



Kansas ends 18-loss streak to Sooners

SPORTS, 1C

Buy One Get One Free (select styles) Expires 11/30/23

Enter to win weekly free shoe giveaway

Fall Savings!



SHOE WAREHOUSE

239-643-2559

shoewarehousenaples.com

933 Airport Rd. S, Naples, FL 34104

Naples Daily News

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2023 | NAPLESNEWS.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Former commission candidate fined

Oppenheimer settles over ethics violations

Laura Layden
Naples Daily News
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

A state commission has approved a settlement with a former candidate for the Collier County Commission to resolve ethics violations.



Oppenheimer

The Florida Commission on Ethics approved a joint stipulated settlement with William "Bill" Oppenheimer at its last board meeting, held Oct. 20.

An investigation by its staff confirmed that Oppenheimer provided inaccurate and incomplete financial information in his qualifying forms to run for office last year.

With the settlement, he agreed to pay a \$1,500 civil penalty.

When Oppenheimer filed to run as a write-in candidate for Collier County's District 4 seat in 2022, he closed the August primary to all voters not registered as Republican, or roughly half of all eligible voters in that district. Some political observers viewed it as a calculated move to help his ally win, using a known loophole.

Two longtime critics of the loophole

— from Florida's east coast — took note of the goings-on, digging into Oppenheimer's filings, then lodging a formal complaint based on what they found, triggering the investigation by the Ethics Commission.

The complainants accused Oppenheimer of leaving out and obscuring information about his assets, liabilities and income. That included everything

See **OPPENHEIMER**, Page 9A

Community honors 80 domestic violence victims



Angelina and Jayden Candia, the sisters of Laura Candia, 20, attend a candlelight vigil held by the Shelter for Abused Women & Children at the Immokalee Library on Thursday evening. Laura Candia was shot and killed on Sept. 16 in what authorities say was a domestic violence incident. ANDREW WEST/THE NEWS-PRESS

Event seeks to raise awareness, provide help to women

Emma Behrmann
Naples Daily News
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

Through tears, Laura Candia's great-grandmother recalled the young single mother as a bright light, a circle of luminaria, flickered in the dark as tribute to domestic assault victims.

In Collier County, Candia, 20, of Immokalee, is the 80th documented victim of domestic violence homicide

since the Shelter for Abused Women & Children Naples began keeping records in 1993, said Linda Oberhaus, CEO of the shelter.

As Candia's grieving family members, with five generations represented, wore black T-shirts featuring her photo and the words "in loving memory," they held lit candles and leaned on each other.

The shelter held a vigil Thursday in front of the Immokalee Branch Library

to remember Candia and the 79 other victims in the county during National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

"It is vital that we, as a community, speak out and work to raise awareness for services that help victims before they become a statistic," Oberhaus said.

The shelter never got to meet Candia; she was killed by her abuser Sept.

See **VIOLENCE**, Page 9A

Israeli ground invasion pushes deeper into Gaza

Russia blames riot on outside interference

John Bacon, Trevor Hughes and Jorge L. Ortiz
USA TODAY

Israel appeared to begin blocking exit routes from northern Gaza on Sunday as its ground invasion of the occupied enclave intensified amid pockets of resistance from Palestinians, who refused repeated Israeli orders to evacuate.

Fierce clashes took place as Israeli forces penetrated deep into northern Gaza near Beit Lahia, a city of 90,000, the Palestinian media outlet Al-Ayyam reported. The Israeli military said its forces were pushing into the territory, encountering militants attempting to launch anti-tank missiles and mortar shells. Dozens of the militants were killed, the Israelis said.

"The objectives of this war require a ground operation," Israeli military chief of staff Herzi Halevi said. "The

See **GAZA**, Page 4A



Buildings lie in ruins Monday in Gaza City's western Tal al-Hawa district as battles between Israel and Hamas continue for the fourth week.

KHODER AL-ZAANOUN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



MIROMAR OUTLETS®

CAR COOL CRUISERS SHOW

NOV 5, 11 A.M. TO 2 P.M. near WINK PLAYLAND



UP TO 70% OFF RETAIL • (239) 948-3766 • MiromarOutlets.com • I-75, Exit 123, Corkscrew Road/Miromar Outlets Blvd. in Estero, between Naples & Fort Myers

Get the latest news, sports and more
See today's top headlines, local breaking news, area scores, things to do and subscriber exclusives at naplesnews.com.

Subscriber-only eNewspaper
Use your computer or app to access your paper online. Subscribers also get access to USA TODAY's eNewspaper, plus updated news and sports Extra sections.

Volume 100th | No. 98
Subscribe 800-404-7343
©2023 \$3.49



7 49377 10050 9

Violence

Continued from Page 1A

16, she said.

“Had Laura known about the Shelter’s services, we may have been able to help her safety plan and/or provide safe shelter for herself and her daughter,” shelter spokesperson Kaydee Tuff said.

The day she was killed

While Candia and her grandmother Olga Welch drove in Immokalee in broad daylight on Sept. 16, Michael Maldonado, 24, of Fort Myers, the father of Candia’s daughter, struck their car with his and caused them to crash, according to court records.

Maldonado then shot into their car multiple times, leaving Welch, who was driving, severely injured with 17 bullet wounds and Candia dead, reports from Collier County Sheriff’s Office say.

Collier County deputies found Maldonado shortly after the incident. They found the suspected vehicle, and it contained several shell casings inside, records state.

He was brought to the Immokalee Substation and booked into jail, where he remains.

He pleaded not guilty Oct. 16, and his next court date is Dec. 7.

Who Laura leaves behind

The shooting took away a 3-year-old girl’s mother and left a family overwhelmed with grief.

Welch, who attended the vigil, is recovering from 17 bullet wounds she sustained after the crash. She relied on a walker to move around.

Candia leaves behind her father, Hienio Candia, mother, Maggie Montez,



People gather at Thursday’s candlelight vigil for Laura Candia, who was fatally shot in what authorities say was a domestic violence incident. A suspect, Michael Maldonado, the father of Candia’s child, is in jail. Her grandmother, Olga Welch, was riding in a car with her when the attack occurred and was shot multiple times. ANDREW WEST/THE NEWS-PRESS

stepmother, Maria Lara, daughter, Melanie Maldonado, and three siblings, Nathan Candia, Angelina Candia and Jayden Candia, according to her obituary from Brister Funeral Home.

Domestic violence services available

The Shelter provides a 24-hour crisis line at 239-775-1101, two 60-bed emergency shelters, nine transitional living cottages and 30 programs and services,

which are all free.

Between 2022 and 2023, the shelter served 1,698 survivors of domestic violence and provided 47,395 bed nights of shelter.

It also provides prevention programs in all Collier County schools. The goal is to end the cycle of abuse and stop violence before it begins, Tuff said.

Educational speakers and training classes also raise awareness on how to identify and report domestic violence and human trafficking in the communi-

ty.

“It is imperative that we stand as a community, raise awareness, know the signs and support the resources that will ultimately end domestic violence in Collier County,” Oberhaus said. “By not speaking out, our silence condones it.”

Emma Behrmann is a breaking news reporter for Naples Daily News and The News-Press. You may reach her at emma.behrmann@naplesnews.com.

Oppenheimer

Continued from Page 1A

from failing to identify the street addresses for his principal home and rental property to making vague references to investments and a pension plan as sources for his income.

Multiple errors, omissions on financial forms

The Ethics Commission’s investigation confirmed multiple errors and omissions in his required financial disclosures.

One of the biggest discrepancies: He reported a net worth of more than \$8 million, but listed assets of less than \$3.1 million, far less.

During the investigation, Oppenheimer admitted that he overestimated his net worth by more than \$5 million, but stated that he didn’t recall how he arrived at the higher number.

His omissions included leaving out the addresses of his principal residence at the time and of two rental properties in Connecticut. He also failed to report money held in several bank accounts and to fully disclose all of the sources for his income, including his deceased wife’s pension.

While he wasn’t required to provide information on the amount of his credit card debt, he overstated it. He failed to provide an explanation for the discrepancy during the investigation.

In an email, Oppenheimer declined to comment on the settlement.

He has not spoken publicly about the ethics complaint, or the investigation.

Oppenheimer no longer lives in Collier County, having sold his home in the Moorings and moved to Jacksonville.

Previously, he served as president of the anti-abortion group Action for Life Inc. in Naples. He led a grassroots effort to ban abortions within city limits, which failed to win support from the City Council.

He also ran for the Naples City Council, unsuccessful-

fully.

Longtime Collier County commissioner unseated

The County Commission race that prompted the investigation included incumbent Penny Taylor, Dan Kowal, Daija Hinojosa and Michelle McLeod. All Republicans, they had campaigned and raised money for at least a year before the primary election.

After entering the race, Oppenheimer didn’t spend any money on his campaign nor receive any donations. He never set up a website, nor did he attend any voter forums as a candidate or put out any campaign signs.

On Aug. 25, two days after the primary, Oppenheimer withdrew from the race, but he’d already influenced the outcome: Kowal unseated Taylor, a longtime commissioner, in a sweeping victory.

After the win, Kowal told the Naples Daily News he didn’t encourage Oppenheimer to run or to withdraw from the race.

The day after Kowal won the primary election, Oppenheimer took to Facebook to congratulate him and celebrate the downfall of Taylor.

An apology and request for leniency

In his written response to the Florida Ethics Commission during its investigation, Oppenheimer acknowledged he didn’t thoroughly read the instructions on the financial disclosure form and “only breezed through them” before submitting it to the Supervisor of Elections Office, without any guidance or help.

He said that shortly after filing the form, he suffered a stroke, leaving him partially paralyzed and forcing him to move to the Jacksonville area and to sell his home in Naples so he could live closer to family and the Mayo Clinic.

When the Ethics Commission first notified him of the allegations brought against him, Oppenheimer responded with a written apology and explanation that attempted to clarify his financial information in great detail.

He admitted his many mistakes and poor penmanship on the form in question and asked for leniency. In his defense, he also pointed out the county’s Supervisor of Elections never found fault with his filings – and that he personally was “not in the habit of filing these papers on a regular basis.”

“At this point, I can only apologize and say that there was no bad intent on my part,” Oppenheimer told the commission.

Considering his health, he added that he could “honestly guarantee” he would never run for office again in Florida.

EARLY BIRD SPECIAL

GET 25% OFF YOUR ENTIRE CHECK BETWEEN 4-5:30PM

CANNOT BE COMBINED WITH OTHER DISCOUNTS OR PROMOTIONS

LAMORAGA
MEDITERRANEAN FUSION + TAPAS

LAMORAGARESTAURANT.COM | 239.331.3669 | INFO.NAPLES@LAMORAGARESTAURANT.COM
3936 NORTH TAMiami TRAIL, NAPLES 34103 OFF US 41 ONE MILE SOUTH OF PINE RIDGE
ND-37893956

FOOT PAIN?

WE KEEP YOU RUNNING!
Serving Southwest Florida Since 2005

Board Certified in Reconstructive Ankle Surgery. Board Certified in Foot Surgery.

SAME/NEXT DAY APPOINTMENTS
239-241-9656

SCHEDULE ONLINE
www.NaplesPodiatrist.com

FAMILY FOOT & LEG CENTER
• WE KEEP YOU WALKING •

- DR. KEVIN LAM, FACFAS, DABLES DABPS NAPLES**
730 Goodlette Road, Ste #102
- DR. LAUREN PELUCACCI, DPM NAPLES**
730 Goodlette Road, Ste #102
- DR. W. DREW CHAPMAN, AACFAS NAPLES**
12250 Tamiami Trail East, Ste #101
- DR. JAKE R. POWERS, DPM NAPLES**
84011 Avenue North, Ste #3
- DR. LORI DEBLASI, DPM, FACFAS ESTERO**
21401 Corkscrew Village Lane, Ste #4
- DR. KARAN MALANI, PA NAPLES**
730 Goodlette Rd, Ste #102