

Volunteer

35-year volunteer helps Loaves & Fishes with USPS Food Drive. See page 12A.



Sports

Apopka's playoff run is over, Darters fall to Winter Park. See page 1B.



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City Council hires new city administrator

By Teresa Sargeant  
Apopka Chief Staff

The Apopka City Council voted to hire Jacob Smith as the new city administrator at the Wednesday, May 15, meeting at Apopka City Hall.

The motion to vote on the matter was tabled from the Wednesday, May 1, meeting because all of the City Council but Commissioner Nick Nesta was able to meet and speak with Smith. On May 1, Nesta requested the tabling for this reason, as well as to review Smith's employment contract.

Smith was not present in person at the meeting, but was there online to answer any questions.

Nesta described the meeting with

Smith as productive. During the meeting, they were able to go through many different concerns that Nesta had.

"Something I've said often is, as long as you keep open lines of communication and provide as much information as possible, you'll breed confidence throughout this city," Nesta said. "If you withhold information and keep anything from us that we should be knowing or the public should be knowing, you're going to breed fear. And that creates so much division within our city. So as long as we can work together in that capacity, we may not agree on everything, and that's okay."

Smith succeeds Edward Bass who

See CITY Page 5A

Planning Commission 5-1 approves transportation plan

By Teresa Sargeant  
Apopka Chief Staff

On Tuesday, May 14, the Apopka Planning Commission voted 5-1 to recommend approval of an ordinance for revising the city's transportation element, and to let the City Council transmit the document to the state Department of Commerce for review.

Engineer Mike Woodward from the Orlando engineering consulting firm Kimley-Horn, presented the revised transportation element at the Apopka Planning Commission's Tuesday, May 14, meeting at City Hall.

Ordinance No. 3029

proposes to repeal and replace the Transportation Element with a newly written element that is being updated for a year 2050 planning horizon.

Last adopted in 2009, the transportation element is part of the city's comprehensive plan, which lays

See PLANNING Page 6A



Photo courtesy of Operation Best Foot Forward

Operation Best Foot Forward finished its latest quarterly safety enforcement earlier this month in six counties. Pictured are organization ambassadors and city of Apopka officials standing at the Jason Dwelley Parkway/Brush Drive crosswalk in Apopka when the enforcement was done on Wednesday, May 8.

Apopka issues four warnings, eight citations during safety enforcement initiative

Operation Best Foot Forward conducted its latest quarterly safety enforcement from April 30 to May 10, with 18 law enforcement agencies across six counties, issuing 488 warnings and citations to drivers that failed to yield to pedestrians. Many of the crosswalks chosen for this enforcement were located near parks and trail

crossings. In total, there were 25 crosswalk locations enforced across Brevard, Marion, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, and Volusia Counties.

There were four warnings and eight citations at this quarter's Apopka crosswalk enforcement at Jason Dwelley Parkway and Brush Drive when the enforcement was conducted

on Wednesday, May 8.

Crosswalks with the most violations for failure to yield to pedestrians also had some of the largest traffic volumes, including North Hoagland Boulevard and Kissimmee Trail in Osceola County, North Dean Road and Timber Oaks Court in Orange County.

See SAFETY Page 3A



Food pantry collects 9,436 lbs. for national food drive

On Saturday, May 11, the National Association of Letter Carriers NALC conducted its annual national Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive, the nation's largest one-day food drive. On that day, customers leave their donation of non-perishable food items next to their mailbox before the mail delivery. Letter carriers then collect the food donations that day as they deliver mail along their postal routes.



Photos courtesy of Loaves and Fishes

Foods collected in Apopka were donated to Loaves and Fishes to help local families. Altogether, the postal workers collected 9,436 pounds of food throughout Apopka. Every year, the Apopka Post Office designates Loaves and Fishes to be the recipient of all the food collected. First held in 1983, Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive helps feed millions of Americans.

Fireworks, music will fill July Fourth event

The city of Apopka is hosting its free family-friendly July Fourth Celebration with music from David J and opening act Emily Henline, and fireworks following the concert.

The event will take place Thursday, July 4, 6-9 p.m. at the Apopka amphitheater, 3710 Jason Dwelley Parkway. Fireworks begin after the concert. Activities begin at 6 p.m., music at 6:30 p.m., and fireworks at 9 p.m.

The event will include food and craft vendors, face painting, balloon artist-

ry, climbing tower, bounce houses, bungee trampoline, fireworks, music and more.

Concert and parking are free. No ticket is required.

Free seating is available in the amphitheater. Attendees may bring blankets and chairs for the lawn area. No tents are allowed.

The event timeline is subject to change.

Anyone who wants to learn more about sponsorship opportunities or to secure a spot as a vendor at the July Fourth Celebration may reach out by email to the events team

at events@apopka.net.

**About the music performers**

David J, a 20-year-old phenom, has been making waves in the music industry with the release of his major label debut project, "Commitment Issues." Infusing a fresh edge and pop crossover to country music, David J captivates audiences with his smooth, energetic delivery, relatable lyrics, and determination to push genre boundaries, earning him a dedicated following and making him a standout in today's music scene.



David J




Emily Henline

Opening for David J is special guest Emily Henline, another promising talent based out of Nashville. With her debut single "Boot Fits," Emily is

ready to take the stage and make her mark on the music world. Her soulful voice and authentic storytelling resonate with audiences.

**This week**  
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Apopka Event of the Week

At the North Orange Branch Library, 1211 E. Semoran Blvd, on Saturday, May 18, from 11 a.m.-noon, the Apopka Police Department will host Cookies and Milk with a Cop. The event will include storytime, arts and crafts, and cookies and milk provided by LCL Food Services (McDonald's). This is a great chance to interact with Apopka officers in a fun and informative environment.

Quotable

We appreciate the sense of security given to our citizens because these departments are enforcing law and order.

The Apopka Chief on recognizing May 12-18 as National Police Week in Florida

Opinion

The Apopka Chief  
A weekly newspaper founded in 1923

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John Ricketson

**Consultant Emeritus**  
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Jackie Trefcer

**Reporters**  
Teresa Sargeant  
Marshall Tempest, Neal Fisher

**General Mgr Emeritus**  
Neoma Knox

Feb. 12, 1929 - Sept. 18, 2021

Our position

National Police Week is endorsed by the signing of a proclamation

In recognition of May 12-18 being the National Police Week in Florida as endorsed by the signing of a proclamation by Governor DeSantis, *The Apopka Chief* would like to acknowledge and add its thanks-giving for Chief Michael McKinley and the Apopka Police Department that has 150 officers and support personnel for its service in protecting the citizens of our community. The APD office is at 116 E. 6th St., Apopka.

In addition, we are thankful for the Orange County Sheriff's Office for its large, multi-faceted law enforcement agency composed of approximately 4,000 staff members and over 800 reserve personnel. In Northwest Orange County, the Sector I substation has Captain Ashley Strange as the Sector Commander, and its location is 1111 North Rock Springs Rd., Apopka.

We know that keeping law and order is stressful, but also rewarding on many occasions, as officers perform their daily duties. We appreciate the sense of security given to our citizens because these departments are enforcing law and order.

We also want to recognize the support given by the Apopka Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association (ACPAAA), which helps support the mission of the Apopka Police Department. ACPAAA volunteers work throughout the year for events hosted by the City and Apopka Police Department. Each year, the helpful police volunteers accumulate well over 1000 hours of volunteering. Obviously, this kind of support is appreciated. In order to become a volunteer, there is a 14-week class offered at the beginning of the year.

Following is the copy included in the proclamation signed by Governor De Santis:

National Police Week in Florida  
WHEREAS, law and order are top priorities, best achieved by supporting law enforcement officers; and

WHEREAS, Florida is a state that values our men and women of law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, more than 53,000 police and law enforcement offi-

cers keep our state safe, and Florida is proud of the selfless courage they demonstrate every day in our communities to serve and protect the public; and

WHEREAS, through the Florida Law Enforcement Recruitment Bonus Payment Program, 1,267 individuals have relocated to Florida to become law enforcement officers; and

WHEREAS, the program is part of the strongest, most comprehensive law enforcement support initiative in the nation, which also includes scholarships for law enforcement, scholarships for children of law enforcement officers, raises in pay, and retention bonuses for law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, in 2021, Governor DeSantis signed HB 1, Combating Public Disorder, into law to prevent local municipalities from defunding their local law enforcement agencies and to give law enforcement and prosecutors additional tools to prevent violence and property destruction that may result from public disorder; and

WHEREAS, in 2022, Governor DeSantis signed HB 3 into law encouraging Floridians to join the law enforcement profession and incentivizing talented, out-of-state law enforcement professionals to join Florida's law enforcement teams; and

WHEREAS, National Police Week in Florida is a time for Floridians to honor the men and women who sacrificed and dedicated their lives to protecting our great state, and to pay special recognition to those officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Ron DeSantis, Governor of the State of Florida, do hereby extend greetings and best wishes to all observing May 12-18, 2024, as National Police Week in Florida.

*IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Florida to be affixed at Tallahassee, the Capital, this 12th day of May, in the year two thousand twenty-four.*  
Ron DeSantis, Governor



New schools are being planned

Guess what?  
The Apopka area is not getting one new school over the next 10 years. Nope, we're getting four!

It is part of the new 10-year capital plan revealed at a work session last week. Each year, our Advanced Planning Committee pores over data to determine the areas of the county of greatest need using enrollment projections based on future planned development. They then adjust the 10-year Capital Outlay plan based on this new data.

This year's plan has FOUR new schools slated for our area to be built in the coming decade. These schools are currently set, at some point, to relieve Apopka High School, Apopka Elementary School, Wolf Lake Elementary School, Zellwood El-

Orange County School Board, District 7



Melissa Byrd

ementary School and Wolf Lake Middle School.

At this time, the first of these will be a new elementary school in 2029. This is based on the current expected enrollment from new developments. But plans can change as we saw with Kelly Park School that was originally scheduled to open in 2026 but was moved up to 2022.

Of course, all of this depends on **when** and **if** building starts in these expected developments, **if**

students attend their zoned schools, and most importantly, **if** the school district can fund the new schools. That will entirely depend on the renewal of the half-penny sales tax in November that will fund nearly 50 percent of our capital program for the next decade.

There are numerous other things presented in this work session as it is always quite a lengthy meeting. This year's meeting was close to five hours long and covered topics from expected future capital budget needs, construction updates and plans, building maintenance updates, budget priorities, and short-falls.

Understanding how massive the building program is in Orange Coun-

See BYRD Page 6A

Tourist tax dollars are being allocated

Some of you might remember this past year the catharsis around the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) deciding how to spend the large amount of Tourist Development Tax (TDT) dollars coming into Orange County. I must have attended a half dozen regular and special meetings before making the motion to redirect funding from Visit Orlando to funding for smaller cities.

Many are still unhappy that state law precludes spending the tourism tax dollars on hotel rooms for items such as transportation, homeless services, af-

County Commissioner District 2



Christine Moore

fordable housing, and additional social safety net programs. This tax was initially supported by the tourism industry to build Orlando's fledgling industry in the late 1970s and legislated by the State of Florida. No one can argue with success. Orlando is the top tourist

destination in the United States.

I remember calling Mayor Nelson about the potential to improve the amphitheater because all the county commissioners and staff were interested in building, supporting, or improving amphitheaters outside of Orlando. The Apopka Amphitheater was the ticket for sending economic development dollars back to Apopka. At that time the Apopka Mayor told me all he needed was \$500,000 but I encouraged him to think bigger as the Orange

See MOORE Page 6A

This Week In God's Word

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. — Romans 13:8

Mema Says

When we make it our aim to please the Father, then all is well.

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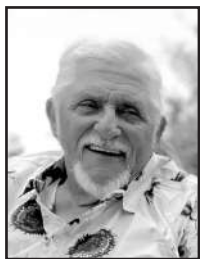


Governmental programs are not helpful when it comes to history

"School days, school days, good old Golden Rule days...."

So goes the song we used to sing as we prepared for another season of school.

As boys, we always talked about how we "hated" school, but after a summer of working the hay fields, swimming in the creek for endless hours, and experiencing quiet times of lying on our backs and naming the clouds, we secretly looked forward to the school routine. Our



Ike Hayden

teachers were all excited about our return and set up a time for us to share our summer vacations.

From kindergarten through our senior year of high school, that little song was our "going back to

school" theme song. As I have watched the progression of education over the years, something is missing. Maybe it is the rest of that ditty that said, "Readin,' and Ritin,' and 'Rithmetic, taught to the tune of a Hickory stick."

Somewhere along the journey, we have lost the tune of the hickory stick. We have put the inmates in charge of the asylum and, now, we are paying the cost. Every time "We the People" relinquish one of our responsibilities, the

government is more than happy to fill the void with one of their programs, like the Dept. of Education, paid for by tax-payer dollars, and subject to the whim of those dedicated to their own ideologies.

Our children are being taught, in some instances that the United States of America needs a new form of government because our present government is not "progressive" enough. Our prestigious halls of higher learning are now populated with professors and ad-

ministrators who are anti-American, and are passing their unhealthy ideologies on to their students, not through debate, but as class requirements for graduation.

Since when do schools, of any level, negotiate with students? Students are in school to be taught, not to be negotiated with over political unrest. One of the courses offered in some of our colleges is "Activism." In high school, we were privileged to be taught about activism. As

we studied American History we learned about activists and their activities (i.e., Paul Revere's engraving of the Boston Massacre, Benjamin Franklin's "Poor Richard's Almanac"). Oh but, I forgot, they do not teach history anymore because it is steeped in "White Supremacy."

We need to get over ourselves and start living for today, and for our nation. In one of the polls taken during our campus take-

See HAYDEN Page 6A



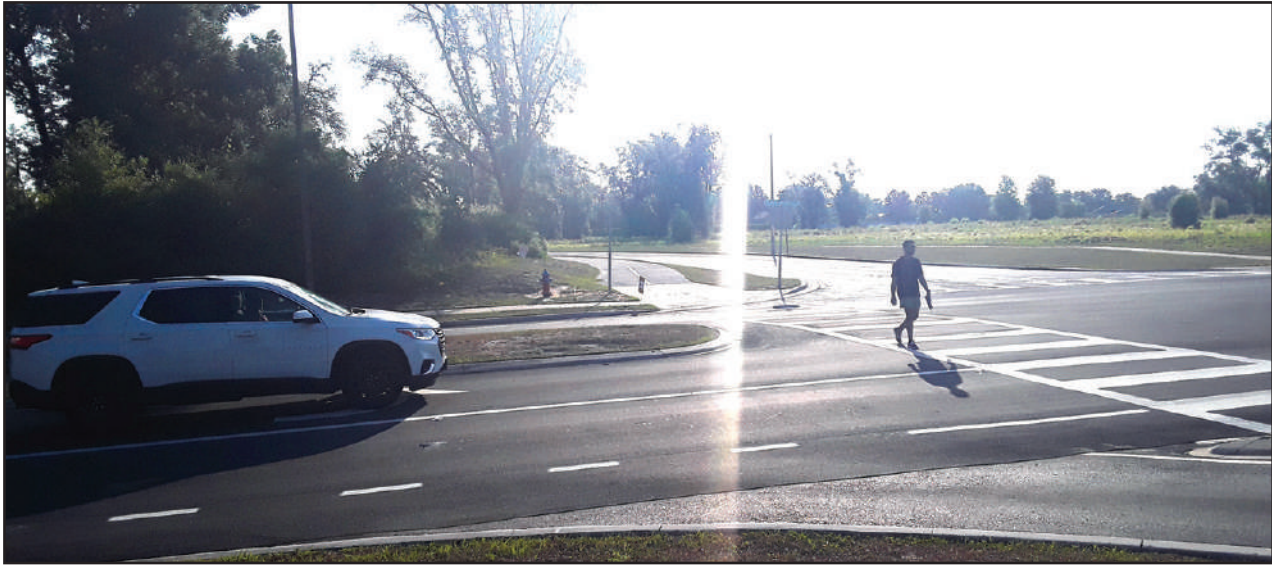


Photo courtesy of Operation Best Foot Forward

Enforcement was in effect at the Jason Dweley Parkway/Brush Drive crosswalk in Apopka as part of the quarterly Operation Best Foot Forward safety enforcement.

## Safety: Law enforcement gives drivers and pedestrians tips on staying safe

*Continued from page 1A*

ange County, HE Thomas Jr. Parkway midblock west of Meadow Dr. in Seminole County, South Atlantic Avenue and Bellemead Drive in Volusia County, and Stadium Parkway midblock south of Judge Fran Jamieson Way in Brevard County.

Since Operation Best Foot Forward began in 2012, the average driver yield rate at program crosswalks has increased by more than 30 percent through a combination of education, enforcement, and engineering.

During Operation Best Foot For-

ward, plainclothes officers, deputies and volunteers cross streets at marked crosswalks, giving drivers enough time to slow down and stop safely. Drivers who do not stop as Florida law requires are pulled over and faced a minimum \$164 citation and three (3) points on their driver's license. These enforcements support the Target Zero and Vision Zero campaigns that aim to reduce traffic-related serious injuries and fatalities to zero.

Law enforcement strongly encourages members of the community to follow these safe practices:

\*Drivers should avoid speeding

and distracted driving, which increase the risk of traffic crashes.

\*Drivers should watch for pedestrians at all marked crosswalks and unmarked intersections.

\*Drivers should stay stopped until pedestrians have cleared the driver's half of the roadway and are more than one lane of distance away.

\*Pedestrians can make themselves more visible to drivers by using marked crosswalks, raising a hand while crossing, wearing bright or reflective clothing, and using a flashlight when it's dark.

## County will host hurricane expo

Orange County is hosting its annual Hurricane Expo, where residents will have the opportunity to learn storm preparedness and recovery tips and meet in person with safety professionals.

The 2024 Hurricane Expo will be on Saturday, June 15, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Evans High School, 4949 Silver Star Road, Orlando. Central Florida me-

teorologist Amy Swezey will provide updates on this year's hurricane season.

Free preparedness items will be available for families to pick up while supplies last.

The Atlantic hurricane season begins on June 1 and ends on November 30.

For more information about the expo, email oco-em@ocfl.net.

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# Workers do need protection

Dear Editor:

Since its inception, the farm bill has excluded working people who are not farm owners. But for the first time, we’re seeing efforts to include farmworkers in the farm bill in a draft framework released by the Senate Agricultural Chair Debbie Stabenow.

While this is an exciting place to start, it will be an uphill battle for these provisions to make it into the final farm bill. Our food and agriculture system depends on the 21.5 million food and farm workers who nourish all of us. Congress cannot afford to pass a new farm bill that ignores their needs.

Here in Florida, farmworkers are risking their lives to feed the rest of us in the face of climate chaos. Many are forced to plant

and harvest the food we eat in extremely dangerous conditions including debilitating heat, severe storms, flooding and hurricanes, smoke from burning fields, rampant pesticide exposure with inadequate safety infrastructure such as clean water and soap, limited training on workforce safety, with even less regulation and oversight of employer compliance with safety protocols, and more, often without warning, and without any relief when disaster strikes. The farm bill must provide protections and disaster relief such as shelter from heat, water breaks, and language appropriate weather alert systems to these working people.

In 2024, we have a chance to rewrite the rules when Congress reauthorizes the U.S. Farm Bill. I

urge Representative Maxwell Frost, Representative Cory Mills, Senator Marco Rubio, Senator Rick Scott, and Representative Daniel Webster to respect working people as part of our agriculture system and partner with colleagues and agencies (DOL, EPA, etc.) to ensure safe and dignified working conditions.

The best first step would be to support the host of commonsense bills already on the table, like Senator Booker’s Protecting America’s Meatpacking Workers Act, Senator Padilla’s two worker bills, Supporting our Farm and Food System Workforce Act and the Fairness for Farmworkers Act.

**Ernesto Ruiz**  
Farmworker Association of Florida

# Request for funds is explained

Dear Editor:

In an editorial by Commissioner Christine Moore, she complains that the City of Apopka shouldn’t ask for both 4 new baseball/softball fields as well as improvements to the Amphitheater from the Tourist Development Tax (TDT) for our Northwest Complex. I’m sorry that she doesn’t feel that adding four additional baseball/softball fields at Apopka’s Northwest Complex is worthy of TDT funding.

It is disingenuous to say that there is only \$15-20 million dollars available, for everyone knows that the amount budgeted is \$75 million and could be as high as \$100 million over the next 3-5 years.

Our softball and baseball tournaments generate heads in beds (hotel stays) with one tournament alone gerating a thousand room nights in the theme park area. We have 5 hotels in Apopka that generate between \$750,000 and \$1,000,000 of hotel tax revenue each year and hundreds of thousands of dollars per year in sales tax, but in the almost six years that she has been a County Commissioner we haven’t received one dime of TDT money. Additionally, if you look at most of the other projects on the TDT list, they have either had year over year grants or the funds are needed for basic building maintenance which isn’t putting more

heads in beds to generate more TDT dollars.

Apopka is comfortable with funding our NW improvements over three to five years to lessen the immediate burden on the TDT fund. As our County Commissioner, we expect that you will fight for the largest city in your district and fund four new ballfields, for our neighbors in Seminole County are about to approve a \$65 million-dollar indoor facility which will directly compete with the 16 fields that we hope will be available over the next several years.

We are asking for your help to fund our baseball/softball fields.

**Mayor Bryan Nelson**

# Bankson votes for cruel law

Dear Editor:

On March 8, 2024, the very last day of the 2024 Legislative Session in Tallahassee, the Republican majority in the Florida House and Senate voted YES on House Bill 433. By this action they have endangered every Floridian who works outside in our increasingly extreme summer heat. Construction workers, lawn crews, farm workers are but a fraction of the roughly two million Florida workers who daily toil in sweltering temperatures.

This cruel bill makes it illegal for any Florida government unit to require that these outdoor workers get periodic water and shade breaks. How inhumane to deny water breaks

in 100-degree heat, or momentary shade for roofers and farm hands. Animals and pets are better-treated. Worse yet, this new law, signed by Governor DeSantis, also bans requiring employers to offer first aid or emergency response for workers suffering heat exposure. Unfortunately, this harsh law takes effect in just 45 days.

Sadly, Apopka’s Representative in the Florida House, Doug Bankson, Pastor of one of Apopka’s churches, voted YES for this brutal law. It matters not if he caved to pressure from the lobbyists for the Florida Chamber of Commerce and other business groups that sought to block all heat-protection rules statewide. It matters not if

he complied for campaign checks and endorsements as he runs for re-election. What matters is that he, as a minister of Christian principles and Biblical teachings, knowingly and willingly chose to ignore the directive in Matthew 25:35-40 which exhorts us “...I was thirsty and you gave me to drink...”

This November voters should remember the callousness and disregard for the needs of their constituents by many of the current members of the Florida Senate and House. You have the choice to vote instead for representatives unafraid to do the right thing in spite of outside pressure.

**Suzanne Kidd**  
Apopka

# Byrd: Tax dollars are necessary

Continued from page 2A

ty Public Schools is vital to understanding the intricacies and challenges our district faces in building and maintaining our 210 schools plus additional support facilities district-wide.

We are the eighth largest school district in the nation and growing so the capital needs of our district are significant.

New residents arrive every day and we have to serve those residents plus all of our previously new buildings are aging and require constant upkeep and maintenance.

All these buildings comprise approximately 34 million square feet of building space and it is now estimated that we will need almost \$9 billion dol-

lars over the next 10 years to sustain the quality educational facilities we expect and need to fulfill our mission.

This cost is, of course, because of the expected growth coming and adding capacity within the district to accommodate that growth, but it is also because of the increase in construction costs in general.

For example, an elementary school that cost \$18 million dollars to build in just 2019 is costing \$37 million this year to build.

This, combined with the understanding that our funding is extremely limited when it comes to capital needs, can be cause for concern.

The state does not provide capital funding any-

more. We have to rely on our local effort to fund capital projects with our local property taxes and impact fees making up only about 50 percent of our building and maintenance needs. Luckily, Orange County residents have graciously supplemented our capital budget since 2002 by approving the half-penny sales surtax.

I will have more on the importance of this surtax in a future column.

But one thing at a time. For now, we are pleased that the need in the northwest part of the county is recognized and accounted for in future plans and that the school district is on top of it. I will keep the community updated as we move along in this process together.

# Moore: ARC funding will be useful

Continued from page 2A

County’s Tourist Development Tax Application Review Committee (ARC) minimum amount was \$2 million.

I contacted the mayor’s staff reminding them of impending deadlines and offering technical assistance to the City of Apopka for applying for the ARC funding. Previous funding has been distributed to the City of Orlando and occasionally Winter Park or Winter Garden applications. Geographic diversity was something the entire BCC was seeking. I believe and still do that the Apopka Amphitheater is a slam dunk to earn several million dollars of TDT funding.

When the City of Apopka application was

returned to the county, and while extremely well done by Parks & Recreation Director Radley Williams, there was a large ask without matching funds for \$13 million. What happened? I have never seen a smaller municipality receive this much money before. The secondary ask, while a great cause for new fields at the Northwest Recreation Complex, may cause the entire application to be rejected. Mayor Nelson penned me a letter advocating for the sports fields. While I agree sports fields are sorely needed, I worried if the application was not “phased in” or divided up over several years, the entire amount would be rejected.

TDT dollars must demonstrate “heads to beds” to be considered for

tourism tax dollars. While I completely support both city requests, the amphitheater improvements and additional sports fields, and would like nothing better than the City of Apopka being awarded the entire \$13 million dollars, I know other District 2 entities, like the Orange Audubon Society and City of Eatonville, have large amounts requested, too.

Sometimes it is better to ask for less than you want so that you receive what you need. I’m hoping that the TDT committee will consider Mr. Nelson’s ask or the committee chooses to phase the request rather than rejecting the Apopka application outright.

Good luck City of Apopka, I am behind you.

# Hayden: Let’s apply Golden Rule

Continued from page 2A

overs, the pollsters stated that out of the people interviewed, 67 percent were not students, nor were they affiliated with the schools. Most of the students involved are not even aware of what they are promoting.

Our greatest bastion of Democracy in the Mideast is the tiny nation of Israel, and it is, without doubt, one of our staunchest allies in the world, and yet our future leaders, philosophers, and professors, are not learned enough, (or perhaps ignorant), of the role Israel has played in the growth of America through health, medicines, and other inventions that have impacted our daily living.

Where did it all begin, and where to lay the blame? I believe America has entered the complacency stage of Socialism’s steps to Communism. We have become so willing to let others do the chores, we have dropped the Hickory stick and allowed our employees (the U.S. Government) to dic-

tate how our children should be raised, corrected, educated, and morally instructed. We need to take up the Hickory stick again and start teaching our children about the importance of respect, both to parents and everyone they meet.

We need to teach them the ethical stance our Forefathers installed in the Constitution of the United States of America, “That all men are created equal, endowed with inalienable rights by their Creator.” I believe every man, woman, boy, or girl ought to know, or at least be familiar with the foreword of our Declaration of Independence as it starts out, “We the People!” (my added exclamation point).

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” This seems the most familiar version of the Golden Rule, highlighting its helpful and proactive gold standard. The Golden Rule should be working in us (U.S.) daily.

“School days, school days, good old Golden Rule days...” This should still be a theme song for our lives.

## Everybody has an opinion. Why not share yours?

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## ALL ABOUT APOPKA

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

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

www.theapokkachief.com, news@theapokkachief.com



#### 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
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Street Maintenance .....	407-703-1731
Utility Billing .....	407-703-1727
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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. <b>www.apopka.net</b>	

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Clerk of the Court .....	407-836-2065
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Solid Waste .....	407-836-6601
Garbage Collection .....	407-703-1731
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Sheriff Administrative .....	407-254-7000
Non-Emerg. Complaint .....	407-836-4357
Utilities .....	407-836-5515
All other departments .....	407-836-3111
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<b>www.orangecountyfl.net</b>	

#### Other Area Numbers of Note

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



# City: Smith has over 18 yrs of managerial, finance experience

Continued from page 1A

died in 2023. At the May 1 meeting, it was revealed that, if appointed, city administrator Jacob Smith's tentative yearly salary would be \$170,000. However, the City Council cannot review the contract until after city staff finishes working on its details and a labor attorney reviews the document.

It was revealed at the May 1 meeting that Smith's employment contract is modeled after that of Bass, but with the stipulation that the City Council is allowed input into the annual evaluation of Smith's job performance.

Growing up outside Seattle, Wash., and currently living in Farmington, Utah, Smith has over 18 years of experience in public administration. He holds a master's degree in public administration from Northern Illinois University in

DeKalb, Ill., and a bachelor of arts degree from Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.

Smith was employed in various managerial and finance positions with the cities of Saratoga Springs and Centerville City, and the state of Utah. His most recent employment was city manager of Fruit Heights City, Utah, from April 2023 to November 2023.

"That's why I'm here: I serve," Smith said at the May 1 Council meeting. "That was one of the things when I came in here that I wanted to make sure, was: one, if I like the people here, that's the first thing. And two, if I can be honest and ethical, and I've done that. I have actually been very impressed. You are a people of great faith that I have noticed, and I have felt it. Everybody has been very warm, kind, down-to-earth and straightforward. That's how I am too."



**Fri., May 17, 2024 thru Sun., May 19, 2024**

**IF (PG)** 10:00A; 11:00A; 12:00; 1:00; 2:00; 3:00; 4:00; 5:00; 6:00; 7:00; 8:00; 9:00; 10:00

**UNSUNG HERO (PG)** 10:50A; 1:40; 4:30; 7:30; 10:20

**THE STRANGERS: CHAPTER 1 (NR)** 11:10A; 1:50; 4:40; 7:20; 10:10

**KINGDOM OF THE PLANET OF THE APES (PG-13)** 11:20A; 12:20; 2:50; 3:50; 6:10; 7:10; 9:30; 10:30

**THE FALL GUY (PG-13)** 12:10; 3:20; 6:40; 9:50

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# Planning: Other agenda items include three major development plans

Continued from page 1A

out a vision for the community's future as well as steps that are necessary to achieve that vision.

The new transportation element includes compiling and completing data, inventory, and analysis of transportation conditions to guide and support the goals, objectives, and policies (GOPs), and writing new GOPs and reorganizing them into three sections: provision of a resilient, connected, multimodal transportation system; transportation infrastructure; transportation funding and capital improvement plan.

The revised transportation element got public feedback via a virtual room as part of the revision process.

The City Council's first reading and transmittal of the transportation element to the state Department of Commerce will take place on June 5 beginning at 1:30 p.m. at Apopka City Hall. The Department of Commerce will have 30 days to review the transportation element and send it back to City Council for

review.

Woodward also presented the updated transportation element at the May 15 City Council meeting. No action was taken or needed on the presentation.

## Other agenda items

The Apopka Planning Commission also voted 6-0 on the following agenda items:

\*Recommended approval of Ordinance No. 3051 for a small-scale future land use map amendment from residential low to industrial for an estimated 0.57-acre vacant parcel located 951 S. Highland Avenue, for the potential development of a 3,200-sq. ft. storage warehouse on the property.

\* Recommended approval of Ordinance No. 3054 for a future land use map amendment from county rural 1/2 to rural settlement for an approximately 4.17-acre property located at 2518 Haas Road. The subject property is vacant with abandoned agricultural buildings.

\* Recommended approval of Ordinance No. 3055 for a change of zoning from T (transitional) to

PD (planned development), also for the same property located at 2518 Haas Road. The proposed change of zoning to PD is being requested by the applicant who is proposing to build a four-lot residential subdivision.

\*Approval of a special exception use permit to allow an accessory dwelling unit in the residential single-family estate (RSF-1A) zoning district for an approximate 1.54-acre site located at 323 Tanglewilde Street.

\*Approval of a special exception use permit for the residential country estate (RCE) zoning district located at 4490 Rock Springs Road, for the proposed addition of 9,600 square feet and associated infrastructure to an existing place of worship.

\*Recommended approval of the Marshall Lake Business Center major development plan for a development consisting of six buildings totaling 43,900 square feet that are comprised of office/warehouse and self-storage uses located at 780 Marshall Lake Road. The subject property is 6.43 acres in size.

\*Recommended approval of a major development plan for the Plymouth Sorrento Apartments planned development, which is a consolidation of two parcels totaling approximately 13.04 acres, located west of Plymouth Sorrento Road, north of U.S. 441 and east of S.R. 429. The major development plan proposes to construct 242 multifamily units with a density of 18.55 dwelling units per acre.

\*The applicant has submitted the Park View Preserve, Phase 2 – Plat for consideration of 78 single-family residential lots on approximately 71.3-acres.

\*The Kelly Park Multifamily Phase 3 – Plat Northwest corner of Waypointe Boulevard and Kelly Park Road, to combine parcels and create three lots, roads and other infrastructure required for the construction of a multifamily development. This plat also serves to establish portions of Airy Spring Street, Fresh Flower Street, and Rainy Woods Street rights-of-ways to support the expansion of and connectivity within the Crossroads at Kelly Park development.



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# April's low rainfall highlights need for water conservation

April marks the third consecutive month of below-average rainfall for the St. Johns River Water Management District's 18-county region. While frontal systems brought some rain, it primarily benefited the northern counties, leaving the southern counties drier. Overall, six counties experienced above-average rainfall, while 12 were below.

Despite the dry conditions, groundwater levels districtwide remain well above drought indicator levels, with most areas within the normal range. District staff continue to monitor rainfall and groundwater levels to ensure adequate supply for public demand.

While it is always critical to use our water wisely, the District strongly encourages the public to be mindful of their water usage during these dry months until our summer rainfall patterns return.

Below are simple tips for residents and businesses to help save water and money on their water bill.

**Indoor**

- \*Only run washing machines and dishwashers with full loads.
- \*Use the shortest

washing cycle for lightly soiled clothes.

\*Thaw frozen food in the refrigerator or microwave, not under running water.

\*Scrape dishes instead of rinsing before loading into the dishwasher.

\*Install high-efficiency showerheads, faucets and toilets.

**Outdoor**

\*Check and repair leaks in irrigation systems.

\*Turn off irrigation systems and water only as needed.

\*Use a kitchen timer to avoid overwatering with sprinklers.

\*Use a hose with a shut-off nozzle when washing cars.

\*Install a rain barrel with a drip irrigation system for landscaping; rainwater is free and better for plants.

A full report outlining April's hydrologic conditions was presented at the District's Governing Board meeting on Tuesday, May 14. Highlights include:

**Rainfall**

\*Districtwide average rainfall was 2.14 inches, 0.47 inches below the monthly average.

\*County-wide monthly rainfall totals ranged from a high of 3.79 inches in Nassau County, to a low of 0.56 inches in Indian River County.

\*Cumulative rainfall for the past 12 months was 55.56 inches, 4.55 inches above the long-term average.

\*Coastal and northern counties had the highest 12-month rainfall totals, with Volusia County receiving over 9 inches above average.

ceiving over 9 inches above average.

**Groundwater**

\*Upper Floridan aquifer conditions generally fell within the normal range by the end of April.

\*Groundwater levels districtwide, expressed as a single index, were in the 75th percentile, normal for this time of year, though decreasing into May.

**Spring flows**

\*Silver Springs recorded a mean monthly flow of 685 cubic feet per second (cfs), or 442 million gallons per day (mgd), a 13 cfs decrease from March, falling from the high range to just within the normal range for this time of year.

\*Blue Spring station in Volusia County reported a mean monthly flow of 148 cfs, or 96 mgd, within the normal range.

\*Rock Springs experienced a slight decrease in mean monthly flow, and remains in the normal range at 59 cfs (38 mgd).

\*Wekiwa Springs exhibited a slight decrease, recording a mean monthly flow of 65 cfs (42 mgd), and is also in the normal range for this time of year.

For further insights into rainfall totals and other hydrologic data, visit sjrw-md.com.

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Where the Spirit Moves

Where in the world today do we see the Spirit of God alive and at work? Do you see it in your church, or is your church just doing the same old thing, going through the motions of the service?

Are there perhaps people in your community who are moved by the spirit to assist others, and do so in a spirit of kindness and love? If so, that is a clue to where to look for the Spirit of God, that is, where you see kindness and love you can be assured that God is there, for where there is love there is God.

On the other hand, when you see a rigid adherence to rules as the guiding theme, one should be suspicious

that we are in the presence of zealots, and perhaps even priests, but not necessarily in the presence of God. Where you see patience and forbearance in difficult circumstances you can be sure you are in the presence of God.

Impatience and intolerance are almost always a sign of selfishness and putting one’s ego first. True religion, rather than being a rigid adherence to rules and commands (thou shalt not’s) is more often an openness to the spirit wherever it leads, and invariably it leads to a life of freedom, and especially a freedom from fear.

– Christopher Simon



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Call **The Apopka Chief & The Planter** at 407-886-2777, fax 407-889-4121, or email [news@theapokkachief.com](mailto:news@theapokkachief.com)

Obituaries

**NORMA J MARCOLINI RYAN**, 92, passed away on April 30, 2024 in Apopka. Born on October 19,1931 in Brownsville, Pennsylvania to Giovanna “Jane” Persello Marcolini and Attilio Giacomo Marcolini. She was predeceased by brothers: A. Robert “Porky” Marcolini (spouse, Dorothy Marcolini), John W. Marcolini; husband, Thomas P. Ryan, Jr.; 1 niece; 1 son-in-law, 1 grandson-in-law. She is survived by her children, Kent Thomas Ryan (wife Maureen), Kevin Lee Ryan (wife Susan), Maureen Ann Landers; 5 grandchildren; 1 grandson-in-law; 1 great grandson-in-law. As well as many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

...

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**ALWILDA “GATOR” SMITH BANKSTON**, 92, passed away peacefully in her home on April 2, 2024, in Winter Park. She was born on February 19, 1932, in Frostproof, to her parents, Alex Wesley Smith and Gladys Dossey Smith. In 1959, she married Chester W. Bankston. Gator is survived by her children, Cindy, Jim (wife Barbie), and 1 grandson.

...

**SARA F. KELLY**, 91, of Championsgate passed away on April 23, 2024. Born on October 6, 1932 in Sweetwater, TX to Henry Vernon & Lillie Mae Dickinson. She is preceded in death by her husband, Fred Wayne Kelly; son, Douglas Wayne Kelly; sister, Sister Margaret Elizabeth. Sara is survived by Doris Jayne Wasson (husband Mike); 3 grandchildren; Tina (Chris) Nichols, Tony (Kate) Wasson, Joseph Morrow; 1 great-grandson, Austin Kacey Nichols, Carol Ann Kelly, John Vernon Kelly.

...

See Obituaries on page 13A

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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In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.  
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“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:14

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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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Where the Spirit Moves

(See message above.)

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”  
2 Corinthians 3:17 NIV



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Matthew 5:16

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# Now would be a good time to stuff tomatoes with chicken or tuna salad

Our friend, Emily Meggett, author of *Gullah Geechee Home Cooking* sadly passed earlier this year.



But she said in her book, “My church community is one of the most important parts of my life. Through church, not only do I deepen my connection with God, I get to connect with my community. Like many churches in the South, we have spring and summer picnics to celebrate the warmer days and catch up on the lives of friends and loved ones. One year, the church asked me to make a dish, and I just so happened to have some juicy tomatoes at home that an old friend brought me. I said to myself, ‘What if I stuffed these?’ I cut out the center of the tomato and replaced it with some chicken salad I made the day before. It was a hit at the picnic, and I’ve made it ever since.” Miz Meggett didn’t say, but I will: this would also work beautifully with tuna fish salad.

Another recipe from Emily Meggett’s book is Squash Casserole. I wish you could see the picture that I am looking at in her book (which I thank my sister for sending to me as a gift a couple of years ago.) The picture alone would entice you to... not walk... but *run* to your kitchen and get busy making your own casserole! She says, “Squash casserole uses some of my favorite vegetables – squash and zucchini. I like to use cream cheese in my casserole because it helps to bring very different ingredients together, and it adds richness and creaminess to otherwise gritty vegetables.”

A personal note, I have never used Nature’s Seasons, so I looked it up. It is a blend of seasonings put out by Morton’s Salt Company. I just may have to get some.

I remember as a child that Mama would start cooking a big pot of pea soup on Saturday mornings for us to eat later in the day after she and Daddy finished working in the garden. She would put ham in it or a ham bone if she had one. I loved it! And from *Country Cookin’*, we have Split-Pea Soup that was made famous at The Little Inn in Homosassa. This is the book that Joyce LaFray Young wrote featuring famous dishes from all over Florida. I believe she has written other books

based on recipes from other states. From *Stew-Pot Favorites of Zellwood*, we have Orange-Nut Cake, from Mrs. Violet Osborn. *Paths of Sunshine* recipe book has a recipe for Mexican-Style Taco Salad that we have for you here.

## EMILY MEGGETT’S TOMATO STUFFED WITH CHICKEN OR TURKEY SALAD

Recipe from *Gullah Geechee Home Cooking* by Emily Meggett

- 6 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1/2 cup sliced scallions
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 3 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
- 1 tablespoon mustard
- 1 teaspoon celery salt
- 1 teaspoon poultry seasoning
- 2 cups Hellmann’s mayonnaise, plus more if needed
- 10 large tomatoes

1) Boil the chicken breasts and scallions in a pot of water until the chicken is cooked through, 25 to 30 minutes. 2) Remove the skin from the chicken and let cool. When chicken is completely cooled, cut it into small pieces and put in a large bowl. 3) Add the celery, hard-boiled eggs, mustard, celery salt, poultry seasoning, and mayonnaise. Stir to combine. If the mixture is too dry, add more mayonnaise. Stir, taking care not to break up the chicken pieces. 4) Place the salad in the refrigerator to chill. (You may make the chicken salad a day ahead.) Cut the tops off of the tomatoes. Use a small paring knife to remove the inside of each tomato. A spoon may be helpful in scooping out the insides. 5) Once you’ve removed the insides of the tomatoes, fill them with the chilled chicken salad. Be generous – it’s called *stuffed* tomato for a reason!

## EMILY MEGGETT’S SQUASH CASSEROLE

Recipe from *Gullah Geechee Home Cooking* by Emily Meggett

- 3 medium yellow squash, thinly sliced into rounds about 1/8 inch
- 3 medium zucchini, thinly sliced into rounds about 1/8 inch thick
- 1 8-ounce package cream cheese, at room temperature
- 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1 cup grated medium or sharp cheddar cheese

- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 2 teaspoons Nature’s Seasons, plus more to taste

1) Preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. 2) Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add the squash and zucchini, bring back to a boil, and cook until tender, about 10 minutes. Drain very well in a colander, making sure to shake all the excess water out. 3) In a large mixing bowl, combine the cream cheese, butter, 1/2 cup of the cheddar cheese, and the egg; stir in the egg, then stir in the squash. Mix well. Add Nature’s Seasons – more if needed – and stir again. 4) Pour the squash mixture into an ungreased 9 x 13-inch baking dish. Sprinkle the top of the casserole with the remaining cheddar cheese. 5) Bake the casserole for 35 to 40 minutes, until golden brown on top. Let cool for a few minutes before serving.

## SPLIT-PEA SOUP FROM THE LITTLE INN IN HOMOSSASSA

Recipe from *Country Cookin’* by Joyce LaFray Young

- (Allow Peas to Soak Overnight)
- 1 cup split peas
- 2-4 cups water
- 1 carrot (diced)
- 1 small onion (diced)
- Ham bone
- 1/2 teaspoon celery salt
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 3 cups milk

1) Wash peas several times, then place them in pan with water and allow to soak overnight. 2) The next day, add carrot, onion, and ham bone. Cook over medium heat until it boils. Simmer uncovered until peas are tender, about 1-1/2 hours. 3) Remove ham bone and press the material through a sieve. Return to pot with liquid they were cooked in. Add seasonings, milk, and any meat pieces from bone. 4) Heat through, stirring to thicken. Serve hot. Serves 4 to 6. Note says: “Lip-smacking good with cornbread.”

## VIOLET OSBORN’S ORANGE-NUT CAKE

Recipe from *Stew-Pot Favorites of Zellwood*

Woman’s Society of Christian Service, Zellwood, Florida

- 1 large orange
- 1 cup raisins

- 1/2 cup pecans
- 1 cups sifted flour
- 1 teaspoon soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1 cup milk
- 2 eggs

Grind orange pulp and rind with raisins and pecans. Save orange juice for topping. Sift together the flour, soda, salt, and sugar. Add shortening and 3/4-cup milk. Beat two minutes with electric mixer at low speed. Add eggs and 1/4-cup of milk. Beat two minutes. Fold orange-raisin-nut mixture into the batter. Pour into well-greased and lightly floured 13 x 9 x 2-inch pan. Bake in 350-degree oven for 40 to 50 minutes. While cake is baking, combine 1/3-cup orange juice, 1/3-cup sugar, and 1 teaspoon cinnamon. Heat to completely dissolve sugar and cinnamon. Drip this mixture over the warm cake. Sprinkle with 1/2-cup chopped pecans.

## MEXICAN-STYLE TACO SALAD

Recipe from *Paths of Sunshine Cookbook*

- 4 cups chopped lettuce
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 cup sliced green olives
- 1 large green pepper, diced
- 1-1/2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1 (26-oz) can kidney beans
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 2 teaspoons cumin
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- Taco chips and sour cream

Arrange the first five ingredients on serving platter and chill from 1 to 12 hours. Brown meat and onions. Drain. Add beans, drained and rinsed, and seasonings to meat mixture. Cook three or four minutes, stirring constantly, until moisture has evaporated. Cover loosely and let stand 30 minutes. Before serving, spoon meat over salad, sprinkle with Taco chips and serve with sour cream. Garnish with avocado when available.

View Kitchen Kapers by Nancy online at [www.theapokkachief.com/recipes](http://www.theapokkachief.com/recipes)

# MAY 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 Dwellie 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 muck-farming days. The one-way drive exits on Jones Road in Zellwood. You will see a fresh-water 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, MAY 17

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](http://cfchristianchamber.com/events-chamber). Contact: [latrondra@cfchristianchamber.com](mailto:latrondra@cfchristianchamber.com)

## SATURDAY, MAY 18

VFW POST 10147 continues to have its fund raising breakfast on the the third Saturday of the month on MAY 18, 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, MAY 19

## MONDAY, MAY 20

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](http://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, MAY 21

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, MAY 22

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](mailto: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 Av-

enue, 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](http://www.Apopkatoastmasters.com).

## THURSDAY, MAY 23.

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 Dewlley Parkway, 5-7 p.m. Free. Last one before summer is this the 18th of May.

## 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/2ABrmbs>, 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](mailto: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 [orangecmgv@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:orangecmgv@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.theapokka-museum.com](http://www.theapokka-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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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](http://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

COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR INFORMATION Events, fund raisers, and non-profit organizations

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## Man admits to sexual battery on child during police job interview

An Orange County jury found Stephen Bodley, 26, guilty of sexual battery on a child after he openly admitted to it during a job interview for the Apopka Police Department, according to a Friday, May 10, news release from the office of State Attorney Andrew Bain.

On June 16, 2021, Bodley

was conducting a job interview at the Apopka Police Department for a position that he applied for as a sworn police officer. The certified voice stress analysis examiner performed a voice stress examination on Bodley.

During the examination, the examiner asked Bodley to expand on concerning answers he pro-

vided in a pre-test questionnaire. In it, Bodley described sexually abusing a child several years ago. He admitted the same when the examiner asked him to explain further.

The Apopka Police Department initiated a criminal investigation after Bodley's disclosure. Police arranged a meeting

with the victim and the victim's mother at the police department where detectives informed them of Bodley's admissions.

Detectives called Bodley back to the police department and arrested him. The defendant testified during the trial and denied sexually abusing the victim despite previously admitting

to committing the crime on three separate occasions.

On May 8, a jury found Bodley guilty of sexual battery on a child less than 12 by a person less than 18 after a three-day trial.

The judge ordered a pre-sentence investigation to determine an appropriate sentence. Bodley is set to be sentenced on June 24.

## Company closes on \$18.5-M loan for 300-house community

First Continental, a Houston-based lending company that specializes in residential lot acquisition and development financing, announces the closing of an \$18.5-million loan for DDC Management, a Day-

ton, Ohio-based land development company, to build a residential community in Apopka.

Situated on a 95-acre tract at 851 South Bion Road, the community, which will be known as

Eden Crest, will be composed of 300 single-family homes and townhomes.

The community will feature 31 acres of open space, conservation tracts and amenities, including a pool with cabanas, a tot lot

and a dog park. Positioned off S.R. 414 and Boy Scout Road, the Eden Crest community will help to meet the growing housing demands of the Central Florida market.

Hartizen Homes, an

Orlando-based residential homebuilder, will acquire the lots and spearhead the construction of the single-family and townhome units.

The multi-phase development is expected to break

ground this month with the first phase of 184 lots slated for completion in the second quarter of 2025; the remaining 116 lots will follow suit and are expected to be completed in 2027.

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### Volunteers help with food drive



Flo Nelson, who is turning 95 this year, is one of the many volunteers for Loaves & Fishes who serves on Mondays. She has been a volunteer with the food pantry for over 35 years. Here she is with her son Mayor Bryan Nelson on Saturday, May 11, when she volunteered for the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive in which Loaves & Fishes took part.

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1061 W Orange Blossom Trail, Apopka  
407-703-8195

### SUDOKU ANSWERS

PUZZLE CAN BE  
FOUND ON PAGE 2B

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

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## Puzzle Solution

P	A	R	S		E	C	T			B	A	T
S	L	A	K	E		A	L	A		E	A	C
T	A	J	I	K		R	E	C		B	L	E
	E	A	M	E	S		N	A	T		L	A
						A	M	E	R	I	C	A
P	R	E	M	A	T	U	R	E	L	Y		
E	N	E	M	I	E	S		R	E	M		
T	A	L	E	R						B	E	R
						B	A	N		E	L	A
										T	I	O
						U	N	A	V	A	I	L
										A	B	L
						R	E	S	O	N	A	T
M	O	A	B			D	K	M		S	A	B
E	L	B	A			Y	E	P			A	I
N	E	B	N			N	E	E			R	A
D	A	I				E	N	D			S	E

## The Crossword Puzzle is found on page 2B



## Alwilda "Gator" Smith Bankston

Alwilda "Gator" Smith Bankston passed away peacefully in her home on April 2, 2024, in Winter Park, Florida of natural causes. She was 92 years old.

Gator was born on February 19, 1932, in Frostproof, Florida, to her parents, Alex Wesley Smith and Gladys Dossey Smith. She graduated from the Apopka High School in 1950. In 1959, she married Chester W. Bankston,



and together they lived in Orlando, Florida. When they met Chet was working as a General Contractor and Gator was working as a secretary for Minute Maid Orange Juice. She was given the name Gator in her twenties and that was her nickname for the rest of her life. She always loved the nickname and used to say it was such a conversation starter. She became a stay-at-home mom when their daughter, Cindy was born in 1961 and their son Jim was born in 1964. She worked as a secretary for Chet after her children had left for college.

Gator enjoyed traveling with her family and had many happy memories from Europe, the Bahamas and a trip to St Barth's. She and

Chet also took their motor home throughout the United States.

Gator had a passion for volunteering. Starting with The Orlando Day Nursery and The Junior League of Orlando as well as at her children's school. Later while living in New Smyrna Beach, Florida, she enjoyed volunteering for The Visitors Center, The Chamber of Commerce, The Daytona Beach Airport and Bert Fish Medical Center. She developed many good friendships while living at New Smyrna and always enjoyed being at the beach.

Gator is survived by her daughter, Cindy of Winter Park, FL; her son and daughter-in-law Jim and Barbie, and Grandson Alec of Winter Park, FL.

## Norma J Marcolini Ryan

10-19-31 •• 4-30-24

Norma J Marcolini Ryan was born October 19, 1931 in Brownsville Pennsylvania and passed away on April 30, 2024 in Apopka, Florida. A lifelong resident of Brownsville whose greatest loves were God, family and Brownsville.

Daughter of deceased Giovanna "Jane" Persello Marcolini and deceased Attilio Giacomo Marcolini. Was predeceased by brothers; A. Robert "Porky" Marcolini and his spouse Dorothy Marcolini; brother John W. Marcolini; husband Thomas P. Ryan, Jr.; Niece Amy Marcolini; son-in-law Tim Landers and his son Madison Landers.

She is survived by her loving family; Son Kent Thomas Ryan, wife Maureen and daughters Shannon and Casey; Daughter Maureen Ann Landers, her daughter Lisa; Son Kevin Lee Ryan, wife Susan and son Sean, daughter Caroline and husband Will Smith plus son Brit-

ton. Many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

Graduated Brownsville High School Class of 1949; owned and operated Norma's Beauty Salon for 44 years, served her town as a founding member of Brownsville Area Revitalization Corporation (BARC); Brownsville Borough council person and first female mayor of Brownsville as well as other related organizations including the Son's of Italy, Rosa Garibaldi Lodge; Mon Valley Initiative and National Road Heritage Corridor.

In lieu of flowers, kindly (if you wish to) donate to the growth of Brownsville through a fund created in her honor c/o Norma Jean Ryan Endowment through BARC, or the Historic Church of St. Peters, or any other organizations working toward the betterment of the town of Brownsville. Here is a link for the Norma Jean Ryan Endowment

through BARC:

[https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted\\_button\\_id=SNF7FW562SVRY](https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=SNF7FW562SVRY)

Family and friends are invited to a formal Catholic Mass at St. Patrick's 6803 Old Highway 441 South, Mt. Dora, Florida on Friday May 24th at 9:00 AM. Which is optional and a Celebration of Life Brunch at the home of Maureen Landers' directly after the Mass. You can choose to come to both or please join us at the home for the Celebration of Life.



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## Sara F. Kelly

Sara F. Kelly, 91, of Championsgate passed away on April 23, 2024. Born on October 6, 1932 in Sweetwater, TX to Henry Vernon & Lillie Mae Dickinson. A sister to Sister Margaret Elizabeth, who passed in 1982.

Sara played clarinet in high school band, but not well enough to march and play. She just wiggled her fingers, which was her first foray into acting.

She married F. Wayne Kelly on Dec 30, 1954.

Sara graduated from Texas Tech University in 1954 with a degree in education and theatre arts and was a published author of two books on faith: Subtracting Fears for the Future; Revelation's Timeless Message and The Light and the Way, and Daily Spiritual Journey. She was a public school teacher, middle school speech and drama; 2 years in Corpus Christi TX and 6 years in Amarillo, TX.

She lived in Sweetwater, TX, Abilene, TX, Lubbock, TX, Dumas, TX, Spearman, TX, Brownfield, TX, Amarillo, TX (38 yrs), Apopka, FL (19 years), Championsgate, FL (5 years)

Sara played bridge, most often at the former Errol Estate Country Club. While living in Amarillo, Sara starred

in several productions, including Driving Miss Daisy and Steel Magnolias, for which she was awarded best actress and best comedic actress respectively.

Sara's husband claimed she had 'president's disease' as whatever organization she joined, she ended up being president sooner or later. She was active in WSCS (Women's Society of Christian Service) in several TX towns, The Amarillo Little Theatre, PTA in Amarillo Little Theatre, ATPE (Association of Professional Educators), TX. She volunteered for the Apopka Women's Club, the Menello Museum, and the Haven House. Sara was a dedicated Methodist all of her life. Her family joked that she was at the church every time the doors were open. Among her things, we found a set of keys to the Global Methodist Church, apparently she could open the doors and be at church anytime she pleased! She was a diligent letter writer. She wrote letters both to compliment and to right wrongs. She once wrote to the CEO of the Frito Lay company as they were using the Ave Maria in a TV advertisement for Fritos, which greatly offended Sara. She got a response back in which the CEO stated that they

had indeed received a number of letters but that hers was by far the most eloquent. The CEO acknowledged their misstep and they withdrew the ad campaign. Sara was a delight and a guide to all who knew her, so full of love and light.

Sara is survived by Doris Jayne Wasson and husband Mike, Davenport, FL. Three grandchildren; Tina (Chris) Nichols, Denver, CO, Tony (Kate) Wasson, Raleigh, NC and Joseph Morrow, Pflugerville, TX, one great-grandson, Austin Kacey Nichols, Denver, CO, Carol Ann Kelly, Davenport, FL, John Vernon Kelly, Pflugerville, TX.

She is preceded in death by her husband, Fred Wayne Kelly, Oct 4, 1996 and son, Douglas Wayne Kelly, July 25, 2019.

A memorial service will be held May 17th, Global Methodist (formerly First United Methodist) of Apopka at 2pm. Gathering afterward in Fellowship Hall. Led by Pastor John Fisher.

Memorial donation suggestions, including addresses Global Methodist (formerly First United) Church

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