

Retirement

After 25 years with the Apopka Police Department, Sgt. Jason Wiggins retires. See page 10A.



Sports

Blue Darters fall to .500 on the season after loss at West Orange. See page 1B.



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Volume 102 Number 40

Friday, October 4, 2024 / 50 cents

City Council approves interlocal agreement

By Teresa Sargeant Apopka Chief Staff

The Apopka City Council approved, 5-0 as a its consent agenda item on Wednesday, October 2, to transfer ownership of a portion of Binion Road from Orange County to the city of Apopka and authorize the mayor to sign and execute the interlocal agreement.

The section being transferred from county to city was from Areca Palm Drive to Hayden Valley Street.

The City Council voted at its Wednesday, Octo-

ber 2, regular meeting. At its June 9 meeting, the City Council approved the interlocal agreement for transferring the section of Binion Road, from Areca Palm Drive to Hayden Valley Street, from Orange County to the city. After city approval, Orange County asked for changes to the interlocal agreement that the Orange County Board of County Commissioners approved on September 10. Because of the amendment to the interlocal agreement, the agreement must be brought

See CITY Page 5A

Sawyer Brown cancels performance

The city of Apopka announced that Sawyer Brown has made the difficult decision to cancel their performance at the upcoming Apopka Proud Concert on Saturday, October 5, due to unexpected health concerns. Sawyer Brown's performance will not be rescheduled.

Because of the short timeframe, the city announced it was unable to secure a replacement co-headliner for the Apopka Proud Concert.

John Anderson, Apopka native and recent inductee into the Country Music Hall of Fame, will be the sole headliner at the



Apopka Proud Concert. Joining him will be opening act, country music artist Dallas Tyler.

Tickets purchased for the original show will be valid at the event with the

new co-headliner. People seeking a refund may visit Eventbrite.com to request a refund. Eventbrite is working to refund all ticket buyers that have requested one via the original meth-

od of payment. For information on future events, follow the Apopka Amphitheater on Facebook at Facebook.com/ApopkaAmphitheater.

Hispanic heritage celebrated

The third annual Apopka Hispanic Heritage Celebration marked Hispanic Heritage Month on Saturday, September 28, at Kit Land Nelson Park. The event included Hispanic music and dancers, food, and community groups. In the left photo, the Orlando-based Raymi Dance School performs a traditional Peruvian dance wearing authentic cultural costumes from Cusco, Peru. In the right photo, Ybeth Bruzual, Spectrum News 13 personality, makes a special appearance and speaks to the crowd.

Contract awarded for expansion of water reclamation facility

On Wednesday, October 2, The Apopka City Council voted 5-0, as a consent agenda item, to award a \$5.1 million contract to a contractor for a water reclamation facility expansion project at the Northwest Recreation Center. The contract will go to L7 Construction Inc., in the amount of \$4.637 million and includes a 10-percent contingency of \$463,700, for a total of \$5.1 million.

L7 Construction was the lowest of three contractors that submitted bids, according to the City Council staff report in the October 2 meeting agenda.

The Finance Department received electronic bids on April 7 with the inquiry deadline of July 9 and an ebid submittal deadline of August 12 at 2 p.m. There were 1,712 notified users; 2,493 project views; and 67 vendors who followed the project.

The project is located at the Northwest Recreation Center and water treatment plant near Jason Dwelley Park-

See CONTRACT Page 5A

St. Paul AME Church hosts Voter Education Forum

By Kennedy Jackson Special to the Chief

The St. Paul AME Church Social Action Committee, under Senior Pastor Gerard Moss, Sr., held a Voter Education Forum for Central Florida voters seeking information about the issues and proposed six amendments in preparation for the November 5 general election.

Held on Sunday, September 29, at the church, the event also provided voters with valuable insights on how to access information about election issues and

candidates, with a focus on fostering informed voting practices.

The forum featured a key panel discussion moderated by Central Florida trial attorney and co-host of the weekly podcast "Let's Talk Nation" Gregory Jackson. Jackson provided an in-depth breakdown of the six proposed constitutional amendments that will appear on the November ballot. These amendments cover important topics such as potential partisan school board, public campaign financing, and property tax rates. However, the topics garnering the most attention were

recreational marijuana and abortion rights.

Jackson emphasized the role of the forum in empowering voters to make informed decisions.

"My role here today is to provide you with the information to help you be better prepared to vote. I am not here to tell you how or what to vote for," Jackson said.

Participants from all political affiliations were invited to attend. The forum drew representatives from the Orange County Supervisor of Elections office, Democratic Women's Club, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Alpha Kappa

Alpha Sorority, and Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. The League of Women Voters was also present and assisted attendees with voter registration on-site.

Bobby Scott, chair of the St. Paul AME Social Action Committee, reminded attendees of the power of voting.

"Voting is the second greatest power we have; prayer is the first," he said, stressing the importance of both spiritual and civic responsibility," Scott said.

One of the event's central



Photo by Gregory Jackson

Bobby Scott, chair of the St. Paul AME Social Action Committee, speaks at the September 29 Voter Education Forum.

See FORUM Page 6A

Rock Your School at Kelly Park

On Friday, September 27, Kelly Park School amped up learning with the annual Rock Your School pep rally (pictured) and innovative classroom lessons. As part of the Get Your Teach On movement founded by Hope and Wade King, Rock Your School joins educators from around the world by creating an outside-the-box educational experience designed to engage students and bring learning to life in classrooms.

Mixed-use project coming to S.R. 429

A developer closed on a \$3.75-million loan for a mixed-use development project that will offer direct access to S.R. 429 in the northwestern corner of the Apopka area.

Kennedy Funding, an Englewood, N.J., based direct private lender, announced in a news release the closing of the \$3.75-million loan to Apopka Two Holdings, LLC, according to a press release from Ken-

See PROJECT Page 8A

This week

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Service Dir. 10B

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Apopka Event of the Week

The Apopka Proud Concert will start at 5:00 p.m., Saturday, October 5, with John Anderson and Dallas Tyler at the Amphitheater, Northwest Recreation Complex, 1101 Mason Dwellley Parkway. Sawyer Brown is unable to be a part of the concert due to illness. See www.apopka.gov/events.

Quotable

Under current law, the existing statutory framework for medical marijuana is repealed six months after the effective date of this amendment which affects how this amendment will be implemented.

Financial impact to be considered if amendment is approved

Opinion

The Apopka Chief
A weekly newspaper founded in 1923

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

Publisher
T. Jerrod Ricketson

Marketing Director
Jackie Trefcer

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

Reporters
Teresa Sargeant
Marshall Tempest
Neal Fisher

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

Our position

Amendment 3 may present more problems than it legalizes

The following information is being presented as food for thought about Amendment 3: Legalizing Recreational Marijuana. The information comes from [https://ballotpedia.org/Florida_Amendment_3_Marijuana_Legalization_Initiative_\(2024\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Florida_Amendment_3_Marijuana_Legalization_Initiative_(2024)). There is additional information available on the website, as well as explanation of the footnotes.

Ballot summary

The proposed ballot summary is as follows:^[1]

Allows adults 21 years or older to possess, purchase, or use marijuana products and marijuana accessories for non-medical personal consumption by smoking, ingestion, or otherwise; allows Medical Marijuana Treatment Centers, and other state licensed entities, to acquire, cultivate, process, manufacture, sell, and distribute such products and accessories. Applies to Florida law; does not change, or immunize violations of federal law. Establishes possession limits for personal use. Allows consistent legislation. Defines terms. Provides effective date.

Who is supporting and opposing this initiative

Smart and Safe Florida is sponsoring the initiative. The campaign reported \$61.28 million in contributions. *Trulieve, a marijuana dispensary company that owns medical marijuana dispensaries in Florida, is the main contributor.*^[2] Smart & Safe Florida said, "The industry is sustainable and growing. In 2020, when the state lost more than 400,000 jobs, Florida's cannabis industry added 15,000 employees. ... Tax revenues from the legal cannabis industry for federal and state governments are projected to reach \$4.06 billion in 2025, according to New Frontier data. ... *There is no evidence* that legalizing marijuana for medical or recreational use at the state level, as 37 states already have done, has boosted underage consumption from the regulated marketplace. The continued black market sale of marijuana perpetuates a culture of criminality.

If adult-use cannabis is legalized, Florida users will have accountability, transparency, and reg-

ulations in place to ensure products are not laced with or contain potentially deadly chemicals."^[3]

Opposition to passing the amendment

Cite No on Floridians Against Recreational Marijuana, and the Florida Freedom Fund registered to oppose the initiative. Together, the committees reported \$125,200 in contributions. The Florida Freedom Fund was created by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis (R) to oppose the marijuana initiative as well as the abortion initiative. DeSantis said, "[The initiatives] are very, very extreme. Once voters figure out how radical both of those are, they're going to fail. It's basically a license to have it anywhere you want. So ... no time, place and manner restrictions. This state will start to smell like marijuana in our cities and towns.

Financial impact statement

The financial impact statement as written by the Florida Financial Impact Estimating Conference is as follows:^{[1][2]}

Adult Personal Use of Marijuana 22-05 (assigned initiative number):

The amendment's financial impact primarily comes from expected sales tax collections. If legal today, sales of non-medical marijuana would be subject to sales tax and would remain so if voters approve this amendment. Based on other states' experiences, expected retail sales of non-medical marijuana would generate at least \$195.6 million annually in state and local sales tax revenues once the retail market is fully operational, although the timing of this occurring is unclear. Under current law, the existing statutory framework for medical marijuana is repealed six months after the effective date of this amendment which affects how this amendment will be implemented. A new regulatory structure for both medical and nonmedical use of marijuana will be needed. Its design cannot be fully known until the legislature acts; however, regulatory costs will probably be offset by regulatory fees. Other potential costs and savings cannot be predicted.



Reasons to approve half-cent tax

Do you remember what our schools used to look like?

I do. My daughters attended Clay Springs Elementary before it was rebuilt with the half-cent sales tax money. The old school was made up of one main building that housed the offices and cafeteria.

All of the classrooms were portable-type buildings with covered outdoor walkways. With all the classrooms accessible from the outside, it was not secure from outside threats and severe weather would make for really wet children.

Frankly, I don't want to get to the point where our children's safety and health are in jeopardy because we don't have funding to improve and update

Orange County School Board, District 7



Melissa Byrd

our schools.

This Election Day, November 5, the Orange County School Board is asking voters whether to continue the current half-cent sales tax for school construction and renovation for another 10 years.

Prior to the half-cent sales tax in 2002, many of Orange County's public schools were outdated and in disrepair.

For example, the average age of schools back then was 33 years and

OCPS had more than 3,000 portable classrooms because the district was unable to keep up with explosive growth.

Since 2002, the sales tax has helped fund the renovation or replacement of 136 schools, reducing portables by 75 percent. The average age of OCPS schools is now 13 years!

However, it is critical to maintain these newer facilities. For example, new schools built at the beginning of the sales tax are now due for new roofs and other crucial systems like air conditioning.

In fact, 75 of our schools will be at least 25 years old in 10 years and will require an estimated \$8.9 billion dollars to up-

See BYRD Page 4A

Transportation needs to be studied

Do I need to tell you that northwest Orange County is and will be facing significant transportation mobility challenges in the coming years? Probably not. You are stuck in the traffic on a daily basis. Demand for roadways is exceeding the capacity of existing facilities.

Recognizing the importance of a transportation system which can support future growth while also preserving the character of our communities is a must. A few years ago, I kept hearing comments at the

County Commissioner District 2



Christine Moore

Apopka City Council meetings to the effect that all of Apopka's transportation problems were the county's fault. Of course, I didn't like hearing this, nor did I believe it to be true.

Thus, I sent top staff to meet with the city staff

to hammer out an agreement to fix our roads with the City of Apopka. Compounding the ability to negotiate effectively by either party is the lack of dedicated transportation funding sources. Thus, it was probably easier to blame the other than to really solve the problem with limited resources available.

I was not happy with the outcome of the joint meeting. Thus, after the fact, I advocated for the county to pick up 100 per-

See MOORE Page 4A

This Week In God's Word

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7

Dema Says

Being thankful calms anxiety.

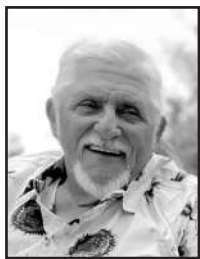
The Apopka Chief is published every Friday and entered as Periodicals, postage paid at Apopka Post Office, under the Act of Congress of March 23, 1879. The Apopka Chief newspaper is published by Foliage Enterprises, Inc., every Friday at 400 N. Park Avenue, Apopka, Fla., 32712-3417. An annual subscription 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.



Welfare programs are funded, but other programs are cut

The definition of a conundrum is, "something that is puzzling or confusing."

As I study a few of the Socialist Conundrums of our nation (there are many), I am absolutely confounded by the following thoughts of fools: America is capitalist and greedy, yet half of the population is subsidized. Half of the population is subsidized, yet they think they are victims. They think they are victims, but their representatives run the gov-



Ike Hayden

ernment. Their representatives run the government, yet the poor keep getting poorer. The poor keep getting poorer, yet they have things that people in other countries only dream about. They have things

that people in other countries only dream about, yet they want America to be more like those other countries.

This pretty much describes the USA in the 21st Century. It is interesting that politicians always talk about Social Security running out of money, but we never hear about welfare, food stamps, or subsidized housing running out of money, and the kicker is, the first group worked for their money, and the second did not.

See why I am confused? Many services for our veterans are having their funding cut, no pay raises for our military and the number of active armed forces is being reduced to a level lower than before WWII, but the illegal aliens are still receiving funding by the billions. It is time for an overhaul!!

What has been grinding the United States of America to dust under the heel of Socialism, which in turn prepares us to accept Communism, are the

lies and deceitful practices of this administration, fueled by the billionaire globalists like Bill Gates, George Soros, and a multitude of others who would allow our children to starve to achieve their goal of a one world government over which they would rule.

One thing stands in their way: those who love the USA, and the Constitution she stands on. Thank GOD for Patriots that will stand and fight for the rights and privileges we still have. President Donald

Trump and J.D. Vance are standing between We the People, and the deep sewer we call Washington, D.C.

One of the world's greatest thinkers, inventors, and entrepreneurs, Elon Musk has given his endorsement to President Donald Trump and J.D. Vance because he has scrutinized the abilities, the strength, and the love for our nation, and its people these two have encouraged, and he found them capable

See HAYDEN Page 4A

Doctor co-authors book aimed at transforming lives and beyond

Growing up in the countryside of Manatí, Puerto Rico, Dr. Omayra Mansfield, chief medical officer at AdventHealth Apopka, fondly recalls the simple joys of her childhood—climbing trees, running through fields, and enjoying “Quenepas,” also known as Spanish limes, with her two sisters.

Her father’s career in the Army took the family across the United States, providing them with opportunities to meet many different people.

“I have tender memories of growing up with my sisters in Puerto Rico. When we moved to the United States, we often traveled back to the island to visit family. Those trips were filled with adventure, enjoying the foods and customs of our culture, and family time,” Mansfield recalled.

Her parents fostered in them a love for reading and curiosity about the world. “My parents wanted us to explore the world. They encouraged us to read and travel,” she says.

Mansfield credits her family for inspiring in her a curiosity and purpose-driven approach to life. She pursued a career in medicine, eventually find-

ing her calling as an emergency medicine physician in Florida. In 2020, Mansfield joined the leadership at AdventHealth Apopka, unaware that her first year as a hospital leader would coincide with a global pandemic. This unprecedented situation required her to build trust and provide sound guidance to the more than 750 team members at the campus.

“I was hired as the chief medical officer at AdventHealth Apopka in February 2020, not knowing what was about to happen in the world. The first few months were tough,” she recalls.

Mansfield is the co-author of “The Trust Transformation,” an evidence-based training program developed at AdventHealth during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic. The book encapsulates the power and principles of interpersonal trust, offering a deep dive into the four attributes of transformational trust: Trustworthy, Authenticity, Dependability and Influence. It provides guiding principles to cultivate trust in every aspect of life, whether personal or professional.

See BOOK Page 8A



Photo courtesy of AdventHealth
Dr. Omayra Mansfield, chief medical officer at AdventHealth Apopka, sits with her new book “The Trust Transformation,” available November 5.

City of Apopka Announces Lineup Change for the 2024 Apopka Proud Concert

presented by MullinaxFord

The City of Apopka regrettably announces that Sawyer Brown has made the difficult decision to cancel their performance at the upcoming Apopka Proud Concert on October 5 due to unexpected health concerns. Unfortunately, Sawyer Brown’s performance will not be rescheduled.

Tickets purchased for the original show will be valid at the event with John Anderson and Dallas Tyler. If you would like to receive a refund, please visit Eventbrite.com and request your refund. The city is working to refund all ticket buyers that have requested one via the original method of payment.

The city appreciate your understanding and continued support. The Apopka Proud Concert remains dedicated to delivering a memorable experience.

The city hopes to see you at the Apopka Proud Concert in the Amphitheater, Northwest Recreation Complex, 3710 Jason Dwellley Parkway. Begins at 5:30 p.m.

Tell them you saw it in The Apopka Chief

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Casey Brents
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Sunday Available 12-2pm good till 4pm.
Reg Price \$25 No Rain Out Dates

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- The Apopka Chief & The Planter

City Ordinance Prohibits Animals On Property.

Hope Card program is launched to help assist people affected by domestic violence

In support of recent Florida Legislation, the Orange County Clerk of Courts along with Court Clerks statewide have implemented a “Hope Card” Program to assist people affected by domestic violence and abuse.

This new program offers individuals who have been issued a final injunction for protection the opportunity to apply for a free, standardized “Hope Card” that can be used to verify with law enforcement that they are covered by a protective court order.

Through the Hope Card Program, a person who has been issued a final

injunction for protection against domestic violence, stalking, repeat violence, sexual violence, dating violence, or abuse or exploitation of an elderly person or disabled adult can apply for a free digital or wallet-sized Hope Card with the Clerk of Court where the petition was originally filed.

“With the launch of the Hope Card Program, we are able to provide further peace of mind for those in our communities who have secured final injunctions for protection against various forms of violence and abuse,” said Orange County Clerk of Courts Tiffany Moore Russell.

“This initiative ensures that individuals with protective court orders can easily and effectively communicate their status to law enforcement, ensuring immediate verification and enhanced safety.”

During the 2024 session, the Florida Legislature passed CS/CS/CS/SB 86 - Hope Cards for Persons Issued Orders of Protection, sponsored by Senator Lauren Book and Representative Mike Gottlieb, which required Clerks of Court to develop and implement a Hope Card Program in Florida, in consultation with the Office of the Attorney General.

Hope Cards will identify the name and birth date of the person protected by the court order, the name and birth date of the respondent, and certain information relating to the protective order such as the type and date the order expires.

Issued Hope Cards will be valid for two years or until the injunction expires, whichever occurs first, but may be renewed if the injunction remains in effect.

If you have a final injunction for protection, go to www.myorangeclerk.com for details on how to obtain a free Hope Card.

Recovery At The Hope Conference on Saturday, October 12, is a free event

New Hope Missionary Baptist Church, is presenting Recovery At The Hope (R.A.T.H.) Conference on Saturday, October 12, from 8:30 a.m.-12 noon, at 927 South Central Avenue. There will be a free breakfast at this free event.

The community is invited (youth, teens and adults) to come to hear information and testimonies from special guests as to how to prevent, identify, deal with and resolve addictions.

An addiction is not always centered on drugs and alcohol. It can be anything

keeping someone from developing a closer relationship with God.

If you are not able to attend, send someone that may need a listening ear or who may be experiencing anxiety, depression, domestic violence, child abuse, or bullying.

Hope is available. Call Rev. Alexander H. Smith, RATH Pastor at 407-721-4759 or Dr. Yvonne Holmes, Ph.D., RN, Mental Health and Christian Counseling, 407-579-1339 for more information and assistance.

Moore: Citizens will be informed and involved in planning process

Continued from page 2A

cent of the cost of a transportation study. I’m happy to say after significant advocacy, scoping the project, and a lengthy procurement process to hire a vendor, Orange County Government has hired VHB, Inc. They will conduct a thorough, area-wide long-range transportation study.

The study is the first step to determine needs and assess which entity is responsible for costs. Please

be aware, we will still be searching for various sources of funding to complete any recommended projects.

The planning process will include a significant public involvement plan which will inform and involve the citizens of the county and city. Appropriate state and local agencies, elected officials, and all community stakeholders will be invited to participate. The agency will conduct up to 10 small group

meetings with interested organizations.

My office will provide an initial list of potential attendees and participants. We will also notify the public of these meetings.

The consultant will also prepare and distribute five editions of project newsletters. These newsletters will be prepared in English and Spanish.

They will also create an internet website for the transportation study. The final documents and plans

will be presented for approval to the full Board of County Commissioners at a public hearing. Public hearings also allow for input from community residents.

The deliverables are quite technical, so I won’t report on these characteristics.

Nevertheless, the analysis of future traffic conditions will provide “no-build scenarios” and “build scenarios” which include all available cost feasible roadway improvement

projects. It will also recommend any transit improvements such as bus service expansion and more transit-friendly development. The study will recommend new roadways or roadway extensions, roadway widening, parallel facilities, and potential realignments.

Based on the assessment of future conditions among the different scenarios, the consultant will identify capacity problems, deficiencies, and issues to determine the transporta-

tion-related changes and needs within the study area. And lastly, the consultant will develop a methodology to determine the roles and responsibilities by jurisdiction for future infrastructure capacity improvements for all roadway segments and intersections within the study area.

I’m happy this process has finally begun. I hope you will join me at one of the facilitated community meetings.

CITY OF APOPKA PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE AMENDMENT TO APOPKA LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

NOTICE is hereby given that the City of Apopka proposes to amend the Land Development Code of the City of Apopka, Florida in accordance with Florida Statutes 166.0413(3)(c) and the Apopka Code of Ordinances, Part III, Land Development Code, Article II, Section 2.4.7(B), to revise sections of said Land Development Code as specified within the Ordinance title and within Ordinance Number 3075.

ORDINANCE NO. 3075
AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF APOPKA, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF APOPKA BY AMENDING PART III – LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE; ARTICLE 4 – USE REGULATIONS, SECTION 4.2 PRINCIPAL USES, TABLE 4.2.2.C. PRINCIPAL USE TABLE TO PERMIT RECREATION FACILITY, OUTDOOR AS A PERMITTED USE IN THE C-COR (CORRIDOR COMMERCIAL DISTRICT) AND MU-D (MIXED-USE DOWNTOWN) ZONING DISTRICTS; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS, AND SETTING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Notice is given that the **City of Apopka Planning Commission** will hold a public hearing at its regularly scheduled meeting in the City Council Chambers of the Apopka City Hall, 120 E. Main Street, Apopka, Florida on **Tuesday, October 8, 2024 beginning at 5:30 P.M.**, or as soon thereafter as possible.

FURTHER NOTICE is given that a public hearing for Ordinance Number 3075 will be held by the **City of Apopka City Council** at its regularly scheduled meeting in the City Council Chambers of the Apopka City Hall, 120 E. Main Street, Apopka, Florida on **Wednesday, October 16, 2024 beginning at 7:00 P.M. AND Wednesday, November 6, 2024 at 1:30 P.M.**

Affected parties and the public may appear at the above listed hearings to speak. The proposed Text Amendment can be inspected at the Apopka Community Development Department located at Apopka City Hall on weekdays between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. City Hall address shown below. Please be advised that, under State law, if you decide to appeal a decision made with respect to this matter, you will need a record of the proceedings and may need to ensure that a verbatim record is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), persons with disabilities needing assistance to participate in any of these proceedings should contact the City Clerk’s Office at 120 East Main Street, Apopka FL 32703, Telephone: 407-703-1704, no less than 48 hours prior to the proceeding.

Apopka City Council
Apopka Planning Commission
Community Development Department

October 4, 2024

Publish: The Apopka Chief

177435

Tell them you saw it in The Apopka Chief

ALL ABOUT APOPKA

The Apopka Chief

Established 1923
(USPS 545-440)

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

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

www.theapokkachief.com, news@theapokkachief.com



City of Apopka Telephone Numbers

City Hall	407-703-1700
Mayor's Office	407-703-1701
City Administrator	407-703-1649
City Clerk	407-703-1704
Community Devel.	407-703-1712
Code Enforcement	407-703-1738
Finance Dept.	407-703-1725
Fire (non-emerg.).....	407-703-1756
Parks and Rec. Dept.	407-703-1741
Police Chief	407-703-1769
Police (non-emerg.)	407-703-1771
Job Line	407-703-1743
Solid Waste Collect.....	407-703-1731
Street Maintenance	407-703-1731
Utility Billing	407-703-1727
Medical, fire emergency.....	911
The city of Apopka was chartered in 1882. It is located at 28°30 north latitude and is 150 feet above sea level. Its population is about 48,000 and its total area is more than 30 sq. mi. www.apopka.net	

Orange County Telephone Numbers

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

Other Area Numbers of Note

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

City: City growth is reason for agreement

Continued from page 1A

back to the City Council for approval, according to the staff report of the October 2 City Council agenda.

Unprecedented growth over the last few years, which has significantly impacted available roadway capacity on both city and county roads including a portion of Binion Road that was county-owned, maintained, and operated, has led the city to pursue the interlocal agreement, according to the staff report.

The city felt it was in its best interest to acquire the Areca Palm Drive to Hayden Valley Street section of Binion Road to minimize time and costs of

projects, according to the city staff report.

New developments in the city have heavily impacted the segment of Binion Road from Areca Palm Drive to Hayden Valley Street, including a planned installation of a new half interchange at Boy Scout Road yielded by a partnership between Central Florida Expressway and the city of Apopka.

Because of the project's complexity, it was determined that limiting project coordination and permitting to one agency, the city of Apopka, was beneficial to maintain the project schedule and costs, according to the city staff report.

Contract: Total cost exceeds city funds

Continued from page 1A

way. The project involves reclaimed water pipes, pumps, instrumentation and appurtenances.

Tetra Tech is the professional engineering consultant under contract for the design and assistance with this project.

The total construction cost exceeds the funds available in the FY2024 budget, according to the staff report.

The city finance staff will bring forth a budget amendment at the next Council meeting, on Wednesday, October 16,

to cover the total estimated construction cost, upon approval, the city staff report says.

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THE WILD ROBOT (PG) 10:10A; 11:10A; 1:10; 1:50 3:50; 4:40; 6:30; 7:20; 9:20

BEETLEJUICE (PG-13) 10:20A; 1:20; 4:20; 7:10; 10:00

SPEAK NO EVIL (R) 10:30A; 1:40; 4:50; 7:40; 10:30

TRANSFORMERS ONE (PG) 10:40A; 1:30; 4:10; 6:50; 9:40

NEVER LET GO (R) 10:10

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

If you haven't noticed, new construction subdivisions are popping up everywhere throughout the Apopka market. Currently, there are an equal number of new construction homes (single-family and townhomes) as there are resale home listings on the market; this is creating unique opportunities for home buyers.

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

All of these factors have created tremendous opportunity for any buyer comfortable enough to make the commitment to buy now, instead of waiting for the market to improve. "I'm seeing extreme builder incentives, below-market loan interest rates, and \$10,000.00 plus closing cost contributions, more than I've seen in years," stated Joe Bornstein, Rock Springs Realty Broker/Owner. In addition, Bornstein noted that many people are not



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

When you walk into a builder's model home and are greeted by the salesperson, it's important to remember they work "FOR" the builder and have the builder's best interest in mind, NOT YOURS! That salesperson is not going to fight to get you the lowest possible price, best terms, incentives and discounts available. The salesperson working for the builder makes an extra commission if you don't utilize a Realtor®. The odds are truly stacked against you in this situation," stated Bornstein. Bornstein also cautions any buyer considering new construction to "never" go into a model home or

community for the first time without your Realtor®. present. In most cases, the builder will register you directly and then "deny" to pay the Realtor®. commission if you should purchase a home in that community. This common builder practice can add thousands of dollars of extra cost to your purchase, while penalizing you for having independent representation intended to protect your best interest when negotiating in the home buying process.

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

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The Way I See It

Patti Bankson

Without a Whimper?

We only have 40-plus days until election day. Not a lot of time, but enough for people who care to do their due diligence; to learn what it'll take to make educated decisions. And the two top offices aren't the only important ones. "Local" races always matter, because, conceivably, someone at the bottom has the potential to work their way to the top.

Political offices didn't start out as life-time careers, but they have certainly become that. The reasoning is that people who are not politically experienced need those who are, to show them how it's done. The motivation in the beginning may have been good and right, a desire to serve "the people", but in the end the motivation looks like nothing more than Ego, Greed and Corruption. Not everyone, of course, but far too many. So many, in fact, that we're looking more like a down-trodden third-world country than the America that was envisioned by our founders. I've heard many call our country an "experiment", clearly believing it to be one that's failed. Not all that long ago, I would have pushed back on that idea, but ...

Do I think there's ever been a perfectly functioning government in America, with our country's "business" being conducted by purely honest, perfect people? Of course not, because Human beings are human ... flawed, imperfect. But, it does seem that there were times when the goal was to try to do the right, honorable, noble thing ... times when principles, character

and reputation mattered ... times when doing something shameful actually caused someone to feel shame ... time when shame itself could motivate one to try to be better.

It seems that we've become a country, a people, where everything's acceptable, okay, as long as it serves our own purposes. There's a lot of talk about caring about doing what's right, what's right for our country, our people, but that's all it is... a whole lot of talk, but not enough action. Wait! No, there actually is a lot of action, but it's finger-pointing action. It's senseless action filled with animosity, rage, untruthfulness ... action designed to bring about the most hurtful results for those being "ruled": Actions based on throwing out what was and worked, in favor of the very thing conservative thinkers aren't allowed to mention: Revolution. Not the kind that won us our freedom from a king, a tyrant; Freedom to become the great, unique country we've been for hundreds of years. Today's revolution is an effort to change our culture, to deny our history, and destroy our traditions.

Looking ahead to the possible consequences of our upcoming election, I guess the question that will be answered is: whether lovers of Who we've been, What we've believed in, Who we may become if we continue down the path we've let ourselves be placed on, will stand up against the current leaders' Marxist philosophy... or whether we'll let everything we've believed in, everything we thought was true about us and our country, everything we've cared about as Americans... be taken away without a whimper?

We'd like to know What YOU think?

barefootwahine1@yahoo.com

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Forum: Church will hold more events leading up to Nov. 5

Continued from page 1A

themes was the need to engage a broader demographic of voters. Hew Pinto, a local community advocate, highlighted the gap in male voter turnout.

"Right now, and for a long time, women have led the charge. Now is the time to focus on male voters who do not turn out to vote as much," Pinto said.

The forum concluded with a renewed commitment from the community to take action and be well-prepared for the November 2024 elections.

"The event has succeeded in equipping us with the tools necessary to be informed, active participants in the democratic process," attendee Ella Gilmore said.

As the November election approaches, St. Paul

AME Church plans to hold additional events aimed at encouraging voter engagement, continuing their mission of civic empowerment within the community.

"St. Paul AME is not just a church in the community, it's the community's church and will continue to stand ready to engage, inform and empower," Pastor Moss stated.



Photo by Gregory Jackson

Pictured (l to r) are Phyllis Wilson, Hew Pinto and Sederia Ogden at the September 29 Voter Education Forum.

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Halloween in the Park is October 26

The city will host Halloween in the Park 2024 on Saturday, October 26, from 10 a.m. to noon at Kit Land Nelson Park, 10 N. Forest Ave., Apopka.

This is a free family-friendly trick-or-treating event with activities, vendors, and more. Children will get to trick or treat around the park, stopping at various vendor booths.

Attendees should bring their own bags for trick-or-treating.

Visit Apopka.gov/Halloween to learn more about Halloween in the Park.

Anyone interested in becoming a vendor may fill out the city's vendor inquiry form at Apopka.gov/Halloween. Email Events@apopka.net for more information.

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The Apopka Chief*

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- Raised and worked on family-owned blueberry farm in Michigan, still in operation today
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Each year, we at **Lake Apopka Natural Gas District (LANGD)** look forward to Public Natural Gas Week as a time to celebrate the vital role natural gas plays in powering our communities. This Public Natural Gas Week, from Oct. 6-12, we are excited to share the immeasurable impact natural gas has played in our country while also reflecting on the strong relationships we have built with our customers over 65 years of service.


To express our gratitude, from Oct. 1 through Oct. 31, 2024, the District will select two customers each week to win a \$200 gift card. For your chance to win, simply tell us in thirty words or less why you choose natural gas for your home. Include your name, address, and phone number, and send your entry to PNGW2024Win@LANGD.org. If you are a winner, **LANGD** asks that you take a photo for our social media. Winners will be contacted by phone and asked to pick up their gift card from our main office at 1320 Winter Garden-Vineland Road, Winter Garden with a photo ID.

So, why choose natural gas?


There are countless reasons to choose natural gas as your preferred energy source. For one, it is cost-effective. Last year, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced that natural gas was 3.3 times more affordable than electricity and significantly less costly than several other residential energy sources. This incredible affordability allows our customers to enjoy lower energy bills and continue contributing to our thriving local economy.

Natural gas is also better for the environment than most realize. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, "Burning natural gas for energy results in fewer emissions of nearly all types of air pollutants and carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions than burning

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coal or petroleum products to produce an equal amount of energy." There are also benefits when it comes to natural gas's reliability, versatility, efficiency, and the list goes on.

While the benefits of using natural gas are many, one of **LANGD's** core strengths lies in our unique relationship with our community.

As a public natural gas system, **LANGD** answers to you, the customer. Being a not-for-profit entity allows us to focus entirely on your satisfaction and the quality of our services, and over the last six decades, the District has made it our mission to provide safe, reliable, and cost-effective natural gas to our neighbors in Apopka, Clermont, Winter Garden, and surrounding communities. We are proud that our efforts continue to win awards and industry recognition for doing so, and as good neighbors, we want to say "THANK YOU" for choosing natural gas as your preferred energy source.

We invite you to celebrate Public Natural Gas Week and experience the benefits of natural gas firsthand. If you are considering making the switch to using natural gas, please get in touch with the **LANGD** marketing team at (407) 656-2734 ext. 307 or marketing@LANGD.org, or visit www.LANGD.org for more information on natural gas service for your home, business or vehicle. Be sure to stay in the loop by liking, following and sharing **LANGD's** content on Facebook and LinkedIn.

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Project: Housing needs reinforces development’s potential

Continued from page 1A

nedy Funding. The funds will be used for land acquisition and working capital for infrastructure improvements on the mixed-use development project. The mixed-use development will be built on an estimated 40-acre site at the intersection of West Orange Blossom Trail and Neal Sibert Drive, and include

the construction of commercial space, retail, and nearly 300 townhomes. The property has been under contract for three years. The developers went through multiple planning and zoning approvals with the city of Apopka and Orange County, readying the site for its next stage of construction. “The development is going to bring much-needed housing and improvements to the area,

and the city of Apopka is very excited that we are making this contribution to the community,” said James Marshall, managing partner of Bengé Development. “Kennedy recognized the value in this project from Day One and worked closely with us to ensure its success.” Mark Falzone, executive loan officer at Kennedy Funding, highlighted the deal’s complexity and Kennedy’s ability to close

where others could not. “This project faced several hurdles, from zoning approvals to financing challenges. Kennedy Funding was able to structure the deal to meet the borrower’s needs and get it done, especially when time was of the essence,” Falzone said. Florida has one of the fastest-growing populations in the United States. For the past decade, Florida has grown by 300,000 to

380,000 new residents per year. According to the U.S. Census, the Orlando-Kissimmee area added nearly 55,000 new residents between 2022 and 2023 alone. This increased need for housing, coupled with Apopka’s proximity to major transportation hubs like the Orlando International Airport and major economic drivers like Disney World, reinforces the strong market potential for this mixed-use development.

Recovery At The Hope Conference is Sat., Oct. 12

New Hope Missionary Baptist Church, is presenting Recovery At The Hope (R.A.T.H.) Conference on Saturday, October 12, from 8:30 a.m.-12 noon, at 927 South Central Avenue. There will be a free breakfast at this free event. The community is invited (youth, teens and adults) to come to hear information and testimonies from special guests as to how to prevent, identify, deal with and resolve addictions. An addiction is not always centered on drugs and alcohol. It can be any-

thing keeping someone from developing a closer relationship with God. If you are not able to attend, send someone that may need a listening ear or who may be experiencing anxiety, depression, domestic violence, child abuse, or bullying. Hope is available. Call Rev. Alexander H. Smith, RATH Pastor at 407-721-4759 or Dr. Yvonne Holmes, Ph.D., RN, Mental Health and Christian Counseling, 407-579-1339 for more information and assistance.

Book: Pandemic led author to write ‘The Trust Transformation’

Continued from page 7A

Originally conceived as a four-hour class for team members and a workshop for leadership teams, “The Trust Transformation” has already impacted the lives of thousands of AdventHealth team members. “The pandemic led us to write the book. What we observed laid our foundation, and as we shared it with others through workshops at AdventHealth, we saw firsthand how this work was helping people

perform and thrive,” she adds. “The Trust Transformation” will be released on November 5 and can be pre-ordered by visiting <https://shorturl.at/59AuK>. Mansfield’s journey with AdventHealth spans over 12 years. Her commitment to the community extends beyond the hospital walls. As a board member of the Hope CommUnity Center, Dr. Mansfield provides vital, evidence-based information to the Hispanic community and leads workshops to educate West

Orange County residents on health issues and available resources. Balancing her professional and community roles, Mansfield is also a devoted mother of two and a loving wife. In her book, she not only addresses the building of trust but also explores its intersection with religion, offering a blueprint for creating positive change in communities and relationships. In celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month, Mansfield emphasizes the importance of being a role model

for the next generation and leading by example. “When I consider what I want for my children, and for our youth, it is to continue to learn and take advantage of the opportunity of an education. This is one thing that no one can take away from you,” Mansfield says. “One thing you can do is pour into yourself from a knowledge standpoint because education will be the one thing no one can ever strip from you. Then, just go for it. There are no limits.”

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Apopka Fire Department offers tips about smoke alarms in the home

The Apopka Fire Department is teaming up with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) for this year’s Fire Prevention Week, which runs Sunday, October 6, through Saturday, October 12. Sponsored by the NFPA since 1922, Fire Prevention Week works to educate everyone about the importance of having working smoke alarms in the home. According to the NFPA, smoke alarms reduce the risk of dying in a

home fire by more than half (54 percent). Meanwhile, roughly three out of five fire deaths happen in homes with either no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms. The Apopka Fire Department offers these key smoke alarm safety tips and guidelines: *Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each separate sleeping area (like a hallway), and on each level (including the basement) of the

home. *Make sure smoke alarms meet the needs of all family members, including those with sensory or physical disabilities. *Test smoke alarms at least once a month by pushing the test button. *Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old. For more information about Fire Prevention Week and smoke alarms, visit FPW.org.

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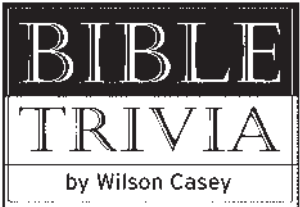
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The Apopka Chief Newspaper

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Man sleeps through a haircut

1. Is the book of Philemon (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. In Matthew 8, which prophet's words did Jesus claim to be fulfilling, as He was healing people? Iddo, Esaias, Gad, Medad
3. Who wrote, "Neither shall any priest drink wine, when they enter into the inner court"? Ezekiel, Isaiah, Daniel, Hosea
4. From Genesis 19, in addition to fire, what did



God rain down upon Sodom and Gomorrah? Hail, Lightning, Brimstone, Mud

5. Whose grave was marked by a pillar erected by her husband, Jacob? Abigail, Lillith, Puah, Rachel

6. From Judges 16, who

slept through a haircut? Manoah, Samson, Adam, Uriah

ANSWERS: 1) New, 2) Esaias, 3) Ezekiel, 4) Brimstone, 5) Rachel, 6) Samson

"Test Your Bible Knowledge," a book with 1,206 multiple-choice questions by columnist Wilson Casey, is available in stores and online.

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Entertaining Strangers

There is cause for wonder in the fact that all the major religions instruct us to be kind to strangers and to help those who may be sojourning in our lands.

Perhaps the reason for this is simply because humans are mobile, and we tend to move away from dangerous areas or areas lacking in food to safer and more abundant regions.

And there is also the obvious fact that we are more likely to help our close family and friends than those we don't know, and this is especially true when the strangers don't resemble us.

People who look often seen as strange,

from whence comes the word "stranger." We live in perilous times where around the world many people are forced to flee dangerous regimes or lack the resources to feed and house their families in their native land. And these people are likely to be seen as "strangers" because they dress differently than us, they speak different languages, and they may have radically different customs.

These are exactly the people most in need of our help and hospitality. And when we open our arms, our hearts, and our homes to these people, it is usually we who gain the most from our kindness.

— Christopher Simon

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

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

Matthew 5:16

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Proverbs 14:26

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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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Entertaining Strangers

(See message above.)

"Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it."

Hebrews 13:2 NIV



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Sergeant retires after 25 years with APD



The community, friends, and family members celebrated with Sergeant Jason Wiggins on his retirement from the Apopka Police Department after 25 years of service. During his tenure, he held positions as a student resource officer, road supervisor, SWAT team leader, firearms instructor, and Community Policing supervisor. The celebration took place at the Fran Carlton Center on Monday, September 30. Wiggins (l) was presented with retirement gifts by Apopka Police Chief Michael McKinley (r).

Photo courtesy of Apopka Police Dept./Facebook

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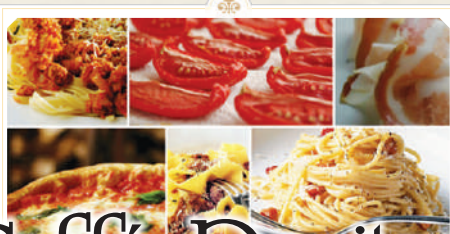
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SUDOKU ANSWERS

PUZZLE CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 2B

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

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

The Crossword Puzzle is found on page 2B