filling. It looks scrumptious.

Jane Bradley says, in her book *Southern Style*, "This recipe was given to me by my Great-Aunt Florence (Mrs. Blyth Noe) of Washington, North Carolina. In the early days of local T.V., Aunt Florence did a thirty-minute cooking segment on the Hospitality House show. She did this "live" four days a week! When asked how she continued to be so creative, she responded, "There are as many meal combinations as you have thoughts – there's no end to it." This is the easiest recipe for the most delicious deviled crab I've ever eaten. It can be baked in a casserole or in scallop shells as a main dish, or in clam shells as a first course. Aunt Florence prefers to use crab shells, but the health department frowns on this practice unless you are picking the crab yourself. She tells me that clam shells stay hotter longer because of their thickness. You can substitute ceramic or glass shells, available at specialty cookware stores."

**AMANDA THOMAS-HENKE'S
"MAMA'S SAUCE,
MY CHEESE FILLING"
BAKED SPAGHETTI**
Submitted by Reader of
The Apopka Chief Newspaper
Sauce:
2 cans diced tomatoes

- 1 can tomato sauce
- 1 can tomato paste
- 1 cup red wine
- 1 regular onion, diced
- Celery, chopped
- Mushrooms, sliced
- Salt
- Pepper
- Fresh rosemary, chopped
- Good sized tablespoon Italian seasoning
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- Sprinkle (not a lot) of red pepper flakes
- 2 lbs lean ground beef

Directions for Spaghetti Sauce:
1) Saute in olive oil chopped onion, celery, mushrooms. Add garlic at end of sauté (do not burn the garlic, which is easy to burn but nasty to eat!). Set aside in separate bowl. 2) Brown the ground beef. If there is excess fat, pour it off. The left-over "stuff" on the bottom of the pan is called "fond." Don't discard it; it is very good for flavoring your food. Deglaze the pan with the red wine, loosening the brown bits with a wooden spoon, and let the mixture reduce by about half. 3) Add your sautéed vegetables, sauces and tomatoes. 4) Let the sauce cook for a while until it thickens. 4) Add seasonings, including any fresh herbs, about 15 minutes before the sauce is done. 5) Then cook your pasta according to package directions.

Cheese Filling:
1 cup ricotta
1 cup cottage cheese (or 2 cups cottage cheese and leave out the ricotta)
1 tablespoon minced garlic
Salt
Pepper
Basil or oregano (maybe 1-1.5 teaspoon) *I used basil but I prefer oregano
Cayenne (a few shakes)
1 egg
1/2 or 1 bag (8oz) shredded Mozzarella

Directions for Cheese Filling: Mix the ricotta or cottage cheese, garlic, seasonings, and egg together. Add the Mozzarella to the mix, and blend together.

To make the baked spaghetti: Mix cooked pasta and spaghetti sauce together. Spread half the mixture in a baking dish. Spoon the cheese filling over the top and spread. Layer on the

other half of the spaghetti mix. Sprinkle with more mozzarella (I used an 8 oz bag). Bake at 350 degrees for 25-30 minutes.

PEPPER-SAGE CHICKEN
Contributed by
PATSY BELL HOBSON,
Liberty, Missouri
SOUTHERN LIVING'S
ALL TIME FAVORITES, 1996

- 1/4 cup water
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh sage
- 1 teaspoon cracked pepper
- 4 skinned and boned chicken breast halves
- Vegetable cooking spray
- Garnish: fresh sage sprigs

1) Combine first 7 ingredients in a large heavy-duty, zip-top plastic bag, and add chicken. Seal and chill 1 hour, turning occasionally. 2) Remove chicken from marinade, reserving marinade. 3) Cook chicken in a skillet coated with cooking spray over medium-high heat until browned, turning once. Add reserved marinade and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer 15 minutes. Slice chicken into strips. Garnish, if desired. Yield: 4 servings.

ORANGE CHEESECAKE
Recipe from *Savannah Style*,
a Cookbook by
The Junior League of Savannah, Inc.

- 1 cup flour, sifted
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon orange rind, grated
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 egg yolk
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- Orange sections for garnish
- Mint sprigs for garnish

Combine flour, sugar and rind. Cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse meal. Add egg yolk and vanilla and blend well. Pat 1/3 of the dough onto the bottom of a 9-inch springform pan. Bake in a hot oven at 400 degrees Fahrenheit for 5 minutes or until golden brown. Remove and cool. Pat remaining dough evenly around sides of pan to 1/2 inch from top.

Pour orange cheese filling (see below) into pan. Place aluminum foil under pan on oven rack and bake in hot oven at 400 degrees Fahrenheit for 8 to 10

minutes until the crust browns slightly. Reduce heat to 225 degrees Fahrenheit and bake 1 hour and 20 minutes longer. Remove and cool slowly, then refrigerate. Serve garnished with orange segments and mint sprigs.

ORANGE CHEESE FILLING
Recipe from *Savannah Style*,
a Cookbook by
The Junior League of Savannah, Inc.
5 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese, room temperature
1-3/4 cups sugar
3 tablespoons flour
1 tablespoon orange rind, grated
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon vanilla
5 eggs
2 egg yolks
1/4 cup frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed and undiluted

Combine cheese, sugar, flour, orange rind, salt and vanilla in a large bowl. Beat at low speed until smooth. Add eggs and egg yolks, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Stir in orange juice. Pour mixture into prepared pan.

DIXIE DEVILED CRAB
Recipe from *Southern Style*
by Jane Bradley
1 pound crabmeat
2 tablespoons mayonnaise
1 teaspoon yellow mustard
1 jar (4 ounces) pimento, chopped, with the juice
1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
2 large eggs, beaten
Salt and pepper to taste
Butter for the dish

1) Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. 2) Pick any bits of shell or cartilage out of crab. Place crab in a large bowl. Add remaining ingredients. Using a fork, mix very well. Pour into buttered casserole or shells and bake for 30 minutes or until nicely browned and a knife, when inserted in middle of casserole, comes out clean. Individual shells will cook in 20 to 25 minutes. Serve immediately. 3) I spray shells with vegetable spray for easy clean-up. You can also give filled shells a quick spray to aid in browning and to keep crab moist. NOTE: Substitute 1 pound canned crabmeat if fresh is unavailable. Serves: 4 (casserole, scallop or ceramic shells) or fills 12 clam shells.

APRIL 2024

★ ★ EVENTS ★ WEEKLY ★ UPCOMING ★ ONGOING ★ ★

MAY 24, 2024 - :END OF 4th MARKING PERIOD Traffic patterns changed. Stormy weather comes and goes! Be careful with your umbrellas. And always watch out for those pedestrians... and ducks. DON'T TEXT WHILE DRIVING - Please! YOU WILL PAY A FINE.

Children must be five years old on or before September 1 to start kindergarten. To enter first grade, a child must be six years old on or before September 1 and must have successfully completed kindergarten (Florida Statute 1003.21). Immunizations must be current.

UNLESS CHANGED: School Start Times for Elementary School & K-8: 8 a.m., Middle School: 9:30 a.m., High school: 7:10 a.m.

City of Apopka's Northwest Recreation Complex, 3710 Jason Dwellley Parkway, Apopka 32712, 407-703-1784. On any given weekend, you can see many, many families in attendance at the beautiful complex setting participating in various organized sport programs, Amenities at the complex include: Soccer Fields, Softball Fields, Baseball Fields, Multi-Purpose Fields, Sand Volleyball Courts, Outdoor Basketball Courts, Tennis Courts, **Walking Trail**, Amphitheater, Playground, Concession Stands.

11-mile wildlife drive (complete with directional signs) (opened in 2015) on Lake Apopka shores, by entering from Lust Road off Binion Road, about a mile south of Camp Wewa in the Plymouth area, for one-way drive, 10 miles per hour, with possible wildlife spotting stops. DO NOT FEED THE GATORS - IT MAY CAUSE CLOSING OF THE TRAIL If you are stopping, drive will take more than 1 hour. Drive runs by canals used in duck-farming days. The one-way drive exits on Jones Road in Zellwood. You will see a freshwater marsh system and wildlife dependent on that type of system. The drive is open on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays and federal holidays and is controlled by the county. Open during daylight hours only (one hour after sunrise and one hour before sunset). Official sunrise and sunset hours can be found online. The road is closed on other days due to ongoing restoration work. The trail is 11 miles long.

WEKIWA SPRINGS STATE PARK is a 7,000-acre Florida State Park in Apopka, Florida. It is located 20 minutes north of Orlando, off Interstate 4 at exit 94, near Altamonte Springs and Longwood. The park also contains the head water of the Wekiwa River. Address: 1800 Wekiwa Circle, Apopka 32712, open from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. For information, call 407-884-4311

FRAN CARLTON CENTER OPEN,

for seniors - senior activities at Fran Carlton Center. CALL 407-703-1642 FOR INFORMATION .

FRIDAY, APRIL 12

ZUMBA FITNESS CLASS, FRIDAYS at 9:00 a.m. at 11 N. Forest Ave., at the Fran Carlton Center.. Call 407-703-1642 for information.

CENTRAL FL CHRISTIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, 1806 S Bay St., Eustis, has Fellowship Friday meetings. For complete details of all chamber events, visit cfchristianchamber.com/events-chamber. Contact: latrondra@cfchristianchamber.com

SATURDAY, APRIL 13

VFW POST 10147 continues to have its fund raising breakfast on the the third Saturday of the month on APRIL 20, from 8-10 a.m. at 519 S. Central Avenue. Cost is only \$7.

MUSEUM OF APOPKANS, Saturday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 122 E. FIFTH STREET, APOPKA. Managed by Apopka Historical Society. Call 407-703-1624 for info.

AVIAN RECONDITIONING CENTER, for birds of prey, 323 Lester Rd., Apopka, hours: 9:30-1:30 p.m., The center is open on Saturdays to the public, weather permitting. Call 407-461-1056 for information.

SUNDAY, APRIL 14

MONDAY, APRIL 15

FITNESS CLASS, MONDAYS 9-10 a.m. 11 N. Forest Ave at Fran Carlton Center. Masks not required while exercising, but are when socializing before and after class. Temperature taken on entry. Pre-register. Call 407-703-1642 for info.

CRAFTS & CHATTER: 9:30-12 noon. Fran Carlton Center, 11 N Forest Ave.Masks required. Temperature taken. Pre-register. Call 407-703-1642 for info.

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS meets Mondays at 6:30 p.m., Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit, 601 S. Highland Avenue. If you have a problem with food – overeating, anorexia, bulimia – there is a solution for you. For more information, visit OA.org or call Carrie 781-867-1071.

TOASTMASTERS: Forest Lake Church by Zoom. Time: 7 p.m., Open to everyone interested. For information, call 407-761-2943. Club Number: 4899556, District 84, Area D42. Orators of Excellence

TUESDAY, APRIL 16

THE SERTOMA CLUB meets the

first and third Tuesday of each month, beginning at 11:30-noon, at Beef 'O' Brady's in The Back Room, 1410 Rock Springs Rd., Apopka. Interested community members are encouraged to attend and get acquainted. Meetings have resumed on first and third Tuesdays. Masks are encouraged.

SENIOR CHAIR EXERCISE, 9-10 a.m., 11 N. Forest Ave. at Fran Carlton Center. Masks not required while exercising, but are when socializing before and after class. Temperature taken on entry. Pre-register. Call 407-703-1642 for info.

ART CLASS. 9:30-12 noon. Fran Carlton Center, 11 N Forest Ave. Masks required. Temperature taken. Pre-register. Call 407-703-1642 for info.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17

The Altamonte Springs / Apopka VFW POST 10147. is NOW OPEN Wednesday and Saturday Mornings from (TIME CHANGE) 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. for coffee and doughnuts. (other hours by appointment only). 3rd Saturday of the month is VFW's fundraising breakfast. Also, evenings of Tribute music are planned. Call 407-889-8266, or email info@vfwpost10147.com for information. The VFW Auxiliary has been formed and is active as well. Don't forget to visit its excellent Military Museum.

ZUMBA FITNESS CLASS, 9-10 a.m., 11 N. Forest Ave., at the Fran Carlton Center. Masks not required while exercising, but are when socializing before and after class. Temperature taken on entry. Pre-register. Call 407-703-1642 for info..

SENIOR CHAIR EXERCISE, 10-11 a.m., Billie Dean Community Center, 225 M.A. Board St., . Masks not required while exercising, but are when socializing before and after class. Temperature taken on entry. Pre-register. Call 407-703-1642 for info

CITY OF APOPKA DRC (Development Review Committee) meets every Wednesday at 9 a.m.-10 a.m. (or as long as necessary) at City Hall, 120 E. Main Street, Apopka. Check for the online version.

BRIDGE CLASS. 9:30-12 noon. Fran Carlton Center, 11 N Forest Ave.Masks required. Temperatures taken. Pre-register. Call 407-703-1642 for info.

TOPS CHAPTER #646. (Take Off Pounds Sensibly), TOPS, a non-profit organization, will help you reach a weight goal with support from friendly, caring members, education, and rewards. Each Thursday weigh-in begins at 9:00 a.m. – meeting ends at 10:15 a.m.. Come to its

NEW location 220 W. Horatio Avenue, Maitland, FL 32751 to meet with others who have a like-minded goal to lose weight. No products, no specific diet to follow, no meds. Call 407-580-0897 for more information.

MUSEUM OF APOPKANS, Open on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 12 noon-5 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 122 E Fifth St. 407-703-1642 for info.

EARLY BIRD BINGO at Bahia Shrine Center, 3101 E. Semoran Blvd.. Doors open at 5 p.m., and the early bird game starts at 6 p.m. For more information, call 407-660-8811.

TOASTMASTERS: still meeting every WEDNESDAY, 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., by zoom. For more information, call 407-765-2629 or visit www.Apopkatoastmasters.com.

THURSDAY, APRIL 19

SENIOR CHAIR EXERCISE, 9-10 a.m., 11 N. Forest Ave., at the Fran Carlton Center. Masks not required while exercising, but are when socializing before and after class. Temperature taken on entry. Pre-register. Call 407-703-1642 for info.

ROTARY CLUB OF APOPKA - For information, call 407-415-6588. Call for updated information on meetings and location.

MUSEUM OF APOPKANS, Open from noon to 5 p.m. on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from 9 a.m.-noon. 120 E Fifth St. Call 407-703-1624 for info.

ZUMBA FITNESS CLASS, 9-10 a.m., 11 N. Forest Ave., at the Fran Carlton Center. Masks not required while exercising, but are when socializing before and after class. Temperature taken on entry. Pre-register. Call 407-703-1642 for info

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday nights Saturday Sounds at Apopka Amphitheater, 3710 Jason Dewley Parkway, 5-7 p.m. Free.

VFW Post 10147 has fund raising breakfast Saturday, **APRIL 20, 2024** 8-10 a.m., 519 S. Central Avenue. Cost is \$7. **Also: Yard sale Saturday and Sunday, 4/20, 4/21**

ONGOING EVENTS

Florida Railroad Museum, 101 S. Boyd Street, Winter Garden, is open Tuesday-Saturday, 11-3 each week excluding holidays. For info, call 407-656-0559. . Must see.

CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS are public and will also be broadcast on this shortened link: <https://bit.ly/2ABrmsb>, and are normally held the first Wednesday at 1:30 p.m.,

and third Wednesday at 7 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 120 E. Main St., Apopka. Subject to change with notice. For info., call City Clerk 407-703-1704. Agenda and minutes of meeting can be found online. Once posted, check for any revisions by Tuesday at 5 p.m. before the meeting

FOLIAGE GARDEN CLUB OF APOPKA, meets the first Thursday of each month, September through May, at 10 a.m. at the Billy Dean Community Center at Alonzo Williams Park, 225 M.A. Board St., Apopka. Contact: apopkafgca@gmail.com

FREE PLANT CLINIC in Apopka is open on Tuesdays. Do you have problems with your plants or lawn? Let a Master Gardener help. Orange County residents can bring their questions and samples to UF/IFAS Extension Master Gardener volunteers at the UF/IFAS Mid-Florida Research Education Center (MREC), 2725 Binion Road, Apopka, 32703; 9 a.m.-12 Tuesdays; 407-254-9200. Questions and photos can be emailed to orangecomgv@ifas.ufl.edu. to be answered by Master Gardeners. A free plant clinic for commercial growers is open Tuesdays 1-4 p.m. at the same location.

KIWANIS CLUB OF APOPKA IS now meeting MONTHLY on the 3rd Tuesday at 8 a.m. at Seacoast Bank, 345 E Main Street, Apopka. Contact 407-464-4606 for information

BROWN BAG LUNCH - Third Saturday of each month, Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit at the corner of Highland and 6th St., Apopka, from 10 a.m.-12 p.m., offer to all who come a brown bag lunch. In addition, men's socks, flip flops, stuffed animals, some clothing, children's books and pet food which is donated by My Pet World, Apopka, may be available. If interested in volunteering, call Debbie at 407-620-5081 for information.

APOPKA FOLIAGE TOASTMASTER'S CLUB, Monday, 7 p.m., on Zoom, Apopka. 407-765-2629.

NWOC FFA Alumni – Monthly meetings (usually the 4th Monday evening in a month during the school year) are open to anyone. (Looking for more information)

MUSEUM OF APOPKANS, 122 E 5th Street, Hours open: Wednesday to Friday, from noon-5 p.m., and Saturdays from 9 a.m.-1 p.m.... Admission is free. Contains displays and information about Apopka's history, and has history books for sale. Monthly meetings of Apopka Historical Society are normally held on a Sunday afternoon. For more information, go to www.theapopka-museum.com.

THE APOPKA ELKS LODGE 2422 meets first and third Tuesdays of month, 201 W. Orange. For more information, call 407-886-1600 or email apopkaelks@aol.com Bar Bingo every Monday night at 7 p.m. promptly.

GFWC APOPKA WOMAN'S CLUB, meets at First United Methodist Church, 201 N. Park Avenue. Call 407-880-2111 for more information.

CITY OF APOPKA PLANNING & ZONING - usually the second Tuesday of the month. 5:30 p.m. City Council Chambers, City Hall, 120 E. Main St., Apopka. All meetings open to the public. Subject to change with notice. For info., call David Moon, 407-703-1739.

BRIDGE GAMES AND CLASSES: Every Monday and Friday morning at 9:15 a.m., at the Lake County Duplicate Bridge Club, 510 W. Key Ave., Eustis. For more information, call 352-315-9934 or visit lakeduplicate.com.

COMPUTER CLASSES in both English and Spanish: Available daily or weekly at OCLS North Orange Branch.* Classes are: Computer Basics, Excel, Word Resume Writing, Email for Seniors, ELLIS English Lab, Word, Online Job Searches, Power Point, Internet, Open Lab, How to use a mouse and keyboard, etc. Call OCLS North Orange Branch* for more details.

HABITAT VOLUNTEERS: Go to www.habitatseminoleapopka.org, click on volunteers. There are a number of opportunities available at the Restores. Call 407-696-5855 or 407-880-8881 to sign up for information.

(OCLS) Orange County Public Library North Orange Branch Address: 1211 E. Semoran Boulevard, Apopka 436 (Semoran) and Thompson Road. www.ocls.info. To reserve a space, call 407-835-7323. The library is now open again Mon-Sat. 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. and Sunday afternoons

*Apopka Area Chamber of Commerce, 180 E. Main St., Apopka. For more info, call 407-886-1441

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Florida insurance companies get help from premium reimbursement formula

By Andrew Powell
The Center Square

The Florida Hurricane Catastrophe Fund Advisory Council has approved a new premium reimbursement formula that will help alleviate the burden on insurance companies operating in Florida.

The FHCF operates under the State Board of Administration and is a tax-exempt state trust fund that reimburses a portion of hurricane losses to residential property insurance companies in the Sunshine State.

According to FHCF's website, it operates to protect and advance Florida's interest in maintaining sufficient insurance capacity. All residential property insurance companies are

mandated to participate in the FHCF and enter into a reimbursement contract.

Under Florida statutes, contracts must stipulate that coverage for each contract year does not exceed the funds-paying capacity of the FHCF, which is limited to \$17 billion.

In late March, the FHCF approved a new reimbursement formula that would be reduced by 6.86 percent for insurance companies that do not change their coverage selections for contract year 2024-25. The FHCF overall rate change is projected to decrease by 7.38 percent, after adjusting for individual company coverage selection changes from the previous year.

According to the FHCF 2024 Ratemaking

Formula Report, based on 2023 market shares and 2024 coverage selections, the average coverage is projected to be 86.874 percent in 2024, a 0.56-percent decrease from 2023 which was 87.36 percent.

The report states that the decrease in average coverage selection for FHCF, generates the 2024 FHCF layer of \$19.5 billion, a slight increase over 2023's \$19.4-billion layer. It further states that rate changes vary by deductible, construction type, and territory.

In the report's summary of changes to the 2024 rate-making formula, it states that several notable factors impact the rate and premium changes including projected growth in the fund's exposure; modeled

loss cost decreases; law and ordinance assumption changes; pre-event note expenses, and mobile home manufacture dates.

Projected loss retention for 2024 is \$9.9 billion, increasing from \$9.4 billion in 2023, while the FHCF premium will increase from \$1.513 billion to \$1.532 billion. This is due to exposure growth, coverage selection changes, and rate decreases.

In January, Bloomberg reported that the Florida State Board of Administration made a securities filing that indicated it intended to generate at least \$1.5 billion from the sale of municipal bonds to replenish the FHCF and provide a further safety net for insurers.

VFW Auxiliary to fundraise with yard sale

The VFW monthly breakfast is Saturday, April 20, from 8-10 for \$7. At the same time, the Auxiliary is having their annual yard sale on Saturday, April 20, from 8 a.m.-3 p.m., and also on Sunday, April 21, from 12-3 p.m. The public is invited to join in this fund raiser.

The Auxiliary supports the veterans and helps the Post take care of veterans' needs. We support the Veter-

ans Village at Ft. McCoy Florida, the Vet Center program that provides safe housing for veteran families that need support transitioning to civilian life, those suffering PTSD and injuries that need assistance. They work with the VA hospital system, and with veterans by providing morale and comfort.

One of its missions is to send cards to active-duty military and their

families. You are welcome to submit your active-duty family members' information so we can include them on our mailout list. At the local level, we help veterans' families that need support financially, with suicide prevention and abuse hot lines.

Please come out and join us. Show your support for the veterans that served our country to keep America and the free world safe.

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GENERAL SERVICE: AUTO-BASICS

Auto technicians say the key to keeping vehicles running well – today and down the road – is routine maintenance. Yet many drivers tend to stall when it comes to keeping up with some everyday auto-basics. A recent survey by the Car Care Council found 25% of cars had low or dirty engine oil, 13% had low or contaminated brake fluid, 18% had dirty air filters, 17% had inadequate cooling protection or low coolant levels, 16% needed new windshield wiper and 27% had low or contaminated washer fluid, 18% needed new belts. Overall, 89% of vehicles were in need of at least one service or repair.

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Check out the Service Directory Pages

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