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Woodmere Dr.

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Secretary
Pampas Dr.

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Pampas Dr.

Come Meet Justin Castanza – Our New District 3 County Commissioner



You may have run into him at a Habitat Build or coordinating the moving parts of an East Family YMCA Wing Festival, or at one of the last 20 MLK Days of Service. Maybe you know him from the Jimmy Hitchcock Committee, as a trainer at a Camp Chandler teen event, or as a Kiwanis Club member. He may have impacted your life while serving on the East YMCA Board of Directors - or your student's life as principal, and now president, of Montgomery Catholic Preparatory Schools. But even if you've never met him, Justin Castanza has surely affected the quality of

your community life if you live in Montgomery. And you do...

"His contributions defy logic," Sam Adams, vice president of youth development for the YMCA of Greater Montgomery said in 2019 when Castanza was named Person of the Year by the YMCA. "He's a person that gives 300%. He gives 100% at his career with Catholic, he gives 100% to his family, and he gives 100% ... to (Montgomery's) young people."

But Castanza jokes that he wasn't the kind of kid people would expect to become a youth leader, much less the principal of his high school alma mater. "As my dad likes to say, I'd been in the principal's office a long time. I just finally landed in the right seat."

Castanza credits his high school counselor for sending him on his leadership journey through Camp Chandler programs, although his parents, Mike and Diane, surely laid the groundwork for his lifetime service attitude. It wasn't long before he became a camp counselor, then camp director, fitting in BA and MS degrees from Mississippi State University along the way. He was only in his 20's when he was running all the programs for the 100-acre camp and serving over 15,000 people a year. He brought in a Christian Leadership Conference, started both the "Adopt A Child" and SWAT (Servants Working All Together) programs, the latter training young leaders to be future camp counselors. He and his wife, Meghan, got married at Chandler and welcomed their first child there. Now the father of three, his volunteer work for the YMCA keeps him Chandler connected. He still assists with first aid, CPR and lifeguard trainings.

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Woodmere Neighborhood Association Meeting

Thursday, May 8, 2025 6:30 p.m.

Museum of Fine Arts Auditorium

Guest Speaker: Honorable Justin Castanza
District 3 County Commissioner

(Continued from page 1 -District 3 County Commissioner Justin Castanza)

When he left his job as camp director to become a math teacher at Catholic High, Castanza probably thought his 100-hour work weeks were over, but a 40-hour job is simply not in his nature. He tacked on youth ministry leader for two Catholic parishes where he would lead weekly get-togethers for up to 100 kids, along with retreats and pilgrimages to Italy, Guatemala, and the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. And as was true of Castanza's Chandler rise through the ranks, he quickly advanced from math teacher to Dean of Students to principal of both the middle and high schools at Catholic. In 2020, he was named president of all four K3-12 schools in the system.

"Justin is the Energizer Bunny," former president Anne Ceasar says. A colleague teacher, Sinead Turner, agrees: "Justin is a leader who tirelessly embodies the idea of excellence, is intentional, and works to support students and teachers in their efforts to attain that ideal."

Last year, Castanza was elected by us to be our District 3 County Commissioner. He listed his top goals in the position as building a community that will thrive, keeping taxes low, recruiting jobs and ensuring public safety. "We need to engage the community, tackle difficult conversations, and commit to the future," he said during the campaign.

So, come to meet Justin Castanza on May 8th – and ask him how he plans to do all that. Then ask him how we can help!

Do You Stoop?

Treasure hunting in curbside trash piles, known as "stooping" in NYC, is one way to expand your yard enhancements. One man's garbage is another man's treasure, as they say, and it's often true. People have used old tires for flowerpots and rope swings since the first tire graveyard was born.

Get creative! An abandoned headboard can make an interesting garden edge or plant background. Two abandoned headboards can anchor your firewood pile or define a V-shaped flower zone while trashed dresser drawers make wonderful vegetable starter boxes. What's more, these give you the advantage of being able to move your tender seedlings for better lighting conditions or into a protected space if frost threatens. If you knock out the bottom panel of the drawers, you have mini garden plots that allow the veggie roots to grow down into your natural soil while defining each vegetable or flower's plot.



Don't overlook large window or photo frames either. Just spray paint, staple gun some chicken wire to the back, and anchor in place for an interesting trellis. Old pantry racks can make beautiful, layered plant stands and with a deep enough shelf in the middle, you've got a potting table.

So many things can be turned into novelty pots or plant holders. That old chair whose seat is missing just cries out for new use – so why not stick a boring plastic pot of begonias and ivy in that seat hole and train the ivy up the chair back for good measure. Almost any kind of container, from an old boot to a toy box can become whimsical garden art. Just be sure to drill some drainage holes if needed so water won't build up and cause root rot for its new residents.

Help give our garbage landfills a rest. Put a little junk to good use in your yard!

Calling All Candidates

The August WNA General Meeting is the deadline to nominate someone to help run our illustrious organization. The offices currently open for nominations included some big ones: President, 1st Vice President, and Secretary. The election of these important roles won't be until November, but our bylaws require the nominations be in by August. The candidates will need to commit to two-year terms.

It falls to the President to call all the Board, Executive Committee, and General Meetings, as well as to appoint committee chairs with Board guidance. The president is the official representative of WNA – our face in the community – and interacts with City and County officials on our behalf.

The 1st VP is the President's proxy and is called to be on duty to assist all committees as needed. This is the President's "go-to" assistant.

The Secretary takes on the recording duties for all the meetings and makes sure that the minutes are safely stored for future reference. Making sure all the players are informed of meetings at least a week prior also falls on the Secretary's shoulders, so coordination with the Media Committee is paramount.

All the officers must be ready to roll up their sleeves for any standing committee that calls upon them. They are the glue that holds the rest of us together. They and the other Directors of the organization meet monthly for about an hour.

In addition, a Zone Coordinator is needed for Zone 6. This position will not be filled by the general election but falls to the Board of Directors to select, so they are seeking a volunteer who is willing to be the liaison between them and the Block Captains. This is primarily an information relay position so that committee members can act effectively in their roles. It's a great way to get to know your more immediate neighbors.

A volunteer Street & Sidewalk Chair is also needed. Here's a chance to oversee the upkeep and maintenance of our neighborhood's common areas. This Chair rubs elbows with appropriate City departments to make a bigger impact on our local quality of life.

Finally, WNA has an opening for a Media Chair. This should be a person who likes social media, enjoys writing and isn't afraid to tackle technical issues to get effective communication out to the rest of us. It's a role that would look great on a work resume or college application! What's more, the Media Chair gets to interact with everybody on the Board and in the Association itself to the extent needed or chosen.

So, ask not what WNA can do for you. Ask what you can do for your neighbors. Come to one of the monthly Board meetings to get a sense of what's needed, what's possible, and what's in the works now. Board meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month and are open to everyone. We'd love to have you join us. Feel free to bring cookies!

Membership Has Rewards

“The purpose of this Association shall be to promote the welfare of its members and to preserve Woodmere as an attractive residential area.”

WNA’s annual Membership Drive traditionally ends in May and our president, Jimmy Gunn, is encouraging us to follow up with our neighbors who haven’t yet joined. Membership numbers impress the City administrators and give us more influence when we’re pointing out neighborhood needs like road repairs and crime prevention. And to help us draw our neighbors in, a new perk was announced at the April Board meeting.



Every WNA Zone winner of the Yard of the Month (from April through August 2025) will now be entered in a drawing for a \$50 gift card! Two prizes will be drawn but the winners can only collect in person at the August WNA general meeting.

Yards of the Month are selected monthly by the six Zone coordinators, each selecting winners for their own zones. Anyone in the zone can nominate a yard to them, and there’s no requirement that the “yard person” be the actual owner of the yard. We have many renters in Woodmere, and many are responsible for the yard maintenance. Winners are chosen based on the care, upkeep, and interesting features reflected. No expensive plants or fancy plots are required – just intentional and consistent attention to details, like curb edging and bush trimming. Of course, colorful flowers and interesting yard art never hurt!

Our six zones are illustrated on the website (woodmeremontgomery.org) and in the WNA Handbook So your mission, should you decide to accept it, is to walk around your zone and check out the yards. Say hi to a neighbor along the way and introduce yourself. Then, nominate someone’s curb appeal to your zone coordinator who can also be found at the WNA website. It’s a great way to thank them for keeping your property values up by keeping their (or their landlord’s) property values up. And be sure to join us in August to see who won!

Financial Report

	January	February	March	2025	Budget
Beginning Balance	17,336.11	17,238.33	17,453.05		
Income					
Membership Dues (Includes Online Dues)	663.12	249.72	103.68	1,016.52	3,038.24
Donations	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cameras & Speed Humps	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Handbooks	9.10	15.00	0.00	24.10	385.00
Total Income	672.22	264.72	103.68	1,040.62	3,423.24
Expenses					
Newsletter/Mailouts	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,000.00
Flock Safety Cameras	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Flags	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Meeting Rooms	770.00	0.00	0.00	770.00	720.00
Printing Handbooks	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Website	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	141.00
Signs & Repairs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Postage	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
PO Box Rental	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	232.00
Admin Expenses	0.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	330.24
Total Expenses	770.00	50.00	0.00	820.00	3,423.24
Ending Balance	17,238.33	17,453.05	17,556.73		

2025 Members	51	57	60		
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Notes to the Financial Report:

- 1 \$12,000 of the balance is reserved to pay for Flock safety cameras.
- 2 Membership dues were raised to \$35 starting in 2025.
- 3 Total memberships in 2024 were 92.

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Website:
www.woodmeremontgomery.org.

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