

Toy Drive

Sertoma Club, Elks Lodge
organize toy drive for
families.
See page 6A.



God Bless
America

Sports

Sheronda Wright talks Pop
Warner Cheer as a first year
coordinator.
See page 1B.



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Volume 102 Number 51

Friday, December 20, 2024 / 50 cents



The Apopka City Council voted 5-0 to appoint Interim Fire Chief Wilfredo Rivera-Sanchez (front row center) as permanent fire chief at the Wednesday, December 18 meeting. Pictured is Sanchez with City Council members and some of his fellow firefighters.

Interim Fire Chief Sanchez is now 23rd department chief

By Teresa Sargeant
Apopka Chief Staff

Voting 5-0, the Apopka City Council appointed interim Fire Chief Wilfredo Rivera-Sanchez as permanent fire chief on Wednesday, December 18.

Before then, Rivera-Sanchez had served as

the interim fire chief, succeeding Sean Wylam as fire chief after Wylam announced his retirement last July. Rivera-Sanchez is the city's 23rd fire chief.

"I'm truly humbled to accept this position. To the residents of Apopka, I am honored to step into the role of fire chief," Ri-

vera-Sanchez said at the December 18 meeting after the City Council cast its vote. "I am fully committed to leading the department whose mission is to save lives, to protect property through fire, EMS and proactive fire prevention methods. When seconds count, you can count on us.

"To the dedicated members of Apopka Fire Department, I pledge to work hard for you and alongside you. I am here to support you. When I look around this room, I don't just see Apopka firefighters. I see members of a family. Together, we have faced some of the most dif-

ficult challenges of our careers, which have tested our strength, our hearts, and through it all, we have grown stronger and closer together. As we move forward, I commit to leading with unity and transparency. I am honored to stand alongside you as we work together to create a stron-

ger, brighter future for our department."

Rivera-Sanchez started with the city in December 2007 as a firefighter. He has moved up through the ranks, having been promoted to fire lieutenant/public information officer in May

See CHIEF Page 10A

Wreaths laid on veterans graves at two cemeteries

The community remembered and honored veterans by laying remembrance wreaths on the graves of the nation's fallen heroes during National Wreaths Across America Day on Saturday, December 14, at Edgewood-Greenwood Cemetery and Bay Ridge Cemetery.

The Apopka/Altamonte Springs/VFW Post 10147 Auxiliary hosted the wreath-laying.

Wreaths Across America (WAA), the national nonprofit whose year-long mission is to remember the fallen, honor those who serve, and Teach our children the value of freedom, proudly announces its theme for 2024: "Live with Purpose."

This year's theme,

See WREATHS Page 3A



Wreaths Across America Day took place on Saturday, December 14, at the Edgewood-Greenwood Cemetery and Bay Ridge Cemetery. In the left photo, at the Edgewood-Greenwood Cemetery, Mayor Bryan Nelson reads a proclamation honoring Linda Laurendeau, a volunteer who died this year who identified over 300 veterans graves in the cemetery. Her hat is displayed in the foreground. In the photo on the right, Nancy Yeager (l) and Eric Mock prepare to lay a wreath at the Bay Ridge Cemetery.



Photos courtesy of Loretta Forlaw

Road survey is now open

The city of Apopka is seeking residents' input for upcoming improvements to Ocoee Apopka Road through a public survey. Available at <https://shorturl.at/SrLIB>, the survey opened

See SURVEY Page 6A

City offices closed on Dec. 25-26

Apopka city offices will be closed on Wednesday, December 25 and Thursday, December 26 for Christmas. Normal operations will resume on Friday, December 27 at 8 a.m.

There will be no trash collection on Wednesday, December 25. Police, medical and fire services will operate as normal.

Christmas Parade honors Sertoma Club's 50th year



Photo by Tammy Keaton

Santa Claus comes to town on the back of a fire engine at the end of last Saturday's Apopka Christmas Parade.

Organized by the Foliage Sertoma Club and co-sponsored by the city of Apopka, the 48th annual Apopka Christmas Parade filled Park Avenue with seasonal joy on the morning of Saturday, December 14. The event theme was "A Golden Christmas in Apopka" to celebrate the club's 50th anniversary.

Pat McGuffin, long-time club member and pastor at Freedom Fellowship Church in the Apopka area, was the master of ceremonies.

"Much has changed since this annual parade started, from those days when we were a much smaller town. Walt Disney

opened Disney World in 1971, and the Foliage Sertoma started as a service club in Apopka in 1974," McGuffin said.

Currently Apopka is the second largest city in Orange County, and traditionally, over 20,000 people watch or participate in the Apopka Christmas Parade. Between 2,000-3,000 people participated in the parade this year, since the parade has four high school bands – Evans, Ocoee, Wekiva, and Apopka – the Rosie O'Grady's Highlanders bagpipe band, and more.

The parade judges were Dr. Bridget Williams, chief of staff for Orange County Public Schools, Ed

Conlan, owner-operator of Beef O'Brady's in Apopka and Mount Dora and the Back Room Steakhouse in Apopka; and Tony Boni, commissioner and former mayor of the city of Longwood.

The parade grand marshal was Bill Spiegel, an investment advisor, Apopka resident and volunteer that includes Rotary Club of Apopka.

Over 20,000 people attend and participate in the Apopka Christmas Parade each year including displays by businesses, organization, churches and schools.

See more parade photos on page 6B.

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Online at: [TheApopkaChief.com/
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Apopka Event of the Week

Yoga for Adults and Seniors with Michelle from Soul-Ga Yoga will meet in the meeting room on Thurs., Jan. 2, from 1-2 p.m., of the North Orange Library, 1211 E. Semoran Blvd. Experience a yoga class designed for adults and seniors from beginners to experts, young or old, flexible or non-flexible. Attendees are encouraged to dress comfortably and bring their own mat.

Quotable

As we reflect on an eventful 2024, we look forward to a 2025 that holds new opportunities for this newspaper and the city of Apopka.

Editorial reflects on the past but expresses hope for the future

Opinion

The Apopka Chief A weekly newspaper founded in 1923

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

Consultant Emeritus

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

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Jackie Trefcer

General Mgr Emeritus

Neoma Knox
Feb. 12, 1929 - Sept. 18, 2021

Our position

The heartaches have changed, but the hope of Christmas has not

In 1863, famed poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow penned the words of a hymn still sung today.

*I heard the bells on
Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play
And mild and sweet their
songs repeat
Of peace on Earth good
will to men*

It's a beautiful refrain and one of our favorite Christmas songs—in part because of the context in which Longfellow wrote it.

In 1863, the United States was in the throes of the Civil War, which would claim more than 600,000 lives (about 2 percent of the nation's population at the time). Longfellow had been widowed for two years after his wife died when her dress caught fire. And on Nov. 27, 1863, Longfellow's son was severely wounded by a Confederate bullet in a Virginia clash.

Four weeks later, as Longfellow nursed his son back to health, he heard the bells on Christmas day and wrote the words we know so well.

As we close the book on a difficult year that saw another contentious election and the passing of our beloved publisher, John Ricketson, it's easy to relate to the anguish Longfellow felt:

*And in despair I bowed
my head
There is no peace on earth
I said
For hate is strong and mocks
the song*

Of peace on Earth, good will to men

Indeed, we saw hate at the tip of an assassin's bullet. We experienced personal loss that caused us intense grief and even tempted us to despair.

But just as Longfellow was honest about the challenges facing him and 1863 America, he came around to a hopeful outlook that we can also appreciate:

*Then rang the bells more
loud and deep
God is not dead, nor does
he sleep
The wrong shall fail, the
right prevail
With peace on earth, good
will to men*

God is not asleep nor dead. And neither is *The Apopka Chief*.

As we reflect on an eventful 2024, we look forward to a 2025 that holds new opportunities for this newspaper and the city of Apopka.

We here at *The Apopka Chief* are a hopeful bunch. We'd like to think that hope came through in our local reporting this year—and that we brought a little goodwill to your lives, as *The Chief* has been doing for more than a century.

Thank you for your continued readership and support of *The Chief* in 2024, a year like no other for our staff family.

Take it from us: Hug your loved ones a little tighter this year. And from our *Chief* family to yours,
MERRY CHRISTMAS.



Emphasis is to create meeting spaces

I hope you read the first three columns on the benefits and recent successes of the Neighborhood Leader Program and Corridor of the Year.

In the first three columns, I discussed the basis for developing a love of neighborhoods and community. I pointed to my regular involvement such as being on hand every Saturday morning for clean-ups, structure of the program, and the benefits of collaboration between members and local government. In this column, I will add a bit about of historic housing construction and creating "outdoor" living rooms.

I recently attended a state bicycle program in

County Commissioner
District 2



Christine Moore

downtown Winter Garden. Nationally recognized speakers shared on planning better walkable and bikeable communities. They alluded to the fact that Apopka and Winter Garden have street grids which were laid out exactly north to south and east to west. This was all prior to WWII.

Shorter blocks or city streets reduce traffic com-

pared to a large subdivision, which dumps traffic all onto a *singular* four-lane road. Downtown Apopka has much of this pre-WWII grid system as does northern Winter Garden. I could digress into how to fix downtown Apopka, but the subject of this column is how the Neighborhood Leader Program is repairing residents' sense of place.

The streets in these pre-WWII neighborhoods have become more of a home. Neighbors have casual meetups while walking dogs, taking children out for bike rides, walking to work, etc. With less traffic and slower traffic, streets

See MOORE Page 6A

BLM, Palestine, other flags may be banned

By Eric Daugherty
Tallahassee, Fla. –

Republican state Sen. Randy Fine filed legislation on Monday that would ban the display of political flags on government property in Florida.

SB 100 applies to flags that represent a "political viewpoint" that is:

- *Politically partisan
- *Racial
- *Sexual orientation/gender-based
- *Political ideology-based

"The governmental entity must remain neutral when representing political viewpoints in displaying or

erecting a flag," the bill text states.

"The first flag that should be flown in a government building is the American flag," Fine said. "Flags that promote Muslim terror or the mutilation of children have no place in taxpayer-funded buildings – whether that government building is our state capital or a public school classroom."

Fine is leaving the Florida Senate soon to run for Congress in District 6 to replace incoming National Security Adviser Mike Waltz. Fine has the endorsement of President-

elect Donald Trump.

"Supporters of Muslim terror, child mutilators, and groomers have no right to taxpayer sponsorship of their repugnant messages," Fine said. "As I prepare to leave the Senate, I look forward to ensuring the only official place in a government building that you will find their flags is in a garbage can."

If fully approved, the law would take effect on July 1, 2025.

As of Monday, there are no companion bills in the House. Fine is the only sponsor.

This Week In God's Word

As water reflects the face,
so one's life reflects the heart.
Proverbs 27:19

Mema Says

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changes seem
worse than they
actually are.

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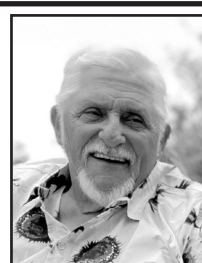
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We all must work to forget the past and create a better future

Everyone claimed to know it. No one doubted it. So, when it happened, why is it the only thing our dependable, trustworthy, news commentators are denying?

Of course, I'm talking about the pardon issued to Hunter Biden because of a "father's love" for his son. I do not doubt the father's love, but that wasn't the main reason for the pardon. The real reason was to keep "Sleepy Joe" out of prison. I'll let you think about that. I'm sick of beating a



Ike Hayden

dead horse!

Let's get on with preparing ourselves for the upcoming MAGA movement in January. Joe Biden had the Constitutional right, and the power to pardon Hunter. Whether it

was for personal reasons or self-deprecation, it was legal. Get over it, it is water over the dam, and we are making a mountain out of something that no one wants to climb! Let's get on with living!

Warren Buffett stated, "You will continue to suffer if you have an emotional reaction to everything that is said to you. True power is getting back and observing everything with logic. True power is restraint. If words control you, that means everyone else can

control you. Breathe and allow things to pass."

I see so much inspiration, hope, and expectation in President-elect Donald Trump, and his Vice President-elect J.D. Vance. It is encouraging to listen to the public speaking of the future with President Trump at the head of the charge for a greater America. My greatest fear is that we will idolize him and elevate our expectations to a much greater position than even a president can fill.

It's like the saying,

"Idolizing a politician is like thinking the stripper really likes you." I agree that as President, Donald Trump will do many more things than his last two predecessors accomplished, but please do not expect more than a President of the United States of America can do.

I'm not talking so much to the Trump stalwarts as I am to those who were willing to cross party lines, Independents, or maybe first-time voters. Give President Trump an

opportunity to show his willingness to serve the people in his role as a President that loves his country, and its people. Although he has most of his cabinet picked, there are still a lot of moving parts that have to be utilized to put his agenda into full operating mode for the fulfillment of his promises.

The choices for cabinet have been excellent for America's growth and prosperity. I agree with

See HAYDEN Page 6A

A view of the bridge



Earlier this month, Orange County Parks and Recreation began renovating the West Orange Trail pedestrian bridge that stretches over Main Street/U.S. Highway 441 in Apopka. Work includes cleaning the bridge, painting the steel, and concrete work and will continue into early next year – about two to three months, depending on the weather, according to Orange County Public Works-Roads and Drainage. The \$1.2 million project will be funded by Orange County Parks and Recreation's budget.

Wreaths: In 2023, volunteers placed over 3 million wreaths worldwide

Continued from page 1A

"Live with Purpose," draws inspiration from the stories of these volunteers whose impactful work in their communities is a beacon of inspira-

tion for all.

In 2023, over three million sponsored veterans' wreaths were placed by volunteers on headstones at 4,225 participating locations worldwide. Wreaths Across America volunteers

tirelessly work year-round to Remember, Honor, and Teach, with each name spoken out loud in grateful acknowledgment of the sacrifices made by our veterans for our freedoms.

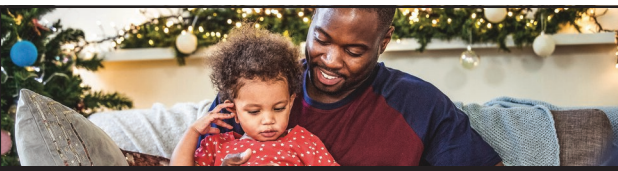
Blake Guyre to perform at Saturday Sounds

Apopka's own Blake Guyre will perform the music of Elton John and Billy Joel in his high energy production "The Entertainer," complete with a full band, visual effects and iconic costuming.

Guyre will perform live at the Apopka Amphitheater as part of the Saturday Sounds Concert Series on January 25, 2025, from 5 to 7 p.m. at 3710 Jason

Dwellely Parkway, Apopka. Guyre is a 2015 Apopka High School graduate.

Scheduled for select Saturday evenings, Saturday Sounds is a free family-friendly concert series where attendees can enjoy food and beverages from local food trucks, or they are can bring their own food and beverages to enjoy.



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The Public Is Invited To
The Dickens Carolers in Concert
An a cappella quartet from The Dickens Carolers will provide a 50-minute Christmas carols concert at Graceworx Community Church.



11:30AM, SATURDAY, DEC. 23, 2023
Concert is free; no reservation required.

GRACEWORX COMMUNITY CHURCH
(Which meets in the facilities of St. Andrews Presbyterian Church)
9913 BEAR LAKE ROAD, APOPKA, FL 32703
For more details, call 321-228-4599.
Photo courtesy of The Dickens Carolers.

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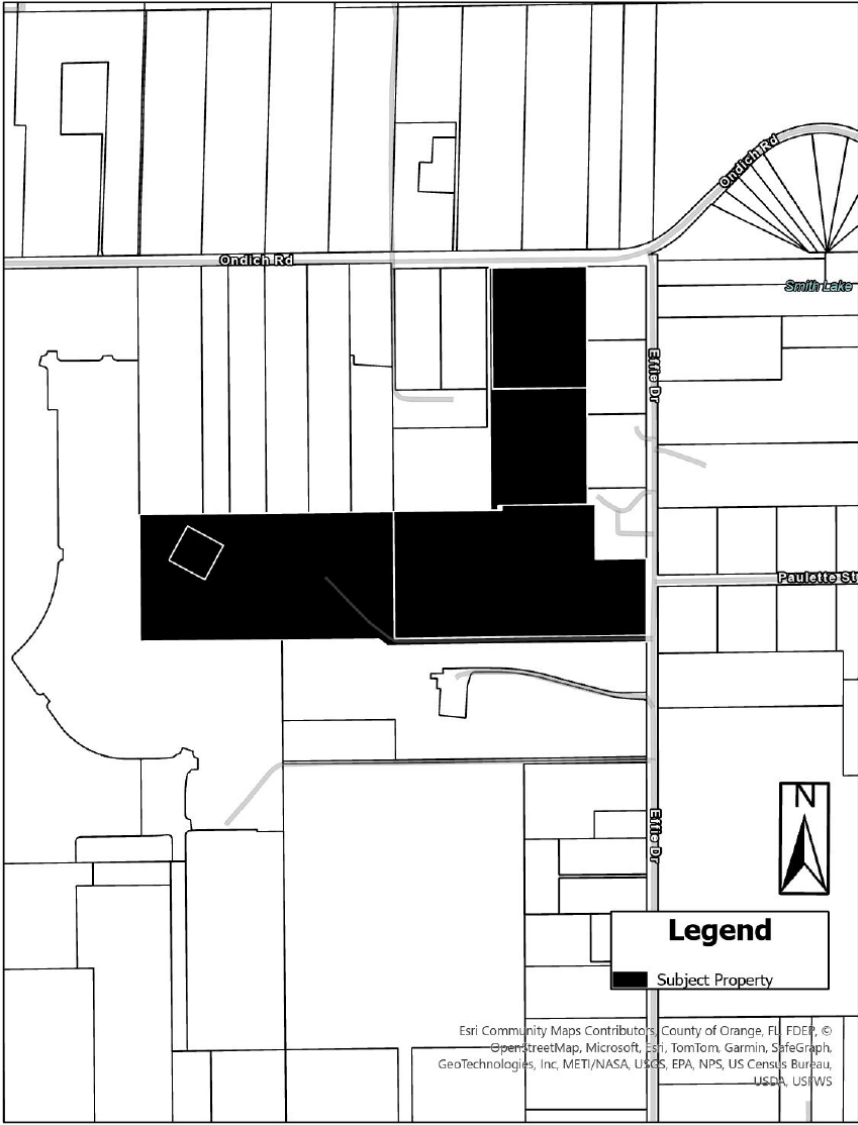
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CITY OF APOPKA
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
LARGE-SCALE FUTURE LAND USE
AMENDMENT AND CHANGE OF ZONING

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Secs. 163.3184 and 166.041(3) (a), Florida Statutes and the Apopka Code of Ordinances, Part III, Land Development Code, Article II, Section 2.4.7.B, that **Appian Engineering, LLC c/o Luke Classon, P.E.** has made application relating to the following described property.

ORDINANCE NO. 3067
AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF APOPKA, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT OF THE APOPKA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF THE CITY OF APOPKA; CHANGING THE FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION FROM COUNTY RURAL TO MIXED-USE FOR CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY GENERALLY LOCATED ON THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF ONDICH ROAD AND EFFIE DRIVE; COMPRISING 54.85 ACRES, MORE OR LESS; OWNED BY PM S-1 REO, LLC; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, CONFLICTS, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

ORDINANCE NO. 3068
AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF APOPKA, FLORIDA, CHANGING THE ZONING FROM COUNTY A-1 (CITRUS RURAL) DISTRICT TO KPI-MU (KELLY PARK INTERCHANGE – MIXED-USE) DISTRICT, FOR CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY GENERALLY LOCATED ON THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF ONDICH ROAD AND EFFIE DRIVE; COMPRISING 54.85 ACRES, MORE OR LESS; OWNED BY PM S-1 REO, LLC; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, CONFLICTS, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.



Parcel Identification Number(s): 11-20-27-0000-00-037, 11-20-27-0000-00-069, 12-20-27-0000-00-001, 12-20-27-0000-00-012, 12-20-27-0000-00-046, 12-20-27-0000-00-048
Contains: 54.85 +/- Acres

NOTICE is given that a public hearing for Ordinance Numbers 3067 and 3068 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, January 15, 2025 beginning at 7:00 P.M.**

Affected parties and the public may appear at the above listed hearings to speak. The proposed Future Land Use and Rezoning Applications 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.

December 20, 2024
Publish: The Apopka Chief
Apopka City Council
Apopka Planning Commission
Community Development Department
177732

EVERYBODY HAS AN OPINION. WHY NOT SHARE YOURS?

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Moore: Personalize your community

Continued from page 2A

become more like living rooms where residents meet and grow. It is safer to walk and bike and thus more chance meetups. We need to encourage builders to go back to smaller projects with duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes on grid-like streets. The big multinational building of subdivisions is harmful to our collaborative culture.

Today, most of us experience ugly, boring, too long to walk anywhere pleasant, high-speed corridors. Even upscale areas like Lester Road have long, unappealing brick walls with cars travelling at high speeds. Yet, the addition of benches, outdoor furniture, art installations, walking clubs, and, of course, pressure-washing could change all of this. Please, North Apopka residents, join our quarterly meetings at Wekiwa High School. Together, we can improve the culture along Lester Road.

Nevertheless, the pre-WWII downtown grids with shorter blocks and often brick roadways dissuade high rates of speed. They encourage greater pedestrian activity. While we aren't discussing blight and homeless issues in this column, these challenges can be remedied with the same solutions. Clean, appealing, unique streets which enjoy greater walkability and bicycle riding are a solution. These individual streets provide the basis for greater communication and engagement between citizens.

The Neighborhood Leader Program incentivizes and grows residents into leaders who in turn create art and grow that love of place along existing corridors. Government can never make all of this just

happen. However, the government can stop additional sprawl and incentivize more pre-WWII development or redevelopment.

I first discovered the truth of personalized schools while serving on the Orange County School Board. Prototype schools were great for efficiency and cost savings, but bad for creating a sense of ownership, care, and concern by students, staff, and parents. By adding art installations, murals, sculptures, and distinctive area pictures, students become connected to their community. I utilized corporate donations, small donors, and my office discretionary funds to make these projects come to life.

I am disappointed the staff at Clay Springs Elementary School took down a previous principal's donation of personal photographs of Wekiwa Springs. They were helpful towards teaching students to love the uniqueness of their school zone and community. Not every school is named after a Class I spring. I recently taught fifty students at a Clay Springs Teach-In event. The only students who knew that Clay Springs is really Wekiwa Springs were my two granddaughters. How tragic.

So, in our District 2 suburban communities, we are working on distinctives celebrating and promoting our best features. We cannot change the layout now of massive suburban subdivisions.

However, like the schools, we can personalize corridors. For example, we hired artist Delia Miller to paint a mural celebrating "Wekiwa Springs" on a blighted gas station at the corner of Thompson and

Votaw roads. Fence cup art declaring Eastern Apopka as "Wekiwa Springs" was erected on Wekiwa Springs Road near the Sprouts store. Rose art was painted on a blighted fence all along Rose Avenue. Lovely magnolia banners were erected along Magnolia Homes Road. A Lockhart historical mural was painted by artist Lisa Mikler along Edgewater Drive. A welcome to cyclists on the Coast-2-Coast trail painted – again by artist Delia Miller – at the corner of Pine Hills and Clarcona Ocoee roads.

I also had plans for "One Apopka" cup art installation along Clarcona Road, but that is when I broke my foot. I hope to complete this project in collaboration with Jarette Schofield next year.

The top leaders in the Neighborhood Leaders Program have studied the book, Love Where You Live by author Peter Kageyama of St. Petersburg, Florida. These leaders are now pondering more projects in their neighborhoods. Installations require fundraising, planning, and engagement of nearby residents. The people who work together on projects become – A TEAM. Once we are a team, we can accomplish anything.

We have much more work to do in 2025. Ideas and opportunities are infinite to restore the love of community and collaboration between neighbors. I kick off the 2025 Neighborhood Leader season with nationally recognized speaker, Edward Erfurt, Director of Community Action, from the Strong Towns Organization, on Thursday, January 16, at Wekiwa High School. I hope to see you there.

Hayden: Treat government as a business

Continued from page 2A

his choice of Secretary of Defense, Pete Hegseth. I do not want some pompous, educated idiot that has never experienced combat sending my grandkids off to a hellhole to die for his egotistical view of the United States as a world police force. I want someone in that office that knows the sound of a fire fight, who knows what it's like to have the pain of losing your buddy, the cost of endless, meaningless fighting for something you don't understand.

I want someone as Secretary of Defense that knows when to say "No" to sending our young men and women into situations in which we have no business, but when called upon to

defend our nation and our allies, will not back down, quit, or make excuses for not responding.

Every cabinet position is extremely important, but I feel the position of Secretary of Defense has to be filled by a person who is not afraid of war, but will consider diplomacy and common, sensible ways before sending people to die; and that is Pete Hegseth.

Donald Trump has promised to clean the sewer that is known as Washington, D.C., and the cabinet he is choosing is not only willing to do it but is committed to following the President's agenda to carry that out.

When President Trump took office the first time, he gained an enormous, eye-opening, education on the

corruption prevalent in our political arena. As a businessman, he knew he had to serve his clients, or he would suffer financially. With politicians, they felt as though the populace should serve them to keep the "freebies" they had "graciously" provided.

It all reminds me of the Turkish Proverb that says, "The forest was shrinking but the axe was clever and convinced the Trees that since his handle was made of wood, he was one of them." We've thrown the axe out of the forest and it's time to get down to the business of making America GREAT again!

Let's stop beating a dead horse and start feeding the live one with our support. MAY GOD BLESS AMERICA!

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(USPS 545-440)

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

www.theapopkachief.com, news@theapopkachief.com



City of Apopka Telephone Numbers	Orange County Telephone Numbers	Other Area Numbers of Note
City Hall407-703-1700 Mayor's Office407-703-1701 City Administrator407-703-1649 City Clerk407-703-1704 Community Devel.407-703-1712 Code Enforcement407-703-1738 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 Line407-703-1743 Solid Waste Collect.....407-703-1731 Street Maintenance407-703-1731 Utility Billing407-703-1727 Medical, fire emergency..... 911 The city of Apopka was chartered in 1882. It is located at 28°30 north latitude and is 150 feet above sea level. Its population is about 48,000 and its total area is more than 30 sq. mi. www.apopka.net	Animal Services.....407-836-3111 Auto/Boat Tags.....850-617-2000 Building Dept.....407-836-8550 County Mayor407-836-7370 County Commission.....407-836-7350 County Attorney407-836-7320 Clerk of the Court.....407-836-2065 Elections Supervisor.....407-836-2070 Fire/Rescue407-836-3111 Solid Waste407-836-6601 Garbage Collection.....407-703-1731 Health Dept.407-836-2600 Hunting/Fishing Lic888-347-4356 Parks and Rec. Dept.407-836-6200 Property Appraiser407-836-5044 Sheriff Administrative407-254-7000 Non-Emerg. Complaint.....407-836-4357 Utilities407-836-5515 All other departments407-836-3111 Medical, fire emergency..... 911 www.orangecountyfl.net	U.S. Senators Rick Scott (Rep.) 202-224-5274 Marco Rubio (Rep.).....407-254-2573 U.S. Representative Daniel Webster (Dist. 11)..... 352-241-9220 State Representatives Doug Bankson407-476-6787 Carolina Amesty (Dist. 45).....unknown State Senators Geraldine Thompson (Dist.11) 407-297-2045 Orange County Commissioner Christine Moore407-836-7350 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 Chief407-886-2777 Museum of the Apopkans.....407-703-1707 Chamber of Commerce.....407-886-1441

Apopka man pleads guilty to health care insurance fraud

David C. Weiss, U.S. Attorney for the District of Delaware, announced on Thursday, December 12, that Pierre Charles Moise, 57, of Apopka, pleaded guilty on Tuesday, December 10, in the U.S. District Court for the District of Delaware to concealing from insurance companies the fact that he paid patients to attend his chiropractic clinic. The Honorable U.S. District Judge Jennifer L. Hall accepted the plea.

According to court documents, Moise owned and operated the Wellness Health Center (WHC), a chiropractic clinic, in Milford, Delaware. Between at least January 2019 and March 2022, Moise himself and through others paid patients who had been in recent car accidents to attend treatment sessions at the WHC irrespective

of whether that treatment was needed. At his instruction, WHC employees then submitted claims for reimbursement to insurance companies, who, under Delaware's no-fault Personal Injury Protection (PIP) law, were obligated to pay WHC for that treatment.

Moise and WHC received over \$630,000 from insurance companies due to that fraud scheme.

Moise pleaded guilty to making a false statement regarding health care matters and faces a maximum penalty of five years in prison. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

"Moise defrauded insurance companies out of hundreds of thousands of

dollars by taking advantage of Delaware's PIP laws," Weiss stated. "Those laws are designed to help put injured individuals back on their feet, not to enrich criminal actors. My office is committed to prosecuting individuals who engage in such criminal schemes that hurt all Delawareans by increasing insurance costs for everyone."

"Moise's business model revolved around defrauding automobile insurers. Instead of operating a legitimate chiropractic clinic, he actively sought patients who did not need treatment, paying them to visit his office unnecessarily and then filing fraudulent claims," said FBI Baltimore Special Agent in Charge William J. DelBagno. "Insurance fraud is not

See FRAUD Page 8A



Merry Christmas

When you need a break from the holiday bustle – whether it's sitting with your head in your hands trying to remember what you may be forgetting, or soaking your aching feet, here's a little trivia that might distract you while you wait for the weariness to go away.

The first Christmas card on record was sent in 1611, long before U.K.'s Sir Henry Cole created the first mass-produced Christmas card in 1843. That first Christmas card had three panels: a family dinner party in the middle and acts of kindness on each side. It also included the words, "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You." Louis Prang, an American printer, brought commercial Christmas cards to the U.S. in 1875. The card design that we know today – with a fold down the middle and in an envelope – wasn't invented until 1910 by the Hall Brothers, who went on to establish a little store chain called "Hallmark".

Over two billion Christmas cards are sent in the U.S. each year. Christmas cards account for 61 percent of greeting card sales in the U.S. With 25 percent of sales, Valentine's Day is next.

If that wasn't enough to inspire you to go back to tackling your holiday "To-do" list, maybe this will.

"A.I. Granny" Messes with Scammers". Meet Daisy. Daisy is an artificial intelligence (AI) personality designed to answer scam phone calls and waste scammers' time. Since many scam calls target the elderly, Daisy has been programmed to have the voice of an elderly grandmother. Just like a character in a book, Daisy has also been given a full personality, complete with grandchildren and hobbies (knitting and bird-watching). Since Daisy

is essentially a computer, she doesn't need to sleep, eat, or take any breaks. She's available 24/7 to talk to scammers. And the more she talks to scammers, the less time scammers have left to talk to real people. In just the first 10 days of her existence, Daisy has answered over 1,000 scam calls and kept some scammers on the phone for almost an hour. Here are some of the humorous ways Daisy wastes scammers' time: She will interrupt the scammer by explaining that a bird just flew by her window, and then will list all her favorite birds – sometimes 20 plus of them. She will pretend to be confused about instructions. For example: Scammer: "Type in www." Daisy: "So, that's three w's and a dot?" Scammer: "Yes, triple w and a dot." Daisy: "How many w's?" She will throw a curve ball at them: Scammer: "Now tell me what is showing on your screen." Daisy: "It's showing me a picture of my cat, Fluffy." She also understands how to be cheeky. In one conversation, the scammer frustratedly exclaimed, "Stop calling me dear!" Daisy's response: "Got it, dear."

While Daisy's mission to frustrate scammers is hilariously satisfying, she has a more serious mission as well. The tech company that created her - Virgin Media O2 - records Daisy's conversations and reports the latest scams and tactics back to law enforcement. So not only is Daisy wasting scammers' time and frustrating them, she's helping law enforcement crack down on them!

If the trivia was a gift of a little down-time, Daisy is a time-saving gift for us all by having conversations with scammers whose goal is to steal from us: our information, our money and/or our time ... time we're then free to spend doing what truly matters to us, being with those we love and remembering The One who is the Reason for the Season.

Merry Christmas, everyone!

We'd like to know What YOU think?
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Fri., Dec. 20, 2024 thru Sun., Dec. 22, 2024

3D SHOWINGS

MUFASA: THE LION KING (PG) 9:30A

MUFASA: THE LION KING (PG) 10:10A; 12:40; 1:20 3:50; 4:30; 7:00; 7:30; 10:10; 10:40

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 3 (PG) 9:40A; 10:20A; 12:50; 1:30; 4:00; 4:40; 7:10; 7:40; 10:00; 10:30

MOANA 2 (PG) 9:50A; 12:30; 3:40; 6:40; 9:50

KRAVEN THE HUNTER (R) 10:00A; 1:10; 4:20; 7:20; 10:20

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE WAR OF THE ROHIRRIM (PG-13) 11:50A; 6:30

WICKED (PG) 12:00; 3:10; 6:20; 9:30

GLADIATOR II (R) 3:00; 9:40

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Sertoma Club, Elks Lodge organize toy drive for families

By Beverly Winesburgh
Special to the Chief

Continuing a decades-long tradition, the Foliage Sertoma Club of Apopka joined forces to financially support the Elks Lodge 2422 annual Holiday Meals and Toys program they organize with the assistance of local schools. Sertoma supports with dollars while the Elks volunteers recruit community donations to pack 200 meal boxes and thousands of toys/games/gifts for the designated families chosen.

On Sunday, December 15, one hundred invited families participated with pizza and games for the children at the Elks Lodge, while their families selected toys/games and were given two food boxes each with staples for the holidays.

The program was founded decades ago by member Arlen (Coz) Mizell, a joint member of both organizations and a founder of the 50-year-old local Sertoma club. His wife, Brenda Mizell and her family continue to support the efforts in Arlen's memory.

The Sertoma Club received a matching grant from Sertoma, Inc, the national not-for-profit parent group of the local clubs to make this year's giveaway day a special memorial to Arlen and the Mizell family.

Members of Foliage Sertoma Club congratulate Volunteers of Elks Lodge 2422 at the annual Holiday Meal and Toy program on December 15, which was organized in conjunction with local schools.

Specifically, this year's additional grant was in memory of Mizell, who was instrumental in creating and producing the food program for decades.

The food is especially welcome during the holidays since the children may miss the school's breakfast and lunch provided, as well as weekend home snack packs, during the holiday break.

Foliage Sertoma Club of Apopka closes every meeting with the prayer "God help us to be of Service to Mankind". The annual program with the Elks is an important tradition devoted to that mission.



Members of the Foliage Sertoma Club of Apopka, including story author and club member Beverly Winesburgh (l), hold up the Sertoma seal in a room surrounded by thousands of dollars worth of toys and games for the children.

Survey: Second public input meeting scheduled for Jan. 2025

Continued from page 1A

on Friday, December 13, and will remain open until January 15, 2025.

The estimated \$28 million construction project will address several safety and widening elements

of the 1.8-mile northern portion of Ocoee-Apopka Road from Harmon Road to Hawthorne Avenue. Proposed improvements include widening the road from two to four lanes to provide additional roadway capacity for the needs of

existing and future users of this corridor.

Ocoee-Apopka Road is one of the two main roads providing access to downtown Apopka from the cities of Ocoee and Winter Garden, as well as unincorporated areas of

Orange County.

The city conducted a December 9 meeting at Fran Carlton Center, where Mike Woodward of Kimley-Horn and Associates discussed project details, project schedule and funding. Kimley-Horn and As-

sociates is the project consultant; city planner Jean Sanchez is the project manager.

The city of Apopka is pursuing outside funding that includes federal dollars, particularly from the U.S. Department of Trans-

portation Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability (RAISE) grant program to cover the majority of the cost.

A second public input meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 13, 2025.

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Chamber Awards honor best in business, community service



Businesses, community leaders, and nonprofit representatives celebrated the winners of the annual Apopka Area Chamber of Commerce Business Awards. The ceremony took place on Thursday, December 5, at the Hidden Barn Venue in Apopka.

Award winners: Policeman of the Year: Officer Cody Grow; Fireman of the Year: Lieutenant Mandy Mathis; Rookie of the Year: Snowie of Central Florida; Legacy Award: Lou Haubner; Businessman of the Year: Mickey Joseph (Hurricanes Bar and Grill); Businesswomen of the Year: Joanna Timm and Angela Scott; Young Entrepreneur of the Year: Christopher Castillo; Top Restaurant: The Nauti Lobstah; Community Champion: Propagate Social House; Platinum Sponsor: Advent Health; Gold Sponsor: Fast Signs



It’s beginning to look at lot like ...



Lights are all glowing at the house of Zellwood resident Tony Picone. With decorations and silver lanes aglow, it’s beginning to look at lot like Christmas.


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In the new year, Orange County District 2 Commissioner Christine Moore will host a community meeting that will focus on incorporating commercial roads in the neighborhood corridor clean-up program.

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The First Quarterly Neighborhoods Leaders' Meeting will take place on Thursday, January 16, 2025, at 6 p.m. in the media center of Wekiva High School, 2501 Hiawassee Road, Apopka.

The meeting's special

guest speaker will be Edward Erfurt, director of community action at Strong Towns, a nonprofit media advocacy organization that produces content that analyzes the failures of the post-war North American development pattern while

giving citizens the knowledge and tools to start making their places better.

For further details about the meeting, call Moore's office at 407-836-5850.

Fraud: 'Insurance fraud is not a victimless crime,' FBI agent says

Continued from page 5A

a victimless crime. It costs taxpayers millions of dol-

lars every year. The FBI will continue to collaborate with our partners to ensure those who engage in such deceptive actions are held accountable."

This case was investigated by the FBI Baltimore Field Office's Wilmington

Resident Agency with assistance from investigators with the Delaware Department of Insurance Fraud Prevention Bureau. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jesse S. Wenger, Meredith C. Rugles, and Shamoor Anis are prosecuting the case.

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CITY OF APOPKA PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE CHANGE OF ZONING

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Secs. 163.3184 and 166.041(3)(a), Florida Statutes and the Apopka Code of Ordinances, Part III, Land Development Code, Article II, Section 2.4.7.B, that **Geoff Summitt** has made application relating to the following described property.

ORDINANCE NO. 3091

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF APOPKA, FLORIDA, CHANGING THE ZONING FROM RSF-1A (RESIDENTIAL SINGLE-FAMILY ESTATE DISTRICT) TO RSF-1B (RESIDENTIAL SINGLE FAMILY-LARGE LOT), FOR CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED 2260 PLYMOUTH SORRENTO ROAD; OWNED BY PARMANI FARMS LLC; AND 2244 SORRENTO AVENUE; OWNED BY MACAULAY GEORGE, COMPRISING 9.51 ACRES, MORE OR LESS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, CONFLICTS, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.



Parcel Identification Number(s): 30-20-28-0484-00-085,
25-20-27-0000-00-022
Contains: 9.51 +/- Acres

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, January 14, 2025 beginning at 5:30 P.M.**, or as soon thereafter as possible.

FURTHER NOTICE is given that a public hearing for **Ordinance Number 3091** 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, February 5, 2025 beginning at 1:30 P.M.**

Affected parties and the public may appear at the above listed hearings to speak. The proposed Rezoning Application 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

December 20, 2024

Publish: The Apopka Chief

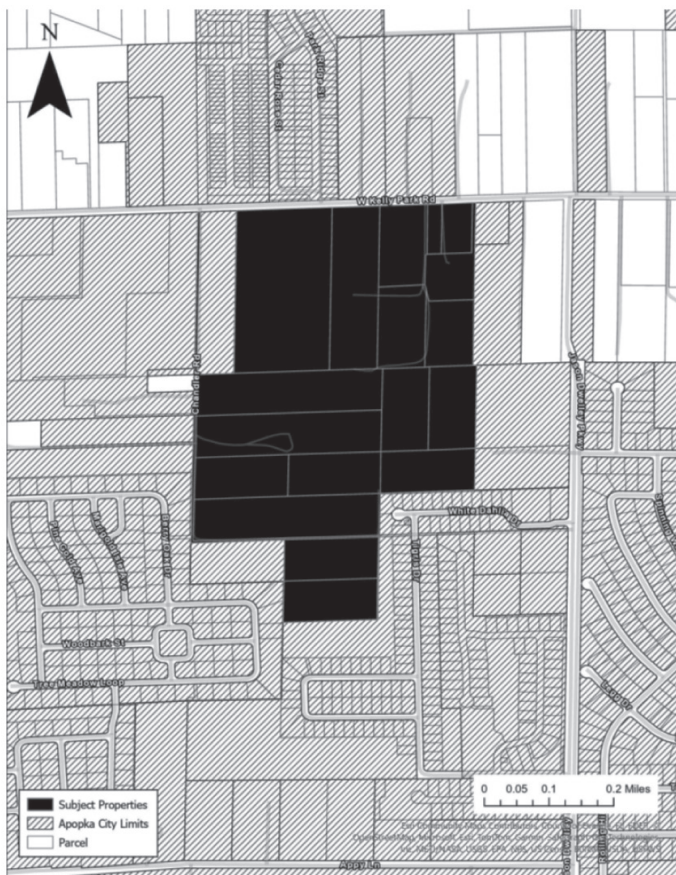
177735

CITY OF APOPKA PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE FUTURE LAND USE AMENDMENT

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Secs. 163.3184 and 166.041(3)(a), Florida Statutes and the Apopka Code of Ordinances, Part III, Land Development Code, Article II, Section 2.4.7.B, that **Jonathan Huels, Esq.** has made application relating to the following described property.

ORDINANCE NO. 3078

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF APOPKA, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT OF THE APOPKA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF THE CITY OF APOPKA; CHANGING THE FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION FROM COUNTY RURAL, CITY FLU-IN PROGRESS, AND CITY RESIDENTIAL VERY LOW SUBURBAN TO MIXED-USE FOR CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY GENERALLY LOCATED SOUTH OF W. KELLY PARK ROAD, AND EAST OF CHANDLER ROAD, OWNED BY ORCHID ESTATE HOA COMMUNITY, MEGA GNG, LLC, JACOB SNAVELY, 4625 CHANDLER ROAD, LLC, MATTHEW & DEBORAH SHAW, DAPHNE MARTIN, WALTER H. ROBINSON III, YOO SHIK UM IRREVOCABLE TRUST, PM-S1 REO, LLC COMPRISING 116.94 ACRES, MORE OR LESS, PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.



Parcel Identification Number(s): 18-20-28-0000-00-132,
18-20-28-0000-00-031, 18-20-28-0000-00-105, 18-20-28-0000-00-050,
18-20-28-0000-00-049, 18-20-28-0000-00-061, 18-20-28-0000-00-048,
18-20-28-0000-00-052, 18-20-28-0000-00-106, 18-20-28-0000-00-035,
18-20-28-0000-00-034, 18-20-28-0000-00-032, 18-20-28-0000-00-033,
18-20-28-0000-00-037, 18-20-28-0000-00-051, 18-20-28-0000-00-080,
18-20-28-0000-00-119, 18-20-28-0000-00-046, 18-20-28-000000-00-047
Contains: 116.94 +/- acres

NOTICE is given that a public hearing 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, January 15, 2025 beginning at 7:00 P.M.**

Affected parties and the public may appear at the above listed hearings to speak. The proposed Future Land Use Application 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, Florida 32703, Telephone: 407-703-1704, no less than 48 hours prior to the proceeding.

Apopka City Council
Community Development Department

December 20, 2024

Publish: The Apopka Chief

177742

Obituaries

PAUL HENRY CARROLL, 81, of Zellwood, passed away on December 6, 2024. Mr. Carroll was born on February 1, 1943 in Brooklyn, New York. Mr. Carroll is survived by: daughters, Debra Lee Carroll and Donna (Ken) Cady; one grandson; one great grandson.

REMIGIUS "REMI" CHRISTOPHER BIRKO JR., 45, of Sorrento, passed away on December 6, 2024. Mr. Birko was born on November 10, 1979 in Winter Garden, Florida. Mr. Birko is preceded in death by: paternal grandparents, Ray and Betty Birko; maternal grandfather, Larry Fleetwood; brother, Cameron Durand. He is survived by: mother, Belinda (Lee) Hendrix; father, Remigius Christopher (Gail) Birko Sr.; stepfather, Randy Durand; children, Mason Millis, Kayla Birko, Jocelyn Birko, and Nicholas Birko; siblings, Wisty (Kalen) Birko-Guehl, Randall "Boo-Boo" (Amanda) Durand, Shannon (Frank) Birko, Jaxsen Hendrix, and Dustin (Kristy) Hendrix; maternal grandmother, Sharon (Gene) Foster; three nephews; three nieces; as well as a slew of aunts, uncles and cousins.

ALTHEA JETT STARLING, 89, of Russellville, Alabama, passed away on Tuesday, December 10, 2024. Born on July 6, 1935, to Theophilus and Mae Ola Jett. She was preceded in death by: parents; husband, Roy Earl Starling; one grandson; sons-in-law Kenneth Gilliam, and Monte Moore, five brothers, and one sister. Althea is survived by: children, Alison Starling Gilliam, Nancy Starling Foster (Joe), John Ivey Starling II (Tena), Adrienne Starling Moore, and Carmen Hemlock Daniels (Mark); brother, A.J. Jett (Carolyn); 17 grandchildren, multiple great-grandchildren, and a host of nieces and nephews.

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WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY Wednesdays, 10 a.m. Holy Tabernacle Church
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"Attend your place of worship this week!"
MARVIN C. ZANDERS FUNERAL HOME
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In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.

State Farm
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49A East 3rd Street, Apopka
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Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there.®

"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

What is the shortest verse in the Bible?

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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

When you advertise in this section, you get the best of both worlds: low-cost ads AND targeted advertising!

MARY "ANN" MOORE HEMBREE, 91, of Rome, GA, passed away on Tuesday, November 26, 2024. Ann was born in Barnesville, GA, on September 15, 1933 to Early Alvin and Mamie Lee (Thurman) Moore. Ann was preceded in death by: daughter, DeLayne Martin; husband, Billy Hembree; and all of her brothers and sisters; two grand children. Ann is survived by: daughters, Debbie Martin, Judy Denny (Randall), Cherryll Yates (Johnny), Gale Young (Alan), Wyndye Farley (Mark Rhodes); several nieces and nephews; and many grandchildren, great grandchildren, great great grandchildren.

See Obituaries on page 10A

Send us Your Church News Email: news@theapopkachief.com



LOOMIS FAMILY FUNERAL HOMES
VISIT OUR ONLINE OBITUARY
LOOMISFUNERALHOMES.COM

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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Unity Church of Christianity
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FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

Congress cannot make a law that favors the establishment of one particular religion; that prohibits the free exercise of religion; or that restricts freedom of speech or of the press, or the right of the people to gather and engage in peaceful demonstration and to petition the government for redress of their grievances.

www.TheApopkaChief.com | news@theapopkachief.com | 407-886-2777

Please support these advertisers that support your freedom to worship.

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

Prepare overnight coffee cake, refrigerate and bake in the morning

Merry Christ-
mas! Blessings
to all or our fa-
vorite people...
our readers and
all the people of
Apopka! We pray
for you and your
loved ones, not
only during our celebration of the birth of
our Savior Jesus Christ, but all through the
NEW YEAR to come. This coming year is to
be a transition to better times for us and our
neighbors throughout the nation as well as
for the world at large. We have prayed for
this, and our prayers are being answered.
When times get better for us, the American
people, times get better for the rest of the
world! It just seems to work out that way.



How about Baked Orecchiette with
Bacon Breadcrumbs for a Christmas Eve
treat? This is a pasta dish from thepioneer-
woman.com. Ree Drummond says it will
take a little over an hour and a half to pre-
pare and bake, and it will make 6 to 8 serv-
ings.

We have a recipe from Emily Meg-
gett for Okra Gumbo. This comes from her
book, *Gullah Geechee Home Cooking*. This
might also be a festive dish for your family
and friends during the Christmas season.
You can serve the gumbo alone or over a
bed of white rice. She recommends using
small shrimp in this recipe.

From *Cooking with Foliage La Ser-
toma of Apopka*, we have French-Fried
Shrimp. Shrimp, which is a favorite recipe
for many of us, will be a special treat for our
Christmas festivities.

Try Zellwood Station Club Car's reci-
pe for Overnight Coffee-Cake. This recipe
comes from *Pot-Pourri of Zellwood, Reci-
pes & Reflections 1983*, published by The
Zellwood Community Center.

And from our friend at First Presby-
terian Church of Apopka, *Treasures and
Pleasures*, we have Sis Pitman's recipe for
Peanut Butter Fudge Dreams. Sis passed a
while back, but she lives on in our hearts.

Good for picnics or brown bag lunches,
Bryan Kilgore of Houston, Texas, contribut-
ed this recipe for Scotch Eggs to *Treasures
and Pleasures*. This may be a special treat
for Christmas get-togethers.

BAKED ORECCHIETTE WITH BACON BREADCRUMBS

Recipe from THEPIONEERWOMAN.COM

PASTA AND SAUCE:

**4 tablespoons salted butter, plus more
for the baking dish**

**1-1/2 teaspoons kosher salt, plus more
to taste**

1 pound orecchiette pasta

1 large onion, thinly sliced
4 garlic cloves, minced
**10 ounces frozen chopped spinach,
thawed and drained**
1 teaspoon black pepper
2 ounces cream cheese
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
3 cups whole milk
2 cups Monterey jack cheese, grated
BACON BREADCRUMBS:
4 slices bacon, chopped
2 tablespoons salted butter
1-1/2 cups panko
1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
1 cup grated parmesan cheese

1) For the pasta: Preheat the oven to
375 degrees. Butter a 9 x 13-inch or oth-
er 3-quart baking dish. Bring a large pot of
salted water to a boil. Add the pasta and
cook according to the package directions,
then drain and set aside. 2) Meanwhile for
the bacon breadcrumbs: Cook the bacon
in a medium skillet over medium heat un-
til crispy, about 5 minutes. Remove the ba-
con with a slotted spoon to a medium bowl,
leaving the fat in the pan. Add the butter to
the pan and let melt, then add the panko
and salt and stir to coat. Cook, stirring, un-
til the panko is a light golden brown, about
2 minutes. Remove from the heat and add
to the bowl with the bacon. Let cool slightly,
then toss with the parmesan. Set aside. 3)
Make the sauce: Melt 2 tablespoons butter
in the empty pasta pot over medium-high
heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring, un-
til softened and starting to brown, about 3
minutes. Stir in the garlic and spinach and
cook until the spinach has released any re-
maining liquid, about 5 minutes. Season
with 1 teaspoon salt and 1/2-teaspoon pep-
per. 4) Add the cream cheese and remain-
ing 2 tablespoons butter to the pot and stir
until melted. Sprinkle in the flour and stir,
then reduce the heat to medium and cook
until the flour is golden brown, about 1 min-
ute. Add the milk, 1 cup at a time, stirring
until slightly thickened between each addi-
tion, 2 to 3 minutes total. Fold in the Mont-
erey jack until melted, about 2 minutes. Sea-
son the sauce with the remaining 1/2-tea-
spoon each salt and pepper, if needed, then
add the pasta, stirring until coated. Trans-
fer to the prepared baking dish and
sprinkle with the bacon breadcrumbs.

Bake until the breadcrumbs are crispy
and the sauce is bubbling, 20 to 25 min-
utes.

EMILY MEGGETT'S OKRA GUMBO

Recipe from *Gullah Geechee
Home Cooking by Emily Meggett*

**3/4 pound salt pork, cut into 1-inch
pieces**

1 onion, chopped

1 bell pepper, chopped
**1 28-ounce can crushed or diced
tomatoes**
1 can tomato paste
**3 pounds okra, cut into 1/2-inch pieces,
or 2 pounds frozen cut okra**
Crushed red pepper
Gold Medal seasoning salt
1 tablespoon sugar, plus more to taste
**1 15-1/4 ounce can corn, drained, or
kernels cut from 2 ears fresh corn**
**1-1/2 pounds small shrimp, peeled and
deveined (optional but recommended)**

1) In a large, heavy-bottomed pot, fry
the salt pork over medium heat until crisp, 5
to 7 minutes. Add the onion and bell pepper
and sauté together for 5 to 7 minutes, un-
til translucent. 2) Add the tomatoes and to-
mato paste. Rinse out the tomato paste can
and refill the can with water. Pour the water
into the pot. Repeat this process two more
times. Bring to a boil over high heat. 3) Turn
down the heat to medium and cook for 25
to 30 minutes. If the mixture is too thick,
add more water. Add the okra, crushed red
pepper, seasoning salt to taste, and the
sugar. Cook for 15 to 20 minutes. 4) Final-
ly, add the corn and shrimp, stir, and cook
the gumbo over low heat for about 10 more
minutes. Serve with rice or eat plain.

FRENCH-FRIED SHRIMP

Recipe from *Cooking with
Foliage La Sertoma of Apopka*

**1-1/2 pounds raw, peeled, deveined
shrimp, fresh or frozen**

2 eggs, beaten

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup all-purpose flour

1/2 cup dry bread crumbs

1/2 teaspoon paprika

Fat for deep frying

Thaw shrimp if frozen. Combine eggs
and salt. Combine flour, dry bread crumbs
and paprika. Dip each shrimp in egg, then
roll in crumb mixture. Fry in a basket in
deep fat, 350 degrees, for 2 to 3 minutes or
until golden brown. Drain on absorbent pa-
per. Makes 6 servings.

ZELLWOOD STATION CLUB CAR'S OVERNIGHT COFFEE-CAKE

Recipe from

POT-POURRI OF ZELLWOOD

3/4 cup softened butter or oleo

1 cup sugar

2 eggs

1 8-oz carton sour cream

2 cups sifted all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon baking soda

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon nutmeg

3/4 cup brown sugar

1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 cup chopped nuts

Combine butter (or oleo) and sug-
ar. Cream until fluffy. Add eggs and sour
cream; mix well. Combine next 5 ingredi-
ents and add to batter. Mix. Pour batter into
greased and floured 13 x 9 x 2-inch baking
pan. Combine brown sugar, cinnamon, and
nuts. Sprinkle over top of batter. Cover and
refrigerate overnight. Uncover and bake in
350-degree oven for 35-40 minutes or until
cake tests done.

SIS PITMAN'S

PEANUT BUTTER FUDGE DREAMS

Recipe from

First Presbyterian Church of Apopka,
Treasures and Pleasures

1 cup white sugar

1 cup brown sugar

1 cup milk

Few grains of salt

1 cup marshmallows

1/4 pound peanut butter

2 tablespoons butter

1 teaspoon vanilla

Cook sugar, milk and salt to the soft-
ball stage. Add marshmallows, peanut but-
ter and butter just before removing from the
stove. Cool, add vanilla and beat, then pour
into a buttered pan.

NOTE: Peanut butter weight is: 1
pound = 1.89 cups, divided by 4 = 0.4725
cups, so you can probably do 1/2 cup (or
little less) of peanut butter and be just fine.
Or 1/4 pound peanut butter = 7-1/2 table-
spoons.

BRYAN KILGORE'S

SCOTCH EGGS

Recipe from *Treasures and Pleasures*,
published 1990 Presbyterian Women,

First Presbyterian Church of Apopka

4 medium hard cooked eggs

12 ounces bulk breakfast sausage

1 tablespoon flour

Sprinkling of salt and pepper

1 beaten egg

**3 ounces dry bread crumbs (plain or
herbed)**

Shell eggs, rinse, and dry with paper
towel. Mix flour, salt and pepper in small
bowl. Roll eggs in seasoned flour. With
your hands, mold 3 ounces of sausage
around each egg, coating evenly. Dip each
coated egg into beaten egg, then roll in
bread crumbs.

Deep-fry eggs in 350 degree oil un-
til golden brown, making certain that sau-
sage is completely cooked, about 3 min-
utes per egg. May be eaten warm but are
better cold. When cooked eggs cool, wrap
in foil.

DECEMBER 2024



EVENTS

WEEKLY

UPCOMING

ONGOING



**SCHOOL BEGAN AUGUST
12** – Traffic patterns will change.
Stormy weather comes and goes! Be
careful with your umbrellas. And
always watch out for those school
children ... 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 kindergar-
ten (Florida Statute 1003.21). Im-
munizations must be current.

UNLESS CHANGED: School Start
Times for Elementary School &
K-8: 8:45 a.m., Middle School:
9:30 a.m., High school: 7:20 a.m.

City of Apopka's Northwest Recre-
ation Complex, 3710 Jason Dwell-
ey Parkway, Apopka 32712, 407-
703-1784. On any given weekend,
you can see many, many families
in attendance at the beautiful com-
plex setting participating in various
organized sport programs,
Amenities at the complex in-
clude: Soccer Fields, Softball
Fields, Baseball Fields, Multi-
Purpose Fields, Sand Volleyball
Courts, Outdoor Basketball Courts,
Tennis Courts, **Walking Trail**, Am-
phitheater, Playground, Conces-
sion 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 GA-
TORS - 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 freshwater marsh
system and wildlife dependent on
that type of system. The drive is
open on Fridays, Saturdays and
Sundays and federal holidays and
is controlled by the county. Open
during daylight hours only (one
hour after sunrise and one hour
before sunset). Official sunrise and
sunset hours can be found online.
The road is closed on other days
due to ongoing restoration work.
The trail is 11 miles long.

WEKIWA SPRINGS STATE PARK
is a 7,000-acre Florida State Park
in Apopka, Florida. It is located 20
minutes north of Orlando, off Inter-
state 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 infor-

mation, call 407-884-4311

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

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20

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

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

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21

VFW POST 10147 continues to
have its fund raising breakfast on
the **third Saturday each month**.
Next one is Dec. 21 from 8-10 a.m.
at \$19 S. Central Avenue. Cost is
only \$7.

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

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

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22

MONDAY, DECEMBER 23

FITNESS CLASS, MONDAYS
9-10 a.m. 11 N. Forest Ave at Fran
Carlton Center. Pre-register. Call
407-703-1642 for info.

CRAFTS & CHATTER: 9:30-12
noon. Fran Carlton Center, 11 N
Forest Ave. Masks not required.
Pre-register. Call 407-703-1642 for
info.

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

TOASTMASTERS: Apopka Foli-
age Toastmasters #840, meets
Wednesdays promptly at 7 p.m.,
8:30 p.m., in person and zoom at
the Museum of Apopkans, 122 E.
5th St., Apopka, 32703. Call 407-
765-2629 for information.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24 CHRISTMAS EVE BLESS ALL THIS REPRESENTS

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 at-
tend 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 no longer
required. 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, DECEMBER 25
MERRY CHRISTMAS**
Most everything is closed ...
so check before going

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

ZUMBA FITNESS CLASS, 9-10
a.m., 11 N. Forest Ave., at the Fran
Carlton Center. Masks no longer
required. Pre-register. Call 407-
703-1642 for info..

SENIOR CHAIR EXERCISE, 10-11
a.m., Billie Dean Community Cen-
ter, 225 M.A. Board St., . Masks
are no longer required/ Pre-regis-
ter. Call 407-703-1642 for info

CITY OF APOPKA DRC (Develop-
ment 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 ver-
sion.

BRIDGE CLASS. 10:15 a.m.-1 p.m.
(approximately) at Fran Carlton
Center, 11 N Forest Ave. Masks
are no longer required. 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, ed-
ucation, and rewards. Each Thurs-
day weigh-in begins at 9:00 a.m. –
meeting ends at 10:15 a.m.. Come
to its NEW location 220 W. Horatio
Avenue, Maitland, FL 32751 to
meet with others who have a like-
minded goal to lose weight. No
products, no specific diet to follow,
no meds. Call 407-580-0897 for
more information.

MUSEUM OF APOPKANS, Open
on Wednesdays, Thursdays and
Fridays, 12 noon-5 p.m. and Sat-
urday 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 infor-
mation, call 407-765-2629 or visit
www.Apopkatostasters.com.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 26

SENIOR CHAIR EXERCISE, 9-10
a.m., 11 N. Forest Ave., at the
Fran Carlton Center. Masks are no
longer required. 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 Wednes-
days, Thursdays, Fridays, and Sat-
urdays 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 are no
longer required. Pre-register. Call
407-703-1642 for info.

UPCOMING EVENTS

16th Annual Dr. Martin Luther
King, Jr. Parade., Monday, Janu-
ary 20, 2025 beginning at 2 p.m.

ONGOING EVENTS

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

CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS are
public and will also be broadcast
on this shortened link: https://bit.
ly/2ABrmsb, and are normally held
the first Wednesday at 1:30 p.m.,
and third Wednesday at 7 p.m. in
the City Council Chambers, City
Hall, 120 E. Main St., Apopka.
Subject to change with notice. For

info., call City Clerk 407-703-1704.
Agenda and minutes of meeting
can be found online. Once posted,
check for any revisions by Tuesday
at 5 p.m. before the meeting

FOLIAGE GARDEN CLUB OF AP-
OPKA, meets the first Thursday of
each month, September through
May, at 9:45 a.m. at the Alonza
William Park / Billie Dean Com-
munity Center, 225 M.A. Board St.,
Apopka. Contact: apopkafgca@
gmail.com. NO MEETINGS JUNE-
AUGUST.

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

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

BROWN BAG LUNCH - Third Sat-
urday 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., of-
fer to all who come a brown bag
lunch. In addition, men's socks, flip
flops, stuffed animals, some cloth-
ing, children's books and pet food
which is donated by My Pet World,
Apopka, may be available. If inter-
ested in volunteering, call Debbie
at 407-620-5081 for information.

APOPKA FOLIAGE TOASTMAS-
TER'S CLUB, Wednesdays, 7
p.m., on Zoom, Apopka. 407-765-
2629.

NWOC FFA Alumni – Monthly
meetings (usually the 4th Mon-
day 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: Wednesay
to Friday, from noon-5 p.m., and
Saturdays from 9 a.m.-1 p.m.... Ad-
mission is free. Contains displays
and information about Apopka's
history, and has history books for
sale. Monthly meetings of Apopka
Historical Society are normally held
on a Sunday afternoon. For more
information, go to www.theapopka-
museum.com.

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

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

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 meet-
ings 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 lakedu-
plicate.com.

**NORTH ORANGE BRANCH
LIBRARY HAS RE-OPENED.**
COMPUTER CLASSES in both
English and Spanish: Available
daily or weekly at OCLS North Or-
ange Branch.* Classes are: Com-
puter 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 Or-
ange Branch* for more details.

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

(OCLS) Orange County Public
Library North Orange Branch Ad-
dress: 1211 E. Semoran Boule-
vard, Apopka 436 (Semoran) and
Thompson Road. www.ocls.info.

*Apopka Area Chamber of Com-
merce, 180 E. Main St., Ap



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Florida Blue 

Breakfast with Santa

The Museum of Apopkans hosted Breakfast with Santa on Saturday, December 7, at the museum. Pictured are Maribel Brinkle, president of the Apopka Historical Society, with Santa and Mrs. Claus.



Photo courtesy of the Museum of Apopkans



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Birdwatching class starts Jan. 5

Orange Audubon Society is offering a three-session Beginners' Birdwatching Class on January 5, 2025, then continuing January 11 and 25, 2025.

Taught by skilled birding instructors Kathy Rigling and Susan Thome-Barrett, all class sessions are from 8 to 11:30 a.m. at the following locations: Orlando Wetlands Park, Oakland Nature Preserve and the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive. Total cost for all three sessions is \$60 for Audubon members, \$75 for non-members, and \$10 for youth (12 and under) with a registered adult.

The class is limited to 12 students and registration is required. To register, visit orangeaudubonfl.org/


Anyone who has to miss one of the morning sessions can make it up in the next fall's series. Dates are to be announced.

Questions can be emailed to education@orangeaudubonfl.org or call 407-488-9559.

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Events & Entertainment

Every Monday: Trivia, prizes for best team 7pm
Every Tuesday: Karaoke with Krazy James 7pm
Friday: Johnny and the Moon Dawgs 7pm
Saturday: Ennis Pruitt Rock & Roll 7pm
Sunday: Sunday Afternoon Sports. Come & Enjoy!

Check out our Full Menu at WWW.STEPHIESPUB.COM
1061 W Orange Blossom Trail, Apopka
407-703-8195

SUDOKU ANSWERS
PUZZLE CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 4B

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

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Puzzle Solution

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

The Crossword Puzzle is found on page 4B