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Nov. 25 - Dec. 1, 2022  
Volume VIII, Issue XLVII

# THE Hernando Sun

REMEMBER TO STRETCH BEFORE BLACK FRIDAY SHOPPING.

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# Students give thanks, then feast.



Wider Horizon School students in Spring Hill stand in a circle for a prayer and discussion about the Thanksgiving holiday on Friday, Nov. 18, 2022. Photo by Hanna Fox.

SEE STORY ON PAGE A 12

## K-9 Deputy, Justice, Retires



Cpl. Miller & Justice at the retirement ceremony

by SARAH NACHIN  
sarah@hernandosun.com

Monday, November 14, 2022, marked eight years of service for a loyal Hernando County Sheriff's office member. Justice, a German Shepherd K-9, and his partner, Corporal Stephen Miller, attended a ceremony marking the four-legged "deputy's" retirement from the force.

Justice was born on June 28, 2013, in Germany and Corporal Miller selected him from a k-9 service in New Smyrna Beach, Florida. The two attended patrol school for 16 weeks and hit the road together as a crime-fighting team in 2014.

Since that time, Justice and Miller have made 125 apprehensions. The team has also assisted in locating missing persons. One of the primary duties K-9 Justice was trained for was locating narcotics.

Between 2015 and 2022, he located 18.5 kilos of mari-



ABOVE & BELOW: Training the K-9 "deputies" (Photos courtesy of Hernando County Sheriff's Office)



juana, 695 grams of meth, 3.2 kilos of hashish, 3 grams of heroin, 132.1 grams of cocaine, 41.3 grams of opioids, and 24.8 grams of ecstasy.

Some notable apprehensions include an incident in 2015 in which Justice tracked down an armed robbery suspect hiding in a shed. Justice apprehended the suspect and pulled him from the shed. While being pulled out, the suspect pointed his firearm at another deputy. At that time,

See JUSTICE RETIRES page A 12

## We have much to be thankful for.

by Dr. William Holland

I've always enjoyed Thanksgiving with my family, but I often become distracted from the intended purpose. Between football, conversations, and pumpkin pie, it's easy to forget how much we have to be thankful for. Sadly, many have forgotten, or maybe they have never known the history of human suffering that is associated with the Pilgrims. It's been recorded that the new colony was focused on giving God thanks for His blessings and protection. William Bradford is quoted, "Being thus arrived in a good harbor, and brought safe to land, they fell upon their knees and blessed the God of Heaven who had brought them over the vast and furious ocean, and delivered them from all the perils and miseries thereof, to again set their feet on the firm and stable earth, their proper element. Thus, out of small beginnings, greater things have been produced by His hand that made all things of nothing, and gives being to all things that are; and, as one small candle may light a thousand, so the light here kindled hath shone unto many, yea in some sort to our whole nation; let the glorious name of God have all the praise." Clearly, the pilgrims of the Plymouth colony praised

Continues on page A 9

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**MEETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Board of County Commissioners  
11/29/2022- 9AM  
John Law Ayers Commission Chambers, Room 160  
Regular Meeting

Community Redevelopment Agency  
11/29/2022- 2PM  
John Law Ayers Commission Chambers, Room 160  
Regular Meeting

Brooksville City Council Meeting  
December 5, 2022, 7:00 PM  
@ City Hall  
201 Howell Avenue  
Brooksville, FL 34601

**City of Brooksville Thanksgiving Holiday Sanitation Schedule**

Wednesday, November 23, 2022  
Thursday pick-ups will be on Wednesday, November 23rd.  
Friday pick-ups will be as regularly scheduled.

state news items...

**Thousands of Students Committed Under Baker Act**

By Ryan Dailey ©2022 The News Service of Florida.

TALLAHASSEE — Florida had 5,077 incidents of students being involuntarily committed under a mental-health law known as the Baker Act during the past school year, data presented Wednesday to a school-safety commission showed.

The Baker Act is a roughly 50-year-old state law that allows courts, law enforcement officers and certain medical workers to order people who could be a harm to themselves or others to be taken to facilities for up to 72 hours.

People taken to facilities involuntarily under the law must receive initial examinations by physicians or clinical psychologists, according to the Florida Department of Children and Families. They also can't be released within the 72-hour period without documented approval from physicians or psychologists.

School districts are required to report Baker Act data under a law approved last year by the Legislature and Gov. Ron DeSantis. Districts report numbers of students who are taken to facilities because of incidents initiated on campuses, school transportation or school-sponsored activities.

The Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission, which was created after the 2018 Parkland high-school massacre, reviewed the Baker Act data Wednesday along with discussing other school-safety issues. The report

marked the first schools-specific look at the number of Baker Act incidents statewide.

The data indicated 4,844 individual students were taken from campuses for involuntary psychiatric examinations under the Baker Act during the past school year.

"That means that there were 233 duplicates," said Pinellas County Sheriff Bob Gualtieri, who is chairman of the commission. "But because the data is without personally identifiable information, we don't know if one student was Baker acted 10 times or 233 students were Baker acted twice. But regardless, what it shows is the majority of the (campus) Baker acts are one-time events."

The data also did not take into account school-age children who were subject to the Baker Act outside of school environments.

The University of South Florida College of Behavioral and Community Sciences has a Baker Act Reporting Center, which collects data on Baker Act incidents for the Department of Children and Families.

The center's most-recent data said that during the 2019-2020 fiscal year, children ages 18 or younger accounted for 17.74 percent of Florida's 128,193 people who were subject to the Baker Act involuntarily.

Because the reporting requirement is new for school districts, school-safety officials have not been able to analyze trends of involuntary examinations that start in schools.

"It's probably going to take a couple years of data, and then looking at it, to provide any context," Gualtieri

said.

But Florida lawmakers in recent years have considered various pieces of legislation dealing with use of the Baker Act, with some characterizing it as being increasingly overused in schools and on younger children.

State Department of Education Senior Chancellor Jacob Oliva pointed to a separate new requirement that schools designate mental-health coordinators. That requirement, included in legislation this year, could help officials better understand the data going forward.

"When we're having our convenings and meeting with folks regionally ... is there a lack of resources, and we're just Baker acting kids because we don't have anybody else to call? Where do we start taking this data, then formulating some strategic plans around that? Those conversations are starting to happen at a much deeper level," Oliva said.

Meanwhile, commission member Douglas Dodd called for more granular data reporting about the grade levels of students who are being taken for mental-health examinations.

"As a school-board member what concerns me greatly is when I see these younger children, these elementary school children, being Baker acted. And I would wonder if there is a way that we could identify elementary, middle, high school, what school it is. Because we have seen an increased number of younger students that are being Baker acted," said Dodd, who is a Citrus County School Board member and a former school-resource officer.

**Not like in the movies**



A vehicle got stuck on the top of a car carrier after its driver drove up the car carrier's ramp in Venice, Fla. Photo courtesy of Venice Fire Rescue.

by ROCCO MAGLIO

Venice Fire Rescue reported that they received a call around 10:30 p.m. Wednesday, November 16th, for a vehicle accident near Pinebrook Rd. and Pinebrook Way intersection. A Nissan Maxima was traveling south on Pinebrook Rd. when its driver drove up a car carrier and crashed near the top, leaving it hanging over the edge precariously close to falling off.

It appears that the driver came upon the car carrier with the ramps down in the road, and the driver decided to race up the car carrier at a high rate of speed. The intention seems to be to jump off the car carrier and continue on. Most likely, the car's shocks would not have taken the force of the jump, but movies and TV repeatedly show successful jumps.

The fire department reported that the car carrier dropped a vehicle off at a nearby residence when the accident occurred. The car carrier was parked with its hazard lights flashing, so it was clearly visible. It was parked under a streetlight with the ramps down when the vehicle struck it.

When units arrived on the scene, they found an uninjured middle-aged male sitting inside the vehicle. The rescue team told the male driver to remain still until crews could stabilize the vehicle. They used industrial straps to secure the front of the vehicle to the car carrier, then had a wrecker stabilize it from the rear. The rescue team then safely extricated the driver from the vehicle. There were no injuries and the scene was turned over to Venice Police for investigation. Venice Police Department cited the driver for careless driving.

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**The Week of Nov. 25 - Dec. 1, 2022**

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## City council members honored for their service



From left to right: Vice Mayor Blake Bell, Councilman Robert Battista, Councilwoman Betty Erhard, Mayor Pat Brayton and Councilman David Bailey

by LISA MACNEIL  
lisa@hernandosun.com

Vice-Mayor Blake Bell presented each member with a separate resolution to recognize their efforts to make policies and decisions for the betterment of the community.

Three members of the Brooksville City Council were honored in separate resolutions at the November 21, 2022, regular meeting. Vice Mayor Blake Bell recognized Betty Erhard, Robert Battista, and Mayor Pat Brayton for their devotion and efforts to make the best decisions for the city and its people. Their terms of service end on December 5, 2022.

Betty Erhard served two four-year terms on the council, beginning in December 2014. She served as Mayor in 2018. "It's bittersweet, 8 years has been a long time," Erhard said. "From red light cameras to marijuana dispensaries, fluoride, going paperless -- look at this!" Erhard said, indicating the screens on the dais, rather than binders. "It came true, finally."

Erhard reminisced of the city's other achievements through the years, "We've done a lot in eight years, and I'm very proud of that. I may not have always been popular in the decisions, but I'm proud to have stood by... and being a good stewardess of the taxpayers' money. That was the most important job up here, and I took it very seriously."

"Thank you," Erhard said in closing. "It's been an honor and a privilege to serve."

Robert Battista also served eight years, beginning his term in December 2014. In 2017, he served as Mayor. Before his city council career, Battista was Brooksville's city attorney from 1995 to 2002 and again from 2011 to 2012 as an Associate with the Hogan Law Firm.

"Yes, this was quite a hoot for eight years. I agree with Betty, this is not an honorarium to sit up here. This is a job, you don't get paid a whole lot for it. I don't know anybody who sat up here because the money was so good."

Battista gave advice to incoming coun-

See COUNCIL MEMBERS page A 6

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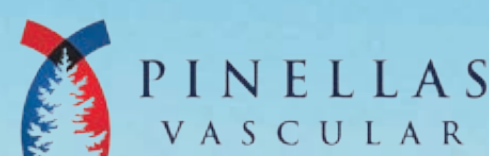
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## Double murder, suicide in Wellington

By Patrick Hramika

The ordinarily quiet subdivision of Wellington was interrupted by gunfire around 5:00 PM on November 21, 2022. Three people were found deceased inside the home. The Hernando County Sheriff's Office has reported that the incident is a double murder in which the assailant took their own life.

Just before 5:00 PM, a 911 call was received from 11071 Heathrow Avenue in Spring Hill regarding a family member with a gun.

Around 2:00 PM, deputies responded to the residence regarding a caller having issues with a family member. Three family members were residing in the home. The responding deputy explained the eviction process to family members at that time. According to the Hernando County Sheriff's office, "The deputy explained the process regarding eviction and offered to assist the family in coming to a compromise that would be suitable for all parties involved. Prior to the deputy clearing the

call, all three family members agreed "the issue was over.""

During the second emergency call, the 911 operator spoke with a female resident who requested a deputy respond because a male resident had a firearm. The Sheriff's Office reported, "The 911 Operator heard what she believed to be a gunshot, followed by the caller screaming and asking the male to "put the gun down." A second shot was heard. There was no further conversation with the caller."

According to the Sheriff's Office, "Based on the call, detectives believe the first shot involved the female homeowner, the second shot was to the second female guest. The third shot, was the male homeowner. Detectives believe the male homeowner shot both residents before turning the firearm on himself."

The investigation shows the incident to be a domestic double murder/suicide. Law enforcement states there is no danger to the community.

The investigation continues.

## Brooksville DPW begins repairs using emergency funding measure.

by LISA MACNEIL  
lisa@hernandosun.com

In October, the Brooksville City Council voted to approve an emergency resolution to allow the City Manager and Mayor to authorize and expedite funding of repairs to the city's water and sewer infrastructure. The measure expedites funding up to \$500,000, allowing the Department of Public Works (DPW) to bypass the usual procurement process. The funds will come from the Enterprise Reserve Fund, which contained \$8,000,000 at the time of the resolution.

Public Works Director Paul Booth reported that his department has been able to purchase filters and replacement assemblies necessary to treat reclaimed water. To date, the department has spent \$134,835.94. Going forward, the Department of Public Works (DPW) will budget to replace 20% of the parts yearly, to lessen the financial impact on the city.

The 50 Lift Station, which has had problems due to rusting of suction tubes, will also be addressed. The process to remedy the situation and place air release devices is expected to cost approximately \$54,500 and begin December 2, 2022.

During the last week of December, the department will consider installing a centrifugal press, which presses water from sludge material, turning it into a dry product they can dispose of in landfills rather than requiring tanker trucks to haul it away. Booth reports that this disposal method comes with a lower price tag. The department is also looking at other avenues to determine which will produce the best outcome.

With other repair and maintenance projects still in the bid phase, Booth reports, "We are on the cusp of having the plant back operating the way it should be and continuing to move forward with making those improvements so we won't have problems in the future."

## City council approves first reading of Southern Hills rezoning plan

by PAT RAI  
pat@hernandosun.com

The Brooksville City Council (BCC) unanimously approved the first reading of a plan to rezone a parcel of land near the Southern Hills and Cascade communities. The plan was previously presented for its first reading to the Council during its Nov. 7 meeting, but the panel postponed deciding the rezoning until residents of the Southern Hills community could meet with the developer and his representatives to air their concerns about the proposed project.

That plan presented by SH Venture II, LLC, calls for rezoning approximately 119.8 acres from Hernando County Agricultural (AG) to a City of Brooksville Planned Development Project-Residential (PDP-R). Located on the north side of Southern Hills Boulevard, immediately east and west of the future Governor's Boulevard and east of US Highway 41 (Broad Street), the rezoning would allow for the development of up to 222 single-family detached homes and 72 townhomes. On March 7, 2022, City Council approved the rezoning of approximately 83.30 acres of the subject parcels located east of the future Governor Boulevard and immediately north of Southern Hills Boulevard to PDP-R to allow for the development of 175 single-family conventional homes.

During the Nov. 7 meeting, residents of the Southern Hills community told council members that they had concerns about traffic, flooding, utility availability, and overcrowding connected to the rezoning. Additionally, residents stated that they never had the opportunity to present their concerns directly to the developer and his representatives from Coastal Engineering Associates, Inc.

In response, the Council put off its decision to rule on the proposed rezoning request until such a meeting could take place.

As a result, Southern Hills residents and the project's developer met on Nov. 14.

That meeting resulted in adding a pair of amendments to the original rezoning plan, including extending buffer areas from 20 feet to 30 feet along Southern Hills Boulevard and replacing a white PVC fence behind that buffer with a 6-foot-high black chain link fence containing privacy sections.

Also, the developer agreed to maintain a 20-foot buffer at the Cascades entrance and not disturb that area's natural characteristics and vegetation.

At the same time, the developer also agreed to make sure that the primary entrance to the future developments in the area retains the architectural features, including color and materials contained in the Southern Hills main entrance.

"So with (those) modifications, we agree to all your staff recommendations for approval of this ordinance," said Coastal President Cliff Manuel.

Finally, City of Brooksville planner Steve Gouldman recommended that the panel approve the first reading of the rezoning request with only clarifications of the proposed amendments to the original proposed rezoning plan.

"Not only did we find it (the proposed rezoning plan) consistent with the comprehensive plan, but we found it compatible with the development pattern in this general area," Gouldman told the Council. "So other than just some tweaks to what he (Manuel) has presented, we recommend that you approve this."

The second reading of the rezoning plan is slated for Dec. 5 during the next regular meeting of the Brooksville City Council.

## Federal inmate accused in 2021 shooting in Brooksville

by PAT RAI  
pat@hernandosun.com

HCSO investigators will serve a warrant on a Florida Department of Corrections (FDC) inmate and principal suspect in a shooting that followed a series of death threats made to a Brooksville resident in 2021.

Denise M. Moloney, media relations manager and public information officer (PIO) for the Hernando County Sheriff's Office (HCSO), said that on Oct. 21, 2021, HCSO deputies responded to a report of a shooting on Union Street in Brooksville.

At the scene, the victim told deputies that they had received several death threats via email indicating that if they did not pay the sender \$10,000, the sender would kill them. (Please note that HCSO did not specify the gender of the victim.)

When the victim did not make the payment, the perpetrator fired several shots into the residence and vehicle belonging to the victim.

Deputies found several shell casings at the scene.

Investigators later recovered a firearm that the Florida Department of Law En-

forcement (FDLE) forensics laboratory later confirmed had been used in the shooting.

Detectives later identified Jason Wells, 34, someone known to the victim, as a suspect in the case.

HCSO detectives subsequently interviewed Wells at the FDC Reception and Medical Center in Lake Butler, Fla., where he admitted to being involved in the shooting.

Based on that confession, along with evidence collected during their investigation, HCSO detectives obtained an arrest warrant for Wells on charges of extortion, written threats to kill, shooting into an occupied dwelling, possession of a firearm by a felon, and unlawful use of a two-way communication device.

Detectives will serve the warrant on Wells at the Florida Department of Corrections facility in Lake Butler, where he is serving a 10-year sentence on unrelated charges.

Moloney said that he will appear in court in Hernando County to answer the shooting-related charges.



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# City council approves first reading of Brookstone rezoning ordinance

by LISA MACNEIL  
lisa@hernandosun.com

The Brooksville City Council voted unanimously via a roll-call vote to approve the first reading of a rezoning petition (RZ 2022-04) submitted by LDG Development on behalf of Brookstone Apartments, LLC. The new PDP-R zone (Planned Development Project - Residential) will allow for the development of an apartment complex.

The property is on the south side of Daniel Avenue, bordered by South Mildred Avenue to the west. The eastern border, at its widest point, is along Hale Avenue. The narrow southernmost end is at the north side of West Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (MLK).

The City council originally heard the item at the November 7th meeting; however, they granted the petitioner a continuance to make changes to the original

## Revised Option A

- PDP for multi-family uses
- 216 Units (-24)
- 15 units/acre (-1.67)
- Modeled after R-3 (setbacks = R1-B/R-2/R-3)
- 44% open space (+4%)
- 40' height (less than R-3)
- Includes staff recommended fencing conditions



request.

Of the two revisions submitted at the November 21, 2022, meeting, "Option A" was approved, which increases the amount of greenspace to 44%, preserves the mature tree canopy along Mildred Street, and reduces the number of units from 240 to 216. City planner Steve Gouldman agreed with the revisions and recommended the council's approval.

Gouldman added that the additional greenspace adds four playground areas versus one in the original plan.

The plan calls for constructing one full-access entrance on MLK and installing a gated exit-only point along Hale Avenue. In addition, there will be a locked entrance accessible only to emergency services from Mildred Avenue.

Concerns by council members and citizens involve the introduction of additional traffic and the compatibility of the complex with the surrounding neighborhood.

Some citizens were concerned about "affordable housing" and its effect on

the city.

However, the developer explained that Brookstone's focus tenants are working families. It is not Section 8 housing, and they do not otherwise subsidize the rental cost. In addition, qualified renters must demonstrate the ability to pay rent and pass required credit and background checks.

The second and final ordinance reading for the rezoning will be at the Dec. 5 city council meeting.

## COUNCIL MEMBERS FROM PAGE A 3

cil members, and possibly to anyone who may consider running for the office; "You have to be thinking of other, bigger things to do. The city is eleven-and-a-half square miles. There's a lot going on... Think broadly, and I'm sure you all will be very successful."

Pat Brayton began his term on December 3, 2018, and is currently serving his second term as mayor. His public service career began in 1994 when he served six years as a city council member until 2000. Brayton was also a city employee, starting in 1972 as assistant finance director, and was promoted to city clerk/finance director, where he

worked until 1980.

"I've just enjoyed this four years. I never thought I'd be back on the Council again after the 90s, and it was a privilege to be elected back then." Brayton recalled his disagreements over matters with other council members. "You're not always going to agree, and if you do, you're doing something wrong."

Brayton expressed his appreciation for his colleagues, City Manager Ron Snowberger, City Clerk Jennifer Battista, and especially city staff. "I really want to give a great 'thank you' to the staff. Without the quality staff that the city has, we'd have a problem. Staff is important. People are important. They mean a lot."

## SHERIFF'S OFFICE BRIEFING NOTES



Hernando County Sheriff's Office Zone/District Map

Please note – Due to the Sheriff Office's interpretation of Marsy's Law, specific information will no longer be provided on incidents that are classified as crimes.

SEE ZONE MAP

### WEDNESDAY NOV. 16 LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS

• Deputies responded to:

- o Commercial/Vehicle Burglary – District 1/Zone 1 – Catalytic o Grand Theft Auto – District 1/Zone 5 – A vehicle was left in a parking lot over night and was stolen sometime overnight – Investigation Active – 2022-34144.

• Schools:

- o Powell Middle School – A student was found in possession of a vaping device that tested negative for THC – Juvenile Citation – 2022-34157.
- o Fox Chapel Middle School – A student was found in possession of a vaping device that tested negative for THC – Juvenile Citation – 2022-34173.

### FRIDAY- WEEKEND NOV 18-20 LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS

• Deputies responded to:

- o Traffic Crash Fatality – District 1/Zone 1 – A vehicle struck two pedestrians where one pedestrian died on scene – Florida Highway Patrol.

- o Death – District 1/Zone 3 – An individual was found deceased inside of their own shed. There was paraphernalia located near the individual. Preliminary investigation reveals this was a possible overdose – 2022-34448.

- o Assault LEO – District 1/Zone 5 – Deputies responded to a suspicious person who was screaming at other people. The suspect began swinging his fists at the deputies and attempted to close the distance. Deputies were able to calm the suspect down and place him under arrest – x1 Arrest – 2022-34491.

- o Drowning – District 1/Zone 1 – A child exited their home and fell into the pool. The child victim was found in the pool minutes later and pronounced deceased at the hospital – Investigation Active – 2022-34472.

- o Accidental Shooting – District 1/Zone 5 – The victim was holding a firearm that did not contain a magazine in it, but the victim was unaware of a round chambered in the firearm. The victim accidentally shot themselves in the arm – 2022-34507.

• Schools:

See BRIEFING NOTES page A 10



WHERE COMPASSION MEETS

# Innovation in Memory Care

The Residence at Timber Pines is a unique and exceptional senior living community that has been part of the Spring Hill community for over 20 years. Situated on beautifully manicured grounds, the community serves a wide range of lifestyle preferences and continuing care needs. The Residence at Timber Pines offers luxury apartment homes for independent living as well as assisted living, and three memory care neighborhoods. Residents are able to remain in their apartment and receive services and support, as needed, to maintain their independence and well-being.



The Residence at Timber Pines has been voted the Gold Winner in *The Hernando Today Newspaper 2022 Readers' Choice Competition* for the

fifth year in a row. The community has also been awarded the Gold Level designation as A Montessori Inspired Lifestyle® Credentialed Community from the Center for Applied Research in Dementia.

When someone you know is experiencing memory loss, we're here with Pearls of Life® memory care. Pearls of Life recognizes the value of each individual and helps residents live dignified, well-rounded lives, discovering the treasures, or pearls, within. The Residence at Timber Pines offers three distinct Pearls of Life memory care neighborhoods.

Pearls of Life memory care offers Montessori Inspired Lifestyle®, a positive approach to providing care for adults living with dementia or Alzheimer's disease. This approach of care is based on the methods of Maria Montessori, as adapted for adults by Dr. Cameron Camp, founder

of the Center for Applied Research in Dementia. This approach allows residents to focus on their individual strengths and engage in meaningful activities.

Come see what sets us apart. Visit [residenceattimberpines.com](http://residenceattimberpines.com) or call us at 352-683-9009 to schedule your personalized tour today.

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## OPINION

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# Why Sam Bankman-Fried Sounded so Much Like a Rand Villain

Sam Bankman-Fried, unlike James Taggart, is not an idiot. He knew his altruism was phony.

by Jon Miltimore



Sam Bankman-Fried, 2022  
Public Domain

The financial collapse of the crypto exchange FTX was brutal and swift. Almost overnight, its CEO Sam Bankman-Fried saw his \$16 billion fortune wiped out.

SBF, as he's popularly known, managed to fool almost the entire world—though not quite everyone.

In hindsight, it's not hard to see the red flags at FTX. There was no board of directors. Bankman-Fried couldn't answer simple questions about his funding. The executive leadership was shady and there was the whole "cabal of roommates" in the Bahamas.

One thing that hasn't gotten enough attention, however, is SBF's philosophy of "effective altruism," a social movement that rejects self-interest and instead focuses on "how to benefit others as much as possible."

Many people will no doubt applaud SBF for his philosophy. Putting others before oneself is considered by many to be not just a virtue but the virtue, and it could help explain Bankman-Fried's meteoric rise and celebrity. Legacy media swooned over SBF's apparent selflessness. Story after story after story gushed over the crypto altruist who wanted to give his wealth away—even as he lived in a \$40 million penthouse.

Bankman-Fried clearly liked to talk about his altruism, which many see as a clear and obvious virtue. Or is it?

### 'Do Not Confuse Altruism With Kindness'

Ayn Rand famously didn't see altruism as a virtue; she saw it as a sinister force.

"Do not confuse altruism with

kindness, good will or respect for the rights of others," Rand wrote. "These are not primaries, but consequences, which, in fact, altruism makes impossible."

Now, I'm not an Objectivist. I actually celebrate giving and see charity as part of my Christian calling. But I think Rand is on to something. While I don't believe "selfishness is a virtue" or "that greed is good," I do believe in rational self-interest, the idea that it's both normal and prudent for humans to advance their own interests in their economic decisions.

The idea of rational self-interest is central to capitalism and was famously articulated by Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations*.

"It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest," Smith wrote. "We address ourselves, not to their humanity, but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages."

Smith, like myself, didn't see charity as a sin or mere foolishness. But he clearly understood that humans are naturally self-interested creatures and that this instinct is not actually detrimental to human flourishing, but a key to it. This is the miracle of a market economy, which leverages self-interest through trade and voluntary action to improve everyone's standard of living.

Now, contrast this sentiment with Sam Bankman-Fried, who said he was bailing out digital assets not because he saw an opportunity but because he felt it was the right thing to do.

"It's not fair to customers," SBF said on CNBC's Squawk Box.

Or consider what Bankman-Fried told an Institute of International Finance audience in August.

"It's okay to do a deal that is moderately bad, in bailing out a place," SBF said.

Purchasing failing companies to protect their customers seems like a dubious business strategy to me, and it was one of the things that caught the attention of seasoned traders, who began to raise questions about FTX. Those traders turned out to be right. FTX, which recently had a valuation of \$32 billion, was massively overleveraged, and when rival crypto exchange Binance announced it was offloading hundreds of millions of dollars of FTT (FTX's token), a run on funds ensued.

But it's worth focusing on Bankman-Fried's rhetoric a little more, because it occurred to me it sounds a little like a character in *Atlas Shrugged*.

### 'Material Greed Isn't Everything'

James Taggart, president of

Taggart Transcontinental, is the most prominent villain in Ayn Rand's magnum opus. He talks endlessly about serving mankind and sneers at those who are concerned with crass profits.

"Material greed isn't everything. There are non-material ideals to consider," Taggart lectures his sister Dagny, the hero of the story.

Taggart's smug thinking is what prompts him to take on his own bad deal, a massive expansion of Taggart Transcontinental into Mexico. He confesses to "a feeling of shame" that he owns a railroad, but "the Mexican people have nothing but one or two inadequate lines."

"The Mexicans, it seems to me, are a very diligent people, crushed by their primitive economy. How can they become industrialized if nobody lends them a hand? When considering an investment, we should, in my opinion, take a chance on human beings, rather than on purely material factors."

Taggart gets his way and—like FTX—his San Sebastian Line is a disaster. The lesson in both cases is clear: beware business deals based on altruism.

SBF, like James Taggart, spoke often about serving humanity. His concern with climate change, global pandemics, and progressive causes earned him laurels and fawning press. Even after the collapse of FTX, newspapers are discussing his noble efforts "to prevent another pandemic." But there is also a notable difference between Rand's petulant railroad baron and Bankman-Fried.

While James Taggart is a mean, surly, unscrupulous man, his altruism seems somewhat genuine; either he's too stupid to see his good intentions will bear bad fruit or he lacks the self awareness to

realize his "altruistic" ideas are not as pure as he believes. (It's important to understand that even though Taggart spurns selfishness and greed, he is clearly a selfish and greedy person.)

With Sam Bankman-Fried, this appears less true.

In an exchange with Vox reporter Kelsey Piper, SBF's altruistic philosophy came up. Piper noted he was "really good at talking about ethics" publicly. His response is telling.

"I had to be...it's what reputations are made of, to some extent," SBF answered. "I feel bad for those who get [expletive] by it...by this dumb game we woke westerners play where we say the right shiboleths [sic] and everyone likes us."

From this response, it's clear Bankman-Fried knew he was a poser. His advocacy was just part of the new game of stakeholder capitalism. (Interestingly, SBF actually refers to ESG as a perversion.)

Sam Bankman-Fried, unlike James Taggart, is not an idiot. He knew what he was doing. I don't know if this makes SBF more of a villain than Taggart or not.

But it certainly makes Bankman-Fried's downfall all the more tragic.

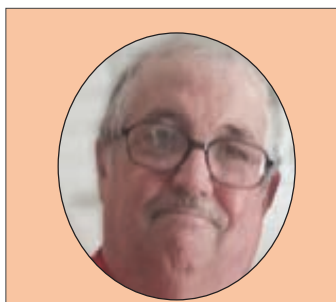
*This article was republished on Fee.org from the author's Substack.*

*Jonathan Miltimore is the Managing Editor of FEE.org. His writing/reporting has been the subject of articles in TIME magazine, The Wall Street Journal, CNN, Forbes, Fox News, and the Star Tribune.*

## The story within the story

It was a different day (Monday, November 21, 2022). I started by going to a concerned citizens' breakfast with a small group from the Hernando County area. The restaurant was called "Up For Breakfast." They put on a good spread of nicely cooked items. This group of people are contributors to a site on the Telegram channel called "Team America Chat," which fields comments on political issues, voter integrity, voting machine manipulation, school board functions (and malfunctions), and Hernando County Commissioners meetings.

The breakfast attendees have been active in the community and are not afraid of their "presentations" being recorded for all to see. Today, we had Mr. Jack Martin, widely known as "Pastor Jack." Jack Martin has shepherded congregations for many years and recently came off of a grueling political contest against Mr. Gus Bilirakis. He has an interesting website on Rumble and Telegram channels called "The Hard Right" (which shows him wearing a pair of red boxing gloves



STEVE GOODWIN  
VETERAN

*Steve Goodwin is a recently retired Christian conservative veteran (of the U.S. Army 82nd Airborne Division), who still feels that "duty to country" did not end when the military uniform got hung up. He and his wife Cecelia live on the edge of a beautifully wooded tract of land just south of the bypass, and are involved in not only church activities, but also attend school board meetings and local community action events as well.*

to begin his segments).

Also in attendance was Mr. Mark "Brad" Benson, who has made several trips to Tampa's courthouse, and the Capital building in Tallahassee. His latest endeavors have him contesting the legalities of the electronic voting process (and the machinations and wire-passed "anomalies" associated with them). In addition, he has gone against "The Man" in Washington, D.C., with a whistle-blow-

er case and won.

Seated on my side of the table was Ms. Diane Liptac, who has championed political causes and cases dealing with natural resource issues. Then there was Ms. Anita Barnes, who has gone before the HCSB (Hernando County School Board) with input regarding issues from school lunch quality, CRT (Critical Race Theory), and many other topics.

And of course, I was there to listen and add what little two cents worth of input I could contribute. This group of concerned citizens may not significantly impact how things are done both locally and nationally. Still, I am constantly impressed with the passion of their commitment to try to make this a better place for us and future generations to live.

(Now to the titled part of this story.)

The two women in our group started asking about the vest I was wearing. I told them it was my "Story Vest," and every pin and sewn-on patch had a unique story. The vest itself had the best story of them all, as it was made by "recycling" a deer hide from a wildlife

casualty on Hwy 98 North many years ago.

A truck had hit and killed the deer very close to a pond (filled with alligators). I had just gotten off of work that afternoon, and I took the remains of the animal and fed them to the critters of the night! It was getting late, and I had put in a full day's driving (from 3:00 am that morning). I did not know how long that animal had sat on the roadside, so I was not going to take it home to eat.

Not more than two weeks after that incident, I had brought my old canoe out to the lake and decided to try my hand at bringing home some fresh bass for dinner. As I was pushing the canoe from the shoreline with a paddle, it was set on a small water hyacinth cluster and gave way, causing me to go right over the side of the small craft and into the muddy waist-deep marsh.

I told the group at this meeting that when something like this happens, your thoughts come to you in a manner of priority, and my mind was quick to process two main items of importance. The first one was that I still had my cell



phone on my side (it was not in a waterproof baggie). The second thought that came to my mind was that I got rid of a deer carcass less than two weeks earlier on this very spot! So once the canoe and I cleared the bank of the pond, it was the last trip I took over those hyacinth, cattail, and gator-filled waters.

With all the other interesting and story-filled souvenir items collected and displayed on the vest, I should also have one with an alligator!

Y'all be blessed, and have a good week!



## OPINION

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## Punishment and discipline are being canceled.



**DOMENICK J. MAGLIO, PH.D.**  
Traditional Realist

criminal of the violent offense is granted his freedom with no punishment. This leads a criminal to believe he can commit another crime on an innocent victim without consequences. There is no reason for the perpetrator to develop the self-discipline to avoid punishment.

Many states do not have an automatic death sentence for killing a police officer. Without this law, the police have a giant target on their backs. Criminals execute police whenever they have the urge to attack justice. Police are sitting ducks in a culture that no longer protects them for their dangerous duty of protecting innocent people. They are not respected for placing their lives on the line.

Our government school administration follows this permissive path of non-punishing in our government schools. Misbehaving

pupils are often not given consequences for their cruelty towards other students and faculty. Teachers and parents often do not confront negative attitudes, academic failings, or offensive behaviors. Students often commit destructive acts in school without any consequences. School administrators do passive counseling without severe penalties for not following appropriate behavior or specific regulations.

Even academic standards have been lowered for students. In many schools, students receive a grade higher than the grade they earned. Some school administrators avoid students with a history of verbal and physical abuse of authority. We have witnessed school shootings where armed officers have acted cowardly by not protecting students from psychological and physical harm. Schools have become lock-up facilities rather than learning institutions.

This lowering of behavioral and academic standards, coupled with the Covid epidemic, has decreased the academic rating of the United States in competing with schools worldwide. America is currently in the lower middle level in math and reading. Students are receiving the lowest ACT scores in years.

The “Summer of Love and Peaceful BLM Riots” in urban democrat-run cities saw police being taunted and demeaned by Antifa punks who were encouraged by many progressive politicians and media. The burning and looting of cities became so widespread that liberal leaders had to end the chaos of mob violence by eventually bringing in an overwhelming number of officers to gain some semblance of control. Few, if any, of the violent rioters were punished for their destruction. For the “woke” participants, punishment was canceled. On the other hand, seventeen-year-old Kyle Rittenhouse attempted to protect businesses and individuals and was charged and obliterated by the media. Despite the woke attacks, he eventually was exonerated by a jury of his peers. Our third branch of government stood tall in negating mob rule.

The underpinnings of our culture are under relentless attack by progressive communists. Biblical child rearing has practically been replaced by permissiveness. Our past extended family morphed into a nuclear family and now into revolving single parents, fragmented families, and even transgender families. Our institutions, like the DOJ, FBI, social media, police, and military are being

weakened by the corrupt woke culture.

The stripping of the United States Constitution, moral values, indoctrinating teachers, and the breakdown of the family are all being done in front of our eyes. The Bill of Rights, Freedom of Speech, the practice of religion, the Right to Assemble, to bear arms, and the right to fair elections are being stomped on by the woke politicians who are striving to establish a one-world communist government.

We are at a point in our history where if citizens consciously accept “wokism,” our freedoms and rights will be gone. As citizens, we must call for punishment for criminal transgressions to save our nation.

*Domenick Maglio, Ph.D. is a columnist carried by various newspapers and blogs, an author of several books and owner/director of Wider Horizons School, a college prep program. Dr. Maglio is an author of weekly newspaper articles, INVASION WITHIN and the latest book entitled, IN CHARGE PARENTING In a PC World. You can see many of Dr. Maglio's articles at [www.drmaglioblogspot.com](http://www.drmaglioblogspot.com).*

## We have much to be thankful for.

FROM PAGE A 1



**DR. WILLIAM HOLLAND**  
Author & Minister

Heaven. I published a book a couple of years ago called “A Lifestyle of Worship,” and it’s about becoming determined to develop an awareness of God’s presence all the time instead of just when we are in church or need a favor. Brother Lawrence, whose seventeenth-century work, “The Practice of the Presence of God,” details his discipline to become so

sensitive to everything going on around him that he might consider all situations as an opportunity to manifest the attributes of Christ.

I realize that most people keep a busy schedule and do not always wake up in the mornings and thank God for all of their blessings. Why is this? Well, we have a tendency to take important things for granted, like our good health or even the air we breathe. We become so occupied with making decisions and leaning on our understanding that we forget God is helping us and always has our best interests in mind. It takes serious dedication to continually concentrate on how worthy He is of our gratitude and adoration. “O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together” Psalm 34:3.

So, we see that Thanksgiving is about expressing our love to God, and those who desire to know Him personally will discover that our devotion is not based on what He can give us but just on who He is. Above my fireplace, there’s a log engraved with Matthew 22:37-38, and I often ask God to reveal to me the depths of this spiritual truth. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.” Every word that has ever been spoken and every book that has been written can only scratch the surface in describing God’s endless generosity and glorious majesty.

This season let us consider our Thanksgiving holiday as

more than a day off from work, a traditional celebration, or a Black Friday sale. May it be a state of mind where we can truly worship Him for our daily blessings and our eternal salvation. It’s wonderful to have a roof over our heads, good health, and a long list of His benefits, but we are especially grateful for His infinite grace. It’s my prayer today, that I will never become spoiled with His blessings, but every moment I pray to be sincerely grateful for the privilege to know Him and be compelled to demonstrate His love and compassion to others.

*Dr. Holland is a Christian author, outreach minister, and community chaplain. To learn more about the Christian life visit [billyhollandministries.com](http://billyhollandministries.com)*

### Letters to the Editor & Correspondence

Please email your letters to [editor@hernandosun.com](mailto:editor@hernandosun.com) Mailing Address: PO BOX 12203; BROOKSVILLE, FL 34603 Please always be courteous in your letters. We will not publish letters that contain personal attacks. Your submission may be edited to conserve space if over 300 words.

## “Newcomers”



**THE POSTSCRIPT**  
By Carrie Classon

Joel and Chené on Friday.”  
“I thought we could do brunch.”  
“We’re having brunch with Raul and Nathan.”  
“Oh.”  
I realized I had something scheduled every day this week. This is not like me.  
Somehow, spending time with people who are all new to this place—leaving what is familiar and trying something new—

something about this pulls us together. I realized it’s because we’re all newcomers.

As newcomers, we’re eager to share our newcomer energy, and to hear where other newcomers have been and where they’re going next. Almost all the newcomers I meet are making changes, going to new places, and trying something new. And, because they are newcomers, they all are excited (and a little nervous) to tell others about it.

“I started painting during the pandemic,” Rosalie told us. She claims she is not an experienced painter, yet all her work has been eagerly taken by friends who have it hanging in their homes.

“I’m working on a memoir.”  
“I’ve taken up yoga.”  
“I’d like to write a novel.”  
“I’m fostering a dog.”  
The thing we newcomers all

share is the opportunity to look at this new place with fresh eyes and apply that fresh perspective to our lives. I am amazed how few people I meet are trying to replicate the lives they have in the U.S. or Canada. Instead, they are figuring out how to do things differently in this very different place—where fireworks go off every night and occasionally at six in the morning, where roosters are constantly crowing, and dogs barking, and the streets are paved with cobblestones, and a lot of the shoes we brought do not work at all.

“Oh, my gosh! I nearly killed myself trying to walk in platform sandals last night!”

“I know. Platforms do not work!”

I love hearing stories about changing course, trying new things, and getting off the beaten track.

Meanwhile, I keep working on my new project, getting my first novel ready to sell. My agent tells me we’re almost ready. It will be a long process, she says, and there are no guarantees. I’m OK with that. I know I’m a newcomer to this as well.

Spending time with newcomers in Mexico has made me realize that most of us aren’t attached to a particular outcome. We like what we are doing right now—and we like doing it together.

“It’s about enjoying life while we’re living it—and not worrying about when it’s going to end,” Karina, another newcomer, said over dinner last night.

I like that. And I think there might be time to squeeze in one more coffee this week.

Till next time,  
Carrie

God and appreciated Him for all they had. Today the meaning of Thanksgiving is often lost under an endless avalanche of media hype, sales advertisements, marketing gimmicks, and aggressive commercialism.

Like all Christians, we thank the Lord for loving us and rescuing us from eternal darkness and death. We could never express to our Heavenly Father enough how grateful we are that He sent Jesus to redeem and forgive us with His blood. I realize there are hard times and many difficult situations, but we are fortunate to not only have His promises of hope and peace here on Earth, but He is also preparing a place for us in

My husband, Peter, and I feel like social butterflies.

We certainly are not. But it feels as if we are because we are staying in a new city and finding it easier to make new friends than at any time since we were children.

When Peter and I moved back to Minnesota to be closer to our family, we missed our old routines and the friends we used to spend time with. Moving to a new city did not bring with it a lot of new friends. Everyone already had friends. Peter and I saw a lot more of our families, which was wonderful. But except for the friends we still had from when we lived here as teenagers, we didn’t see many new people.

This is not the way it works when we are in Mexico.

“Can we have brunch with Karina and Rick on Friday?” I asked. “We’re going to dinner with





# Students give thanks, then feast.

by ROCCO MAGLIO

Wider Horizons School has been organizing a Thanksgiving feast for decades. The school purchases several turkeys, and parents take them home to prepare and return them to the school.

Different classes make the sides, and the entire school enjoys a Thanksgiving meal. Preschool students bake cornbread, while primary students make green beans. Lower elementary students contribute cookies and cranberry sauce, while upper elementary students make mashed potatoes. Junior high and high school students make the stuffing.

This year, the Thanksgiving feast was on Friday, Nov. 18. The entire school gathered in a circle and said a prayer of thanks for the food they were about to enjoy. The preschoolers, primary, and lower elementary students sang various Thanksgiving songs. Some upper elementary students read their compositions about what they are thankful for.

After the prayer circle, the students returned to their classrooms, where they enjoyed the Thanksgiving meal. Food was served by the junior high and high school students. After eating, the junior high and high school students cleared tables and cleaned dishes. Then classes went outside for recess and there was a huge football game for the junior high and high school students.

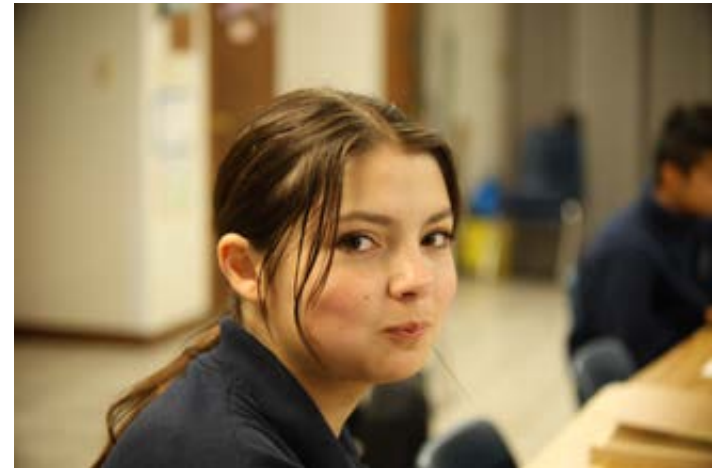
Jael, right and Hayley, in Upper Elementary left chat and enjoy Thanksgiving at Wider Horizons.



BELOW: Primary eating the Thanksgiving meal.



ABOVE: Leyton and David serving Thanksgiving dinner in their classroom.



LEFT: Madison enjoys the Thanksgiving meal.



BELOW: Lower Elementary students spell out "Happy Thanksgiving" in circle.



## K9 JUSTICE FROM PAGE A 1

Miller and the other deputy fired their weapons at the suspect and killed him. During the gunfire, Justice never released the suspect's leg.

Another incident occurred when Justice and Miller were on duty in their vehicle. Corporal Miller saw a robbery happening just across the street at an ATM. They went over there, and three suspects fled on foot. Two went in one direction, and the other went in a different direction. Miller released Justice to apprehend the two suspects that went in the same direction. He chased them through the parking lot, around the building, and then disappeared from Miller's sight. The deputy called him back, and Justice returned with a shoe in his mouth. After dropping the shoe, Justice went back to look for the third suspect, whom he quickly located. The suspect refused to comply with Miller's commands, and Justice bit the suspect. The next day, Miller found out that when Justice went on his first jaunt, he jumped into the getaway car with the two suspects, bit them both, and then took the shoe. All three suspects were caught and arrested.

At the retirement ceremony, there was an unveiling of a portrait of Justice that was painted by Corporal Miller's daughter, Blaire. Additionally, the Sheriff's Office members presented K-9 Justice with a Lucite plaque with the following inscription:

"Thank you for eight years of 'pawsome' service."

As a retiree, K-9 Justice will relax in the yard, which he's not very fond of yet, and serve as "chief of security" at the Miller residence. But it won't be an easy transition because he's trained to stay alert almost constantly and be in the thick of the action.

"This [work] is what the dogs live to do, so he's not looking forward to retirement like humans are," Miller remarked.

And, although Justice is retiring, Miller will still be on the job. The deputy had a K-9 named Kilo before obtaining Justice, and soon, he'll be getting another four-legged partner.

"Justice is a happy dog, but when it's time to do business, he'll do it," Miller stated. "He has the type of personality that's like a light switch. He can turn it off and turn it on."

He's not aggressive to people that pose

no threat, but when it's time to go to work catching criminals, he's ready. And a fugitive on foot is no match for Justice, who can run up to 30 miles an hour for short distances!

Not all law enforcement officers are suited to being K-9 deputies. You have to be physically fit because many physical demands come into play as a K-9 handler. You have to be comfortable lifting the dog and running with the dog.

You have to be emotionally stable, too; as one K-9 deputy stated, "Sometimes the dogs are like kids, so you have to be patient with them. You get attached to them, but you have to understand they're not our pets; they're a tool. Sometimes you have to send them into harm's way."

Corporal Miller is a natural when it comes to being a K-9 deputy, as he concludes, "Every day's a great day when you've got a dog with you."



ABOVE: Blaire Miller and Cpl. Stephen Miller & Justice at the retirement ceremony

## HERNANDO COUNTY'S CURRENT BUILDING PERMITS PERMITS ISSUED WHERE ESTIMATED VALUE > \$150,000

PERMIT DATE | OWNER | ADDRESS | DESCRIPTION 1 | DESCRIPTION 2 | SQUARE FEET | EST. VALUE | USE TYPE | USAGE DESCRIPTION | LOCATION |

11/09/2022 THORNTON RICHARD LYNN PALM GROVE COLONY UNIT 3 LOT 72 ORB 307 PG 146 55X28 \$ 403,000 SFA SINGLE FAMILY RES A-ZONE 06145 COLONY CIR

11/09/2022 AGUERO ARBELIO ALMANZA HIGHLAND LAKES REPLAT BLOCK T LOT 28 28' X 56' \$ 127,000 MH MOBILE HOME 1 ACRE OR MO 09856 LAKE DR

11/08/2022 SOCH JENNIFER L ROYAL HIGHLANDS UNIT 6 BLK 421 LOT 8 60.67X72.67 \$ 349,497 SF SINGLE FAMILY RES. DETACH 12499 HARRIS HAWK RD

11/08/2022 BASSETT ALLEN ROYAL HIGHLANDS UNIT 8 BLK 624 LOT 6 52'4" X 72'4" \$ 300,000 SF SINGLE FAMILY RES. DETACH 16048 MOUNT SPARROW RD

11/08/2022 TRAMUTOLO MARY ELLEN SPRING HILL UNIT 13 BLK 808 LOT 19 53.3X53.3 \$ 228,000 SF SINGLE FAMILY RES. DETACH 13477 TROLLMAN ST

11/08/2022 CORNWELL TROY H JR S330 FT OF W330 FT OF SW1/4 OF NE1/4 LESS R/W FOR CENTRALIA 75.17X89 \$ 265,000 SF SINGLE FAMILY RES. DETACH 12159 CENTRALIA RD

11/08/2022 SEDA-RIVERA SANDRA L TRAILS AT RIVARD PHS 1 2 & 6 LOT 109 89.25X68.67 \$ 417,000 SF SINGLE FAMILY RES. DETACH 02377 DOG LEG CT

11/08/2022 CARRASCO WILLIAM II ROYAL HIGHLANDS UNIT 9 BLK 173 LOT 9 58.67X64.67 \$ 284,035 SF SINGLE FAMILY RES. DETACH 09343 NODDY TERN RD

11/08/2022 WAL-MART STORES EAST LP N1100 FT OF A TR 857X2830 FT MOL IN E1/2 OF N3/4 AKA N1100 NA \$ 141,800 FS FIRE SPRINKLER 13300 CORTEZ BLVD

11/08/2022 STARYNSKA MARIYA SPRING HILL UNIT 3 BLK 140 LOT 2 56.5X56.67 \$ 180,000 SF SINGLE FAMILY RES. DETACH 07399 SKYLARK DR

11/07/2022 JOSEPH GEORGES JUNIOR OAKWOOD ACRES LOT 90 AKA A PAR IN CLASS I 149.7X78.10 \$ 1,046,000 SF SINGLE FAMILY RES. DETACH 04935 JUMPER LOOP

11/07/2022 KEHLER BRITNEY SE1/4 OF NW1/4 ORB 937 PG 1473 & THAT PT OF SW1/4 OF NE1/4 74.33X69 \$ 455,969 SF SINGLE FAMILY RES. DETACH 04025 MAJESTIC OAK LN

11/07/2022 SPORTCLIPS COASTAL LANDING LOT 1 60X20 \$ 175,000 CD COMMERCIAL REMODELING 07065 COASTAL BLVD