

Aldersgate Methodist Church prepares for Pumpkin Palooza



PHOTOS BY CAL CARY / THE SUMTER ITEM

USC Sumter Fire Ants baseball and softball players help Aldersgate United Methodist Church on Alice Drive in Sumter unload pumpkins for its pumpkin patch on Tuesday.

Take your pick of 4,500 pumpkins

BY CAL CARY
cal@theitem.com

The lawn at Aldersgate United Methodist Church is the familiar color of orange this time of year. Pumpkins litter the church grounds and are for sale to the community.

This will be Aldersgate's 22nd year of the pumpkin patch, and more than 4,500 pumpkins are available. Aldersgate partners with the USC Sumter Athletics Department to unload pumpkins from a truck each year. This year, the USC Sumter baseball and softball teams stacked up pumpkins while UMC cooked and served food to those who helped.

"The Sumter Fire Ants are one of the key components for us being able to pull this off every year; they give up them-

selves, their time, and you hear the enthusiasm they bring to the table," said Mark Cox, member of Aldersgate United Methodist Men.

In addition, the church puts together an event called the Pumpkin Palooza on Oct. 8 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. It is inviting the community to attend the fair that will have bounce houses, crafts, a DJ, face painting and yard games such as corn hole. The fair will have free admission, and three food trucks will be present for visitors to purchase food.

The pumpkins are grown at Navajo reservations and are shipped to Sumter. Aldersgate takes the proceeds from selling the pumpkins and gives the money back to the Pumpkin Patch Organization. Any leftover money goes toward the community to Sumter United Ministries and Sumter Christian Charities. Last year, Aldersgate raised \$13,500.

SEE PUMPKINS, PAGE A8



Tri-county weathers wind, rain, outages from storm

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Strong winds, heavy rain, fallen tree branches and power outages were some of the outcomes from Hurricane Ian on Friday.

South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster held a briefing on Hurricane Ian at 12:30 p.m., where National Weather Service COO John Murphy said Hurricane Ian's landfall was imminent.

It was updated as a Category 1 hurricane Friday morning, and Ian had already affected South Carolina's coast throughout the morning, Murphy said. A tornado watch was in effect in the northeast of the state.

According to Murphy, the hurricane's direction was to make landfall along the state's coast. He reported the Midlands would not be hit directly. However, he said Ian would bring tropical storm-force winds to inland regions.

As of 1:15 p.m., Hurricane Ian was off the coast of South Carolina and 130 miles southeast of Sumter traveling at about 14 mph. Heavy rainfall was expected throughout the day Friday with flash flooding possible in

SEE IAN, PAGE A10



RICHEL WEBER / THE SUMTER ITEM

Linemen work to restore power in Sumter during the storm on Friday afternoon.

Today's newspaper was written with news updates as of 2 p.m. Friday to print ahead of Hurricane Ian's arrival. Officials predicted the storm's worst effects were between 3 and 6 p.m. The Sumter Item worked ahead to ensure the Weekend Edition newspaper would be delivered to our readers. Hurricane Ian and other news updates throughout Friday afternoon and evening were published online at www.theitem.com to keep readers informed.



SHELBY GOULDING / THE SUMTER ITEM

Sumter Fire Department holds its first Sumter County Firefighters Awards Banquet with all volunteer firefighters for the first time since 2019 on Thursday night. Volunteers were recognized for their service to the community.

Sumter Fire Department volunteers gather for 1st awards banquet since COVID-19 pandemic

BY SHELBY GOULDING
shelbie@theitem.com

Although Tropical Storm Ian's winds grew stronger, canceling events left and right in the community, the Sumter Fire Department couldn't let a celebration go unrecognized. Not again.

On Thursday evening, the Sumter Fire Department held its first Sumter County Firefighters Awards Banquet with all of its volunteer firefighters

present for the first time since 2019 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"COVID has interrupted that for the last few years, and we've not been able to do it. Last year we actually divided it into districts," said Brian Christmas, assistant fire chief for the fire department. "This is the first year we've done that since COVID, and got everybody together."

SEE VOLUNTEERS, PAGE A10

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DEATHS, B5

Charlie Harris Jr.
Kevin Q. Epps
James McLeod
Linda Jane Lawhon

Clarence Johnson Jr.
Timothy Butler Cain Sr.
Henry Lee Rich
Mary Elizabeth Ham Burgess

WEATHER, A12

RAIN IS GONE

Warmer with sun and clouds on Saturday and mostly cloudy at night; low clouds Sunday.

HIGH 76, LOW 59

INSIDE

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SECOND FRONT

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In Ian's wake, worried families crowdsource rescue efforts

BY BEATRICE DUPUY
Associated Press

Many people whose loved ones stayed behind in the pathway of Hurricane Ian are crowdsourcing rescue efforts as they grapple with the helplessness of waiting and not knowing.

In TikTok videos and Facebook posts, families are sharing their desperate pleas and strangers are answering their calls, even as local officials urge people to use official channels for help.

Hannah Foltz had assumed her grandparents, Janet and Larry, evacuated from their mobile home in Naples. But when the 35-year-old in Indiana heard from her mother, she learned they had not only stayed but the water that flooded their home was almost chest deep with the fridge floating. Her 75-year-old grandmother didn't know how to swim.

"We were all in like pure panic mode, sitting in Indiana, crying, feeling helpless," Foltz said.

She turned to a Facebook group of more than 400,000 people, #HurricaneStrong.

"They are terrified, and both have health conditions," she posted in the group along with her grandparents' address.

She didn't expect for even one social media user to head out to her grandparents and report back so quickly. But that was followed by another good Samaritan and then two more.

"Knowing that there are people out there that just literally want to go help a complete stranger," she said. "That was just like a miracle."

An informal digital structure built on the backs of previous disasters was on full



COURTESY OF HEATHER DONLAN VIA AP

This image, posted on social media, shows flooding from Hurricane Ian in the home of Heather Donlan's father in Naples, Florida. Donlan said her social media post crowdsourced the person she holds responsible for saving her father's life as flooding inundated the 87-year-old's home.

display in the midst of Ian's fury. Users shared online forms to request and volunteer for rescues. Facebook groups sprung up with pleas for help, including phone numbers and addresses, and offers from volunteers to step in.

Authorities continue to urge Floridians to use official emergency channels, like 911, to report immediate distress, not social media, which can be unreliable and even put the good Samaritans who respond in danger. U.S. Coast Guard spokesman Erik Villa said that family members should try to get a hold of their loved ones and monitor the area they live in before calling emergency services.

Kingman Schuldt, greater Naples retired fire chief with the International Association of Fire Chiefs, said social

media users should also be discreet with how much public information they share about their loved ones online.

"Obviously, when you put a public request for help you have to be careful with how much you put out there because there are bad actors," he said.

The posts are pulling on heartstrings and driving some to rush in to help.

There was a brief moment Wednesday when Heather Donlan's 87-year-old father, Jack, called his daughter for what he thought would be the last time. A pipe had burst in his Naples home and water was coming in from the outside — sealing him inside.

Donlan, whose Naples home was also taking on water, had already dialed 911 about her dad and was told that rescuers would try to get to him, but the roads were impassable. There was no way she could reach him herself.

A firefighter friend recommended she share her post on Facebook and see if anyone in the area could come to her father's aid. Her father had already been in the water for hours and his phone was losing battery.

A local teacher and her sons walked through the water to get to Donlan's dad. They drove him to Donlan's home three miles away, and he was taken to the hospital for dehydration and a wound on his ankle.

"That social media post 100% saved his life," the 48-year-old Donlan said.

"The people here on the ground wouldn't have been able to help if it had not also been for the people willing to re-share, push and post when we didn't have service."

Sumter school board race series coverage held due to Ian

STAFF REPORT

We did not include Sumter school board race coverage in today's paper due to Hurricane Ian. At the beginning of the week, we will analyze the new District 3 race on Sumter School District's Board of Trustees. Then, regular Weekend Edition coverage of the school board races should continue next weekend.

CORRECTION

If you see a statement in error, email pressrelease@theitem.com.

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Hubert Graham Osteen II
36 W. Liberty St., Sumter, S.C. 29150
Jacqueline Brown Osteen
36 W. Liberty St., Sumter, S.C. 29150
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Study finds that climate change added 10% to storm's rainfall

BY SETH BORENSTEIN
AP Science Writer

Climate change added at least 10% more rain to Hurricane Ian, a study prepared immediately after the storm shows.

Thursday's research, which is not peer-reviewed, compared peak rainfall rates during the real storm to about 20 different computer scenarios of a model with Hurricane Ian's characteristics slamming into the Sunshine State in a world with no human-caused climate change.

"The real storm was 10% wetter than the storm that might have been," said Lawrence Berkeley National Lab climate scientist Michael Wehner, study co-author.

Forecasters predicted Ian will have dropped up to two feet of rain in parts of Florida by the time it stopped.

Wehner and Kevin Reed, an atmospheric scientist at Stony Brook University, published a study in Nature Communications earlier this year looking at the hurricanes of 2020 and found during their rainiest three-hour periods they were more than 10% wetter than in a world without greenhouse gases trapping heat. Wehner and Reed applied the same scientifically accepted attribution technique to Hurricane Ian.

A long-time rule of physics is that for every extra degree of warmth Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit), the air in the atmosphere can hold 7% more water. This week the Gulf of Mexico was 0.8 degrees warmer than normal, which should have meant about 5% more rain. Reality turned out to be even worse. The flash study found the hurricane dropped dou-



ASSOCIATED PRESS

A first responder with Orange County Fire Rescue makes her way through floodwaters looking for residents of a neighborhood needing help in the aftermath of Hurricane Ian on Thursday in Orlando, Fla. Climate change added at least 10% more rain to Hurricane Ian, a study prepared immediately after the storm shows.

ble that — 10% more rain.

Ten percent may not sound like a lot, but 10% of 20 inches is two inches, which is a lot of rain, especially on top of the 20 inches that already fell, Reed said.

Other studies have seen the same feedback mechanisms of stronger storms in warmer weather, said Princeton University atmospheric scientist Gabriel Vecchi, who wasn't part of the study.

MIT hurricane researcher Kerry Emanuel said in general, a warmer world

does make storms rainier. But he said he is uncomfortable drawing conclusions about individual storms.

"This business above very very heavy rain is something we've expected to see because of climate change," he said. "We'll see more storms like Ian."

Princeton's Vecchi said in an email that if the world is going to bounce back from disasters "we need to plan for wetter storms going forward, since global warming isn't going to go away."

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36 W. LIBERTY ST., SUMTER, S.C. 29150
(803) 774-1200

Vince Johnson
PUBLISHER
vince@theitem.com
(803) 774-1201

Kayla Green
EXECUTIVE EDITOR
kayla@theitem.com
(803) 774-1235

Rhonda Barrick
NEWSROOM MANAGER
rhonda@theitem.com
(803) 774-1264

Jill Burrus
CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER
CLASSIFIEDS, SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DELIVERY
jill@theitem.com
(803) 774-1212

Sandra Holbert
OBITUARY / NEWSROOM CLERK
sandra@theitem.com
(803) 774-1226

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Each year, Sumter Fire Department holds a banquet to honor the men and women that serve our community. Because of the pandemic, this banquet didn't happen in 2020 and was split into smaller events in 2021. On Thursday night, each station was brought together for the first time since 2019. The program was nearly canceled again as Sumter prepared for Hurricane Ian's arrival, but the department's command staff felt it was imperative to recognize these first responders after going so long without a proper banquet.



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U.S. long-term mortgage rates up for 6th week; 30-year at 6.7%

WASHINGTON (AP) — Average long-term U.S. mortgage rates rose this week for the sixth straight week, marking new highs not seen in 15 years, before a crash in the housing market triggered the Great Recession.

Mortgage buyer Freddie Mac reported Thursday that the average on the key 30-year rate climbed to 6.70% from 6.29% last week. By contrast, the rate stood at 3.01% a year ago.

The average rate on 15-year, fixed-rate mortgages, popular among those looking to refinance their homes, jumped to 5.96% from 5.44% last week.

Rapidly rising mortgage rates threaten to sideline even more homebuyers after more than doubling in 2022. Last year, prospective homebuyers were looking at rates well below 3%.

Freddie Mac noted that for a typical mortgage amount, a borrower who locked in at the higher end of the range of weekly rates during the past year would pay several hundred dollars more than a borrower who locked in at the lower end of the range.

Last week, the Federal Reserve bumped its benchmark borrowing rate

by another three-quarters of a point in an effort to constrain the economy, its fifth increase this year and third consecutive 0.75 percentage point increase.

Perhaps nowhere else is the effect of the Fed's action more apparent than the housing sector. Existing home sales have been in decline for seven straight months as the rising cost to borrow money puts homes out of reach for more people.

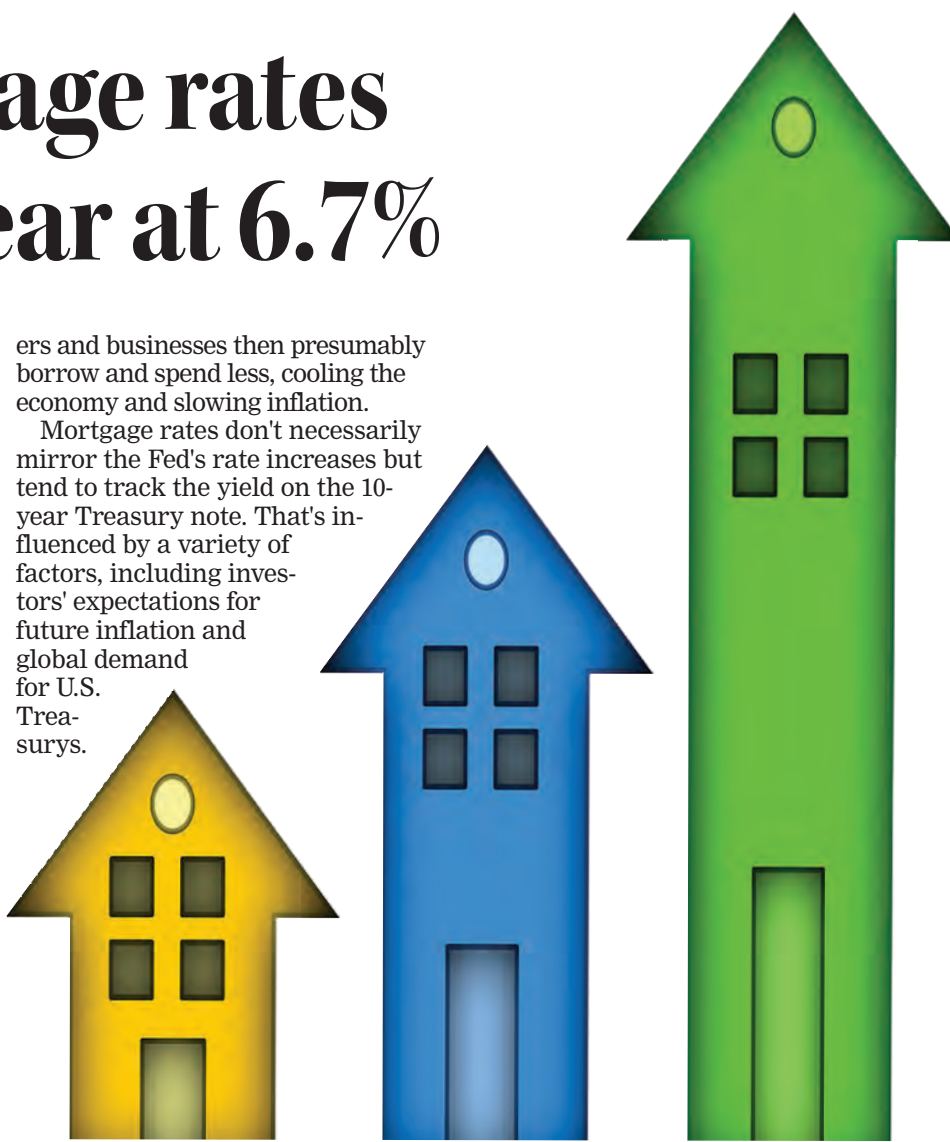
The government reported Thursday that the U.S. economy, battered by surging consumer prices and rising interest rates, shrank at a 0.6% annual rate from April through June. That was unchanged from the previous estimate for the second quarter.

Fed officials forecast that they will further raise their benchmark rate to roughly 4.4% by year's end, a full point higher than they envisioned as recently as June. And they expect to raise the rate again next year, to about 4.6%. That would be the highest level since 2007.

By raising borrowing rates, the Fed makes it costlier to take out a mortgage and an auto or business loan. Consum-

ers and businesses then presumably borrow and spend less, cooling the economy and slowing inflation.

Mortgage rates don't necessarily mirror the Fed's rate increases but tend to track the yield on the 10-year Treasury note. That's influenced by a variety of factors, including investors' expectations for future inflation and global demand for U.S. Treasuries.



Movies with Isaiah: Pugh masterful in 'Don't Worry Darling'

BY ISAIAH RIDLEY
Community contributor

Before I provide my thoughts on this film, I want to share a reminder that the views I have regarding any form of cinema are solely my opinion.

Before watching "Don't Worry Darling," I became strongly aware of the negative press — stories of behind-the-scenes drama between Shia LaBeouf and director Olivia Wilde resulting in him being removed from the project.

One of my rules of thumb is deliberately removing myself from the political and dramatic landscape that pertains to various themes, messages or beliefs that can generally transform into a problematic situation. My goal is simply providing an honest analysis on whether the story resonated with me on an emotional and thought-provoking level, thus allowing me to share it with all readers or viewers on my YouTube channel.

"Don't Worry Darling" is a psychological thriller directed by Olivia Wilde, whom you may be familiar with from the medical drama "House M.D.," "Cowboys and Aliens," "Tron: Legacy," "Richard Jewell" and many other films and TV series that made her a household name. The thriller stars Florence Pugh, Harry Styles, Chris Pine, Gemma Chan and Wilde. The story revolves around the character of Alice Chambers living the simple, perfect and ideal life with her husband, Jack, who happens to be massively dedicated to his employment and aspirations in becoming something greater and accepted socially.

Strange events that cause Alice to question the life she's living bring about significant disturbing and creepy revelations. Much like my review on "Barbarian," I am going to venture into the territory of being intentionally vague on the overall details of this film. I've always appreciated any



This image released by Warner Bros. Entertainment shows Florence Pugh in a scene from "Don't Worry Darling."

WARNER BROS. ENTERTAINMENT VIA AP

A REVIEW

story that initiates the purpose of thinking outside of the box and challenging my perspective on what's possible. As I watched the story unfold on Sunday evening, I found how unique and interesting it was in captivating me into this specific world.

If I were to give an accurate description of what "Don't Worry Darling" represents, I believe it would spoil the importance and the initial plot of the film. From a cinematography perspective, the film is vibrant in colors, sharp and precise, and figuratively sets the mood on how it transitions significantly from idealistic to intense atmosphere and questionable scenarios.

Florence Pugh delivers a masterful and realistic powerful performance as Alice, who is desperately searching for reasons regarding her existence. Not only is Pugh a beautiful woman, but she's immensely talented, too. I fully admit all scenes with her had me falling in love. She captures the mindset of a loving, dedicated and naïve housewife before quite easily transitioning into an emotional, fearful and determined character. I'm not overly familiar with Harry Styles other than knowing he was in the group One Direction and his brief appearance in Marvel's "Eternals."

Styles' performance I found to be very serviceable and believe he did a very good job with the material. There were scenes where it was obvious that he was attempting to match the energy of Pugh, and it wasn't catching on like it should've, although it didn't deter me from enjoying the overall quality of the story in the end. Chris Pine's performance as the mysterious Frank I found was equally disturbing and chilling. He's another actor I've grown to appreciate ever since I watched his portrayal as Captain Kirk from 2009's Star Trek reimagining. How he can easily slip into the role of a charming, intelligent and calmly deranged mystery man was quite frightening in my eyes.

"Don't Worry Darling" offers an interesting view into a unique world that I found is very reminiscent of the household neighborhood environment of, say, Tim Burton's "Edward Scissorhands." Essentially that's the most accurate wording that I could articulate in describing how to view their existence of the characters. Reviews from an assortment of critics indicated that this film was Wilde's attempt at deconstructing men or sending a message of an anti-male testament.

As someone who watched the story unfold, I personally didn't see that theme being present at all in the film. I fully believed that her inten-

tion was clearly indicating the ever-growing threat of anyone following blindly no matter the gender. At least that's how I perceived it, and maybe the initial message was simply hitting a bit too close to home for some viewers. Granted, it's not my place to solidly state what their issue is in the end. All have the right to like or dislike a film. In the end, all that matters is what that one person feels and what they got out of the story.

I do think "Don't Worry Darling" will find an audience because I find it to be a very

misunderstood and underrated form of cinema that needs to be watched with an open mind for it to be appreciated. There wasn't one moment when I found myself bored. In my opinion, I found how fascinating, different, emotional and thought provoking it truly was on the surface and within the story itself.

My final rating of "Don't Worry Darling" is another 10/10 and two thumbs up. I highly recommend this gem as a quality outing for the year. This film is not for children. There's intense sexual situations, violence, disturbing imagery, detailed innuendo and profanity that isn't suitable for them. A great film to watch with friends or on a date. Once again, I highly recommend "Don't Worry Darling."

Next review will be the 2022 horror film "Smile" that's being released Friday.

Isaiah Ridley works at Beacon Cinemas in Sumter. To watch his movie reviews online, find him @Izzy's Cinematic Escape on YouTube.



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Rules sought for 'gooning' — taking troubled teens to care against their will

BY JIM SALTER
Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Within what's known as the secure transport industry, it's called "gooning." Brawny men show up under the cover of darkness and force a teenager into a vehicle, taking them against their will to a boarding school, foster home or treatment center.

The process is typically initiated by parents at wit's end over what to do with a child they perceive as troubled. For the kids, it's the traumatic first leg of a journey to an unheard-of place, perhaps hundreds of miles away from home.

Teens who resist are often told, "We can do this the easy way or the hard way." They might be restrained with handcuffs or zip ties. They could be blindfolded or hooded. Though a secure transport company operator was indicted last month, criminal charges are rare because the little-known industry is virtually unregulated. In fact, the indictment was for violating a restraining order, not for the transport itself.

"Some of these stories are almost out of a Charles Dickens novel," said Rep. Ro Khanna, a California Democrat who is pushing for federal regulation of the secure transport industry.

Thousands of American teenagers end up annually in some form of congregate care facility or program aimed at dealing with issues ranging from behavioral problems to drug or alcohol abuse and crime.

In Missouri alone, more than 100 Christian boarding schools promise hope for wayward teens. In Utah, wilderness programs use a back-to-nature approach to try to help young people turn around their lives. Other kids end up in foster homes or treatment centers.

In many cases, the children don't want to leave home and won't go along with their parents. That's where secure transport companies come in.

At a cost often reaching thousands of dollars, parents hire one of the many companies specializing in transporting children to congregate care. Many have websites touting their approaches.

"My goal to your child is to start this transition with 100% honesty and integrity," Julio Sandoval of Safe, Sound, Secure Youth Ministries in Missouri posts on his site. "I am not of the ideology of necessarily making your child happy. Happiness will eventually arise when he finds himself growing as a young man and not a threat to himself and society."

Sandoval, 41, and the mother of a California teenager were indicted by a federal grand jury in August. The indictment said workers for Sandoval's company handcuffed the teenager at a store in Fresno, Cali-



This December 2020 photo shows Agape Boarding School in Stockton, Missouri. The speaker of the Missouri House is urging the U.S. attorney in Kansas City to shut down Agape Boarding School, accusing the Christian school of "what amounts to organized crime against children." The secure transport industry is known to take youth to the school.

'You pick up a kid in California, and he ends up in Missouri. If there is a problem or abuse, where does jurisdiction lie? This is an issue that squarely deals with interstate commerce. I do think we need a federal solution.'

UTAH STATE SEN. MIKE MCKELL

fornia, and drove him to the Agape Boarding School in Stockton, Missouri. The boy allegedly remained restrained for the entire 27-hour ride. Sandoval and the mother are accused of violating the boy's restraining order against her.

Sandoval was formerly a dean at Agape and now works at another Christian boarding school in Missouri, in addition to operating the transport company. Phone and email messages left with his company and Sandoval's lawyer weren't returned.

The secure transport industry is regulated in just one state — Oregon. That law, implemented in 2021, prohibits the use of hoods, blindfolds and handcuffs, among other things.

Other states may follow suit. Utah state Sen. Mike McKell, a Republican, and Missouri state Rep. Keri Ingle, a Democrat, plan to introduce legislation next session regulating the secure transport industry in their states. But advocates say

would provide for regulation of transport companies.

"I think people didn't realize the kind of trauma and abuse that was going on," Khanna said. "There was a sense they're going to be sent to be reformed, they're going to get tough love."

"But they didn't realize there was actually emotional abuse, sexual abuse, physical abuse taking place, and they didn't realize the trauma of kids being tricked to going there. What we end up doing is just creating more trauma for these kids."

David Patterson was one of those kids.

He was a high-achieving high school freshman — honor roll student, a pole vaulter on the track team. He said his parents became alarmed because he got drunk and smoked marijuana on Halloween, and because he told them he was gay.

On Father's Day 2002, two men showed up at the Pattersons' California home about 4 a.m. and roused him out of bed. They displayed the handcuffs they'd use if he didn't get into a taxi, which took the trio to the airport for the flight to Missouri. Within hours, Patterson was at Agape, where he spent about a year.

Patterson, now 35, said the trauma of being taken to the school stuck with him for a de-

cade. "When I would see yellow cabs, I would have panic attacks and episodes," he said.

The process is expensive. One company lists fees on its website showing that prices range up to \$2,895 plus airfare for two agents and the child; or \$300 to \$5,000 for kids who are driven to a facility, depending on the distance and other factors.

A data analysis earlier this year by American Public Media, *The Salt Lake Tribune* and KUER public radio in Salt Lake City found that Utah receives far more troubled teens than any other state. The analysis of the period from 2015 through 2020 showed about one-third of teens who crossed state lines for a youth treatment facility ended up in Utah. Virginia, Texas, Missouri and Iowa had the next-highest numbers.

Adding to concerns about the secure transport companies are accusations about some of the places the kids are taken.

At Agape, serving about 60 teenage boys, the school's former doctor was charged last year with multiple counts of sexual abuse of children, and five staff members are charged with abuse. The Missouri Attorney General's office asked a judge this month to shut down Agape, and Missouri Speaker of the House Rob Vescovo asked the U.S. Attorney in Kansas City to do the same. So far, the school remains open.

In nearby Humansville, Missouri, Circle of Hope, a Christian boarding school for girls, closed amid an investigation in 2020. The husband-and-wife co-founders were charged with 99 abuse counts last year, including sexual abuse.

The allegations of wrongdoing at Agape and Circle of Hope led Ingle to sponsor a measure signed into law last year that requires more rigorous oversight in Missouri.

Now, Ingle said she'll seek stricter regulations on companies transporting the kids against their will.

"It seems like something that's so dramatic — minors being taken in the middle of the night and whisked away to a facility. But this is something that has been happening in this state for decades now," Ingle said.

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1	17,667	1,473	737	680	340	1	25,142	2,096	1,048	967	484
2	23,803	1,984	992	916	458	2	33,874	2,823	1,412	1,303	652
3	29,939	2,495	1,248	1,152	576	3	42,606	3,551	1,776	1,639	820
4	36,075	3,007	1,504	1,388	694	4	51,338	4,279	2,140	1,975	988
5	42,211	3,518	1,759	1,624	812	5	60,070	5,006	2,503	2,311	1,156
6	48,347	4,029	2,015	1,860	930	6	68,802	5,734	2,867	2,647	1,324
7	54,483	4,541	2,271	2,096	1,048	7	77,534	6,462	3,231	2,983	1,492
8	60,619	5,052	2,526	2,332	1,166	8	86,266	7,189	3,595	3,318	1,659
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Ian's effects in southwest Florida are everywhere

BY TIM REYNOLDS

Associated Press

Hurricane Ian was over southwest Florida for only a few hours.

It will take months to clean up all the damage. Maybe longer. And some of the destruction can't be cleaned up at all.

From trees getting ripped out of the ground to signs being ripped apart, traffic lights crashing onto roadways and some buildings simply being destroyed, the impact was everywhere, and almost nothing was spared. The only difference between one place and the next was the severity of the problems.

"We will get through this," said Vice Mayor Richard Johnson of Sanibel, Florida. "And we'll come out on the other side better than we were going in."

Perhaps, but it will be a massive undertaking, ranging from the cosmetic to the crucial and everything in between.

Fort Myers Beach is, quite simply, destroyed. Businesses are gone. Jobs are obviously lost, at least temporarily. The cleanup will take weeks, and that will almost certainly have to precede any rebuilding efforts.

"Our entire staff is safe, and although the restaurant sustained incredible damage, the structure of the building is intact," the ownership of Nervous Nellie's, a seafood restaurant on the beach, said in a statement. "We are hoping to work our way through this and be back stronger than ever."

Across the region — Naples, Fort Myers, Sanibel — the magnitude of the damage is impossible to ignore. Along U.S. 41, the main road in the region, countless signs outside businesses are damaged, torn or just gone. The steel posts holding street signs in the ground are bent backward, no match for Ian's wind and force. The doors to storage-unit garages were twisted, sending the belongings inside some of the spaces



DOUGLAS R. CLIFFORD / TAMPA BAY TIMES VIA AP

Jake Moses, 19, left, and Heather Jones, 18, of Fort Myers, explore a section of destroyed businesses at Fort Myers Beach, Florida, on Thursday after Hurricane Ian.

flying into the air. The majority of traffic lights are out, wires dangling to the road below in some cases.

And in one instance, a metal traffic sign directing drivers toward Interstate 75 got crushed by an electronic traffic sign warning drivers about a closed lane.

"I've seen some things," said Clark Manchin, a construction project manager, as he assessed the mess. "I've never seen that."

Patience was quickly wearing thin. A 7-Eleven worker pleaded with people who filled her store: No \$20s, please. Small bills only. "If I run out of change, we have to close," she pleaded. There was no gas, no hot food and — because there was no running water — no coffee or bath-

rooms, either.

"I didn't take this as seriously as I should have," Mark Crow of Naples said. "I didn't stock up. I didn't board up. It's a mess, man. It's bad."

Much of the damage, thankfully, was just cosmetic. The 150-foot-high, 250-yard-deep nets ringing a Top Golf facility in Fort Myers were shredded, swaying in the afternoon breeze, not far from where a shredded American flag remained atop a pole at an office complex. At Florida Gulf Coast University, a set of bleachers — once on the sideline of the soccer field — blew halfway across the pitch and wound up crushing one of the goals.

Other damage was far worse. At an RV park in Fort Myers, debris from a

destroyed golf cart floated in deep standing water Thursday, long after the storm cleared. Downed power lines and the destroyed poles they were attached to blocked the entrance. And down the street was a barn-style building that had been under construction. Its walls collapsed, the roof pinning the shredded lumber on the ground.

The damage assessments, and the cleanup, are just beginning.

"We have to be patient," Sanibel council member John Henshaw said. "We have to start looking at where are we going to stay and live for a significant period of time. Don't know exactly what that is. We'll learn more as we go through this process."

Methane blast in Baltic Sea highlights global problem

NEW YORK (AP) — Scientists have been measuring the scale of the massive methane leak from damaged pipelines in the Baltic Sea, with the latest figures equating the levels of gas escaping to the annual emissions of some whole countries. It is thought to be the single biggest recorded gas leak over a short period of time.

But as serious as the methane escaping from ruptured pipelines may be, there are alarming incidents of massive methane releases around the world frequently.

Climate scientists have found that methane emissions from the oil and gas industry are far worse than what companies are reporting, despite claims by some major firms that they've reduced their emissions. That matters because natural gas, a fossil fuel widely used to heat homes and provide electricity, is made up of methane, a potent climate-warming gas. It escapes

into the atmosphere from well sites and across the natural gas distribution network, from pipelines and compressor stations, to the export terminals that liquefy gas to ship it overseas.

Scientists measuring methane from satellites in space have found that methane emissions from oil and gas operations are usually at least twice what companies reported, said Thomas Lauvaux, a scientist at University of Reims in France. In the Permian Basin, the largest oil and gas field in the United States, methane emissions were two to three times higher than what companies reported, he said.

"Everybody claims they have reduced their emissions, but it's not true," Lauvaux said.

Governments around the world, especially in the U.S., are also notorious for underestimating how much methane escapes into the air, said Cornell

University ecology and biology professor Robert Howarth, who studies natural gas emissions.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency uses voluntary self-reporting from industry instead of independent verification, which is what's needed, Howarth said.

Globally, Turkmenistan is among the worst offenders for releasing methane into the atmosphere, while Saudi Arabia is among the best at capturing it based on satellite observations, Lauvaux said. The U.S. falls somewhere in the middle with some companies capturing methane pretty well and others performing terribly.

Lauvaux and other scientists have observed more than 1,500 major methane leaks globally, and potentially tens of thousands of smaller leaks, using satellites, he said.

Most of the oil and gas industry's methane emissions come from pipelines and compressor

stations, according to Kayrros, a company which analyzes satellite data.

Many of those so-called leaks are not accidental; they occur when companies perform routine maintenance. For example, when a pipeline needs repair, operators need to bleed gas out so they can weld without an explosion. But instead of capturing the gas, most companies just open the pipeline and release the methane into the air, a practice which is legal in the U.S. and elsewhere. Some companies do capture methane instead of just releasing it, but more could adopt the practice, scientists said.

One way the oil and gas industry tries to reduce methane emissions is by flaring, or burning off, what they consider excess gas. Companies might employ a flare when they're drilling for oil, and gas comes up along with the oil. If they don't have the pipeline infrastructure

to transport it to customers, or if they've decided that gas, which is generally cheaper than oil, isn't worth the effort, they may send the gas up a flare stack to burn it off.

In Turkmenistan, scientists found flares malfunctioning for as long as three years. "This gas is just pouring into the atmosphere," Lauvaux said.

A study released Thursday by scientists at the University of Michigan found that flaring releases five times more methane in the U.S. than previously thought. Flares, they found, are often unlit or not working, allowing gas to escape directly into the atmosphere.

Reducing flaring or making sure flares are working properly would go a long way, said Genevieve Plant, a lead author of the study and climate scientist at University of Michigan.

"If we take action soon, it will have a large climate impact," Plant said.

South Korea, U.S. and Japan hold anti-North Korean submarine drills

BY HYUNG-JIN KIM

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea, U.S. and Japanese warships launched their first trilateral anti-submarine drills in five years on Friday, after North Korea renewed missile tests this week in an apparent response to bilateral training by South Korean and U.S. forces.

The North's recent five missile launches, the first such tests in a month, also came before and after U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris visited South Korea on Thursday and reaffirmed the "ironclad" U.S. commitment to the security of its Asian allies.

The one-day, three-nation training off the Korean Peninsula's east coast is meant to cope with a North Korean push to advance its ability to fire missiles from submarines, according to a South Korean navy statement.

North Korea has been building bigger submarines, including a nuclear-powered one, and testing sophisticated missiles that can be fired from them in recent years. That's an alarming development for its rivals because it's harder to detect underwater-launched missiles in advance.

South Korean officials said last weekend that they had detected signs that North Korea was preparing to test-fire a



The USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier, the largest craft in the photo, participates in a joint anti-submarine drill among South Korea, the United States and Japan in waters off South Korea's eastern coast in South Korea on Friday. South Korea, U.S. and Japanese warships launched their first trilateral anti-submarine drills in five years on Friday, after North Korea renewed missile tests this week in an apparent response to bilateral training by South Korean and U.S. forces.

SOUTH KOREA DEFENSE MINISTRY VIA AP

missile from a submarine.

Friday's drills involve the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan as well as U.S., South Korean and Japanese destroyers, the navy statement said. During the training, the navy ships from the three nations were to search and track a U.S. nuclear-powered submarine posing as a North Korean submarine while exchanging related information, according to media reports.

"We will respond and neutralize any forms of North Korean provocations in an overwhelming and decisive manner," Capt. Cho Chung-ho, commander of

South Korean navy troops who took part in the training, was quoted as saying in the statement.

In addition to its submarine-launched missiles, North Korea also has a variety of nuclear-capable missiles that place both the United States and its allies South Korea and Japan within striking distance. This year, North Korea has performed a record number of missile tests as it refuses to resume long-stalled nuclear diplomacy with the United States.

Friday's training comes as South Korea and Japan are looking to mend

ties frayed over history and trade disputes. The two Asian countries together host a total of 80,000 American troops. Earlier this week, the Reagan took part in joint U.S.-South Korean drills near the peninsula, the first such bilateral involving a U.S. aircraft carrier since 2017. The North's most recent missile tests happened on Thursday, hours after Harris left South Korea. During her visit to the Demilitarized Zone separating the two Koreas, Harris said: "In the South, we see a thriving democracy. In the North, we see a brutal dictatorship."



REFLECTIONS

Yellow Cab Co. drivers with their cars are, from left, Roy Windham, J.C. Grady, Lem Caughman, Barney Freeman, John Lee Scott, Iverson Johnson, Heyward Poole, Marion O. Baker (owner), Arthur Henderson (manager), Leo Garner, Eddie Brown, Joe Chandler, James Bradham, W.D. Bell, David Garner, Charles Johnson and Henry Sheriah.

SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTOS



Taxis provided an important service to Sumter residents

Reflections remembers the arrival of the Star and Yellow Cab companies to the Sumter community. These companies provided residents with a valuable



Sammy Way
REFLECTIONS

means of transportation, especially those without automobiles during World War II and for those visiting our city. In many instances, cabs provided assistance in emergency situations. This report illustrates the arrival of the most well-known companies and the individuals responsible for bringing them to Sumter. Information and photos used to prepare this report were found in *The Sumter Item* archives.



J.C. (Pee Wee) Rodgers, owner of Star Cab Co., stands near one of his cabs.

When Sumter residents called #1110, the number of Star Cab, they were assured of riding to their destination in autos which carried liability and property damage insurance. This transportation company offered the public a service upon which they could depend regardless of the occasion. The Star Cab Co. was organized in Sumter in June 1941 by J. C. (Pee Wee) Rodgers, a life-long resident of the Sumter community. Before starting his company, he worked for a year within other Sumter taxi firms. He began his business with only one cab; however, the business soon expanded to eight cabs operated by trained and competent drivers. Rodgers remained the sole owner and manager. He also owned and managed the Blue Circle, a popular night spot on Manning Avenue near the intersection of Sumter and Summerton highways. This gather-

ing spot was well-known for its cuisine and ample space for dining and dancing.

The Yellow Cab Co. also was established in Sumter in 1941 by Marion O. Baker. The company was organized initially with five cabs; however, this venture soon expanded to 15 cabs, the largest fleet of any taxi company in this city. During the Second World War, not all the calls from their customers could be addressed; since Sept. 1, 1941, Baker was unable to purchase any additional equipment not already licensed per government order.

One of the soundest policies of the company was the practice of also carrying liability and property damage insurance on every cab. This policy was started long ago and was responsible for the assurance that Sumter residents felt whenever they rode in a Yellow Cab. In addition, regular meetings of all Yellow Cab drivers were held to encourage saving of tires and economic use of gasoline. Baker governed his cabs to a 35-mile-an-hour speed limit to ensure observance of the government's request for slower driving. As proof of the company's safe driving record, a 10% reduction in the cab company's insurance premiums was granted. It is of interest to note that the manager of the company also held periodic meetings with state safety officials and drivers in order to promote accident prevention. Employees of the Yellow Cab Co. had an excellent record for war bond purchases and making regular investments from their weekly salaries.

Baker was associated with the taxi business since 1934, when he opened his first company in Gastonia, North Carolina. He would eventually acquire three cab companies and one bus line (The American Cab and Service Co. of Gastonia, The Yellow Cab Co. of Sumter, Myrtle Beach Transit Co. and the Yellow Cab Co. at Myrtle Beach). He operated a total of 40 cabs and two buses.

Baker was a native of Lee County, South Carolina, and had engaged in business in Gastonia for 20 years before making Sumter his home. The slogan of his successful enterprise was "Courteous and Dependable Taxicab and Bus Service."



The Star Cab Co. of Sumter's fleet of cabs and their drivers are seen March 14, 1943.



ABOVE: Yellow Cab Co. was established in Sumter in 1941.



LEFT: The Star Cab Co. bought this ad to be published on Christmas Eve 1952.

BELOW: This ad for Yellow Cab Co. in High Pitch Shaw Magazine in 1943 assured military members it would deliver them back to base.



Back on the Post on time
with **YELLOW CAB**

the Sumter ITEM YESTERYEAR

Navy club exhibits model Japanese sub; bike-a-thon supports St. Jude

75 YEARS AGO — 1948

March 9 - 15

• Charles H. Chewning, principal of the city's elementary schools and school chairman for the current Red Cross drive in the city, reported yesterday that the first week of the school drive for donations has netted approximately \$300. Chewning made his report at a meeting of the steering committee members of the Sumter Chapter of the American Red Cross.

• The program to be given when John Sebastian, harmonica artist, makes his first local appearance under the auspices of the Sumter Community Concert Association was announced by Harry Bryan, president of the association.

• Notice has been received that the remains of Technical Sgt. Lewis W. Phillips will soon arrive in the United States. He was a native of Sumter, where he finished high school and then attended the College of Charleston. Technical Sgt. Phillips was 34 years old when he was killed at Bungay, England, on his 36th mission. He was a radio and radar operator on a B-25.

• The Sumter Y Midgets and Juniors split a twin bill with the Junior Optimists teams of Columbia in the Columbia YMCA gym. The Optimists Midgets won a 21-19 victory in the final seconds of the game. The Sumter Juniors won their game by only a two-point margin with only a minute to go.

• Tony Bowman, Laddie Owens and Poss Parham, Edmunds High School seniors, spoke to the Lions Club. Many Lions and visitors present said it was one of the most enjoyable and instructive programs given this year. The boys told of their daily class schedule, chapel activities and student council responsibilities. Miss Billie True Haddon, a senior at Edmunds High, also gave several Marimba selections.

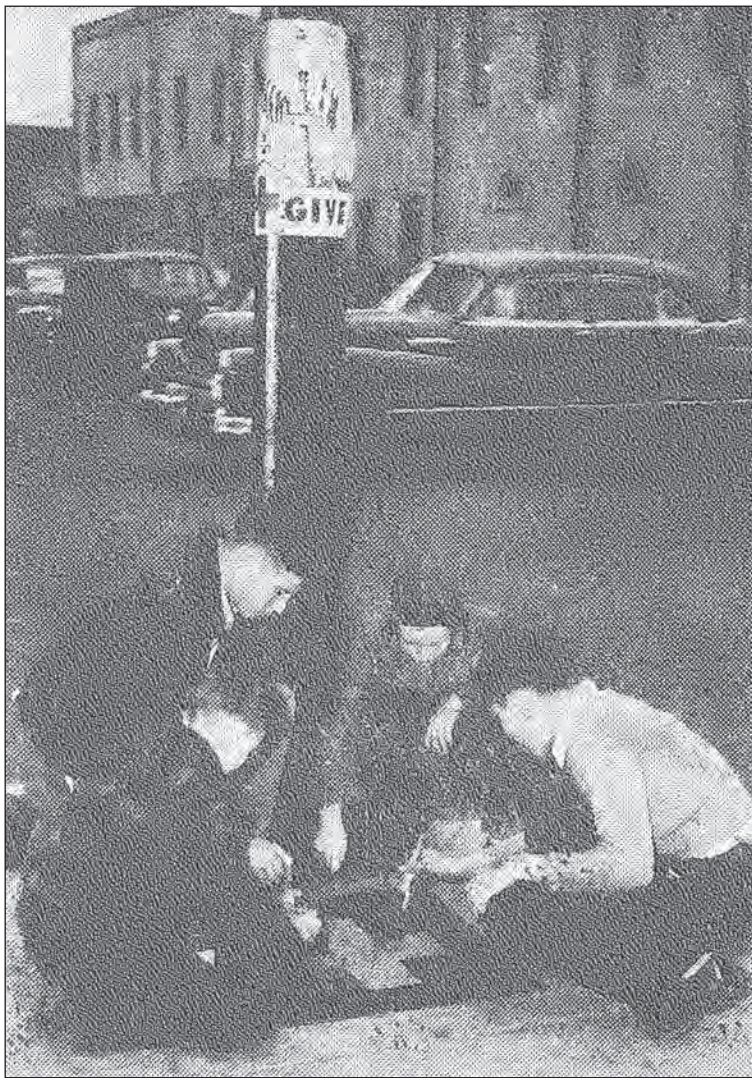
• Leonard Humphries, Gus Pringle and Jimmy Potter were crowned free throw champions in their respective divisions at the YMCA. Humphries sank 17 out of 25 to lead the Midgets, Kenny Rosefield came second with 16, Mike Kelley was third with 13, and John Duffie Jr. sank 12 to take fourth place.

• The John Dargan Music Club, which is composed of the pupils of Mrs. John K. Frierson and their parents, gave a recital at Hillcrest High School. The first, second and third grades were in costume and played in the rhythm band. The other students played individually.

• Working directly with children of preschool age, 11 Winthrop college home economics students are teaching during the present six-week period in the nursery school on the campus of women. Provided as a laboratory for working out problems of family relationships and child care and development, the nursery school offers research opportunities for classes in health, education and psychology.

• A 4-H Club tractor maintenance program to train older farm boys in the more efficient use and maintenance of farm tractors has been planned, according to M.C. McKenzie, Clemson Extension agricultural engineer. The program is designed to increase the skill of the club members in operating tractors — the key machine on the farm. McKenzie emphasizes that it is a program on better care and not a program on repair of tractors.

• Lulu L. Harvin was elected president of the Pilot Club of Sumter at a business meeting of the club held at the community room. Marjorie Knox, incumbent president, presided at the meeting, which also witnessed the following elections: Mrs. Julian Chandler, first vice president; Annie Lee Blackmon, record-



SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTO

Sumter Boy Scouts pitch in to help the local Red Cross chapter in its drive for donations March 17, 1948. The boys shown above are painting a red cross on a corner of Main and Liberty streets. From left are James Medlin, Fernie Walker, Samuel Cook and Bobby Lee. Boys of Troop 33, sponsored by the local post of the VFW, under the direction of Scoutmaster Cody Palmer, put up appropriate posters on light and telephone poles throughout town. Troop 39, sponsored by Post 15 of the American Legion, painted red crosses on Main Street corners.

ing secretary; Mrs. Marion Curtis, treasurer; and Mrs. C.D. Brunk, corresponding secretary.

• Many helpful suggestions from Clemson poultry specialists are given in the 1948 Yearbook of the South Carolina Poultry Improvement Association. This association is the official agency authorized by the Bureau of Animal Industry, USCA, to conduct poultry improvement work in South Carolina under the national poultry improvement plan.

• The Navy Club of U.S.A. now has on exhibition one of its mobile units consisting of one of the latest models of a captured Japanese one-man suicide submarine. The exhibit can be seen at the corner of Main and Liberty streets. There is no admission charge. However, voluntary donations are gratefully accepted and funds so raised help the Navy Club of U.S.A. carry on their extensive welfare and rehabilitation program.

50 YEARS AGO — 1972

Nov. 16 - 22

• Antique airplanes and aerobatics will be among the attractions flying enthusiasts of all ages may look forward to at the Sumter Jaycees' Air Show at Sumter Municipal Airport. The proceeds from the air show sponsored by the Sumter Jaycees will go to the Sumter County Drug Abuse Council.

• The members of the County Board of Education welcomed a new ex-officio member, Col. Paul Hoza of Shaw Air Force Base. Col. Hoza is to be what Fred McLaughlin, chairman of the board, termed a "communicating representative." Col. R. Y. McBurney, commander of the 363rd combat support group, Shaw, recommended Col. Hoza's appointment to the board and the appointment of an officer as an ex-officio member of each of the school district's board of trustees in an attempt to facilitate communications between school officials and the military community.

• South Carolina's Fifth-Annual Duck Calling Contest sponsored by the Sumter Game and Fish Association is scheduled for Saturday at Burnt Gin Lake in Manches-ter State Forest. Participants in the contest will be limited to 50 persons, but the public is invited as spectators. The

1972 event features a \$250 cash prize for the winner to be used for a trip to represent South Carolina in the national duck-calling contest, to be held later at Stuttgart, Arkansas.

• Brownie Troop 516 at Shaw recently held its investiture and rededication in a candlelight ceremony, attended by parents, and followed with a party with games and refreshments as well as special decorations. Also invested were troop committee mothers.

• Morris College will open its 1972 basketball season, and the Hornets will once again be short on experience and height. With only five of his 14-man squad being upper classmen, Coach Harry Geter is faced with the problem of getting as many players as possible with enough experience to carry the Hornets through the long season which will conclude in late February.

• Sections of the new parking lots in the civic center have been designated for two-hour parking, and appropriate signs have been posted directing drivers to these areas. The two-hour parking limitation was set to accommodate those persons having business to take care of in the courthouse and civic center and for library visitors.

• Richard Williams, a poet from Chapel Hill, North Carolina, has been meeting with sophomore English classes at Council Street Campus to help the students gain new appreciation of contemporary poetry. He has read and discussed works of major and minor poets as well as the work of high school and elementary students in South Carolina.

• Charles L. Griffin III has announced as an independent candidate for mayor in the Pinewood municipal election on Nov. 28. Griffin is a teacher and coach at Wilson Hall in Sumter. He previously taught at Roy Hudgens Academy in Lynchburg and before that worked for the Darlington County Welfare Department.

• There will be several changes in telephone service numbers when Direct Distant Dialing comes to Sumter, according to the General Telephone Co.'s district manager. J.C. Franklin said the telephone number for repair service, now 114, will become 414; calls to directory assis-

tance, now 113, will be 411; and calls for assistance in dialing local calls will change from 116 to 416.

• Another event has been added to the fifth annual South Carolina Duck Calling Championship scheduled for Burnt Gin. The Sumter Bassmasters will stage a casting contest for both bait casting and spinner outfits with a gift certificate and a trophy going to the winner.

• The annual Morris College homecoming parade will be held Thursday. The parade, a special feature of the homecoming celebration, is scheduled to proceed from downtown Sumter (Main Street bridge) to the campus. Civic, religious and business groups who wish to enter units should contact Coach Pollard.

• The Sumter United Way's 1972-73 campaign came within 7.5 % of its \$282,700 goal at its fourth and final report meeting at the USO on Canal Street with \$261,551 or 92.5% of the goal accounted for. According to James T. Hailey, campaign chairman, the cut-off date for the campaign will be extended through Nov. 22 in order to give workers a chance to complete their solicitations and hopefully pass their goals.

• The Sumter County YWCA youth members known as Y-Teens and Y-Ettes will be participating in three important events. These girls will hold a Windshield Wash at the shopping plazas to raise money for United Way; Y-Teens and Y-Ettes will be helping with the Environmental Coalition's Recycling Day held at Swan Lake; and the Y-Teens will take part in the YWCA's annual World Mutual Service Celebration at Holy Comforter Church.

25 YEARS AGO — 1997

Sept. 27 - Oct. 2

• When Steve Duggan decided to play college football at Furman University in 1986, he went on a partial scholarship. By the time he completed his final season in 1990, he was an All-American center. Now Duggan is a member of the Furman Athletic Hall of Fame. He will be honored during the Furman-Virginia Military Institute game along with former football players Frankie DuBusk, Andrew Burr and Carl Tremble, Olympic swimmer Angel Myers and former swimming coach Howard Wheeler.

• Richland Northeast tried to fumble the contest away early, but Crestwood could not take advantage of the Cavaliers' generosity. The Knights' failure to score off two early RNE fumbles sealed their fate, as they lost a 31-7 decision at Sumter District 2 Memorial Stadium. The loss dropped Crestwood to 0-5 overall and 0-1 in Region IV-4A and stretched its winless streak to 16.

• Sumter's antique dealers say more and more people are finding out what they've known for years: There's something special about something old. "If it's been around a while, it's probably solid wood, it's put together with glue and not staples, it's not particle board," says Lynda O. Parker, who owns Broadstone Manor Antiques on Broad Street. "When I bought new stuff, it fell apart."

• Want to know if it's sweeter the second time around? Just ask Sumter High School's Susan Hilton, who has been chosen for the second time to receive the district's highest honor as the District 17 Teacher of the Year. Hilton, who was selected this past school year as her school's Teacher of the Year, was also the district's Teacher of the Year in 1985.

• Staff Sgt. Peter Vasquez points to a 4-inch crater in the concrete floor where Fort Jackson recruits learn how to throw grenades. "That's my hole," Vasquez jokes. He's mighty glad that hole is in the floor and not in him.

Until last week, Vasquez had what must be one of the most nerve-racking jobs in the military, training scared and clumsy recruits how to toss live grenades. Most of the time, they do fine. But twice in the past two weeks, terrified recruits have failed to lob the grenade over the shoulder-high wall at the range, leaving it rolling around the floor at the feet of both trainee and trainer.

• The University of South Carolina Sumter's brightest academic "stars" will shine when the campus observes its annual Honors and Awards Convocation in the auditorium of the E. Whilden Nettles Building on the Miller Road campus. Second only to commencement on the university's academic calendar of events, the ceremony will spotlight Presidential and Dean's Scholars, who will be presented, respectively, gold and silver medallions bearing the university seal.

• A wilderness camp nestled in remote Clarendon County is offering an alternative to jail for some of the state's youngest lawbreakers. The Rimini Marine Institute houses 14- to 17-year-old boys who are in S.C. Department of Juvenile Justice custody for various nonviolent offenses. The nonprofit institute offers kids a last chance before they're added to the state's ever-growing adult jail population.

• The 1997-98 hunting seasons on Santee National Wildlife Refuge have been set. A three-week deer season will be open in October. The Pine Island Unit primitive weapons hunt will be held Oct. 6-11. The Cuddo Unit archery-only hunt will run Oct. 13-18, and the Cuddo Unit primitive weapons hunt will run Oct. 20-25. Primitive weapons include long or compound bows and muzzle-loading rifles or shotguns.

• Works in porcelain and stoneware clay by Hartsville artist Patz Fowle will be the feature exhibit for October at the Sumter Gallery of Art. Works by Margaret Dickson Cone (1915-1996) in oil, watercolor, pencil and pastel chalk will be displayed in the gallery foyer. Collage artist Sheri Moore of Summerton is the guild artist of the month and will show a variety of her works in the gallery gift shop.



PHOTOS BY CAL CARY / THE SUMTER ITEM

USC Sumter Fire Ants baseball and softball players help Aldersgate United Methodist Church on Alice Drive in Sumter unload pumpkins for its pumpkin patch on Tuesday.

PUMPKINS

FROM PAGE A1

Another tradition Aldersgate celebrates is planning field trips for preschool and kindergarten students. One thousand students are expected to come and listen to stories, stroll through the pumpkin patch and receive a small gift pumpkin. Kids can also stand by the newly added measuring stick station to have their photo taken to measure how tall they are.

“Children who came here are bringing their children to come here; a lot of what Aldersgate does is giving from the heart,” Cox replied after being asked about the changes during the course of the 22-year pumpkin patch history.

A second load of pumpkins will be delivered in the middle of October, so even if they are running low, it does not mean they are out. Pumpkins range from \$5 to \$25 depending on their size. And on Oct. 29, the church will host a trick-or-treat movie night.



SUMMERTON DRUGS

Men and Women's Diabetic Shoes



Women's diabetic shoes are available size 5-13m narrow-xx wide.



Men's diabetic shoes are available size 7-17, narrow - xx wide

Coverage is for anyone with Medicare Part B (or other qualified insurance) who has diabetes, appropriate documentation from a qualified physician, and: Previous amputation of the foot, or part of either foot, or History of ulcers, or History of pre-ulcerative calluses, or Diabetic Neuropathy with evidence of Callus formation, or Foot deformity, or Poor blood circulation



N.G. Osteen 1843-1936
THE WATCHMAN AND SOUTHRON

H.G. Osteen 1870-1955
FOUNDER, THE ITEM

H.D. Osteen 1904-1987
THE ITEM

Margaret W. Osteen 1908-1996
THE ITEM

Hubert D. Osteen Jr. 1936-2020
THE SUMTER ITEM



OPINION

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Jacqueline B. Osteen CO-OWNER

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Vince Johnson PUBLISHER

COMMENTARY

Is 'our democracy' failing our country?

Asked, "What is an American?" many would answer, "An American is a citizen of the United States."

Yet, at the First Continental Congress in 1774, 15 years before the U.S. became a nation of 13 states, Patrick Henry rose to proclaim that, "British oppression has effaced the boundaries of the several colonies; the distinctions between Virginians, Pennsylvanians, New Yorkers and New Englanders are no more. I am not a Virginian, but an American."

Henry was saying — more than a dozen years before our constitutional republic was established — that America already existed as a nation, and he was her loyal son.

In an 1815 letter to Thomas Jefferson, long after both men had served as president, John Adams wrote:

"As to the history of the Revolution, my Ideas may be peculiar, perhaps Singular. What do We mean by the Revolution? The War? That was no part of the Revolution. It was only an Effect and Consequence of it. The Revolution was in the Minds of the People, and this was effected, from 1760 to 1775, in the course of fifteen Years before a drop of blood was

drawn at Lexington."

Adams was saying that America was conceived and, as an embryonic nation, grew within the hearts of the peoples of the 13 colonies, two to three decades before the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia.



Pat Buchanan

In short, our country came to be before our republic came to be, and long before

what we today call "our democracy" came to be. A country is different from, and more than, the political system that it adopts.

France was France all through the Bourbon dynasty, the Revolution of 1789, the creation of the First Republic, the Reign of Terror, Napoleon's First Empire and the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy — all the way to the creation of the Fifth Republic by President Charles de Gaulle.

And beneath the carapace of the USSR, the heart of Mother Russia continued to beat. Rightly, during the Cold War, we regarded Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland,

Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria as "captive nations" and captive peoples.

The point: Neither the regime nor the political system imposed, nor some abstract idea, is the country that pre-dates them and has first claim upon the loyalty of its sons and daughters.

In his famous toast, American naval hero Stephen Decatur declared: "Our country! ... May she always be in the right; but our country, right or wrong!"

The crisis today for those who incessantly proclaim, "Our democracy is in danger," is that millions of patriots are coming to see our incumbent regime, "our democracy," as faithless and failing in its foremost duty — to protect and defend our country and countrymen from enemies foreign and domestic.

Forced constantly by the establishment to choose between them, patriotic Americans may one day come to choose, as did their fathers, the country they love over the crown that rules them.

Consider.

The Biden regime that currently rules us has allowed 3 million migrants to invade our country in two years. These illegals continue to

break our laws and cross our border at a rate of 250,000 a month.

Among them are terrorists, robbers, rapists, murderers, cartelists and child molesters. The Biden regime has abdicated its duty to halt the invasion that is changing the ethnic, racial, religious, social and political character and composition of our American family without the consent of the American people, into whose national home these intruders are breaking with impunity.

President Joe Biden is assuring that the future of the nation will be determined by millions of people who have in common only that they broke our laws to get into our country. Vice President Kamala Harris smugly dismisses demands to address the crisis by saying America's southern border is "secure."

With this invasion has come a flood of the narcotic fentanyl, which last year took the lives of 100,000 Americans, a number equal to all the U.S. war dead in years of fighting in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Under the Biden party's policy of softness on crime and indulgence of the criminal class, assaults, robberies, carjackings and "mass shoot-

ings," where four victims are killed or wounded in each episode, have surged in U.S. cities.

With America's currency and economy in his custody, Biden has, in 18 months, run up inflation, that cancer of America's currency, to 8%, run up the national debt to where it far exceeds the gross national product and crashed the stock market, wiping out trillions in wealth.

"The pandemic is over," Biden told "60 Minutes" in September, a month when more than 400 Americans were dying of COVID-19 every day, a death rate higher than World War II and equal to the bloodiest war in U.S. history, the Civil War of 1861-1865.

The custodians of "our democracy" are failing in the most fundamental of duties of any political system — to protect and defend the people. No failed regime can justify its permanence by claiming some inherent superiority.

Patrick J. Buchanan is the author of "Nixon's White House Wars: The Battles That Made and Broke a President and Divided America Forever."

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EDITORIAL PAGE POLICIES

EDITORIALS

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

are written by readers of the newspaper. They should be sent via e-mail to letters@theitem.com, dropped off at *The Sumter Item* office, 36 W. Liberty St. or mailed to *The Sumter Item*, P.O. Box 1677, Sumter, S.C. 29151, along with the full name of the writer, plus an address and telephone number for verification purposes only.

HURRICANE IAN-FLATION



comics.com @hpayne@detroitnews.com © 2022 ANDREW M. MCELROY

COMMENTARY

Biden's slapdash, election-season student loan gambit may be in trouble

WASHINGTON — The Pacific Legal Foundation, libertarian litigators with no shortage of things to litigate against, might have found the key to unlocking a courthouse door. If it has, President Biden's slapdash, election-season, \$500 billion (at least, over 10 years) student-loan forgiveness might be found illegal and unconstitutional.

Its grossest flaw is forgetfulness regarding the Constitution's appropriations clause, which — in case it has slipped your mind, as it evidently has Biden's — says: "No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law."

How else does student-loan forgiveness violate statutory and constitutional law, and justice? Let us count the ways.

It transfers wealth upward to a mostly affluent minority — college graduates, who have higher projected lifetime earnings (on average, nearly \$1 million higher) than the nearly two-thirds of Americans without college degrees who will pay, as taxpayers, to improve the financial condition of college graduates. Forgiveness is unjust to students who took jobs and scrimped to avoid accumulating education debt. And to those who repaid their debts. Forgiveness creates moral hazard: Future students will borrow in anticipation of future forgiveness. Forgiveness draws arbitrary distinc-

tions: Why is student debt a more pressing problem than, say, consumer or auto or mortgage debt?

Biden's half-trillion-dollar forgiveness expenditure will dwarf the postulated \$248 billion in savings from the whimsically titled Inflation Reduction Act. In a delightful understatement, the *New York Times* says that when administration officials claim the forgiveness is "paid for" because tax revenue is higher than was projected, this "defies traditional budget accounting conventions." If revenue increases by an unanticipated sum of at least X, a new program spending X costs nothing? Who knew?



George Will

Although the Supreme Court has admonished the executive branch that Congress does not hide elephants in mouseholes, Biden purports to have found an enormous pachyderm — authorization for his \$500 billion program — nestled in the 2003 Heroes Act. It allows executive action modifying student loans during wartime (e.g., 2003) or other "national emergency." Nowadays, emergencies exist when presidential caprice proclaims one. Under the 2003 act, student borrowers are heroes. Talk about defining virtue down.

The forgiveness policy was produced, without statutory warrant or regular

public notice and comment procedures. As a Pacific Legal Foundation attorney says, Biden has created "a \$500 billion program by press release."

The program's flaws provide what the military calls a target-rich environment. But because of the Supreme Court's rules about who has "standing" to sue — rules that should be liberalized — a mere citizen cannot sue even though Biden's forgiveness cornucopia injures the citizen's financial well-being and the structure and processes of the citizen's government.

The PLF has, however, found among its attorneys one who would experience a concrete injury from Biden's forgiveness. He lives in Indiana, where, as in at least six other states, forgiven loans may be taxed as income. He says he will be economically injured by cancellation of his particular loan payments. Biden's minions might try to derail PLF's litigation by creating for the Hoosiers and others similarly situated a way to opt out of what otherwise will be automatic forgiveness.

If, however, the PLF can establish standing for a plaintiff, it will argue, *inter alia*, the applicability of the "major questions" and "nondelegation" doctrines. The former holds that when the executive branch claims a power to order social changes with vast economic or political consequences (e.g., the Centers for Disease Control claiming a power, since overturned, to impose a nationwide eviction moratorium), courts should be

skeptical unless *legislation* clearly and explicitly authorizes the power. It is implausible that, two decades after the Heroes Act was passed to cushion lives disrupted by war deployments, it authorizes Biden's unilateral expenditure of a sum almost three times larger than the U.S. Army's 2022 budget.

The nondelegation doctrine holds that Congress may not delegate to the executive branch essentially legislative power. Such as the power to rewrite the Heroes Act to waive statutory requirements incompatible with Biden's sweeping forgiveness.

Presidents properly wield "emergency" powers not to solve long-standing problems, but only in sudden, unexpected, fast-moving crises, and only until Congress can exercise its law-making jurisdiction. Biden, however, announced his loan forgiveness as an act of executive discretion justified by a law written in response to a terminated emergency, the Iraq War. This law was repurposed to inflate presidential power during the declared pandemic emergency.

But about a month after Biden announced the forgiveness, he said: "The pandemic is over." Nevertheless, progressives praise all this. Their praise has temporarily interrupted their professions of alarm about endangered constitutional, rule-of-law and democratic norms.

George Will's email address is george-will@washpost.com.



VOLUNTEERS

FROM PAGE A1

Christmas said they had a good showing with close to 200 filling the Sumter County Civic Center; about 140 were firefighters with the Sumter Fire Department.

The fire department came close to canceling the 2022 awards banquet with the inclement weather.

"This was very close to getting canceled. Every day I was in meetings trying to determine whether we were a go or no go," Christmas said. "We were up until yesterday morning when we finally said we have to make a decision based off the information we were getting from the news media and from The Weather Channel."

The Sumter Fire Department holds this event annually to give recognition to its volunteer firefighters who don't get paid or often go unrecognized for their service, and Christmas and the other administrative staff didn't have the heart to take the annual banquet away from them again.

"To me, I can't do it without them. Chief [Karl] Ford can't do it without them," Christmas said. "It takes every one of them; from the newest firefighter up to the most senior person, it takes all of us as a team to respond to incidents."

City of Sumter Support Services Director Lefford Fate was the guest speaker for Thursday evening's event.

Looking out into the crowd of first responders, he thanked them for their service, something a lot of them don't often hear but deserve to hear, especially as the majority of them will give their service this

weekend as Ian made landfall in South Carolina on Friday.

"Tell your story, and thank you, thank you, thank you for your service," he said. "There is a big, ugly, massing storm coming, and sometimes I get nervous with things like that happening, but then I'm standing here looking across this audience, and I'm seeing firefighters that aren't afraid of the storm. No matter what happens, they're going to be there for us to make sure we're safe."

Sumter Fire Chief Karl Ford announced the 2022 award recipients one by one for their service throughout 2021.

Here are the winners announced during the banquet:

— Station 4 Pleasant Grove firefighter Kenny Reynolds won Sumter County Firefighter of the Year

— Station 7 Wedgefield Wendell Patterson won Sumter County Officer of the Year

— Explorer of the Year is Levy Swiney

— Special Recognition Award for 40 years of service to Thomas Dollard Sr. and J.D. Coleman II

— Thirteen out of 16 Station Firefighter of the Year award recipients (Three stations did not have a recipient nominated.); Nick Watts, Bryan Thompson, John Kruger, Kenny Reynolds, J. Vandevander, William Sheehan,

Troy Nelson, Justin McCoy, William Dyson, J.J. McLeod, Westley Stalvey, Preston Moses and Bert Watts.

— Sixteen Station Officer of the Year award recipients: Cameron Northrop, Daren Avins Jr., Troy Lamontagne, Jim Phillips, T.J. Mullen, S. Westmoreland, W. Patterson, Jeff Grant, Dwight Mixon, John Cavey, Cody Dyson, Tommy Dollard, Bassett Ali, Steven Thomas, Don Goldman and Johnny Watts.



Lefford Fate serves as the guest speaker for the Sumter County Firefighters Awards Banquet.



Sumter County Council Chairman Jim McCain Jr. speaks at the event.



PHOTOS BY SHELBY GOULDING / THE SUMTER ITEM

Sumter Fire Department honors its volunteer firefighters for their service to their community during the department's first Sumter County Firefighters Awards Banquet since 2019 on Thursday night.



ABOVE: Sumter Fire Chief Karl Ford speaks during the banquet.



RIGHT: J.D. Coleman II receives a special recognition award for 40 years of service to Sumter Fire Department.



Thomas Dollard Sr. embraces Sumter Fire Chief Karl Ford as Dollard receives a special recognition award for 40 years of service to Sumter Fire Department.

IAN

FROM PAGE A1

the evening. Winds were between 25 to 35 mph with the possibility of them intensifying to between 58 to 73 mph.

A tropical storm warning and flood watch were in effect for the tri-county area until 8 a.m. Saturday.

Mostly sunny skies are expected Saturday, with a high of 75 degrees and wind speeds between 7 to 13 mph. Tonight, winds are expected to slow to between 5 to 7 mph, and skies will be partly cloudy. Low temperatures are expected to be about 58 degrees.

The governor reported water on several state roads and said it's still "very dangerous" during his afternoon briefing. McMaster encouraged residents to stay indoors until the storm passed.

As of Friday afternoon, no deaths were reported in the state, McMaster said.

South Carolina had 90 guardsmen on active duty, according to the South Carolina Military Department, and South Carolina Emergency Management Division Director Kim Stenson said the state was operating at the highest level of response



CAL CARY / THE SUMTER ITEM

A fallen tree branch blocks part of South Church Street in Summerton as Hurricane Ian moved through the state on Friday.

until the storm curtailed.

Ian has brought several power outages across the state. Nanette Edwards, executive director of the Office of Regulatory Staff, said there were more than 69,000 power outages across the state as of Friday afternoon. She anticipated those numbers would climb throughout the day.

South Carolina Department of Public Safety was active, responding to calls for service Friday, which upticked

as the storm made its way along the South Carolina coast, Director Robert Woods IV said. There were reports of fallen trees and road emergencies. They remained active on the roadways Friday and requested residents stay off roadways until the storm passed.

McMaster said he worked closely with President Joe Biden and the Biden Administration on South Carolina's safety.

On Friday morning, FEMA announced that federal emergency aid has been made available for South Carolina to help with state, tribal and local efforts concerning emergency conditions resulting from Hurricane Ian.

FEMA is authorized to identify, mobilize and provide at its discretion equipment and resources to lessen the impacts of emergencies. Biden authorized FEMA to coordinate public health and safety resources, protect property, save lives, provide appropriate assistance and lessen or avert the threat of catastrophe for all 46 South Carolina counties.

"When there's a hurricane, there's no politics involved there," he said. "Everyone agrees we want to keep people safe and protect people."

As Ian made its way closer to South Carolina, Sumter County Emergency Management Director Donna Dew said the local agency was preparing for the damaging winds and heavy rain.

POWER OUTAGES

Power outages were reported throughout the county because of strong winds and fallen powerlines.

As of 1 p.m., Sumter Coun-

ty had about 750 households without power between Duke Energy and Black River Electric Cooperative. Clarendon County had more outages with about 1,100 households without electricity. Lee County had about 600 total.

Outage totals increased in the late morning hours on Friday with the increased wind gusts.

As of 2 p.m., Brenda Chase, a BREC spokeswoman, said portions of Clarendon east of Manning and toward Kingstree in Williamsburg County were having heavier outage totals. That area is actually serviced by Santee Electric Cooperative.

Chase said officials expected the worst effects from the storm to be between 3 and 6 p.m. Friday.

Coastal counties and neighboring inland counties, including Williamsburg, were seeing the most power outages associated with the storm.

"All of our crews are working outages now and will continue as long as they determine conditions to be safe to work in," Chase said.

Shelby Goulding, Alaysha Maple and Bruce Mills contributed to this article.

Sumter ITEM OUTDOORS

Call the newsroom at: (803) 774-1226 | E-mail: pressrelease@theitem.com

Some adjustment

I wasn't close enough. The big timber on the hillside is open, and I can see through the trees to a pine thicket that extends from the hardwood bottom where I've been sitting, to the hilltop on the east. The wind here is usually good. I have trimmed a shooting lane from the stand toward the pines and have been hunting this stand for several years. It was left on the property by another hunter.



Dan Geddings

The woods here are beautiful. A variety of hardwoods with a few big pines scattered about. A small creek runs through this bottom right by the stand. Squirrels climb through the hardwoods overhead, songbirds flit through the understory, and deer sneak through this forest on silent

hooves.

I have a corn pile toward the end of the shooting lane, but I do not put a lot of corn there. The stand is more than 300 yards from the road, and I'm not so anxious to carry heavy bags of corn over the hill and through the bottom to the stand. I sometimes carry a bucket with a mixture of cob and shelled corn to the lane that stretches toward the next hilltop.

The deer eat the corn, and I have a camera there, but I seldom see them on the corn during daylight hours. They tend to ramble back and forth through the bottom and over the next hilltop. Some have walked right by the stand. They never look up and see me.

I did kill a big deer here a couple of years ago, but most get a pass from me. I just sit and watch them. A few have caught my scent and spooked, but most of them never know I am there. I am only there for a few hours on a few days of the week. Sometimes I think that I am invading their world, but I've come to realize it's a part of my world, too.

I've thought about moving the stand closer to the pine thicket or up the hill a little ways but have hesitated. I didn't know how the wind would perform there or if I will be out of position to see back toward the creek bottom. But this year, I've made an adjustment. I've seen a big deer travel the edge of the pines a couple of times this year but have been unable to get a clear shot through the timber.

I remembered that I had a hanging stand and a set of climbing sticks at home. Instead of moving the existing stand, I could install the hanging stand farther up the hill in a position to intercept that buck along the edge of the pine thicket. Now, I think I will be close enough.

The stick ladder comes in a set of five sections. Each section is 4 feet tall. The sections are strapped to the side of the tree. I try to pick out a straight tree that doesn't lean forward. The stand straps to the tree independently from the ladder. I usually put the ladder up, then pull the stand up with a rope. The stand has a safety chain, and I use ratchet straps to secure it to the tree. It needs to be offset from the ladder and down 3 or 4 feet from the top to make it safe and easier to access.

I went in during the middle of the day recently and installed the stand. It overlooks the shooting lane, the edge of the pines, and is closer to the hilltop. I am very pleased with its location. I haven't hunted the stand yet, but I will soon.

On another part of the club, I have a stand that also needed some adjustment. I've moved that stand several times. Originally, I installed it on a little hilltop overlooking a well-worn game trail along the edge of a swamp. I moved the stand to the edge of the hill, then back out toward the woodland road. The wind swirled too much around that little hill, so I moved it again.

Recently I spent some time to walk the woods and find a place away from the hill in a nearby hardwood drain that had some promising signs. I've moved the stand there, trimmed a shooting lane and set up a trail camera overlooking a corn pile. That may be just the adjustment I needed. We'll see soon enough. By the way, I've named that stand The Boat 6. It's the sixth location.

Reach Dan Geddings at cdgeddings@gmail.com.



Joe Bernal drives on his family's farm in Fruita, Colorado. With the Colorado River overtaxed, Grand Valley farmers in Colorado now face some of the most urgent questions regarding the future of water in the river and the West.

HUGH CAREY / THE COLORADO SUN VIA AP

Farming, water and Wall Street on Colorado's Western Slope

BY CHRIS OUTCALT
The Colorado Sun

LOMA, Colo. — Under the blazing afternoon sun, Joe Bernal navigates a shiny-green John Deere tractor onto a dirt road a few miles north of downtown Fruita. Bernal is headed to cut hay in a field a few hundred feet down the road. On his way, he points out the land his family has acquired through the years. His grandparents had 150 acres over there. His parents bought this land here. His great-grandparents, who showed up in 1925, lived in a house right there.

Surrounding Bernal's land are the vistas of the Grand Valley, a strip of high desert situated on Colorado's Western Slope marked by dusty mesas and cliffs and the winding, ever-present Colorado River, which plunges down from the mountains to the east. Grand Valley farmers and ranchers use the water to irrigate tens of thousands of acres, growing everything from peaches and corn to wheat and alfalfa.

But since 2000, flows on the river have declined 20% and water levels at Lake Powell and Lake Mead have dropped to less than 30% of their combined storage. With the river overtaxed, Grand Valley farmers now face some of the most urgent questions regarding the future of water in Colorado and the West. Questions about how agriculture, which accounts for about 70% of the state's Colorado River water use, can be more efficient, whether water can be conserved and banked in Lake Powell and what, if anything, to do about someone looking to make a buck on the state's most precious resource, so-called water speculators.

In the Grand Valley, much of the concern around private, profit-driven investment in the river has focused on a New York investment firm called Water Asset Management, or WAM. Run by co-founder Disque Dean Jr., son of a New York real estate developer, WAM has spent millions buying farmland with valuable water rights in this part of Colorado. The company is the largest landowner in the influential Grand Valley Water Users Association, which operates the 55-mile Government Highline Canal. Western Slope farmers rely on the canal's senior water rights to irrigate about 24,000 acres of farmland.

When the *New York Times* declared in a January 2021 headline that "Wall Street eyes billions in the Colorado's water," Colorado water users voiced significant concern about the company's motives.

"The worry was that a New York hedge fund's outside investors would not have the same economic and sociological calculus in deciding to lease or sell their water as a longtime resident would," Anne Castle, a senior fellow at the Getches-Wilkinson Center for Natural Resources, Energy and the Environment at the University of Colorado, said. "Generational farmers and ranchers are going to be thinking about the impact on

their neighbors, the local communities and what their kids do if the water leaves the ranch."

State politicians looked at addressing private water speculation during the most recent legislative session. Colorado law already requires water be put to a "beneficial use," say, to irrigate a farm, supply taps in cities or be left in the river for environmental or recreational purposes. You can't just buy water rights and sit on them. A draft state bill, however, tried to examine whether it might be viable to curb the sale of water in Colorado purchased specifically to turn a profit later on. But telling people what they can and can't do with their private property rights is a tricky proposition. The bill did not make it beyond the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.

Three years ago, Water Asset Management purchased a farm from a landowner who was leasing land to Bernal, who farms alfalfa, corn and other crops north of Fruita. A member of the water users association board, Bernal has since leased a few other WAM-owned fields. The way he puts it, he's neither WAM's advocate nor their adversary. "I keep saying, 'So far so good,'" Bernal said. "Am I glad they're here? Not really. Would I have invited them in? No. How are they now? They're as good as any landlord I've had."

WATER SAVINGS PROGRAMS

A few years ago, through the Grand Valley Water Users, Bernal enrolled some land in a water conservation project known as the System Conservation Pilot Program, sometimes referred to as a "buy and dry" or lease-fallowing program. The project, which ran from 2015 to 2018, was designed partly as a test of how paying farmers to voluntarily and temporarily fallow land might actually look in practice.

Restarting the program was a key part of a plan the Upper Basin states of Colorado, Utah, New Mexico and Wyoming released in June in response to Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Touton's call to cut between 2 million and 4 million acre-feet of Colorado River water use by next year. The original, four-year Upper Basin program, funded by major water utilities and money from the Walton Family Foundation, spent more than \$8 million and reduced consumptive use by roughly 50,000 acre-feet, according to reports compiled by the Upper Colorado River Commission.

Colorado's U.S. Sen. John Hickenlooper introduced legislation in late July that would effectively reauthorize the program. If the bill, which has yet to make it out of the Senate, eventually passes, there appears to be money on the other side in the form of the \$4 billion in drought funding included in the Inflation Reduction Act spearheaded in part by U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet. The federal money will be available through the Bureau of Reclamation for states and other public entities to pay water users to voluntarily reduce use.

When Bernal first heard about the pilot program concept, he thought it could open up some useful possibilities for him, a way to optimize his operation. Maybe he could get some guaranteed income. Or maybe this would give him a chance to do some land leveling on a field he wouldn't be able to do otherwise. Heck, maybe he could even just work a little less.

Grand Valley Water Users Association board member Troy Waters, a fifth-generation farmer north of Fruita, said he was at first resistant to this type of program but did eventually participate in the initial pilot project and learned a lot by doing so.

"With all the issues that are going on on the Colorado River, I think programs like this might become a necessary evil," Waters said. "I think Colorado is going to have to do their part; even though I still feel this whole mess is the Lower Basin's fault — they created it. The Lower Basin states have just been willy-nilly drainin' them reservoirs."

Designed correctly, Bernal thinks some kind of water banking program could help ease the crisis. "I think a widely distributed water banking program can have a low impact on a community, and I think it can still be beneficial to what we're doing."

But he also worries that efforts to curb water use could alter the character of the place he grew up, where the red rock plateau of the Colorado National Monument rises above the river. If too much land is fallowed, Bernal is concerned it could negatively impact the local co-op or the seed producer or the trucker who lives down the road or the part-time mechanic he employs or his son Bryan or nephew Mario Baleztena who do this work with him full time.

"Imagine if we didn't have this irrigation system," Bernal said. "There wouldn't be anything to look at but the Monument."

But it's a delicate balance, he said. For instance, he knows the land he leases from WAM could be enrolled in a restarted system conservation project, bringing new revenue for the owners. "WAM would sure like to see a program," he said.

"It could hurt the entire system if they try to put too much in," Waters said of WAM potentially enrolling land in any future water savings program. Waters said he would want a program that didn't allow any one individual to enroll too much land or for there to be too much ground fallowed in the valley as a whole.

"If you take out a quarter of the farm ground," Waters said, "if it ain't managed right, this whole valley will turn into a dust bowl."

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is part of a collaborative series on the Colorado River on the eve of the Colorado River Compact, signed nearly 100 years ago. The Colorado Sun, The Associated Press, The Albuquerque Journal, The Salt Lake Tribune, The Arizona Daily Star and The Nevada Independent are working together to explore the pressures on the river in 2022.

PUBLIC AGENDA

EDITOR'S NOTE: Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, some meetings/events may be cancelled, rescheduled or held virtually.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS BOARD Monday, 5:30 p.m., Sumter Sheriff's Office conference room

SANTEE-LYNCHES REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS BOARD OF DIRECTORS Monday, 6 p.m., Central Carolina

Technical College, 506 N. Guignard Drive, Building M400, Room M401

SUMTER CITY COUNCIL Tuesday, 1 p.m., Sumter Opera House, 21 N. Main St.

BISHOPVILLE CITY COUNCIL Tuesday, 5:30 p.m., Colclough Building, 109 E. Council St., Bishopville

TOWN OF LYNCHBURG PLANNING COMMISSION Wednesday, 4 p.m., town hall

The last word in astrology

EUGENIA LAST

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You'll learn if you participate in community or family events or reunions. Listen, ask questions and make suggestions, and you will team up with someone who has something to contribute to help you reach your goal. Romance is in the stars. 5 stars

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): An open mind will help you better understand what's within your grasp. Do your due diligence regarding how you earn your living. Update your skills and parlay something you're good at into a fruitful future. 3 stars

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Keep life simple, conversations honest and your money in a safe place. Overindulgence will put you in a precarious position that can affect a relationship with someone with the wherewithal to help you get ahead. Work on self-improvement and discipline. 3 stars

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Take better care of your health, reputation and home. Someone will make you look bad if given the opportunity. Be on your best behavior, and don't commit to anything you cannot do. Focus on ideas, creativity and getting along with others. 3 stars

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Have fun with friends, family or people you share a hobby with. Getting out and about will broaden your outlook regarding what's possible and who can help you. Personal improvement will open doors that were closed in the past. 5 stars

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Share accurate information. Consider your sources before you pass along data to others. If someone doesn't fact-check properly, you'll be the one who bears the blame. Don't let anger set in when caution, truth and choice of words are the paths to success. 2 stars

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): A trip or attending a lecture or exhibit will be enlightening. Personal growth and

entertainment will go together. Leave nothing to chance, engage in conversations and research whatever interests you. A reunion will help you reconnect with someone special. 4 stars

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Make a difference. Size up what's happening around you and adjust what isn't working for you. Express your concerns and offer solutions that you can put in place. A gain will mirror a loss. Update your home. 3 stars

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Don't bend under pressure. Look for opportunities that let you use your physical skills and qualifications to bring about positive change. An older relative or friend will concern you. Lend a helping hand, and a reward will follow. Romance is encouraged. 3 stars

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Moderation will help you avoid insult or injury. Take a pass if invited to a gathering that could put your health at risk. Time spent at home will give you a chance to improve your personal life and surroundings. 3 stars

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Reach out to someone who is doing something you want to pursue. The connection will lead to inroads that will help you cultivate skills, experience and knowledge that groom you for success. Invest time and money in your appearance and education. 4 stars

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): You'll have plenty to contribute verbally, but don't let your emotions slip into the conversation, costing you your reputation. Choose each word carefully to avoid saying something you regret. Turn a challenging situation into a positive experience, and you'll overcome adversity. 2 stars

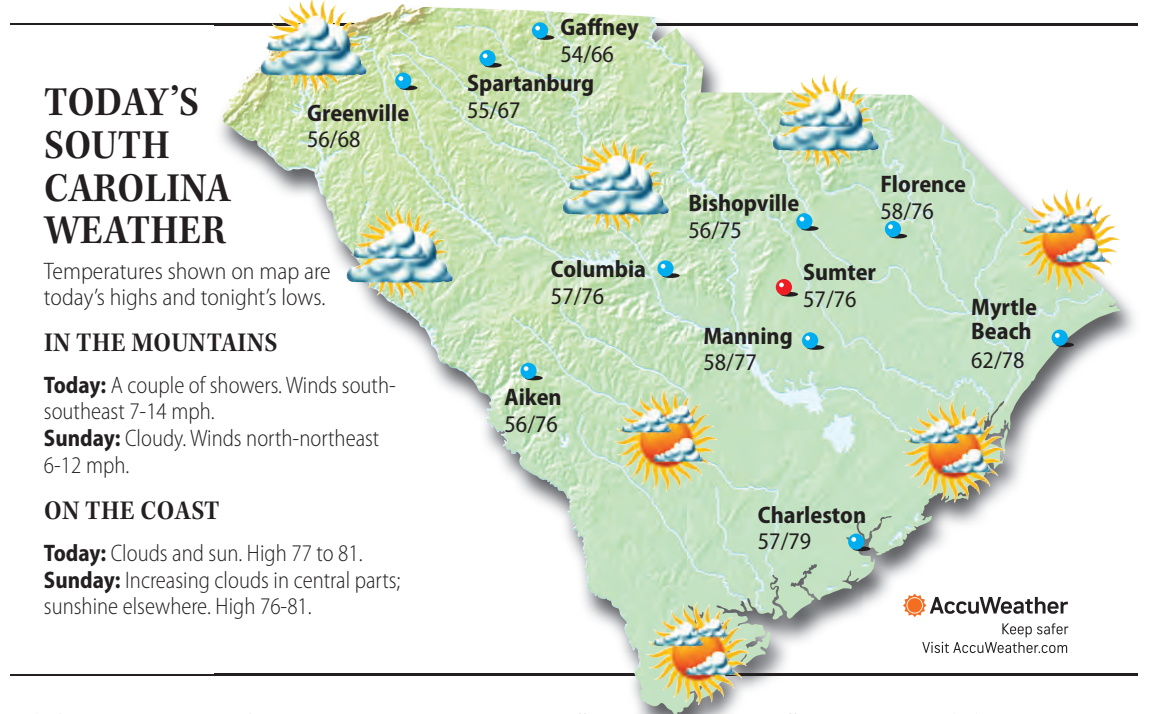
1 star: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. 2 stars: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. 3 stars: Focus and you'll reach your goals. 4 stars: Aim high; start new projects. 5 stars: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

WEATHER

Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2022

AccuWeather® five-day forecast for Sumter

Table with 6 columns: TODAY, TONIGHT, SUNDAY, MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY. Includes weather icons, temperatures, and chances of rain.



LOCAL ALMANAC

Table with 4 columns: Lake, Full pool, 7 a.m. yest., 24-hr chg. Lists lakes like Murray, Marion, Moultrie, Wateree.

Table with 4 columns: River, Flood stage, 7 a.m. yest., 24-hr chg. Lists rivers like Black River, Congaree River, Lynchess River, Saluda River, Up. Santee River, Wateree River.

LAKE LEVELS

Table with 4 columns: River, Flood stage, 7 a.m. yest., 24-hr chg. Lists rivers like Black River, Congaree River, Lynchess River, Saluda River, Up. Santee River, Wateree River.

RIVER STAGES

Table with 4 columns: River, Flood stage, 7 a.m. yest., 24-hr chg. Lists rivers like Black River, Congaree River, Lynchess River, Saluda River, Up. Santee River, Wateree River.

SUN AND MOON

Table with 4 columns: Sunrise, Moonrise, Sunset, Moonset. Includes dates for First, Full, Last, and New moons.

TIDES

Table with 4 columns: High, Lt., Low, Ht. Lists tide times for Today and Sun.

NATIONAL CITIES

Table with 4 columns: City, Sat. Hi/Lo/W, Sun. Hi/Lo/W. Lists cities like Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York, Orlando, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Francisco, Wash., DC.

REGIONAL CITIES

Table with 4 columns: City, Sat. Hi/Lo/W, Sun. Hi/Lo/W. Lists regional cities like Asheville, Athens, Augusta, Beaufort, Cape Hatteras, Charleston, Charlotte, Clemson, Columbia, Darlington, Elizabeth City, Elizabethtown, Fayetteville.

NATIONAL CITIES

Table with 4 columns: City, Sat. Hi/Lo/W, Sun. Hi/Lo/W. Lists cities like Florence, Gainesville, Gastonia, Goldsboro, Goose Creek, Greensboro, Greenville, Hickory, Hilton Head, Jacksonville, FL, La Grange, Macon, Marietta.

REGIONAL CITIES

Table with 4 columns: City, Sat. Hi/Lo/W, Sun. Hi/Lo/W. Lists regional cities like Marion, Mt. Pleasant, Myrtle Beach, Orangeburg, Port Royal, Raleigh, Rock Hill, Rockingham, Savannah, Spartanburg, Summerville, Wilmington, Winston-Salem.

Weather(W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, i-ice

The SPCA relies heavily on community support and donations. Currently, the biggest needs are for dry puppy and kitten food, wet cat food, cat litter and cleaning supplies. The following are also appreciated: Newspapers, stuffed animals, heavy duty trash bags (30 gallon or larger), dishwashing liquid, laundry detergent, bleach, paper towels, sheets and comforters, baby blankets, canned dog and cat food, dry dog food, treats, leashes and collars, disinfectant spray, all-purpose cleaner, air freshener, no scratch scrubbers, two-sided sponges for dishes, litter freshener and, of course, monetary donations are also gratefully accepted.

Advertisement for 'We have a NOSE for NEWS' featuring a cartoon dog detective and contact information for The Sumter ITEM.

THE NEWSDAY CROSSWORD

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down.

Answers for the crossword puzzle.

CREATORS SYNDICATE © 2022 STANLEY NEWMAN WWW.STANXWORDS.COM 10/2/22

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down.

Answers for the crossword puzzle.

SATURDAY'S ANSWERS

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down.

Sudoku puzzle grid.

Jumble puzzle with clues and answers.

Stallions hold off Mullins for homecoming win

BY EDDIE LITAKER
Sports Contributor

Lee Central High School's varsity football team came away with a 26-6 win over Mullins on Thursday in its Region VIII-2A opener, but the Stallions did not survive the game unscathed.

With Lee Central leading 18-6 and driving for another score late, senior running back Christopher Moorman broke off a 16-yard run to the Mullins 5. After the play, with 2:57 showing on the game clock, Moorman received medical attention and was stretchered off the field. Two plays later, Zayveion Perkins took it in from the 5, with Dominic Washington's 2-point conversion run accounting for the game's final points.

"We hope it is not as bad as it looked, preliminary wise," said Lee Central head coach Justin Danner. "We feel like it may have been a dislocation. But right now, the kid did play a great game for us, and he was very high spirited, and that's all that you can ask for. You ask the guys to come back out and kind of finish the football game for him, and I thought that they did that. Chris is a big contributor to our football team, offensively and special teams."

Moorman, one of six Stallions with at least one carry in the game, finished with 88 yards and a score on six rushes. Moorman's score came on a 48-yard burst up the middle at the 10:03 mark of the second quarter. He then added the conversion run to put Lee Central up 16-0.

Moorman, Washington, Perkins and Ja'Marion Slater all had touches on the Stallions'

first scoring drive of 76 yards in 11 plays. Perkins and Slater ran for 17 and 14 yards on consecutive plays to move the ball to the Mullins 38. Slater broke off an 18-yard run four plays later that set up a 6-yard Washington scoring run with two seconds left in the opening quarter. Slater ran for two to give the Stallions an 8-0 lead.

To complement Moorman's stellar rushing effort, the unofficial final numbers for the rest of the Stallions' running back stable had Slater with nine rushes for 71 yards, Washington with 65 yards on eight carries, Perkins with four totes for 28 yards and Christopher Thomas gaining 13 yards on two attempts.

"We try to use about five or six backs in a lot of different packages to try to kind of spread it around, because a lot of backs all have different abilities," Danner said. "I thought the backs did a good job, but I felt like we blocked them pretty good up front. It was an ugly football game; it was a weather game. It was real windy, and we try to be built for the rain and the wind and the cold. I thought that the guys kind of stuck it inside pretty hard, but I was really frustrated with us losing some snaps and having some turnovers, as far as fumbles were concerned. Against better football teams, they're going to make us pay for it, so we want to try to get that cleaned up going into next week."

Ball security was an issue for both teams, with 13 unofficial total fumbles in the game. Lee Central lost three of its six fumbles, while the Auctioneers lost the ball just one



Lee Central's Tavon McFadden celebrates against Mullins on Thursday.

PHOTOS BY CAL CARY / THE SUMTER ITEM

of the seven times it hit the turf while in their possession.

Two of those changes of possession came on consecutive plays in the second quarter. The Stallions got a scoop and almost scored as Thomas came up with the loose ball on a fumble by Auctioneers quarterback Syree Livingston and brought it all the way back to the 5. Already up 16-0 and poised to land a knockout blow, the Lee Central offense handed the ball right back to Mullins on the next play.

The Stallions still went up by three scores in the sequence, as the defense cashed in for a safety two plays later



Lee Central's Christopher Mooreman carries the ball against Mullins on Thursday.

SEE LCHS, PAGE B2

South Carolina's O'Donnell Fortune, the former Sumter High defensive back, celebrates after the Gamecocks' win over S.C. State on Thursday.

PHOTOS BY NICH PITTS / SPECIAL TO THE SUMTER ITEM



Gamecocks get the best of S.C. State, win 50-10

BY ISIAH LUCAS
isiah@theitem.com

South Carolina hosted South Carolina State on Thursday evening, as the game was moved up two days due to Hurricane Ian. While a lopsided 50-10 win for the Gamecocks was the final result, there were some moments in the early stages that showed the Bulldogs had some fight in them.

The second-consecutive home win improved the Gamecocks' record to 3-2. Head coach Shane Beamer was encouraged by a lot of the things he saw, but also acknowledged the areas where his team needs to grow.

"We have a lot to correct, but I'm proud of the win and I'm proud of our team," Beamer said. "I told them last week after we beat Charlotte that we would find out about the maturity of our team this upcoming week going into (playing) South Carolina State and then we would



Former Sumter High punter Dyson Roberts launches a kick for South Carolina State against South Carolina on Thursday.

find out even more with the game being changed and I thought they handled it well. There's a lot to clean up, the story of the first half was turnovers on offense and penalties on defense, we had way too many pass interference calls but I thought we did a lot of really good things.

"I'm really proud of the way our offense responded tonight to some adverse situations. They never blinked and just kept com-

ing back out there. We told the team at halftime that we needed to get better as a football team in the second half and I feel like we did."

On the game's second play Spencer Rattler was intercepted after a deep pass attempt was dropped. Duane Nichols made an incredible diving play to secure the takeaway. The Bulldogs deployed both Corey Fields Jr. and Tyrece

SEE USC, PAGE B4

Laurence Manning wins a windy late afternoon game at Heathwood Hall

BY TIM LEIBLE
tim@theitem.com

Laurence Manning made the trip over to Heathwood Hall a little earlier than normal for their SCISA 4A football game on Thursday.

Already a day ahead on the calendar, the Swampcats had a 4 p.m. kickoff as they looked to improve their record in SCISA's newly formed classification to 2-1.

The blustering winds added to an irregular football game, but a late scoop and score by Bryson Hodge helped LMA seal a 22-15 win.

"I thought this was probably the best we've played, and to do it under these circumstances was very impressive," LMA head coach Will Furse said. "We have a lot to work on, but I'm very pleased with our performance. I'm hoping we can build on it."

"I think our guys are going to have some confidence after beating a team like Heathwood."

Playing on Thursday after-

noon wasn't an easy task, especially on the road. Furse liked seeing his team step up to the challenge.

"It kind of throws you for a loop, but our guys were able to adjust," Furse said. "Luckily, we were coming off a bye week, so we had some extra time to prepare. We got out at 11:30, did a walk through, had a team meal. We just pushed everything forward by about three-and-a-half hours."

"It's a situation we haven't handled before, but I was proud of the way our guys handled it."

Laurence Manning provided the only offense in the first half. LMA charged down the field on a 17-play drive to open the game. Thomas Sumpter eventually punched in a rushing touchdown to put an exclamation point on the 70-yard drive. A successful 2-point conversion brought the score to 8-0, where it stayed until after the break.

LMA had some strong opportunities to add to that lead.

Laurence Manning forced a

SEE LMA, PAGE B2



Laurence Manning's Josiah Burson (11) ran for two touchdowns and intercepted a pass in the Swampcats' win over Heathwood Hall on Thursday.

NICH PITTS / SPECIAL TO THE SUMTER ITEM

Laurence Manning volleyball has milestone week with pair of wins

BY TIM LEIBLE
tim@theitem.com

The Laurence Manning volleyball team has been waiting for a turning point in their program.

The Lady Swampcats have struggled to find wins going back nearly a decade. This week, they earned consecutive wins over Trinity Collegiate and Thomas Sumter to bring their win total up to four. While that may not be a historic mark for many programs, it's a major leap in the right direction for LMA.

"It's honestly indescribable," head coach Amy Marshall said of the magnitude of the week. "It's fun being that team that people say, 'Well, they've never really done anything, but they're making a little bit of noise this year.' Four victories is not noise for many, but it's noise for us, and these girls want to be heard.

"There have been tears. I've cried, the girls have cried. These girls have put in hard work. If we're not at a match, we're practicing. These girls come to the gym looking all pretty after school and leave looking like they've just run a triathlon."

Marshall has seen that hard work lead to results. One of the major points of emphasis has been improved communication, and it showed in their two wins this week.

"They're starting to work together, and everything is starting to run smoothly. It's not getting easier, by any means, but it's becoming second nature to them," Marshall said.

"They're on their toes more, they're moving, they're picking each other up. They come together after every point, regardless of if they win or they lose it. They've finally started to play as one. It started to show this week, for sure."

LMA started the week with a 4-set win over Trinity Collegiate, another SCISA 4A program. The Lady Swampcats took the first set 25-18 and the second 25-17 but dropped the third 25-17. Marshall loved the way her team fought back to grind out a 25-23 win in the final set to claim the win.

"These ladies work and they work, and they fought so hard in the first



Laurence Manning's Ariana Somcheen (13) and the Lady Swampcats won two games this week to double their total victories on the season.

NICH PITTS / SPECIAL TO THE SUMTER ITEM

set, and sometimes in the second set they almost forget everything they have to do," Marshall said. "Everything has to work right to find success, and they lost that in one of those sets, but they found it again."

Senior captain Ariana Somcheen led the charge in the win with 10 kills and an ace. Abby Bolden, a freshman, had six kills and four aces. Sophomore Laini Kosinski added eight kills and four aces, and Maddy Lyles, LMA's senior libero, added four aces.

The match was a prime example of young players stepping up, which the Lady Swampcats need, as five seniors will graduate in the spring.

"Ariana and Maddy are huge shoes to fill," Marshall said. "The good news is, since I took over the program, I've tried to take over as many parents as possible to get their kids at the younger level to start playing club ball. Laurence Manning has always been a football, basketball, baseball and softball school. These kids play travel ball, they play AAU basketball, and volleyball was never something that they played in the offseason. These kids have started to understand that you can't put the volleyball down in October and pick it back up

for summer conditioning and think you're going to be able to win games."

The momentum carried into Wednesday with a win over Thomas Sumter. Somcheen had another huge game with 14 kills and six aces. She showed the kind of leader LMA sees behind the scenes every day.

"She never gives up. She is one that wants to get better, and she wants to improve and it shows," Marshall said of Somcheen. "And she helps with the JV hitters. She's a leader, not just for the varsity team, but the JV team as well. So many of the kids watch her play and are like, 'Wow, that's what I want to be.'"

Marshall said you can see Somcheen's development this season in her service game.

"Ari has a beautiful jump serve this season, and last year she was working on it, and it hadn't been perfected," Marshall said. "Seeing her go to that jump serve every serve this year just makes your heart smile because it's proof that hard work and dedication pays off."

Laurence Manning was able to get a three-set sweep over the Lady Generals, a major turn from their previous meetings. In the preseason, LMA

fell to TSA in a long five-set match. A week ago, an injury-riddled Lady Swampcat squad was swept. On Wednesday, they won 25-23, 25-17, 25-21. It was a great sentimental victory with a veteran coach like Gwen Herod on the opposing bench.

"Miss Gwen has been so helpful to me over the years," Marshall said. "She has always led her teams with impressive ability. The fact that these girls went out and busted their tails and worked so hard and pulled together a victory in three sets is awesome for us."

Thomas Sumter had some strong performances. Emily Young had 15 kills and three blocks, while Lily Naylor led the team with 30 digs, adding two kills. Riley Hyder had another 10 digs and five kills. Fendley Kimbro led the Lady Generals with 20 assists.

Still, LMA persevered. Kosinski had another big game with nine kills, two aces and a dig. Abby Boldin had three aces and two kills. Lyles had four aces and seven digs. Kosinski continues to impress Marshall, despite her lack of experience in the sport.

"Before last year, Laini had never played volleyball before, and she has just taken that front middle spot and just run with it," Marshall said. "Laini has the ability to jump up over the net and kill a ball, and she has great court awareness that she can go up to kill a ball and see there's an open spot behind the setter and just dinks it right there. She has really come alive."

Laurence Manning has three games left in the regular season, a trip to Lee Academy on Wednesday before games with Pinewood Prep and Trinity Collegiate. Unlike past seasons, Marshall is hopeful that their season won't end with their regular season finale.

"We have never really made the playoffs. We're 100% in position to do that, and we're going to fight like the Cats that we are. We'd love the opportunity," the head coach said. "We've got three very winnable games coming up. I haven't even mentioned playoffs to them; we want them focused on the matches we've got coming up.

"We want to go to state and show people who doubt us what we can do."

Lee Central's Ja'Marion Slater (7) runs through the Mullins defense on Thursday.

PHOTOS BY CAL CARY / THE SUMTER ITEM



LCHS FROM PAGE B1

to make the score 18-0 with 3:37 to go in the third quarter.

Lee Central's other two lost fumbles came on the first play of its opening series of the second half and two plays after the safety, a turnover that set up Mullins' only score of the night.

The Auctioneers took over at their 28 after the turnover and began a 13-play drive that culminated with a 9-yard Tyshawnta Davis scoring run at the 7:46 mark of the final quarter. Mullins stayed with the ground game through the drive's entirety, with Treyveon Gause hitting two quick bursts for 13 and seven yards on consecutive plays to advance to the Stallion 15.

The Stallions, now 3-3 overall, had to make a few adjustments in their preparation for the week. First came the word early in the week that the game would be moved to Thursday because of the anticipated effects to the area from Hurricane Ian. Then, on gameday, the game time was pushed up from 7:30 to 6:30 p.m.

The Lee Central defense makes a stop against Mullins on Thursday.



Also, it was homecoming week for Lee Central students, faculty and alumni.

"For us, this week, or any year as it relates to homecoming, our big push is that (we have) no distractions," Danner said. "So, believe it or not, we spoke to the guys on Sunday and just talked about the possibilities of possibly moving the game up to at least Thursday. We didn't think it would go as close as Wednesday, so I wanted that to be on their minds. I thought our guys did a good job of really trying to make it about Mullins, and I thought that we really did that all tonight. I thought we tried to make it about Mullins and just not think about anything else."

With an extra day off heading into a bye week, the Stallions will have time for players to heal before taking the field again on Oct. 14 for a region matchup at Marion.

"With all the bump-ups of tonight, we'll need as many days as we can to try to get healthy," Danner said. "We have a couple of other guys who have been out as well, so we're trying to get as many kids back as we can get back."

LMA FROM PAGE B1

fumble on Heathwood's first drive and marched down to the 5-yard line but couldn't punch it in.

After trading punts, Sumpter intercepted a pass midway through the second quarter to set up what should've been a scoring drive for the Swampcats. LMA had two touchdowns called back because of penalties on back-to-back plays. First, Ian Harris had a 40-yard tote on the ground that was erased before a 50-yard touchdown pass was also called back. Harris suffered an injury on the latter play. He tried to return in the second half but was unable to finish the game.

"We probably left a couple of touchdowns on the table, but it is what it is," Furse said. "We've got to do a better job of finishing and not committing penalties."

Heathwood opened the second half with the ball and marched down the field on a 7-minute drive to tie the game at 8-8. That score would stand until early in the fourth, as each squad turned the ball over on downs on their next drive.

With just over nine minutes to play in the game, Sumpter punched in a score to give LMA a 6-point cushion. The conversion failed to leave the score at 14-8, but it was a lead the Swampcats would not surrender. That would be the final highlight in an excellent all-around performance from Sumpter. He finished with 14 carries for 52 yards and two touchdowns offensively and added four solo tackles and a pick on the defensive side.

"He's one of our better athletes. We've been waiting for him to have a breakout performance, and this might have been it," Furse said of Sumpter. "He's extremely fast and intelligent. It's exciting to see him have success on offense."

After back-to-back punts, the Laurence Manning defense made the stop it needed and then some. Heathwood attempted to run a reverse but dropped the pitch. Hodge was happy to take advantage. After a slight bobble, he scooped up the loose ball and scored on a 40-yard return.

"Even if they had completed the reverse, I think we would've had it for a tackle for a loss, but (Hodge) had great awareness," Furse said. "It gave us a two-score lead with about five minutes left, so it took some of the pressure off us and made us more confident we were going to win."

Bryson Smith added a 2-point conver-

sion to push the lead to 22-8. That final score proved crucial, as Heathwood immediately responded with a passing touchdown. The extra point would've given the Highlanders the lead had Hodge not taken the fumble to the house.

The Swampcats regained possession after the score and chewed all but eight seconds off the clock. A few attempts at a long touchdown were fruitless, and LMA left with a 22-15 win.

Outside of Sumpter's touchdown runs, LMA had some strong performances on the ground. Quarterback Tyler June ran for 114 yards on 17 carries and was 6-10 for 40 yards through the air. Harris finished with 21 yards on nine carries. Brandon King added three catches for 31 yards through the air.

Defensively, King had nine total tackles and a tackle for a loss. Jackson Brunson had six total tackles and a TFL. Josiah Burson had five total tackles. Chappell Brogdon finished with eight total tackles, and James Olden locked down the middle with four total tackles and a tackle for a loss.

"Defensively, I thought our effort was great," Furse said. "They're really good on offense, so to be able to hold those guys to 15, I thought those guys did a really good job."

LMA leaves the win a little banged up. Bryson Smith was on a snap count coming into the game as he battled the flu all week. He was only cleared to play Thursday morning. Harris was knocked out of the game, and Jackson Brown was also injured in the first half after returning from another injury. With a three-day weekend before returning to work Monday, Furse hopes his team can heal up.

"It couldn't come at a better time," Furse said of having an extra day off. "I don't think any of these injuries are season-ending; we're just banged up. Hopefully we'll have everyone back next Friday."

Laurence Manning is now in the thick of their SCISA 4A schedule. They sit at 2-1 in the classification, and now three of their remaining four games will be played against 4A schools. That starts with a trip to Porter Gaud next week.

"We dropped our first game to Hammond, so we really need to win the rest of our games if we want to get home-field in the playoffs," Furse said. "Every game is extremely important. We've just got to take it one week at a time, hope we can build on this last week and continue to get better and better."



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Atlanta outfielder Ronald Acuna Jr. and the Braves host the Mets this weekend to determine the winner of the National League East.

Big series in A-T-L: Mets vs. Braves with NL East on the line

BY PAUL NEWBERRY
Associated Press

ATLANTA — Two months into the season, it looked like the New York Mets were headed for an NL East runaway.

Not so fast, said the reigning World Series champions.

Sparked by two budding stars, the Atlanta Braves suddenly found their mojo.

Now, they're a mere game behind the Mets heading into the biggest series of the year, a three-game set in the A-T-L on the final weekend of the regular season.

"It's gonna be fun," Braves manager Brian Snitker said. "That's kind of why you play."

This isn't quite like the classic pennant races of the pre-wild card era, when a team had to win its league or division to make the postseason. The Mets and Braves have both locked up playoff berths.

But every other division title has been clinched with a week to go, leaving the NL East as a most enticing outlier. And winning the division does come with a major perk.

The NL East champion gets a first-round bye. The team that winds up second will have to host a best-of-three series, most likely against the San Diego Padres.

"We know how good (the Braves) are and we've got an opportunity just like they do," Mets manager Buck Showalter said. "It's great for baseball and it's good for our sport that we all love."

The free-spending Mets, bolstered by a dynamic rotation and sluggers Pete Alonso and Francisco Lindor, are headed to the postseason for the first time since 2016.

Their biggest goal has been met.

Still, considering they've been in first place all but a couple of days this season, it would be a major downer if the Mets fail to snap Atlanta's run of four straight NL East titles.

Looking for more punch at the plate, New York is calling up 20-year-old Francisco Alvarez — baseball's top-rated prospect — ahead of Friday's opener.

"It's an important series and it's one where everyone is going to play hard," Mets third baseman Eduardo Escobar said through a translator.

Early on, it didn't look like much of a race. The Braves were 10 1/2 games behind the Mets on May 31, stumbling along with a record of 23-27.

Since then, Atlanta has matched the Los Angeles Dodgers as the hottest team in baseball with a 74-32 mark, getting huge contributions from a pair of rookies.

Michael Harris II was called up from Double-A to join the lineup on May 28, largely with the idea that he would bolster the team's defense in center field.

Turns out, the 21-year-old is much more than a glove man. Harris is hitting .305 with 19 homers, 64 RBIs and 20 stolen bases, making him the favorite for NL rookie of the year and already earning him a long-term deal.

If Harris is the best first-year player in the

league, he's not far ahead of teammate Spencer Strider.

The hard-throwing right-hander with the bushy mustache began the year in the bullpen before making his first career start on May 30.

The 23-year-old Strider has been nothing short of dazzling. In 20 starts, he is 10-4 with a 2.77 ERA and 165 strikeouts in 107 1/3 innings.

Unfortunately for the Braves, Strider won't be available for this series. He's out for the rest of the regular season with an oblique injury, though Atlanta is hopeful of getting him back for the playoffs.

Even without Strider, the pitching matchups are enticing: New York's Jacob deGrom (5-3, 2.93 ERA) against Atlanta's Max Fried (13-7, 2.50) on Friday, followed by Max Scherzer (11-4, 2.13) vs. Kyle Wright (20-5, 3.18) on Saturday, and Chris Bassitt (15-8, 3.2) vs. Charlie Morton (9-6, 4.29 ERA) Sunday night.

The weather forecast also looked much more promising than just 24 hours earlier.

With Hurricane Ian barreling up the East Coast, the Mets proposed shifting the series opener to Thursday — an off day for both teams. The Braves declined, having played 13 straight days.

By Thursday morning, the forecast called for only a slight chance of showers over the weekend.

The Braves have been chasing the Mets all summer, finally catching them on Sept. 6. But this one has been a nail-biter for a while, the margin no more than three games for more than a month.

New York leads the season series 9-7, which means the Mets can clinch the potentially important tiebreaker with one win in Atlanta.

The Mets won four of five when the teams met in New York the first week of August, which many thought would finish off Atlanta's division hopes.

But the Braves are 32-13 since then, feasting on below-.500 teams with a 21-5 mark. New York, meanwhile, opened the door by getting swept at home by the lowly Cubs, though the Mets have bounced back to win nine of their last 12, including a 10-inning win over the Marlins on Wednesday in which they rallied from a four-run deficit.

The Braves lost in extra innings at Washington, dropping a game behind New York.

That's OK, said Snitker, who pointed out that his team has played "a lot of big games, long years, high-pressure games. These guys have gotten a whole bunch of them under their belt. I don't think there's a whole lot that's gonna shake them."

This was supposed to be final three games of the regular season, but the lockout forced an extension of the schedule. The Braves will travel to Miami for three games against the Marlins next week, while New York closes out at home with three against the Nationals.

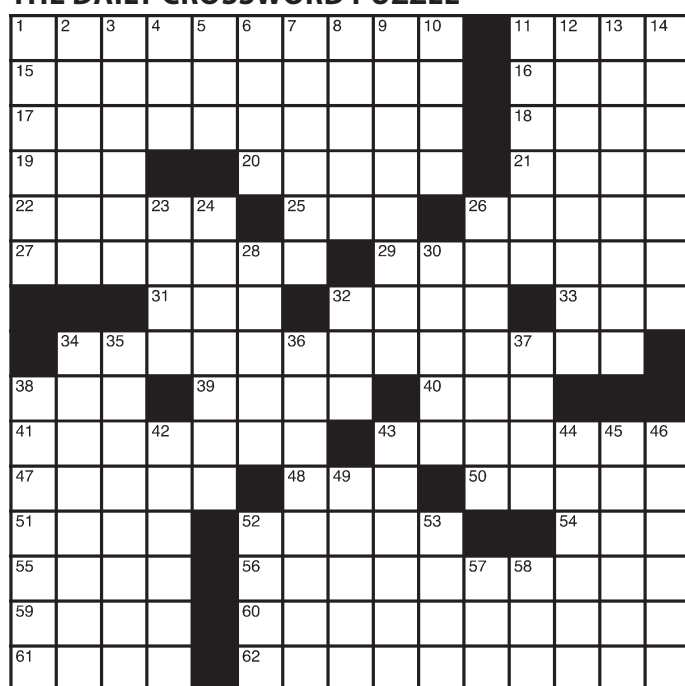
No one is thinking about those games.

It's all about this series.

"Two really good teams obviously going at it," Snitker said. "We'll see what happens."

SATURDAY PUZZLES

THE DAILY CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Matthew Stock and Pravan Chakravarthy 2/12/22

- ACROSS**
- 1 Works on the margins, perhaps
 - 11 Water color
 - 15 "Were you followed here?"
 - 16 Hold sway
 - 17 Ambitious workers
 - 18 Wasatch Mountains
 - 19 Oscar-nominated biopic about a Supreme Court justice
 - 20 "Your Movie Sucks" author
 - 21 Dial on old TVs
 - 22 Disney princess from Avalor
 - 25 Cholera
 - 26 Pt. of VAT
 - 27 Ditches
 - 29 Cocktails flavored with orgeat syrup
 - 31 Actor Millen of "Orphan Black"
 - 32 Change in holiday entertainment?
 - 33 "Spring forward" letters
 - 34 Small wing nut
 - 38 "A ___ upon thee!"
 - 39 Checks
 - 40 Sticker in a cushion
 - 41 Black Friday exhortation
 - 43 Made a course standard
 - 47 Burnett who appeared on the final season of "Better Call Saul"
 - 48 Actress Longoria
 - 50 Pink bear in "Toy Story 3"
 - 51 Of all time
 - 52 Puffed up
 - 54 ___-free container label
 - 55 Capital on the Gulf of Guinea
 - 56 Website with a "Recipes & Menus" section
 - 59 Son of Hera
 - 60 Wildly incompatible
 - 61 ___ control
 - 62 "Studying, simplified" website
- DOWN**
- 1 "Is nothing ___?"
 - 2 Ready for field work
 - 3 Teeters (on)
 - 4 Meryl Sheep of "Sesame Street," for one
 - 5 Date
 - 6 Cut (down)
 - 7 Outs
 - 8 Someone who's all style and no substance
 - 9 French course final?
 - 10 Musical pause
 - 11 Necktie
 - 12 Icelandic gift-givers of lore
 - 13 Selfless sort
 - 14 Marie Kondo superlative
 - 23 With 28-Down, twice-daily occurrences
 - 24 End of a Google Maps route calculation
 - 26 Bile
 - 28 See 23-Down
 - 30 First Hebrew letter
 - 32 Way finder
 - 34 Neighborhood diner?
 - 35 Absolute ends
 - 36 Treat with DJ
 - 37 Wild about
 - 38 Warmup stretch
 - 42 Sylvan area
 - 43 Flying ___
 - 44 WWII craft
 - 45 Equally uncontaminated
 - 46 Cooks slowly
 - 49 "You can clap now!"
 - 52 Fires (up)
 - 53 Gloaming
 - 57 Akira
 - 58 Shares time, for short?

Previous Puzzle Solved



JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

By David L Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

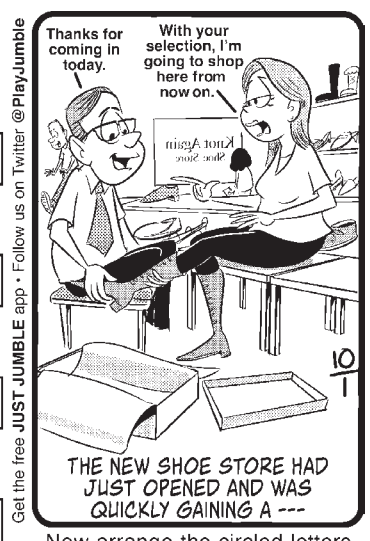
Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

KALOC

FARET

WOSDIN

SOCOYH



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

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Print answer here:

(Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumbles: LEGAL PROUD ORATOR AFLAME
Answer: The tree wasn't growing coconuts like it should. To find out why, they hired a — PALM READER

SUDOKU

HOW TO PLAY:
Each row, column and set of 3-by-3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 through 9 without repetition.

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

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

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THE ANSWERS TO THESE PUZZLES CAN BE FOUND ON TODAY'S DAILY PLANNER PAGE.

Wiseman stars as Warriors, Wizards open preseason in Tokyo

BY CLAY BAILEY
Associated Press

James Wiseman, who missed last season rehabilitating a right meniscal tear, scored 20 points on Friday as the defending champion Golden State Warriors defeated the Washington Wizards 96-87 to open the NBA preseason in Tokyo.

Wiseman played 24 minutes, connecting on eight of 11 shots, while adding nine rebounds and one block.

Rui Hachimura, a native of Japan who received a robust ovation from the crowd when he was introduced with the Washington starters, led the Wizards with 13 points and nine rebounds. Wiseman and Hachimura were the only players to finish in double figures as both teams substituted freely, particularly in the second half.

Warriors star guard Stephen Curry played 13 minutes, going 1 of 7 from the field — a 3-pointer — finishing with six points. Wizards guard Bradley Beal played 18 minutes and scored nine points.

It's part of a two-game series in Tokyo between the Warriors and Wizards, the first played in Japan since the Houston Rockets and Toronto Raptors played a preseason game in 2019.

The sellout crowd got glimpses of stars Curry, Draymond Green and Hachimura, as well as Beal. None of the Golden State starters played more than 20 minutes. By the third quarter, the teams were deep into their benches and gave reserves extended time in the game.

Both teams showed some early turnovers, errant passes and shot under 33% in the first half. Both teams ended the game shooting under 37%.

No. 10 N.C. State seeking landmark win over No. 5 Clemson

BY PETE IACOBELLI
Associated Press

CLEMSON — No. 10 North Carolina State understands what it takes to beat Clemson. The Wolfpack would sure like to add a second-straight landmark win over the Tigers on Saturday night.

The Wolfpack (4-0) open Atlantic Coast Conference play with one of their most critical games of the year. Top the Tigers (4-0, 2-0 ACC) and North Carolina State has an early leg up — along with a tiebreaker if both schools finish with the same league mark — in the ACC Atlantic Division.

NC State quarterback Devin Leary said last year's win over then-ninth-ranked Clemson was certainly a confidence builder for a team that had lost its previous eight to the Tigers.

That victory at home showed “we can compete with the best as long as we prepare and do our jobs,” said Leary, the ACC preseason player of the year. “I think we got a little bit of a taste of that last year.”

Plenty of eyes will be on this contest, NC State's first top-10 matchup. ESPN is in town with “GameDay” and Memorial Stadium is sold out.

Clemson coach Dabo Swinney knows how difficult the Wolfpack can be. “We've had some games here and there that got out of hand, but most of them have been hard-fought games,” he said. “I'm sure this will be the same.”

The Tigers have relied on a rejuvenated offense under quarterback DJ Uiagalelei to stay perfect. Uiagalelei had thrown for 10 touchdowns this season, already more than his nine TD throws in 2021.

“He's just in a different place,” Swinney said of his junior passer. “He's very confident and playing with a

lot of joy. He was not very confident last year.”

The difference is clear. Uiagalelei went toe-to-toe with Wake Forest quarterback Sam Hartman in Clemson's 51-45 OT win over the Demon Deacons last week.

STREAKING TIGERS

Clemson has a 10-game win streak, the longest in the Bowl Subdivision. The Tigers also have won their past 36 games at home, a stretch that dates to Pitt's 43-42 victory at Death Valley on Nov. 12, 2016. The Wolfpack were part of that run of home success, losing to No. 1 Clemson 41-7 on Oct. 20, 2018.

ATTACKING DOWNFIELD

N.C. State can look at Wake Forest's offensive plan in last week's shootout loss to the Tigers for an indication of what could work. The Demon Deacons had six touchdown passes and were aggressive in pushing the ball downfield to attack an injury-battered secondary.

“You see what they did and you tip your hat to them,” Wolfpack offensive coordinator Tim Beck said. “But I don't know if we'll get the same (looks) or not.”

STORM WATCH

Clemson administrators have tracked Hurricane Ian's projected path and believe conditions will not make the field unplayable come kickoff. Tigers kicker B.T. Potter said he routinely works with wet footballs just to be ready in case rain storms come.

“It's a normal week,” Swinney said. “We're getting our team ready to play.”

Still, both Clemson and North Carolina State had their ball-handlers working with soggy footballs to prep for what may come Saturday night.

Leary said before the snap at practice, someone will walk by with a water bottle



Clemson quarterback DJ Uiagalelei (5) scrambles past Wake Forest defensive lineman Tyler Williams (72) on Saturday. The Tigers face their second straight ranked foe today as they host N.C. State.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NO. 5 CLEMSON VS. NO. 10 N.C. STATE

No. 10 North Carolina State (4-0, 0-0 ACC) at No. 5 Clemson (4-0, 2-0), Saturday, 7:30 p.m. ET (ABC)
Line: Clemson by 7, according to FanDuel Sportsbook.
Series record: Clemson leads 59-21-1

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Clear control of the ACC Atlantic Division with near the halfway point of the season. Clemson comes off a dramatic, 51-45 OT win over previously undefeated Wake Forest and can hold a tiebreaker against both its prime competitors in the division. North Carolina State ended a long losing streak against the Tigers last year and will look to win its first game at Clemson since Philip Rivers was their quarterback in 2002.

KEY MATCHUP

Clemson QB DJ Uiagalelei vs. North Carolina State's defense. Uiagalelei is a revamped passer this season, already throwing for more TDs in four games this year than he did a season ago. But the Wolfpack are one of the ACC's top defenses, first in fewest points allowed per game, second in the league against the rush and third against the pass.

PLAYERS TO WATCH

North Carolina State: QB Devin Leary is the 'Packs' clear leader, completing nearly two-thirds of his throws for 890 yards and nine touchdowns against just two interceptions. Leary is 16-3 as the Wolfpack's starting quarterback the past two seasons.
Clemson: DT Tyler Davis' return from injury against Wake Forest was a big reason the Tigers were able to largely shut down the run and get a bit of pressure on Deacons quarterback Sam Hartman in the fourth quarter and overtime. Davis is quick and powerful and can shut down the middle.

FACTS & FIGURES

Clemson has a 36-game home win streak, dating back to November 2016 and can tie Florida State's ACC mark of 37 straight by beating the Wolfpack. The Tigers also carry a 10-game win streak overall, the longest in the Power Five. ... North Carolina State is in its first top 10 battle in football history. ... Clemson has played five previous undefeated matchups at Death Valley where both teams are 4-0 or better. The Tigers are 4-1, the loss coming to Jameis Winston and Florida State in 2013. ... North Carolina State center Grant Gibson has special ties to Clemson. His grandfather is former Charlotte Mayor Harvey Gantt, the first Black student to enroll at Clemson in 1963. ... Clemson has scored 175 points, tied for second most through four games in program history. Only the 2000 team that started 8-0 has scored more during that stretch.

USC FROM PAGE B1

Nick at quarterback on their opening drive but were forced to punt after picking up a first down.

That's how most of the evening would go for the Bulldogs, who are now 1-3 after dropping two straight games. Head coach Oliver Pough knows his team has an uphill battle to get where it wants to be.

“Our two missions were to play better — we didn't quite get that done — and to stay healthy, which we sorta, kinda got done,” Pough explained. “I do see some things that show signs of improvement but we are not as good on defense right now as we were last year.”

“We've got our work cut out for us. We're not as aggressive, we don't tackle very well and we make too many mistakes. We haven't been very good at all to be perfectly honest with you. We are 1-3 and we look like it.”

A 15-yard run by Marshawn Lloyd on the first play of the next drive made it look like a promising drive was in store. A 5-yard pass from Rattler to Josh Vann two plays later was the next biggest play of the drive before the Gamecocks were forced to punt after reaching midfield.

The Gamecocks forced another 3-and-out and took advantage of the decent starting field position. Lloyd broke off a 31-yard run to get the Gamecocks in the red zone. Rattler passed to Ahmearan Brown for a gain of 11 and then passed to Lloyd for a 5-yard touchdown two plays later. Tonka Hemmingway ran the ball in for the two-point conversion and the Gamecocks led 8-0.

Nick would get a first down for the Bulldogs on a 12-yard run that advanced the ball into Gamecocks' territory but a punt followed three plays later. A great punt by former Sumter Gamecock Dyson Roberts pinned South Carolina inside its own 5. A third down conversion pass from Rattler to Christian Beal-Smith kept the drive alive as the first quarter ended and the Gamecocks maintained an 8-0 lead.

Rattler connected with Jalen Brooks for a 54-yard completion on the first play of the second quarter and it looked like the Gamecocks had things rolling. Completions to Brooks again and Jaheim Bell set up USC on SC State's 12-yard line. Bell would punch it in from one yard out after two runs by Juju McDowell and the Gamecocks led 15-0 after the extra point.



Former Manning standout and current South Carolina State linebacker Aaron Smith (11) talks with teammates during their matchup against South Carolina on Thursday.

PHOTOS BY NICH PITTS / SPECIAL TO THE SUMTER ITEM

Kendrell Flowers got some work in on the ground during the following S.C. State drive, picking up a first down after two carries of three yards each. The Gamecocks got whistled twice for pass interference on the drive. The second gave the Bulldogs new life on a third down. With the ball at the Gamecocks' 30 yard line S.C. State couldn't take advantage after a holding penalty knocked the Bulldogs back 10 yards and Fields was picked off by Sherrod Greene two plays later.

The Gamecocks would drive all the way to the red zone before Rattler would be picked off for the second time of the night on the ensuing possession. This time, it was Zion Keith with the takeaway. USC would get the ball back after the Bulldogs went 3-and-out. A few S.C. State penalties and a few nice runs from Rattler and McDowell set up a 6-yard rushing touchdown by Rattler and the Gamecocks went up 22-0 going into the half.

There was a new energy from the Bulldogs on the opening drive of the second half. Nick had a rush of nine yards followed by a 19-yard run two plays later. Two plays later, Nick completed a 32-yard strike to Shaquan Davis to set the Bulldogs up at the USC 11-yard line. A 7-yard pass from Nick to Alex James set up first-and-goal at the one and Nick would proceed to run it in to put the Bulldogs on the board.

It took five plays for the Gamecocks to answer, as Rattler connected with Austin Stronger for a 15-yard touchdown. South Carolina led 29-7 and seemed to have control of the game from that point.

There was one more glimmer of light for the Bulldogs after going 3-and-out. The punt was blocked by the Gamecocks' King-Demenian Ford

and recovered by Josh Vann, who proceeded to fumble and give the ball back to SC State. That light was put out when Nick was intercepted by Marcellas Dial three plays later.

A 35-yard pass from Rattler to Bell started the next drive. Christian Beal-Smith would gain 20 all-purpose yards on the drive including the 1-yard score to add more security to the Gamecocks' lead. USC led 36-7 heading into the final quarter.

That was the last drive of the game for Rattler, who has had his second consecutive game with a completion percentage above 70%. It has been an improvement since the game against Georgia a few weeks ago.

“I think we're getting there,” Beamer said about the progression of the team's deep passing game. “We're not going to be able to just run the ball and dink and dunk down the field and win football games, we've got to throw the ball down the field. We need to continue to call it and take those shots but we've got to be able to hit on them as well.”

A 3-and-out for the Bulldogs and a turnover on downs for the Gamecocks started the final frame. Fields was intercepted by Bam Martin-Scott, who returned it 37 yards to the S.C. State



Former Crestwood kicker Gavyn Zimmerman, center, kicks for S.C. State.

2-yard line. Lloyd would walk it in on the next play and South Carolina led 43-7.

Nice and Tyler Smith picked up most of the yardage on the next Bulldogs possession. A pass interference penalty gave the Bulldogs first-and-goal at the nine. After a 5-yard run by Nice and back-to-back incomplete passes, the Bulldogs opted to kick the field goal. Former Crestwood Knight Gavyn Zimmerman converted to make it a 43-10 game with 6:48 remaining.

Consecutive 3-and-outs followed, with both teams using some of their substitutes. The Gamecocks got great field position after a 30-yard punt return by Vann. Dante Miller would have a 23 yard run to help set up a 13-yard scamper by Luke Doty for the game's final score.

It was the second consecutive game that the Gamecocks scored 50 or more points in after beating Charlotte 56-20 last weekend.

It was the third game of the season where the Bulldogs gave up at least 40 points. While the defense for S.C. State has struggled, Manning alumnus Aaron Smith has been a bright spot at the linebacker position. He's had three consecutive games with at least 5 tackles and a tackle for loss. The sophomore's play is something Pough hopes will continue.

“The guy is a very bright and talented individual,” Pough said. “At some point he's got to trust coaching and trust some of the stuff that people show him in practice and the week that I help him get to the right spots. He still sometimes kind of goes off on a tangent and we don't necessarily know why. So we're trying to figure him out a little bit but we get a lot of different kinds of guys who are projects at South Carolina State and he is one of those. He may be one of the best (on our defense).”



Former Lakewood defensive end Tyreek Johnson (10) plays defense for South Carolina during their win over S.C. State on Thursday.

Panthers seek to continue complete dominance over Cardinals

BY STEVE REED
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE — Kyler Murray has never beaten the Carolina Panthers. Then again, not many Arizona Cardinals quarterbacks have.

The Panthers have owned the series matchup against the Cardinals, winning 14 of 19 games, including six straight victories. They've defeated Arizona in each of the last three seasons — twice with Murray as the starting QB — and six straight times overall dating to 2015 by a whopping average margin of 35-17.

Two of those wins came in the playoffs, including the 2015 NFC championship game in which the Panthers destroyed the Cardinals 49-15 to reach their second Super Bowl.

"It means something," defensive end Brian Burns said. "I would say from the history we have always had their number and always had it out for them."

You have to go back to 2013 when Carson Palmer was playing quarterback for the Cardinals' last win against the Panthers.

Of course, right now both teams are simply thinking about getting back to .500 after starting the season 1-2 when they meet Sunday at Bank of America Stadium.

Panthers coach Matt Rhule knows getting a win against Murray won't be easy. Rhule called Murray one of the great quarterbacks in the league, citing his "magical" ability to extend plays as he did earlier this season in an overtime victory over Las Vegas.

Rhule also remembers facing Murray in college when the QB threw six touchdowns and ran for another score in Oklahoma's 63-33 win over Rhule's Baylor Bears.



Carolina defensive end Brian Burns and the Panthers host the Arizona Cardinals on Sunday.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

"I saw him do things in college that made me just want to walk off the field," Rhule said. "We sacked him and knocked the ball out of his hands, it bounced on the ground three times; he picked it up and threw it for an 18-yard first down. He's one of the most amazing players I've ever seen."

KYLER AT 50

Murray is still a young quarterback, but he's far from a rookie.

Now in his fourth NFL season, he'll play his 50th professional game Sunday.

"Fifty games? That's a lot of games," Murray said. "It doesn't feel like it, honestly. That's crazy."

Murray was the No. 1 overall pick out of Oklahoma in 2019. He's already a two-time Pro Bowl selection and helped lead the Cardinals to a playoff berth last season.

He said he has learned a lot over 50 games, but the biggest is simply perseverance.

"You've just got to keep going,"

Murray said. "Control what you can control. Obviously, we've had a lot of ups and downs. But it's a long season — one game doesn't make or break you. The team knows that, the locker room knows that, so you can't dwell on how we feel right now."

WHERE'S THE BEEF?

The Cardinals are very thin at receiver right now with injuries to A.J. Green and Antoine Wesley.

They're also very small.

After Green left last Sunday's game against the Rams with a knee injury, the Cardinals were left with the 5-foot-7 Greg Dortch and the 5-foot-9 Andy Isabella and Marquise Brown.

Arizona coach Kliff Kingsbury hopes Rondale Moore can return this week, which will help. But Moore is also just 5-7, so that doesn't help the height problem.

"We've just got to be smart about how we maximize those guys and utilize them, take advantage of what they do well," Kingsbury said.

Three-time All-Pro DeAndre Hopkins is also out while he misses the fourth game of a six-game suspension for breaking the NFL's rules on performance-enhancing drugs.

JUST GET OPEN

This season has been a struggle so far for Panthers quarterback Baker Mayfield, who has the second-lowest completion in the league and is 25th overall in QB rating.

Rhule has refused to place all of the blame on his new quarterback, challenging the team's wide receivers to do a better job of getting separation from defenders.

"Get open and the ball will come your way," Rhule said.

Rhule added of Mayfield: "I think Baker's going to be play great this week. He's focused. He's prepared."

PINEIRO'S POP

There was a bit of panic from the Panthers when kicker Zane Gonzalez was lost for the year with a groin injury in the preseason.

But replacement Eddy Pineiro, who lost a training camp competition to Greg Zuerlein with the Jets, has been up to the task. He's 7 of 7 on field goal attempts and is perfect on extra points, too.

TAKING IT AWAY

The Panthers failed to register a takeaway in their first two games, but they turned things around last week against the Saints with three takeaways to get back to even on the season in the turnover differential.

Carolina blitzed more against Jameis Winston and they're expected to use that same strategy to get Murray off his mark Sunday.

Bengals top Miami 27-15 after injured Tagovailoa carted off

BY MITCH STACY
Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Behind an overhauled offensive line coalescing in front of quarterback Joe Burrow and a defense forcing turnovers, the Cincinnati Bengals are looking more like the defending AFC champions.

After losing their first two games, the Bengals have reeled off two wins in a span of five days.

They beat the New York Jets on Sunday, then turned around and took down Miami 27-15 in a Thursday night game marred by the horrific sight of Dolphins quarterback Tua Tagovailoa being taken off the field on a stretcher.

Tagovailoa was taken to a hospital, but was expected to be released and fly home with the team. Coach Mike McDaniel said the QB sustained a concussion.

Burrow tossed a late 2-yard touchdown pass to Hayden Hurst to seal the win after Cincinnati safety Vonn Bell picked off Miami backup quarterback Teddy Bridgewater with three minutes left in the game.

"All day the protection was awesome," said Burrow, who was 20 for 31 for 287 yards and two touchdowns. "I had all the time I needed in the pocket to find the guys I needed."

Tee Higgins caught seven passes for 124 yards and a TD for Cincinnati (2-2). Evan McPherson kicked two fourth-quarter field goals — including

a 57-yarder — when the Bengals' drives stalled.

"Joe was lights out," Bengals coach Zac Taylor said. "You had to beat man coverage. We had the guys to do it and the protection to match it and the quarterback who, that's what he wants to see."

Bridgewater threw an incomplete pass on Miami's final drive to turn the ball over on downs with 57 seconds left.

Tagovailoa was 8 for 14 for 110 yards and an interception before his injury. Bridgewater finished 14 for 23 for 193 yards, a touchdown and an interception in relief.

"It's a tough loss," Bridgewater said. "It's tough walking away, especially under the circumstances."

Tyreek Hill paced the Dolphins with 10 catches for 160 yards. Jason Sanders kicked three field goals and had one blocked. He also missed a point-after attempt.

"You're going to lose games to very good teams if you lose the turnover battle and you're kicking field goals instead of trying for touchdowns," Miami coach Mike McDaniel said. "We had been executing. We didn't today. You don't get free passes against good teams."

'SCARY MOMENT'

The Bengals handed Miami its first loss of the season. The Dolphins departed Cincinnati with uncertainty

surrounding the future of their starting quarterback.

Tagovailoa was chased down and thrown to the turf by Cincinnati's Josh Tupou with about six minutes left in the first half. He remained down for more than seven minutes before being taken to a hospital with reported head and neck injuries.

His teammates gathered around as they worked on him.

"Very scary moment," McDaniel said. "He was evaluated for a concussion. He's in the concussion protocol, but he's being discharged. It's an emotional moment. It's not a part of the deal you sign up for."

The 24-year-old Tagovailoa was suffering from a sore back and was listed as questionable for most of the week ahead of the game.

Tagovailoa briefly left Sunday's 21-19 victory over the Buffalo Bills after appearing to be disoriented by what the team originally said was a head injury after taking a hard hit from Bills linebacker Matt Milano late in the first half. He missed just three snaps and returned after half-time.

The team and Tagovailoa said after Sunday's game the quarterback had a back injury that caused his awkward stumble and fall after he was slammed into the turf in the second quarter. The team said Monday that Tagovailoa was not in concussion protocol. He said he "hyper-extended"

his back after getting his legs caught under someone on a quarterback sneak.

CHEERS

At halftime, the Bengals added two players to their fledgling Ring of Honor at Paycor Stadium.

Isaac Curtis is regarded as one of the team's all-time great receivers. The four-time Pro-Bowler played in Cincinnati in 1973-84 and still holds the Bengals record for average yards per reception (17.07).

Tackle Willie Anderson was considered one of the best offensive linemen of his era. Anderson played in 182 games (regular and postseason) for Cincinnati in 1996-2007 and went to the Pro Bowl four times.

They join last year's Ring of Honor inaugural class: team founder/coach Paul Brown, quarterback Ken Anderson, tackle Anthony Munoz and cornerback Ken Riley.

INJURIES

Dolphins: CB Xavien Howard left in the second half after suffering a groin injury.

Bengals: TE Devin Asiasi left in the second half with an ankle injury.

UP NEXT

Dolphins: At New York Jets on Sunday, Oct. 9.

Bengals: At Baltimore on Sunday, Oct. 9.

OBITUARIES

CHARLIE HARRIS JR.

Charlie Harris Jr., 82, husband of Albertha Croom Harris, was born on Oct. 10, 1939, in Sumter, a son of the late Charlie Sr. and Essie Mae Bowen Harris.

He departed this life on Sunday, Sept. 25, 2022, at Prisma Health Tuomey Hospital in Sumter.

Public viewing will be held from 2 to 6 p.m. on Sunday at Job's Mortuary.

Funeral services will be held at 1 p.m. on Monday at Wayman Chapel AME Church, 160 N. Kings Highway, Sumter, SC 29154 with the Rev. Robert L. China Jr. officiating. Interment will follow at Wayman Chapel AME Church Cemetery.

The family will receive friends at the home, 2690 Clarendon Road, Rembert, SC 29128.

Job's Mortuary Inc., 312 S. Main St., Sumter, is in charge of arrangements.

Online memorials may be sent to the family at jobsmortuaryinc@gmail.com or visit

us on the web at www.jobsmortuary.net.

KEVIN Q. EPPS

Funeral services for Kevin Q. Epps will be held at 1 p.m. on Monday at Trinity Missionary Baptist Church, 155 Wall St., Sumter, with Larry C. Weston, pastor, and Bishop Jeffery Johnson officiating. Interment will follow in Bradford Cemetery.

A public viewing will be held from 3 to 6 p.m. on Sunday at the mortuary.

Kevin was born on June 29, 1990, in Sumter, to Kevin E. Prince and Joeann Epps. He died on Saturday, Sept. 24, 2022, in Alcolu.

The family is receiving friends at 15 Weatherly Road, Sumter.

Services entrusted to Whites Mortuary LLC — "Dedicated To Excellence - Committed to Service."

JAMES MCLEOD LINDA JANE LAWHON

A memorial honoring the

lives of James "Ken" McLeod and his sister, Linda Jane Lawhon, will be held at 3 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 8, at McLeod Chapel, 274 McLeod Chapel Road, Pisgah.

Mr. McLeod died on Thursday, April 28, 2022, and Ms. Lawhon died on Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2020.

CLARENCE JOHNSON JR.

MANNING — On Friday, Sept. 23, 2022, Clarence Johnson Jr. departed this life at McLeod Health Clarendon.

Born on Wednesday, Aug. 19, 1959, in Manning, he was a son of the late Clarence Thomas Sr. and Barbara Jean Martin Johnson.

Services celebrating his life will take place at 1 p.m. on Sunday at Elizabeth Missionary Baptist Church, 4829 Alex Harvin Highway, Ram Bay community of Manning, where the pastor, the Rev. Terry R. Johnson Sr., will officiate. Masks are required for those attending the service. The service of commitment will follow in the family plot located in Elizabeth Missionary Baptist Church Cemetery.

Public viewing will take place from 4 to 6 p.m. today at Fleming & DeLaine Chapel, 222 W. Boyce St., Man-

ning.

The family is receiving relatives and friends from 2 to 8 p.m. at the residence, 1066 Hamilton Road, Ram Bay community of Manning. Masks are required.

Fleming & DeLaine Funeral Home and Chapel of Manning is assisting the Johnson family. Online condolences may be sent to www.flemingdelaine.com or flemingdelaine@aol.com.

TIMOTHY BUTLER CAIN SR.

Timothy Butler Cain Sr., 91, widower of Eugenia Gary-Cain, departed this life on Monday, Sept. 26, 2022, in Sumter.

He was born on May 10, 1931, in Sumter, to the late James Witherspoon and Annie Elizabeth McCoy Cain.

Funeral services are incomplete and will be announced later by Whites Mortuary LLC.

HENRY LEE RICH

Henry Lee Rich, 73, husband of Ozella Junious Rich, departed this life on Wednesday, Sept. 28, 2022, in Sumter.

He was born on Oct. 9, 1948, in Florence, to the late Sadie Rich Parks and the late Taff Williams.

Funeral services are incomplete and will be announced later by Whites Mortuary LLC.

MARY ELIZABETH HAM BURGESS

Mary Elizabeth Ham Burgess, 84, widow of Jacob Burgess Sr., was born on Oct. 17, 1937, in Clarendon County, a daughter of the late Richard Metz Ham and Katie White Ham. She departed this life on Sunday, Sept. 25, 2022, at her residence.

Public viewing will be held from 2 to 6 p.m. on Sunday at Job's Mortuary.

Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. on Monday at Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church, 14 N. Brand St., Sumter, SC 29150 with the Rev. Larry Barnes officiating.

Interment will follow at Bradford Cemetery.

The family will receive friends at the home, 2130 McCrays Mill Road, Sumter, SC 29154.

Job's Mortuary Inc., 312 S. Main St., Sumter, is in charge of arrangements.

Online memorials may be sent to the family at jobsmortuaryinc@gmail.com or visit us on the web at www.jobsmortuary.net.

the Sumter ITEM CLASSIFIEDS

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CLASSIFIED DEADLINES

11:30 a.m. the day before for Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday edition.
11:30 a.m. Friday for Sunday's edition.

We will be happy to change your ad if an error is made; however we are not responsible for errors after the first run day. We shall not be liable for any loss or expense that results from the printing or omission of an advertisement. We reserve the right to edit, refuse or cancel any ad at any time.

LEGAL NOTICES

Beer & Wine License

Notice Of Application
Notice is hereby given that Shree Sambhu One, LLC intends to apply to the South Carolina Department of Revenue for a license permit that will allow the sale OFF premises consumption of Beer and Wine at 2114 HWY 521 S. Sumter, SC 29153. To object to the issuance of this permit / license, written protest must be postmarked no later than October 3, 2022. For a protest to be valid, it must be in writing, and should include the following information: (1) the name, address and telephone number of the person filing the protest; (2) the specific reasons why the application should be denied; (3) that the person protesting is willing to attend a hearing (if one is requested by the applicant); (4) that the person protesting resides in the same county where the proposed place of business is located or within five miles of the business; and (5) the name of the applicant and the address of the premises to be licensed. Protests must be mailed to: S.C. Department of Revenue, ATTN: ABL, P.O. Box 125, Columbia, South Carolina 29214; or Faxed to: (803) 896-0110.

Summons & Notice

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF SUMTER IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS CASE NO. 2022-CP-43-01146

SUMMONS AND NOTICE OF FILING OF COMPLAINT (221103.00074)

Rocket Mortgage, LLC f/k/a Quicken Loans, LLC,

PLAINTIFF,

vs.

Nicole Bastedo a/k/a Nicole Elizabeth Bastedo, Individually, as Personal Representative, and as Legal Heir or Devisee of the Estate of Elizabeth Bastedo a/k/a Elizabeth Huggins Bastedo, Deceased; and Any Heirs-at-Law or Devisees of the Estate of Elizabeth Bastedo a/k/a Elizabeth Huggins Bastedo, Deceased, their heirs or devisees, successors and assigns, and all other persons entitled to claim through them; all unknown persons with any right, title or interest in the real estate described herein; also any persons who may be in the military service of the United States of America, being a class designated as

Summons & Notice

John Doe; and any unknown minors or persons under a disability being a class designated as Richard Roe,

DEFENDANT(S).

TO THE DEFENDANT NICOLE BASTEDO A/K/A NICOLE ELIZABETH BASTEDO, INDIVIDUALLY, AS PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE, AND AS LEGAL HEIR OR DEVISEE OF THE ESTATE OF ELIZABETH BASTEDO A/K/A ELIZABETH HUGGINS BASTEDO, DECEASED ABOVE NAMED:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and required to answer the Complaint in the above entitled action, copy of which is herewith served upon you, and to serve copy of your answer upon the undersigned at their offices, 2712 Middleburg Drive, Suite 200, P.O. Box 2065, Columbia, South Carolina 29202, within thirty (30) days after service hereof upon you, exclusive of the day of such service, and if you fail to answer the Complaint within the time aforesaid, the Plaintiff in this action will apply to the Court for the relief demanded in the Complaint, and judgment by default will be rendered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

YOU WILL ALSO TAKE NOTICE that should you fail to Answer the foregoing Summons, the Plaintiff will move for a general Order of Reference of this cause to the Master in Equity for Sumter County, which Order shall, pursuant to Rule 53(e) of the South Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure, specifically provide that the said Master in Equity is authorized and empowered to enter a final judgment in this cause.

TO MINOR(S) OVER FOURTEEN YEARS OF AGE AND/OR MINOR(S) UNDER FOURTEEN YEARS OF AGE AND THE PERSON WITH WHOM THE MINOR(S) RESIDES AND/OR TO PERSONS UNDER SOME LEGAL DISABILITY: YOU ARE FURTHER SUMMONED AND NOTIFIED to apply for the appointment of a Guardian Ad Litem to represent said minor(s) within thirty (30) days after the service of this Summons and Notice upon you. If you fail to do so, application for such appointment will be made by the Plaintiff(s) herein.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the original Complaint in the above entitled action was filed in the office of the Clerk of Court for Sumter County on July 25, 2022.

SCOTT AND CORLEY, P.A.
Ronald C. Scott (rons@scottandcorley.com), SC Bar #4996
Reginald P. Corley (reggiec@scottandcorley.com), SC Bar #69453
Angelia J. Grant (angelj@scottandcorley.com), SC Bar #78334
Allison E. Heffernan

Summons & Notice

(allisonh@scottandcorley.com), SC Bar #68530
H. Guyton Murrell (guytonm@scottandcorley.com), SC Bar #64134
Kevin T. Brown (kevinb@scottandcorley.com), SC Bar #64236
Jordan D. Beumer (jordandb@scottandcorley.com), SC Bar #104074
ATTORNEYS FOR THE PLAINTIFF
2712 Middleburg Drive, Suite 200
Columbia, SC 29204
803-252-3340

EMPLOYMENT

Schools / Instructional

****FREE TAX SCHOOL****
Earn extra income after taking course. Flexible schedules, convenient location. Register now! Courses start October 3rd. Call 803-418-0123 Liberty Tax Service.

RENTALS

Unfurnished Homes

3 bdrm, 2 full bath house for rent, \$1,000/mo. Silver Community near Summerton. 347-782-4415



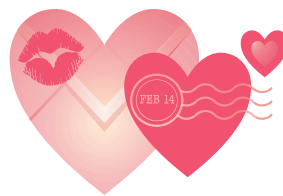
Property Mgt Co. accepting resumes for the position of "MAINTENANCE TECH"

for our local area communities. Should have exp in a handy man role and strong customer service skills. Please fax or email resume to: HR Director, 910-435-8934 resumes@unitedmgtii.com

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Rent Based On 30% of Adjusted Income
Utility Allowance Given

Southview

60 Hilliard Drive • Sumter, S.C. 29150
For application or information, please call 803-934-1449
TTY 800-735-8583

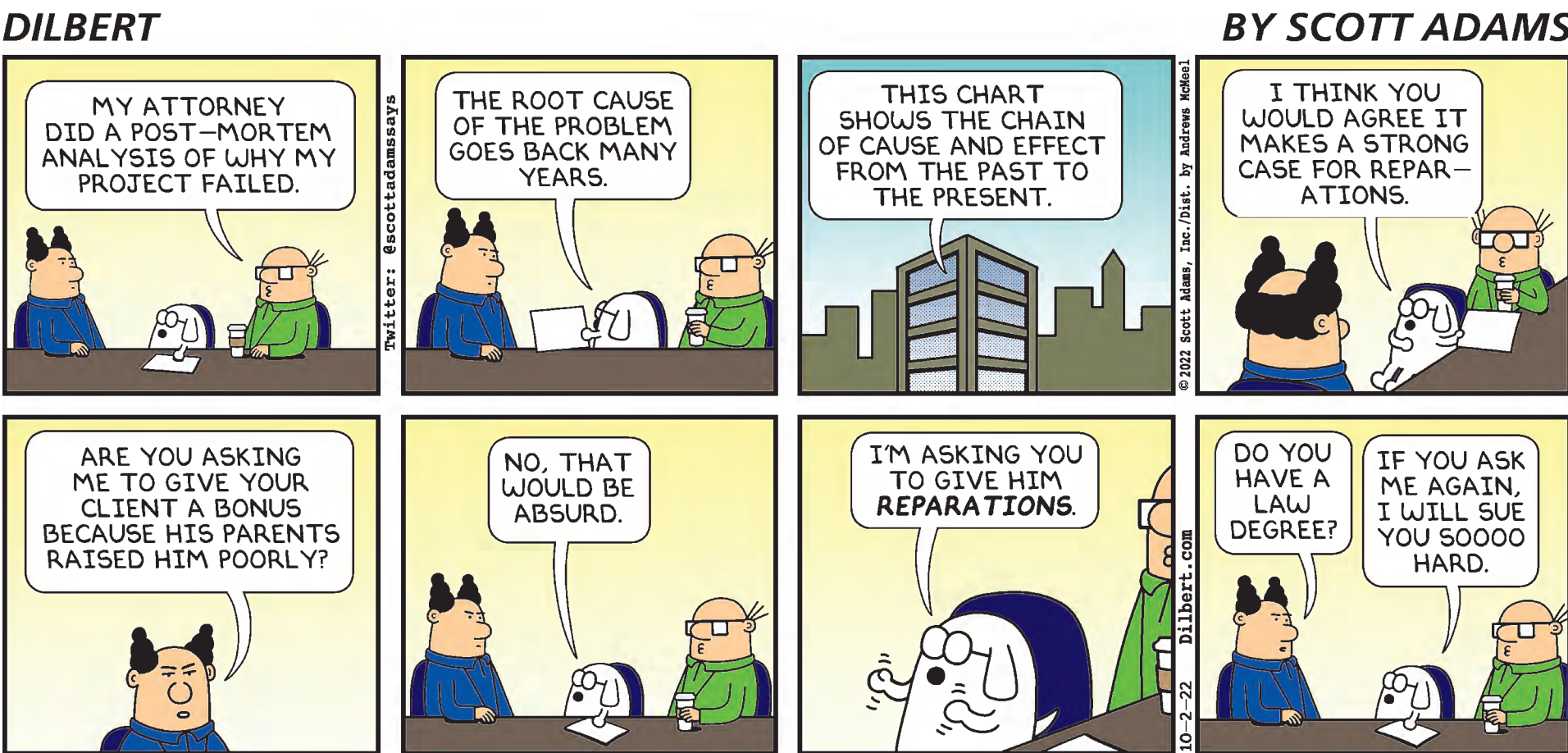
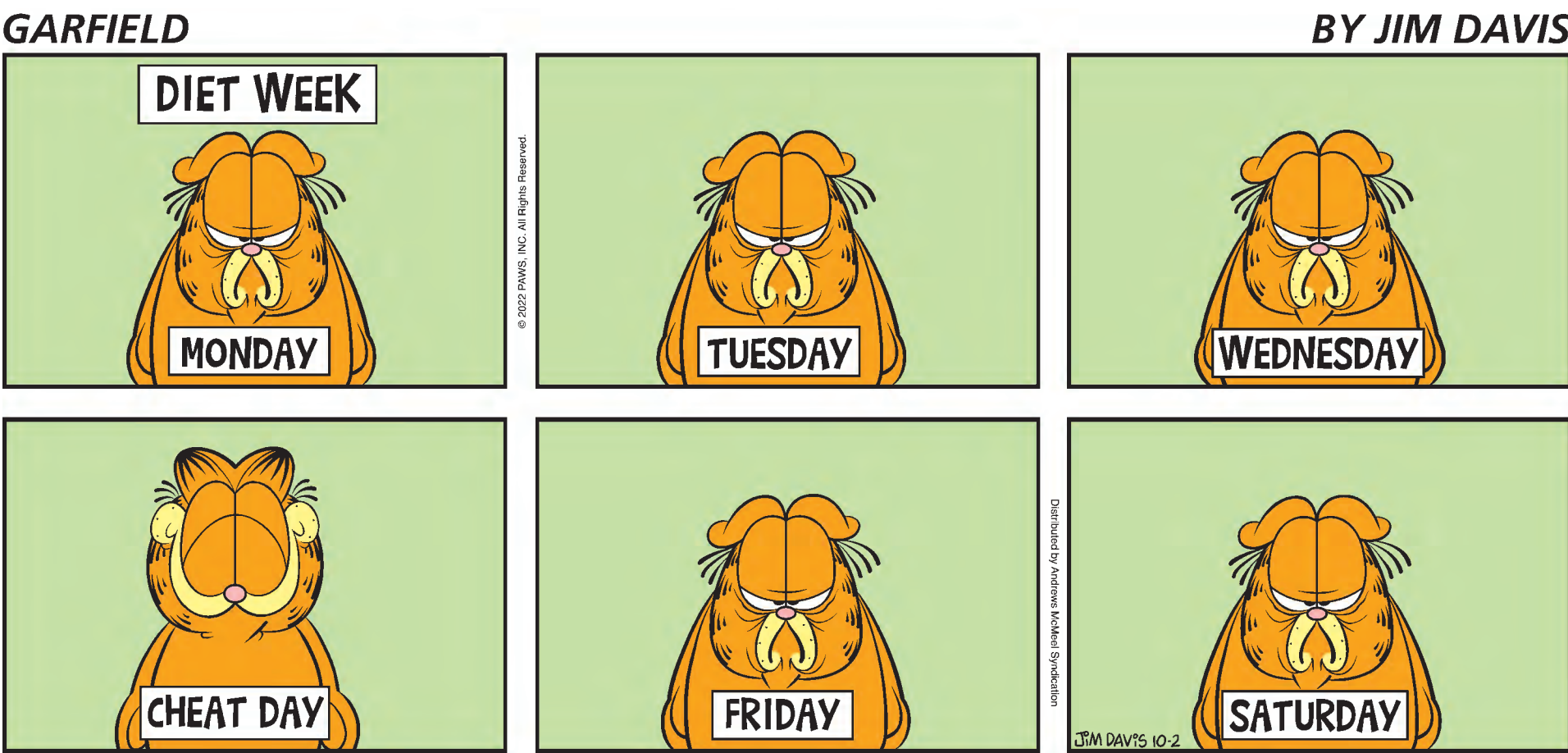
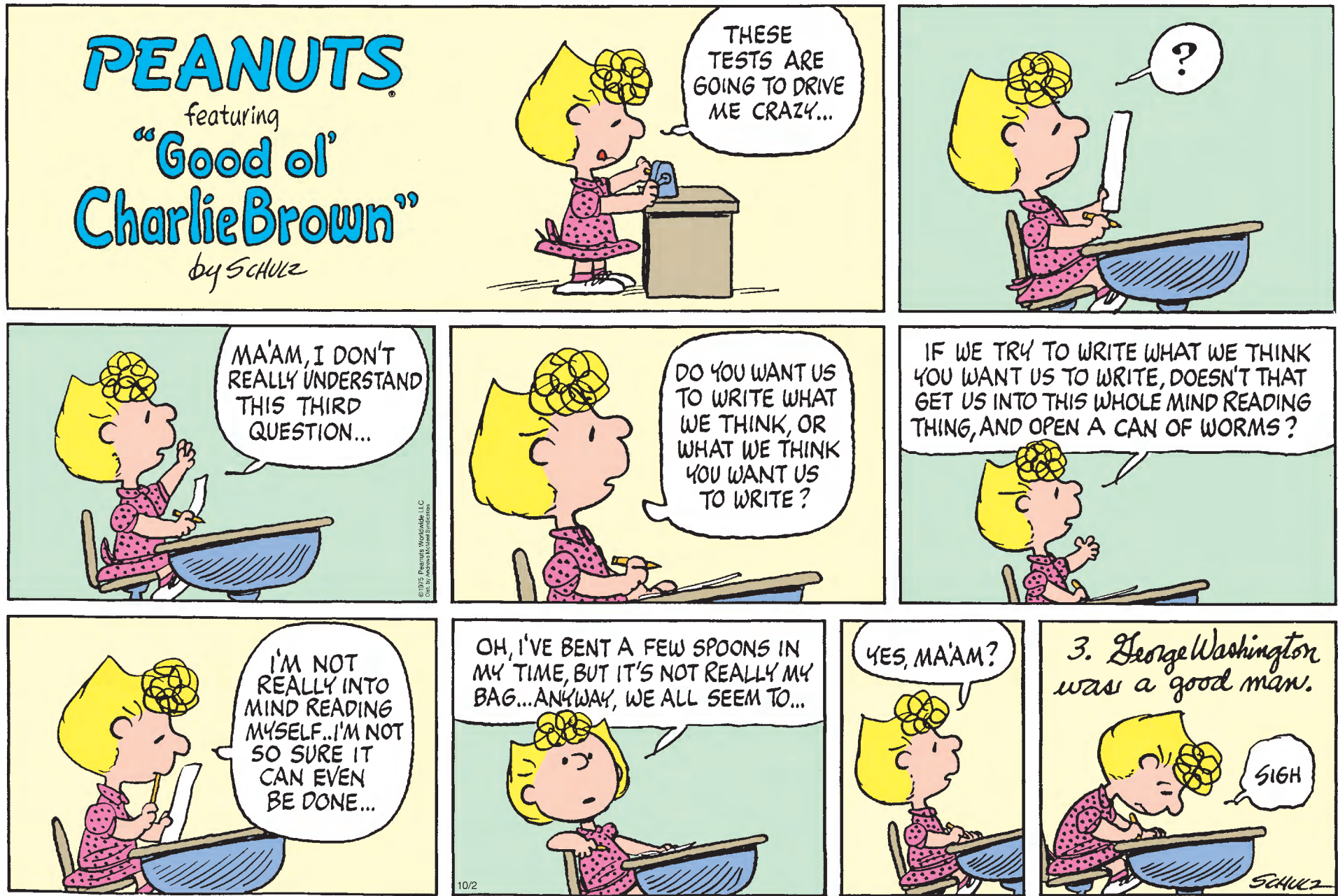
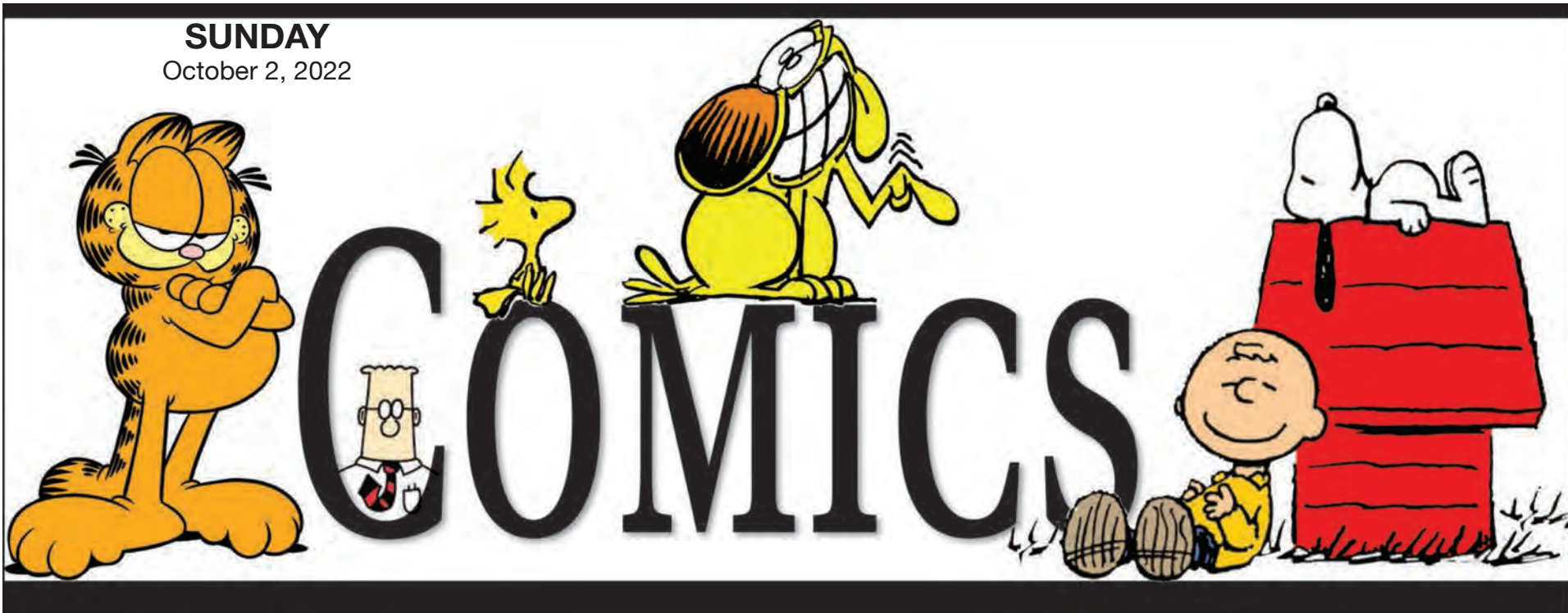


The Perfect Housewarming Gift

The Sumter Item is locally owned and run. We're part of this community and we believe in Sumter.

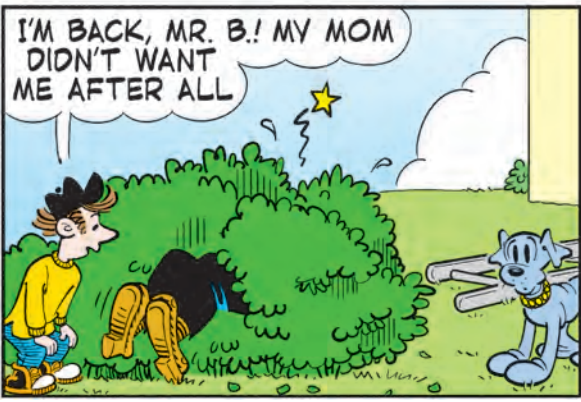
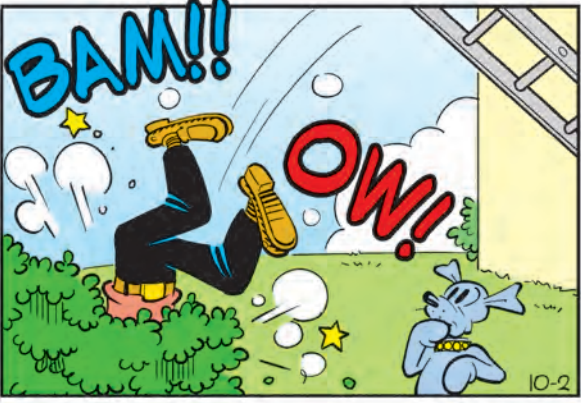
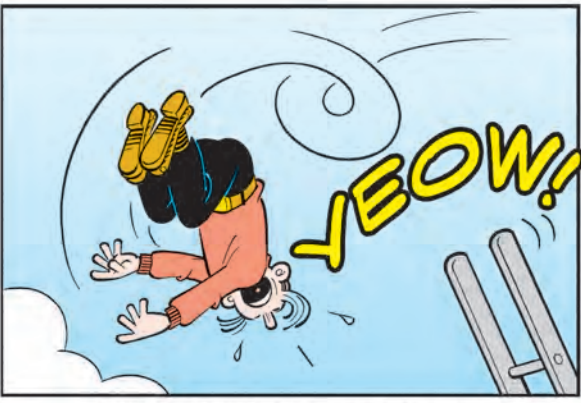
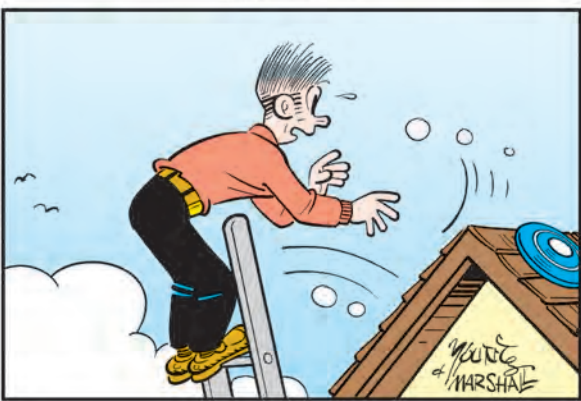
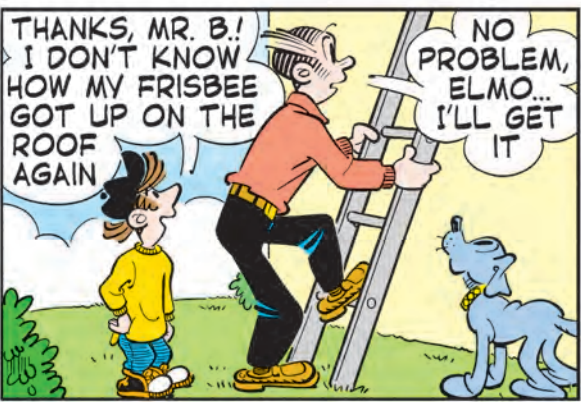
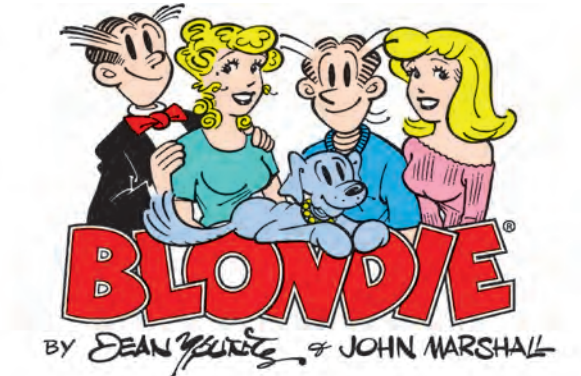
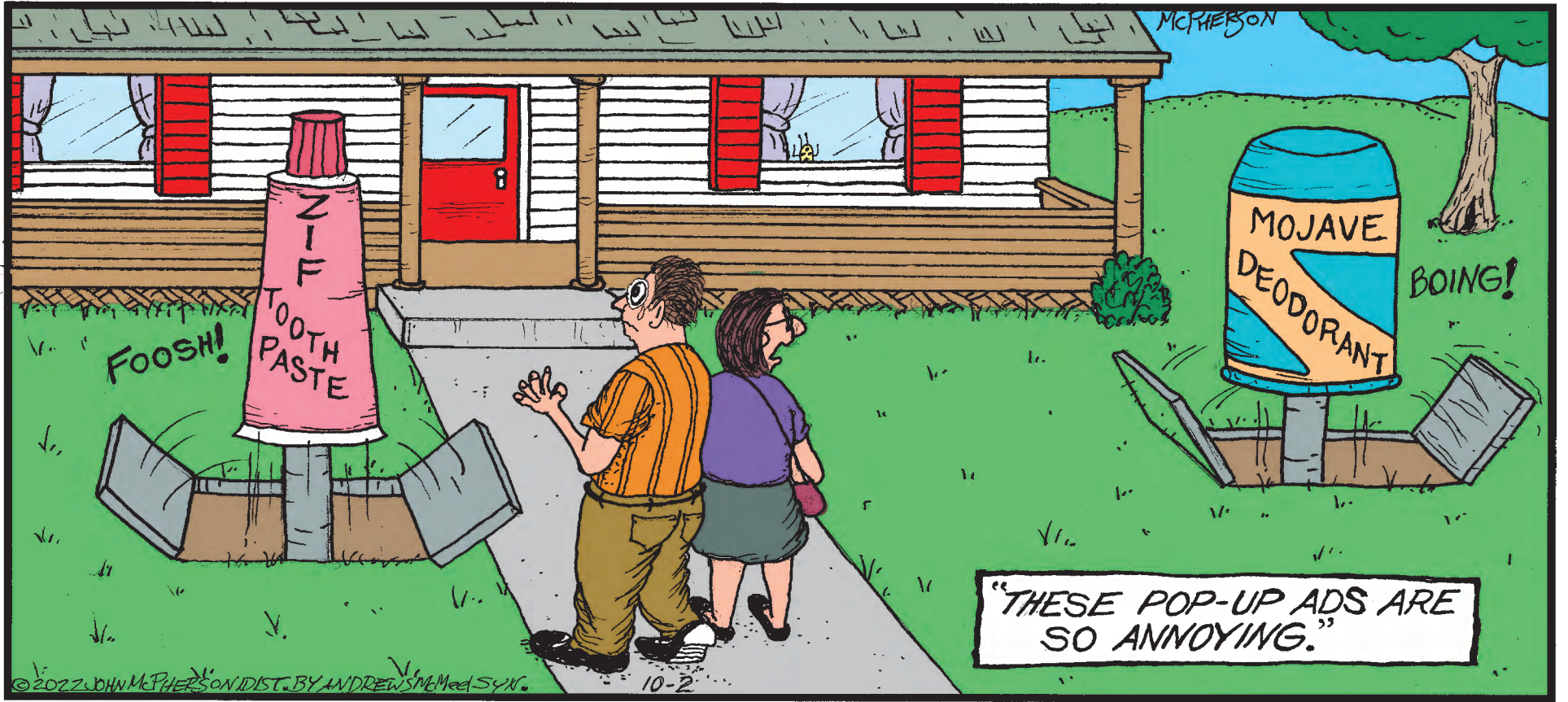
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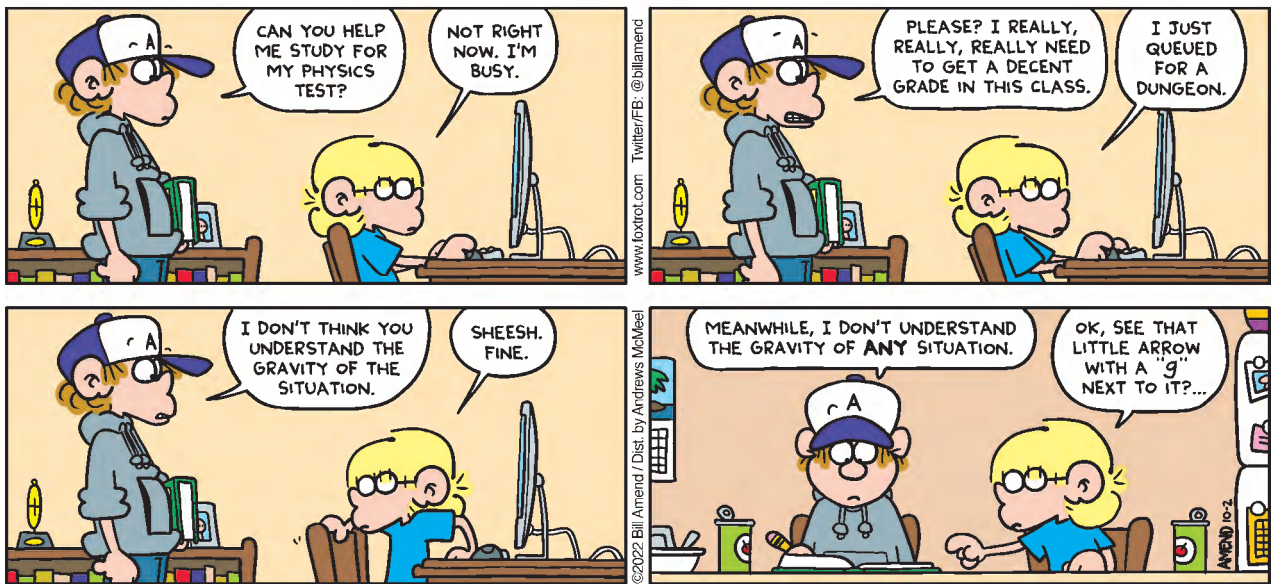
CLOSE TO HOME

BY JOHN McPHERSON



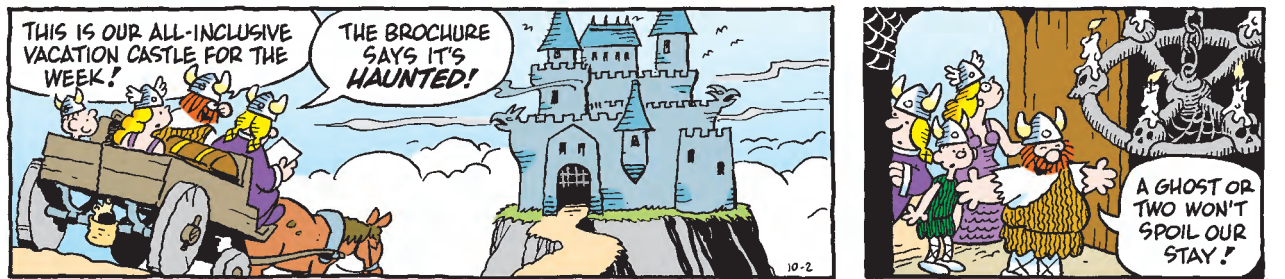
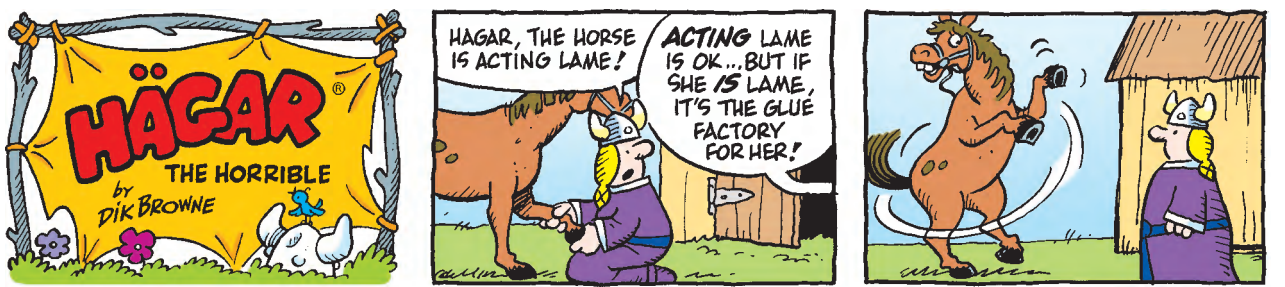
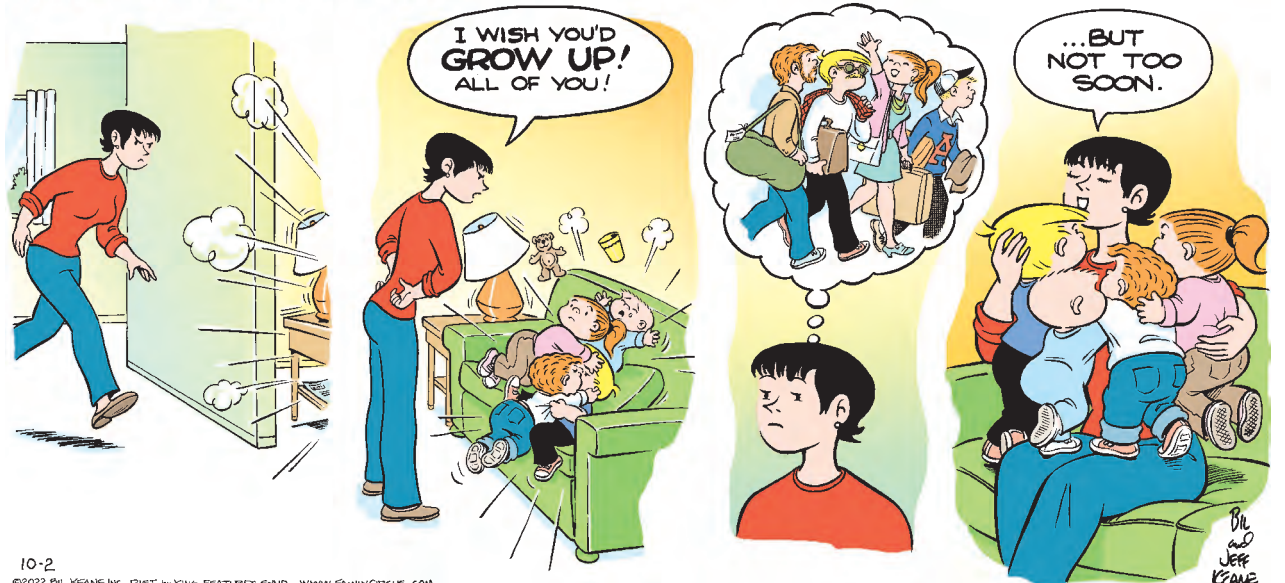
FoxTrot

by Bill Amend



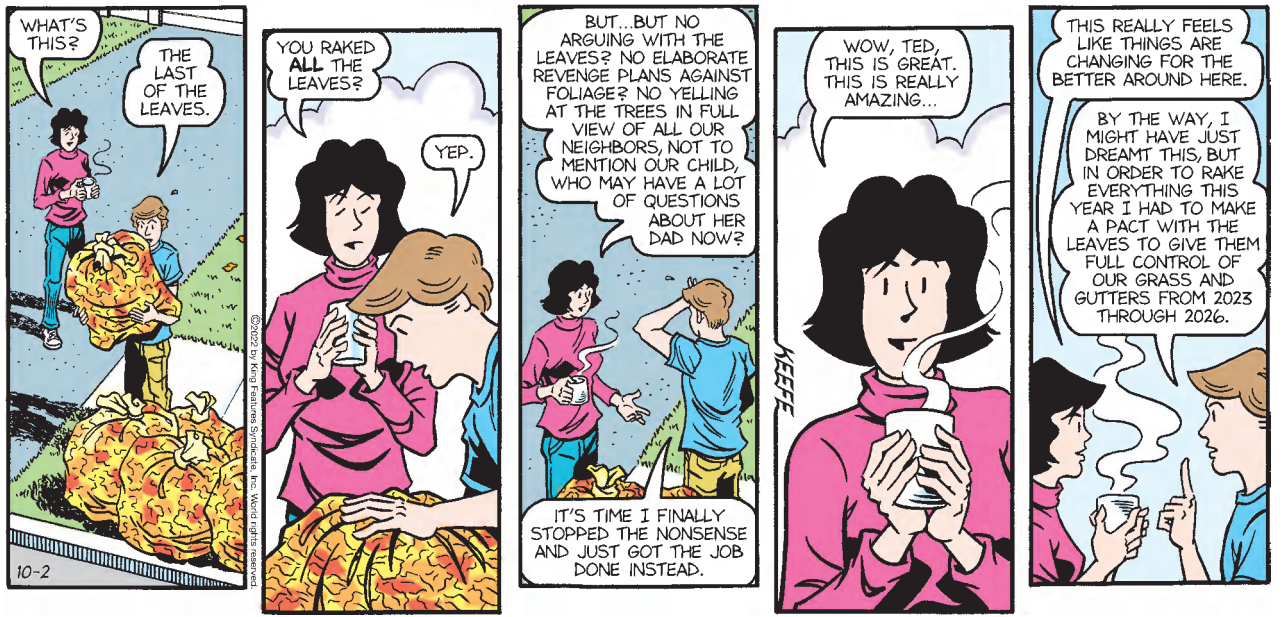
THE FAMILY CIRCUS

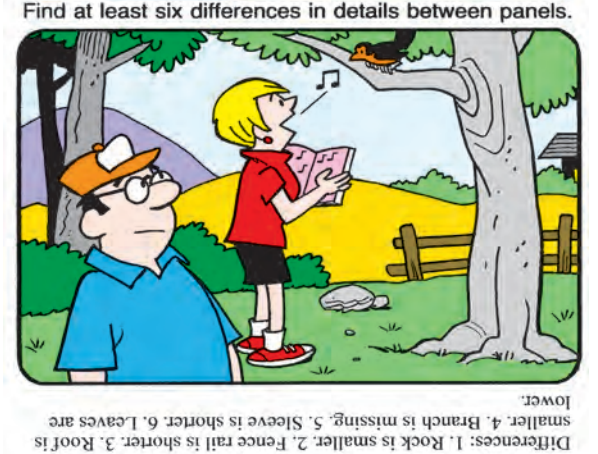
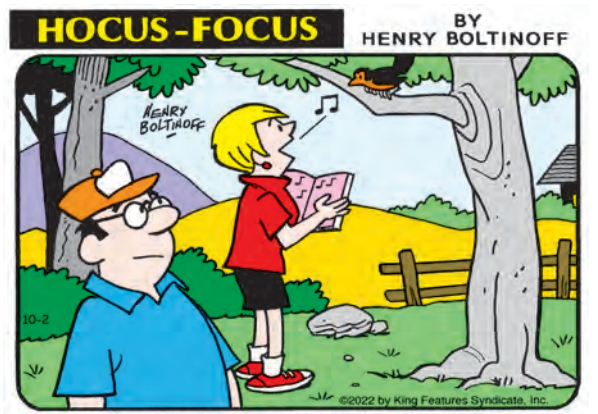
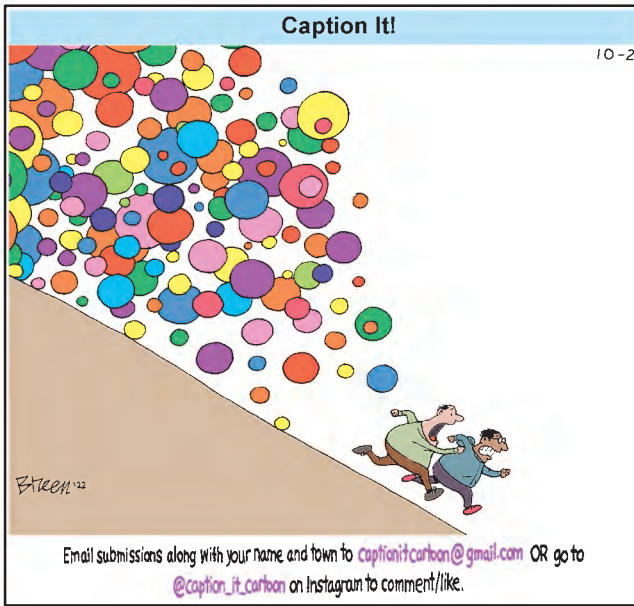
By Bill Keane



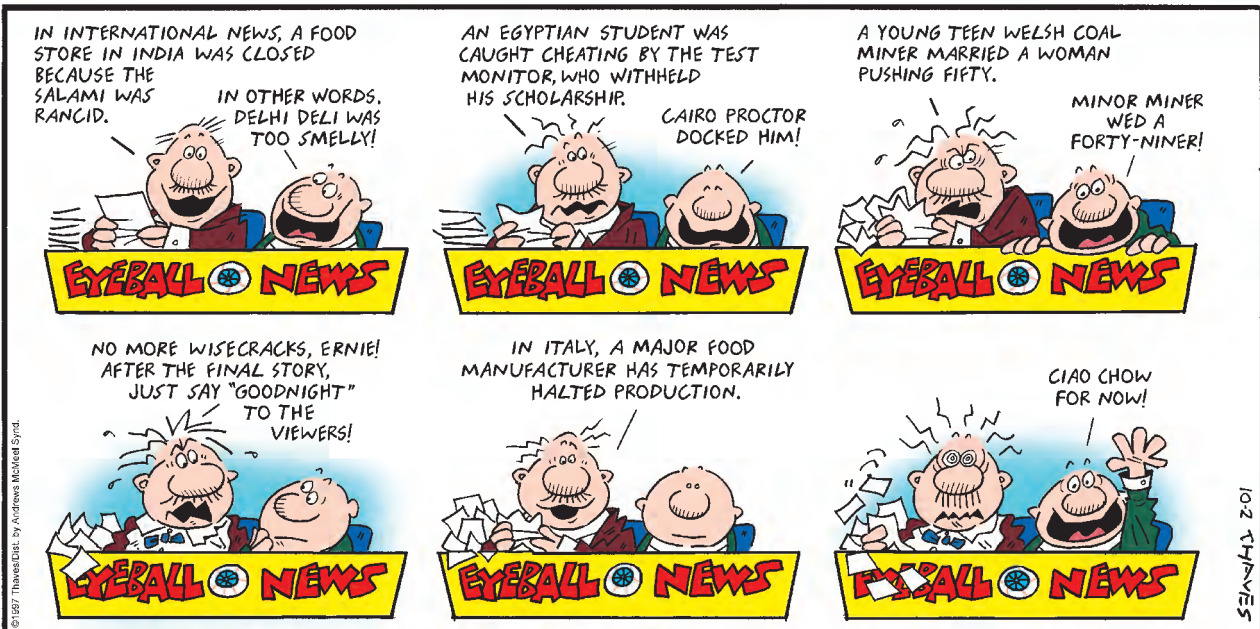
SALLY FORTH

BY FRANCESCO MARCIULIANO & JIM KEEFE



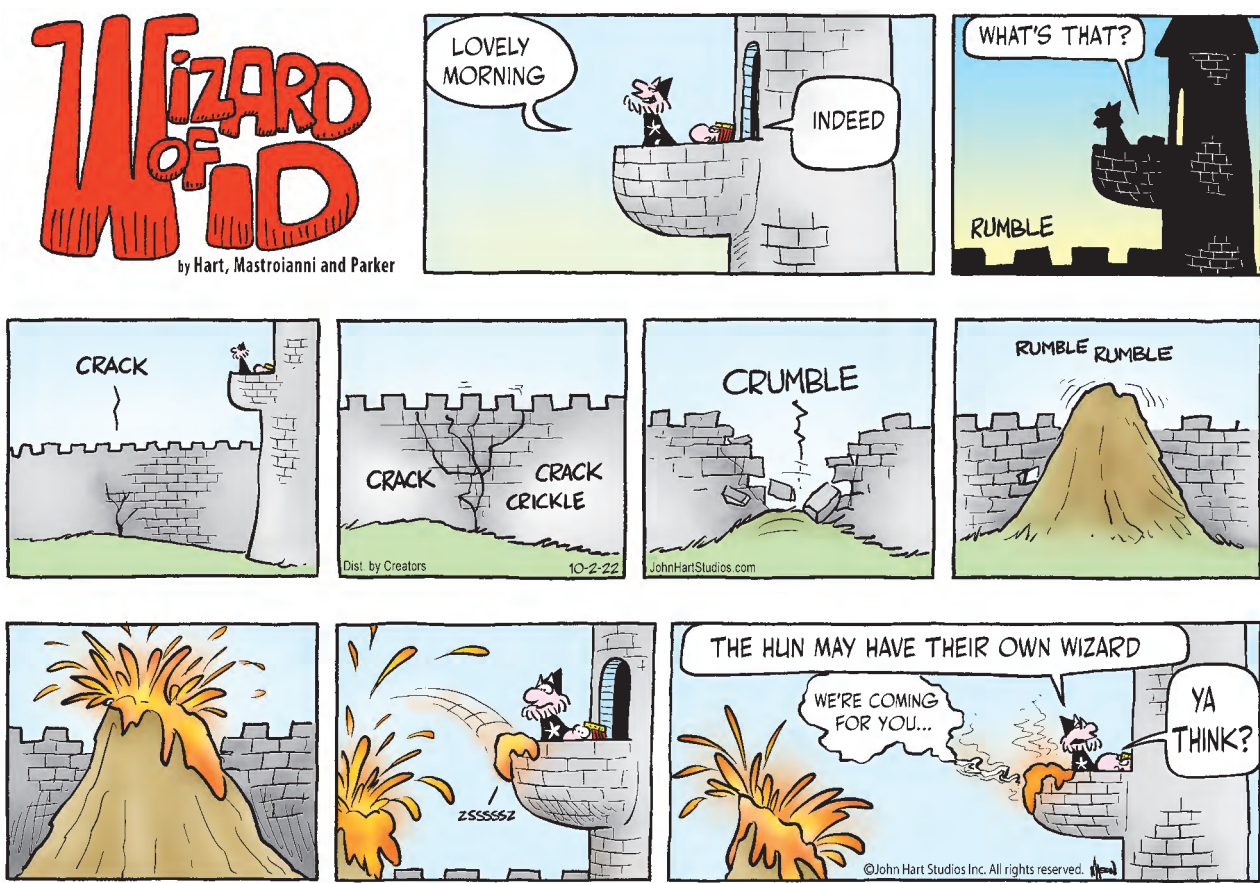
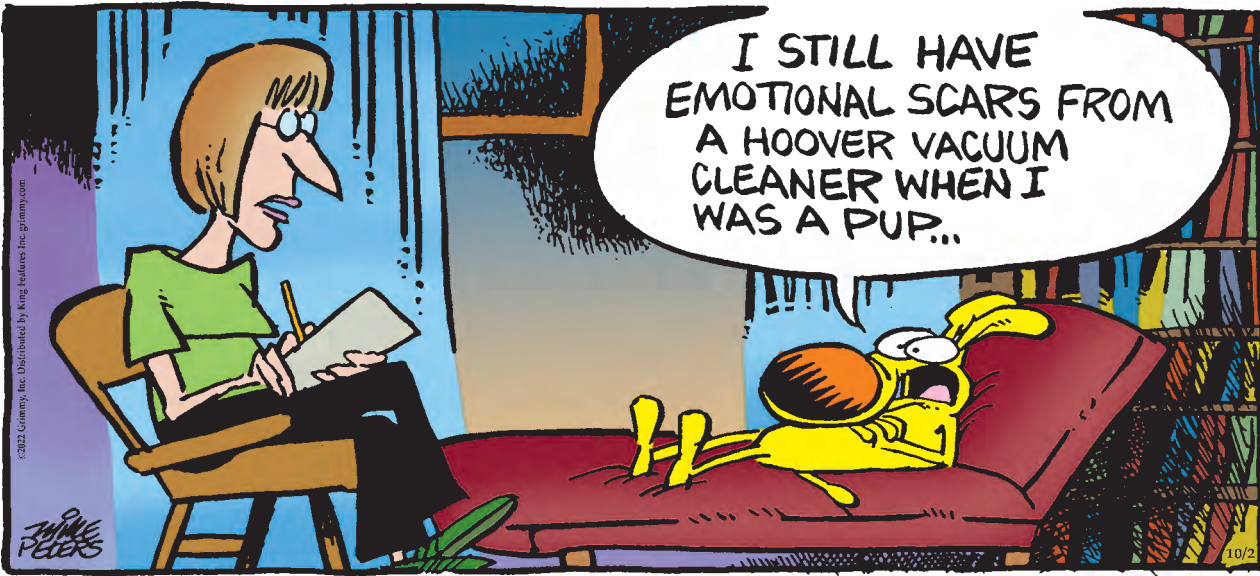


FRANK AND ERNEST



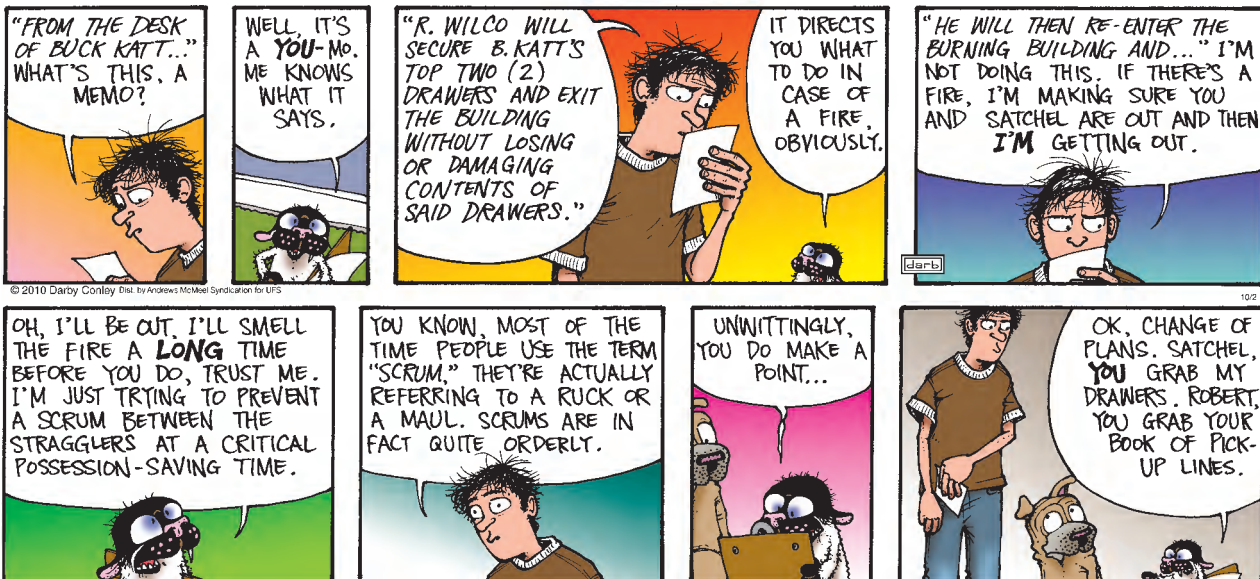
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS

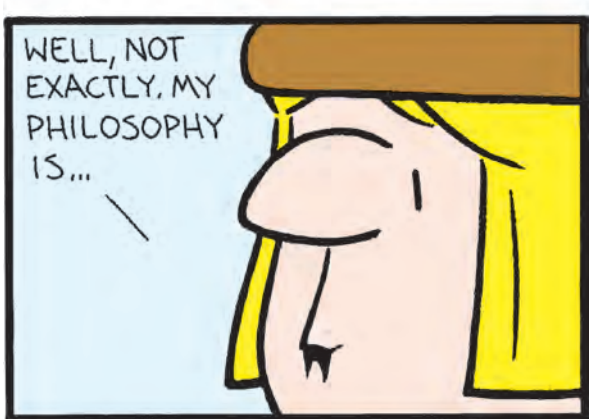


GET FUZZY

BY DARBY CONLEY

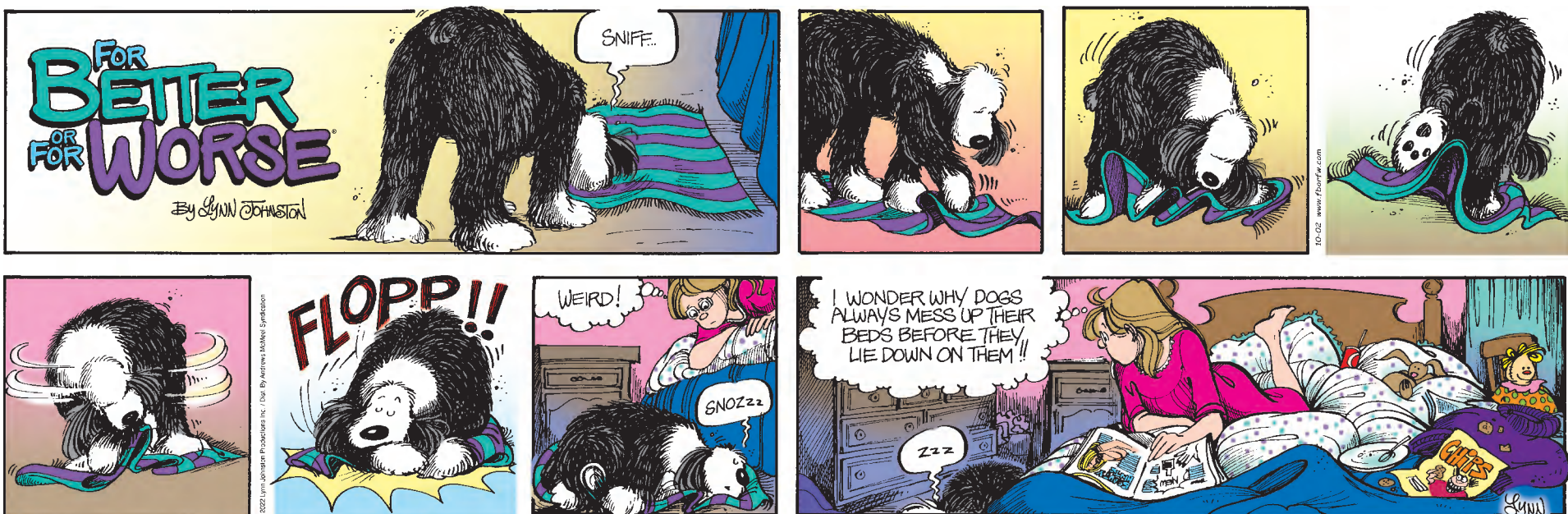
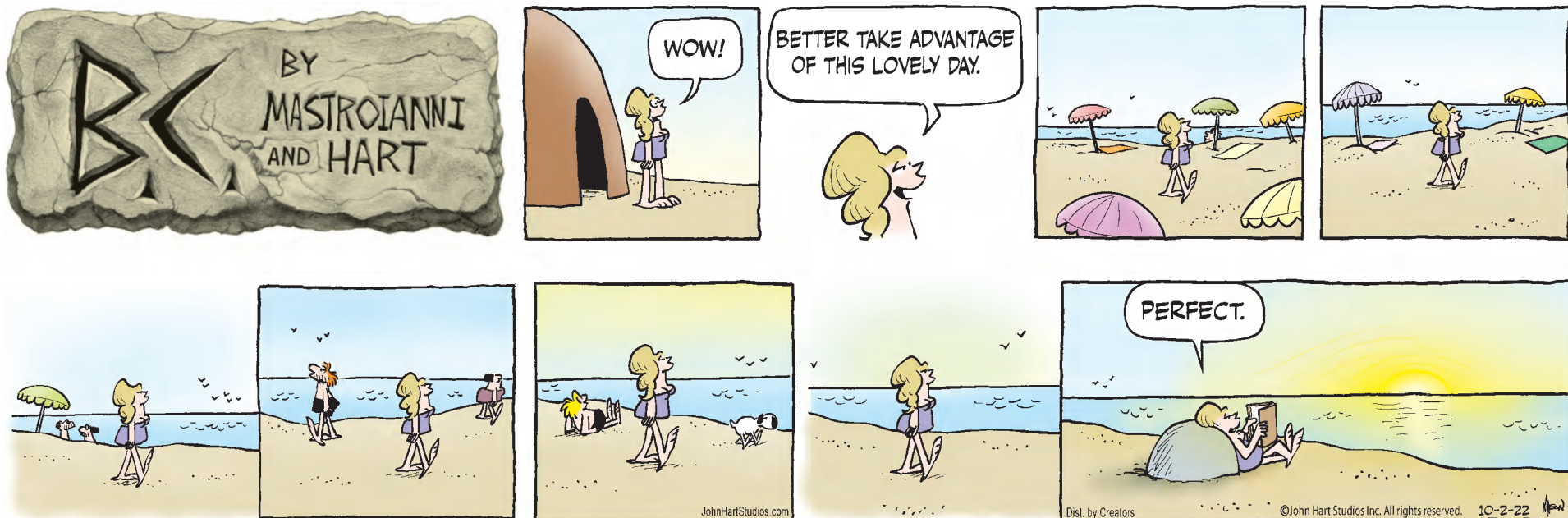
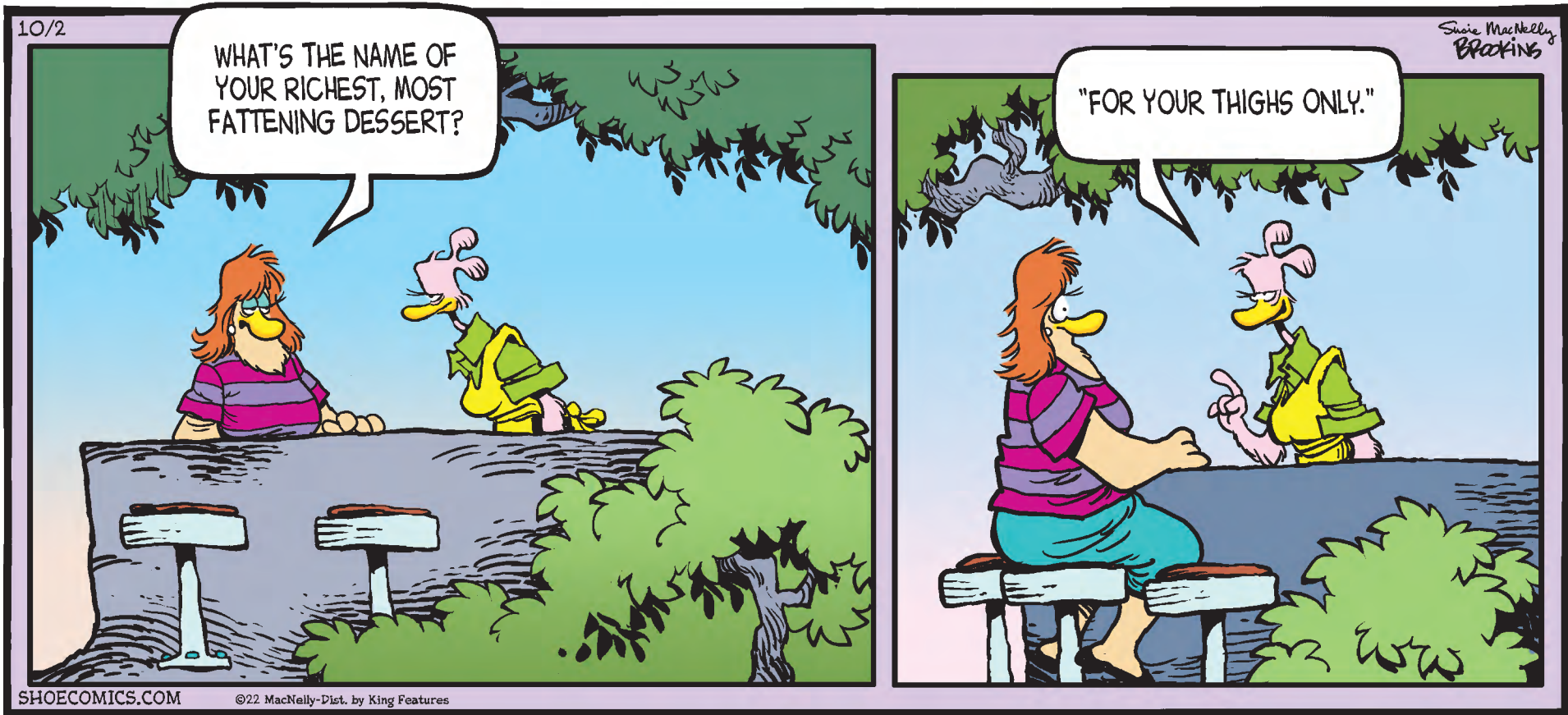


THE BORN LOSER



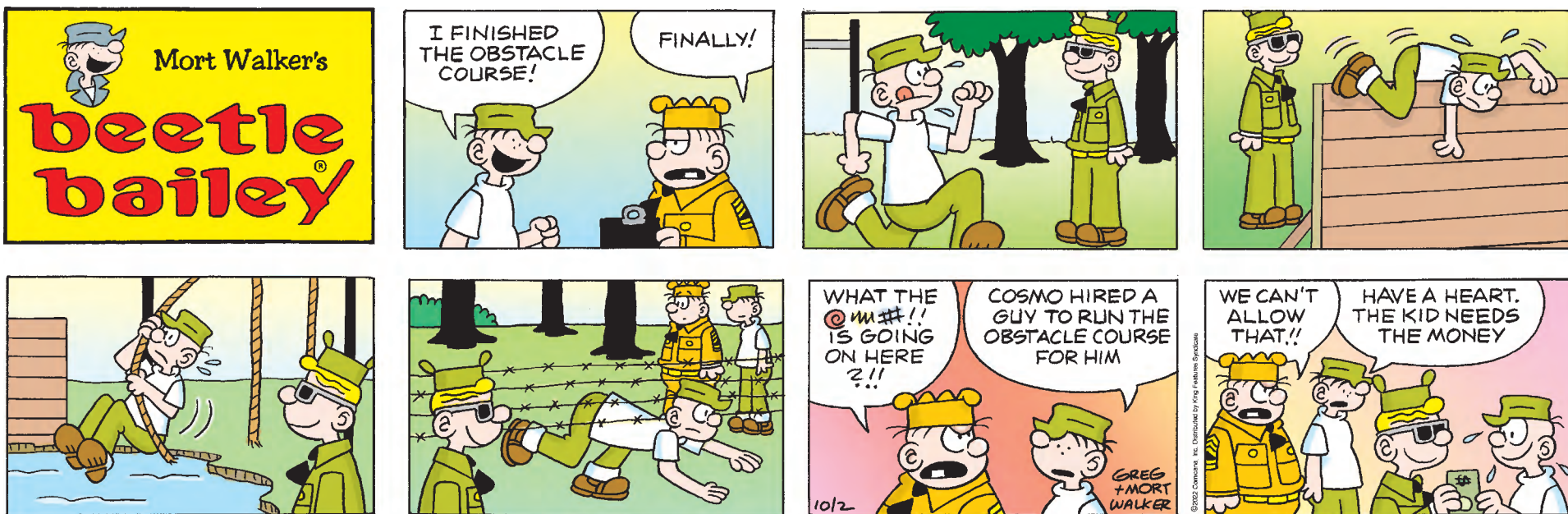
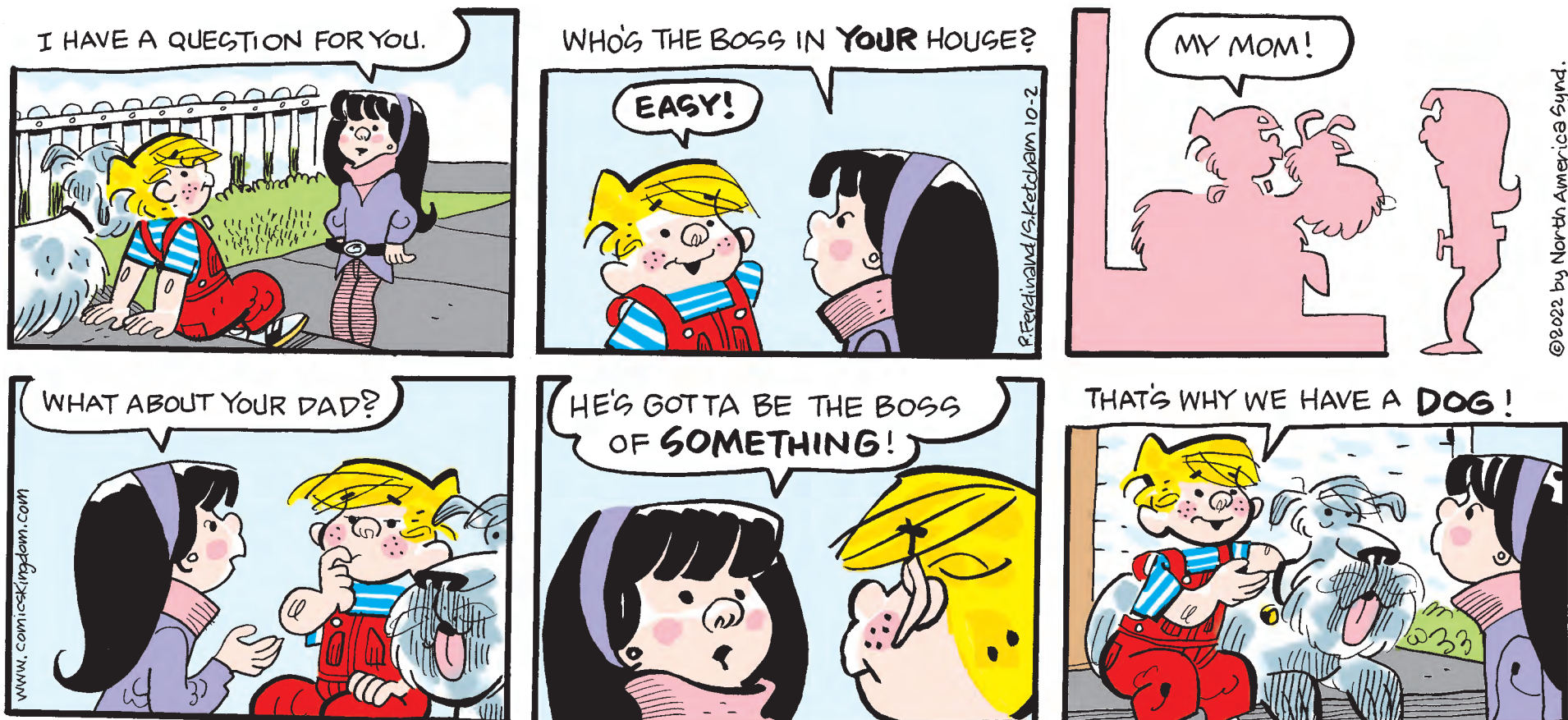
SHOE

BY GARY BROOKINS & SUSIE MACNELLY



DENNIS THE MENACE

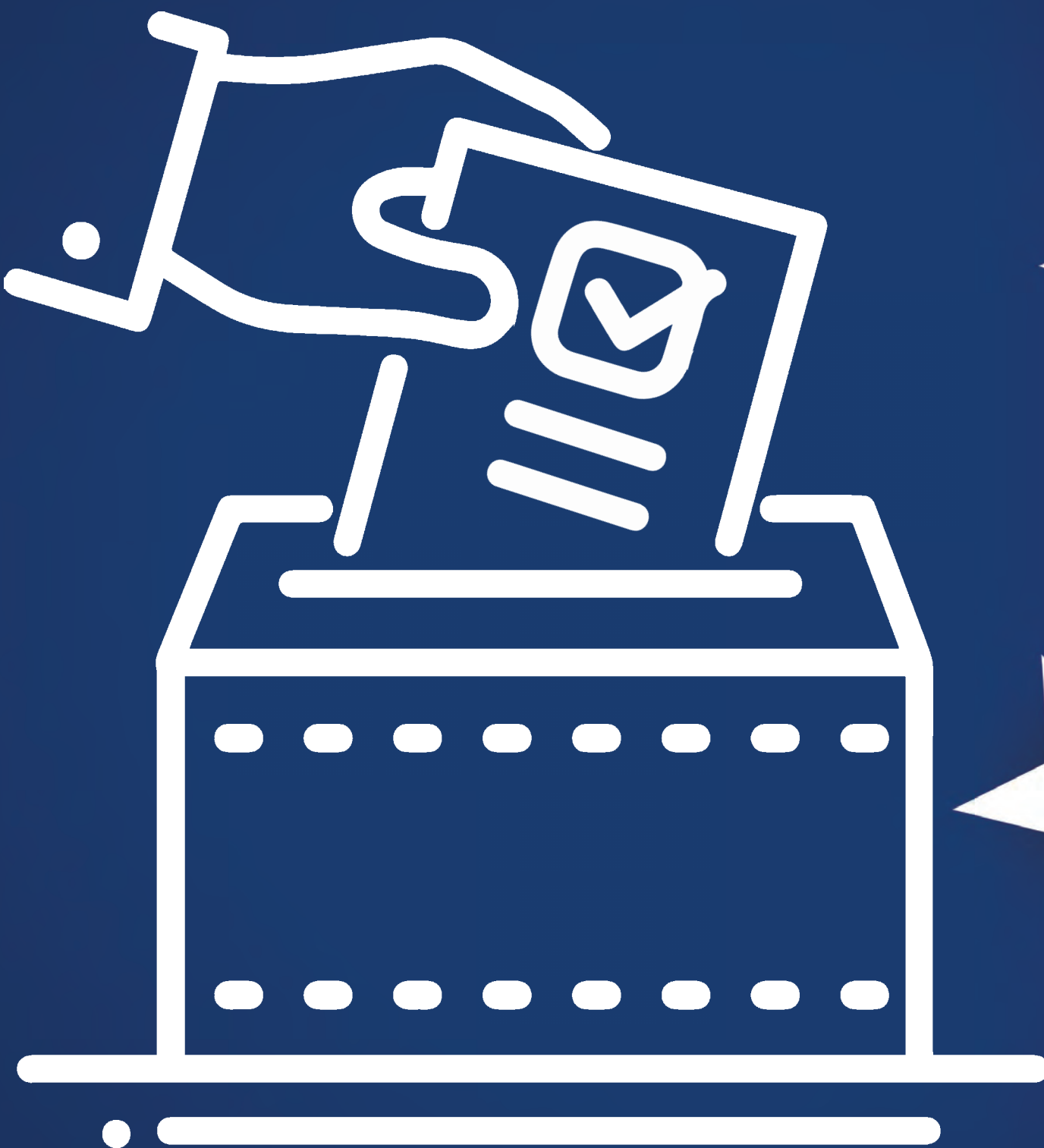
BY HANK KETCHAM



VOTE

2022

YOUR GUIDE TO THE GENERAL ELECTION



INSIDE: Voter precincts,
local and state candidate Q&As
and more information to
help you be an informed voter.

**What to know about
Sumter's Penny for
Progress Initiative**

VOTER FAQ

What is South Carolina's new voting system and how does it work?

South Carolina has been using the ExpressVote ballot-marking system in all elections since Oct. 1, 2019. After checking in at your polling place, you will be given a blank ballot and be directed to an ExpressVote. You insert the ballot into the ExpressVote to begin making your selections on a touchscreen. Making selections on the touchscreen is very similar to making selections on the old voting system. After making your selections, you will do a final review then print your ballot. To cast your vote, you will be directed to a ballot scanner. Review the selections on your printed ballot and insert it into the scanner. The scanner tabulates the votes on your ballot and feeds the ballot into a locked ballot box. The paper ballots are then used to verify and audit election results.

What are the benefits of a ballot-marking device?

Ballot-marking devices (BMDs) offer many of the benefits of touchscreen voting machines while also providing the assurance and security of a paper ballot.

- BMDs are fully accessible for people with disabilities allowing every South Carolinian to vote independently using the same equipment. Hand-marked paper systems are not accessible and require voters with disabilities to vote with assistance or on a device different from other voters.

- BMDs prevent voters from overvoting (selecting more candidates than allowed). Hand-marked paper ballots can be overvoted. Election officials are unable to determine voter intent in an overvoted office leading to the voter's vote not being counted.

- BMDs prevent stray marks. Unintended marks on a paper ballot can cause overvotes or votes to be cast differently than intended.

- BMDs prevent improper marks. Voters do not always mark paper ballots by filling in the oval as instructed. It is common for voters to circle a candidate's name, make a check mark, or even cross through a name. Improper marks require election officials to try to interpret these marks to determine voter intent. Ultimately, marking the ballot differently than instructed can cause a voter's vote to not be counted.

- BMDs reminds voters if they have undervoted (missed an office or voted for fewer candidates than allowed).

- BMDs offer the easiest transition for voters. South Carolinians have been voting on touchscreens for the past 15 years. Voting on the ExpressVote will offer a familiar experience with the added assurance of verifying their vote on a paper ballot.

Is the voting machine connected to the Internet while I am voting?

No. The voting unit is never connected to the Internet. Additionally, the voting units are not connected to each other. Each is a standalone, self-contained unit.

I've moved and haven't updated my voter registration card. Can I still vote? If you moved to...

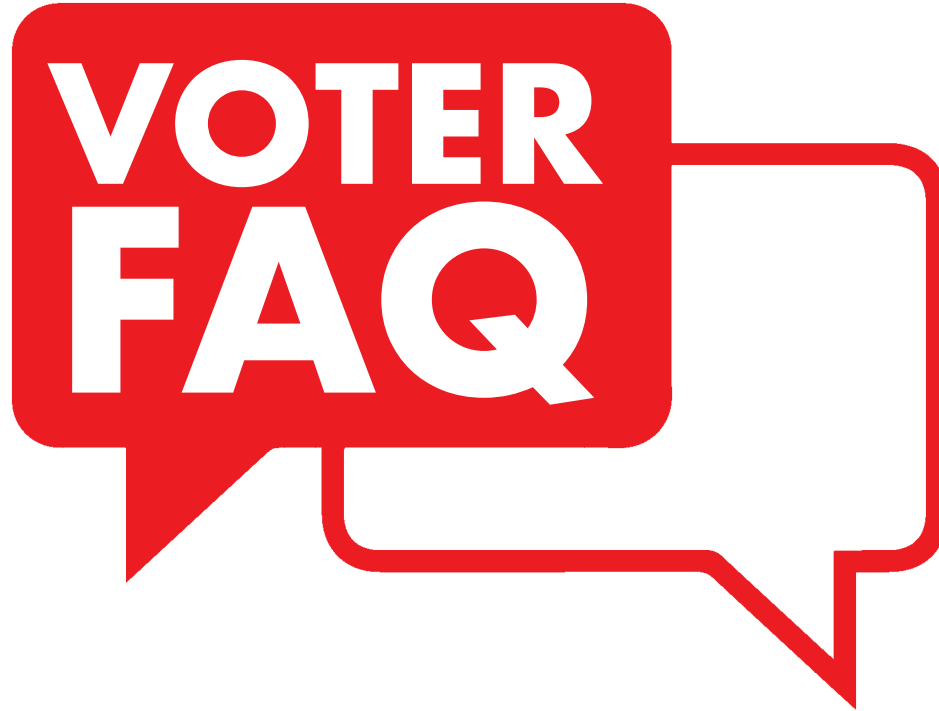
1. ...another residence within your precinct, you can vote at your polling place but must first fill out a change of address form.

2. ...a different precinct within your county, you are eligible to vote a failsafe ballot (see below).

3. ...another county within 30 days of the election, you are eligible to vote a failsafe ballot (see below).

4. ...another county prior to 30 days before the election, you had to register by the deadline and are not eligible to vote.

There are two options for voting failsafe:



1. Vote at the polling place in your previous precinct using a limited, failsafe ballot including only federal, statewide and countywide offices.
2. Go to the voter registration office in the county in which you currently reside, update your address, and vote a full ballot there.

I have moved to South Carolina after the 30-day voter registration deadline, can I still vote?

Federal legislation 1965 Voting Rights Act, as amended, section 42 USCA 1973aaa-1 permits a voter who moves to a new state within 30 days prior to the presidential election (and who may therefore fail to qualify for voter registration in their new state) to vote for president and vice president only in their state of former residence. In South Carolina, this means a registered voter of another state who has moved to S.C. after the registration deadline may vote in their former state for president and vice president only. That voter should contact their former voting office to request a ballot. If a registered voter of a South Carolina county moves to another state within 30 days (or after that state's registration cut-off), this voter may contact their former county office and request an absentee ballot for president and vice-president only. The voter would go through the normal absentee voting procedures, either by mail or in person. The former county is responsible for furnishing this voter a ballot for president/vice president. A voter who has moved to another state within this deadline also has the option of returning to their former precinct and voting in person at the polls for president and vice president only. This will probably require the voter to cast a provisional ballot.

What do I take with me to the polls to vote?

When voting in person, you will be asked to show one of the following Photo IDs:

- A valid S.C. driver's license
- SC Department of Motor Vehicles ID card

- includes S.C. concealed weapons permit

- SC voter registration card with photo

- US passport
- Federal military ID

- includes all Department of Defense photo IDs and the Department of Veterans Affairs benefits card

What if I don't have one of these photo IDs?

If you do not have one of these photo IDs, you can make your voting experience as fast and easy as possible by getting one before Election Day. If you are already registered to vote, you can go to your county elections office to get a SC voter registration card with photo. You will need to provide your date of birth and the last four digits of your Social Security number. You can do this even on Election Day. Free DMV ID cards are also available from

the Department of Motor Vehicles.

If you cannot get a photo ID, bring your non-photo voter registration card with you to the polling place. You may vote a provisional ballot after signing an affidavit stating you have a reasonable impediment to obtaining a photo ID. A reasonable impediment is any valid reason, beyond your control, which created an obstacle to obtaining a photo ID. Some examples include: a disability or illness, a conflict with your work schedule, a lack of transportation, a lack of a birth certificate, family responsibilities, a religious objection to being photographed and any other obstacle you find reasonable. This ballot will count unless someone proves to the county board of voter registration and elections that you are lying about your identity or having the listed impediment. To vote under the reasonable impediment exception:

1. Inform the poll managers that you do not have a photo ID and could not get one.
2. Present your current, non-photo registration card.
3. Sign the affidavit provided by the poll managers stating why you could not obtain a photo ID.
4. Cast a provisional ballot that will be counted unless the county board of voter registration and elections has reason to believe your affidavit is false.

Does my driver's license/DMV ID card have to be a REAL ID?

No. You can vote with either a regular driver's license/DMV ID card or a REAL ID.

What happens if I have a photo ID but forget to bring it to my polling place?

If you forget to bring your photo ID to your polling place, you may vote a provisional ballot that will count only if you show your photo ID to your county elections office prior to certification of the election (on Friday after the General Election).

How are election results posted for poll watchers?

A small printer, much like the one used in adding machines, is attached to the voting unit. It is in a locked compartment during voting hours. After the polls close, a poll manager prints the vote totals for each candidate in each contest. After the poll manager signs the printed report, the report is posted on the wall, as has been done in the past.

What are official results?

After the election, a canvass is conducted to review accumulated votes. Results from individual voting units are uploaded into a new election configuration and compared with the election night totals. Only after the six-member Board of Canvassers review and verify these results are they considered official.

When is a recount necessary?

When the difference between any winning candidate and any other non-

winning candidate is 1% or less of the total votes cast for all candidates for that office, a recount is mandatory.

When I left the polls, I was asked to participate in an "exit poll." Is this legal?

Exit polls are legal and participation is voluntary. They are not conducted by the State Election Commission or county election offices. Exit polls may not be conducted inside the polling place, and voters should not be approached as they enter the polling place. If you feel threatened or intimidated by a pollster, report it immediately to the poll clerk.

I saw a candidate/member of candidate's campaign at my polling place talking to voters. Can he do that?

Yes, but there are restrictions:

- Inside the polling place: No campaigning is allowed. Candidates may be inside the polling place and talk to voters as long as they are not campaigning, intimidating voters or interfering with the election process.
- Within 500 feet of an entrance to a polling place: Candidates and campaign staff may campaign as long as they are not intimidating voters or interfering with the election process. However, no campaign literature, signs, or posters are allowed. Candidates are allowed to wear a badge no larger than 4.25" x 4.25" featuring only the candidate's name and office sought. Candidates must remove their badge upon entering a polling place.

A candidate is definitely campaigning while in the polling place. What can I do?

Inform the poll clerk immediately. If the issue is not resolved, contact the county elections office. The board will address the complaint.

Can candidates or their representatives take people to the polls to vote?

Yes. It is permissible for any person, even a candidate, to give a voter a ride as long as it is being done solely to help facilitate voting. However, no one can give a voter anything of value in exchange for voting.

Can I take my child with me to vote?

Yes. Minor children (under age 18) of a voter may accompany the voter in the voting booth.

Are "ballot selfies" legal? Can I take a picture of my ballot and share it with others?

No. State law prohibits anyone from showing their ballot to another person (S.C. Code of Laws Section 7-25-100). The use of cameras is not allowed inside the voting booth.

Can alcoholic beverages be sold on Election Day?

Yes, the ban on the sale of alcoholic liquors on statewide election days was lifted as of July 1, 2014.

Can lottery tickets be sold on Election Day?

Yes.

Where can I report an issue or file a complaint about the election?

Any issues or complaints regarding a polling place on Election Day should first be addressed to the poll managers. Poll managers may be able to quickly resolve the issue. If not resolved at the polling place, or if the issue or complaint is regarding some other aspect of the election, voters should contact their county elections office.

Source: S.C. Election Commission/SCVotes.gov

On May 13, 2022, Gov. Henry McMaster signed into law legislation passed by the General Assembly that establishes early voting and makes significant changes to the absentee voting process. Absentee voting allows qualified voters to cast a ballot by mail prior to Election Day. In-person absentee voting is no longer authorized by law.

Who can vote absentee

- People with employment obligations that prevent them from voting during early voting hours for the duration of the early voting period, and

during the hours the polls are open on Election Day.

- People attending a sick or physically disabled person which prevents them from voting during early voting hours for the duration of the early voting period, and during the hours the polls are open on Election Day.

- People confined to a jail or pretrial facility pending disposition of arrest or trial that prevents them from voting during early voting hours for the duration of the early voting period, and during the hours the polls are open on Election Day.



ABSENTEE VOTING

- People who will be absent from their county of residence during early voting hours for the duration of the early voting period, and during the hours the polls are open on Election Day.
- People with physical disabilities.
- People 65 years of age or older.
- Members of the armed forces and Merchant Marines of the United States, their spouses and dependents living with them
- Persons admitted to a hospital as an emergency patient on the day of the election or within a four-day

period before the election.

How to vote absentee

- Step 1: Get your application
- You can submit your request for an application as early as Jan. 1 of the election year.
 - Call, visit or send your request by U.S. mail to your county voter registration office.
 - You must provide your name, date of birth and last four digits of your Social Security number.

UNOPPOSED CANDIDATES

Here is a list of candidates you may see on your ballot who are running unopposed by someone in another party. Every race has the option for write-in candidates.

Attorney General Alan Wilson (R)	Sumter County Council, District 6 James T. McCain Jr. (D)	Lee County Council, District 03 Keel Addison (D)
Comptroller General Richard Eckstrom (R)	Sumter City Council, District 3 Calvin K. Hastie Sr. (nonpartisan)	Lee County Council, District 04 Gordon Eckley (D)
State House of Representatives, District 51 David Weeks (D)	Sumter City Council, District 5 Colin C. Davis (nonpartisan)	Lee County Council, District 06 Charles Beasley (D)
State House of Representatives, District 67 Murrell Smith (R)	CLARENDON Clarendon County Auditor Patricia Pringle (D)	Lee County Council, District 07 Johnette McCutchen Caughman (D)
Solicitor Circuit 3 Ernest Chip Finney III (D)	Clarendon County Treasurer Matt Evans (D)	Lee School Board, District 04 Jaicovielle Fortune (D)
SUMTER Sumter Probate Judge Dale Atkinson (D)	Clarendon County Council, District 2 W J Frierson (D)	Lee School Board, District 05 Regitt James (D)
Sumter County Council, District 2 Artie Baker (R)	LEE Lee County Auditor Cecil LaVear Stevens (D)	Lee School Board, District 06 Nathaniel Brunson (D)
Sumter County Council, District 4 Charles T. Edens (R)	Lee County Treasurer Shirley Cook Dixon (D)	

EARLY VOTING

Any voter can visit an early voting center in their county and vote. Voters will be asked to present photo ID when checking in to vote.

Where to early vote in Clarendon County

- County Voter Registration and Elections Office: 411 Sunset Drive, Manning, SC 29102

Where to early vote in Lee County

- County Voter Registration and Elections Office: 101 Gregg St., Bishopville, SC 29010
- Lynchburg Police Department Building: 106 Main St., Lynchburg, SC 29080

Statewide general elections:

- Monday, Oct. 24-Saturday, Nov. 5 (closed Sunday, Oct. 30) – Monday, 15 days prior to election day, through Saturday, three days prior to election day
- 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
- Closed Sundays and state holidays.

Runoffs:

- Wednesday, six days prior to election day, through Friday, four days prior to election day.
- 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
- Closed on state holidays.

Where to early vote in Sumter County

- County Voter Registration and Elections Office: 141 N. Main St., Sumter, SC 29150
- FJ DeLaine Elementary School: 5355 Cane Savannah Road, Wedgefield, 29168

DID YOU KNOW???

There are 66,282 registered voters in Sumter County, compared to 3,359,609 statewide. In Clarendon County, there are 21,984 registered voters, and Lee County has 10,567 registered voters.

In Sumter County, 28,629 of the registered voters are male, while 37,644 are female. In Clarendon County, 9,718 registered voters are male, and 12,263 are female. In Lee County, 4,563 registered voters are male, and 6,004 are female.

Sumter County's registered voters includes 31,268 white voters and 35,014 non-white voters. In Clarendon County, 11,769 registered voters are white, and 10,215 are non-white. In Lee County, 3,997 registered voters are white, and 6,570 are non-white.

The largest age category of registered voters in Sumter County is the range of 45-64. There are 22,299 registered voters in Sumter County in that age range. Clarendon County has 7,406 registered voters who are 65 or older, making up the largest age range group in the county. Lee County's largest age category of registered voters is the same as Sumter, 45-64-year-olds. Lee has 3,589 registered voters in that age range.

This information is as of a Sept. 1 report from the S.C. Election Commission.

www.PennyForProgress.com

Keep the penny rollin'!



Vote yes on November 8th!

- Better Road access for future economic development
- Safer Community
- Emergency Radio & Pager upgrades
- New Fire Trucks
- Gyms & Community Centers
- Park & sidewalk improvements
- Forensic Center

TRI-COUNTY PRECINCTS



SUMTER COUNTY

Barrier Free — Voter Registration Office, 141 N Main St Rm 114, Sumter

Bates — Bates Middle School, 715 Estate St, Sumter

Birnie — Birnie Hope Center, 210 S. Purdy St, Sumter

Burns-Down — Alice Drive Middle School, 40 Miller Road, Sumter

Causeway Branch 1 — Millwood Elem School, 24 Pinewood Rd, Sumter

Causeway Branch 2 — Millwood Elem School, 24 Pinewood Rd, Sumter

Cherryvale — Cherryvale Community Cntr, 4340 Confederate Rd, Sumter

Crosswell — Crosswell Elem. School, 301 Crosswell Dr, Sumter

Dalzell 1 — Hillcrest Middle School, 4355 Peach Orchard Rd, Dalzell

Dalzell 2 — Hillcrest Middle School, 4355 Peach Orchard Road, Dalzell

Delaine — Delaine Community Center, 5400 Cane Savannah Rd, Wedgefield

Ebenezer 1 — Ebenezer Middle School, 3440 Ebenezer Rd, Sumter

Ebenezer 2 — Ebenezer Middle School, 3440 Ebenezer Rd, Sumter

Folsom Park — Willow Drive Elementary, 26 Willow Drive, Sumter

Furman — Furman Middle School, 3400 Bethel Church Rd, Sumter

Green Swamp 1 — Sumter School District, 1345 Wilson Hall Rd, Sumter

Green Swamp 2 — Sumter School District, 1345 Wilson Hall Rd, Sumter

Hampton Park — Meeting House at Memorial Park, 407 W Hampton Ave, Sumter

Hillcrest — Hillcrest Middle School, 4355 Peach Orchard Rd, Dalzell

Horatio — Horatio Fire Station, 7720 Sumter Landing Rd, Horatio

Lemira — Lemira Elementary School, 952 Fulton Street, Sumter

Loring — Crosswell Elem. School, 301 Crosswell Dr, Sumter

Magnolia-Harmony — S. Sumter Resource Center, 337 Manning Ave., Sumter

Manchester Forest — Wedgefield Fire Station, 2035 S.C. Highway 261 S, Wedgefield

Mayesville — Mayesville Fire Station, 20 S. Main Street E., Mayesville

Mayewood — RE Davis College Preparatory Academy, 345 Eastern School Rd, Sumter

McCrays Mill 1 — Sumter County Career Cntr, 2612 McCrays Mill Road, Sumter

McCrays Mill 2 — Sumter County Career Cntr, 2612 McCrays Mill Rd, Sumter

Millwood — Millwood Elementary School, 24 Pinewood Rd, Sumter

Morris College — North Hope Center, 904 N. Main Street, Sumter

Mulberry — North Hope Center, 904 N Main St, Sumter

Oakland Plant 1 — Oakland Primary School, 5415 Oakland Dr, Sumter

Oakland Plant 2 — Oakland Primary School, 5415 Oakland Dr, Sumter

Oswego — Crestwood High School, 2000 Oswego Rd, Sumter

Palmetto Park — Central Carolina Tech. College, 660 N Guignard Dr Bldg 700, Sumter

Pinewood — Manchester Elementary School, 200 Clark St, Pinewood

Pocotaligo 1 — Lakewood High School, 350 Old Manning Rd, Sumter

Pocotaligo 2 — Lakewood High School, 350 Old Manning Rd, Sumter

Privateer — Pocala Springs Elem Scho, 2060 Bethel Church Rd, Sumter

Rembert — Rembert Fire Station, 7045 Post Office Street, Rembert

Salem — Rural Fire Station, 6090 Myrtle Beach Hwy, Gable

Salterstown — Chestnut Oaks Middle Schl, 1200 Oswego Road, Sumter

Savage-Glover — S.Sumter Resource Center, 337 Manning Ave, Sumter

Second Mill — USC Sumter Arts/Letter Lecture Room, 200 Miller Rd, Sumter

Shaw — Shaw Heights Elem School, 5121 Frierson Rd, Sumter

South Liberty — American Legion Home Bldg, 28 Artillery Dr, Sumter

South Red Bay — South Hope Center, 1125 S. Lafayette Dr, Sumter

Spectrum — Kingsbury Elementary School, 825 Kingsbury Rd, Sumter

St. John — Shiloh Community Center, 475 Puddin Swamp Rd, Lynchburg

St. Paul — Cherryvale Elementary Sch, 1420 Furman Drive, Sumter

Stone Hill — Jehovah Baptist Church, 803 S. Harvin St, Sumter

Sumter High 1 — Sumter High School, 2580 McCrays Mill Rd, Sumter

Sumter High 2 — Sumter High School, 2580 McCrays Mill Rd, Sumter

Sunset — Kingsbury Elem. School, 825 Kingsbury Rd, Sumter

Swan Lake — Willow Dr Elem. School, 26 Willow Dr, Sumter

Thomas Sumter — Hillcrest Middle School, 4355 Peach Orchard Rd, Dalzell

Turkey Creek — Lemira Elementary School, 952 Fulton St, Sumter

Wilder — Wilder Elem. School, 900 Floral Ave, Sumter

Wilson Hall — Wilson Hall School, 520 Wilson Hall Rd, Sumter

CLARENDON COUNTY

Alcolu — Alcolu Fire Station, 1612 Main St., Alcolu

Barrineau — Barrineau Fire Station, 3803 St. James Road, Lake City

Barrows Mill — Oakdale Union Fire Station, 1757 Fire Tower Road, Lake City

Bloomville — Liberty Fire Station, 5119 Brewer Road, Manning

Calvary — Mt. Pleasant RUME Church, 14076 Panola Road, Pinewood

Davis Station — Davis Station Fire Station, 2684 M.W. Rickenbaker Road, Manning

Harmony — Harmony Presbyterian Church, 8629 Highway 301, Alcolu

Hicks — Turbeville Town Hall, 1400 Main St., Turbeville

Home Branch — Paxville Town Hall, 10279 Lewis Road, Manning

Jordan — (New) Wyboo Fire Station, 9699 Highway 260, Manning

Manning 1 — Weldon Auditorium Lobby, 7 Maple St., Manning

Manning 2 — Clarendon County Administration Building, 411 Sunset Drive, Manning

Manning 3 — Clarendon County Administration Building, 411 Sunset Drive, Manning

Manning 4 — Manning Fire Station, 42 W. Boyce St., Manning

Manning 5 — Weldon Auditorium Lobby, 7 Maple St., Manning

New Zion — Clarendon County EMS Building, 15677 Highway 301, New Zion

Oakdale — Oakdale Union Fire Station, 1757 Fire Tower Road, Lake City

Panola — Mt. Pleasant RUME Church, 14076 Panola Road, Pinewood

Paxville — Paxville Town Hall, 10279 Lewis Road, Manning

Sardinia-Gable — Melina Presbyterian Church, 3539 Black River Road, Gable

Summerton 1 — Summerton Fire Station, 6 N. Cantey St., Summerton

Summerton 2 — Clarendon 1 Resource Center Gym, 1154 4th St., Summerton

Summerton 3 — Clarendon 1 Resource Center Gym, 1154 4th St., Summerton

Turbeville — Turbeville Town Hall, 1400 Main St., Turbeville; and

Wilson-Foreston — Wilson-Foreston Fire Station, 1115 N. Brewington Road, Manning

LEE COUNTY

Ashland/Stokes Bridge — Fire Station #4, 3018 Una Rd, Bishopville

Ashwood — Fire Station #3, 4396 Sumter Hwy, Bishopville

Barrier Free — Voter Registration Office, 101 Gregg St, Bishopville

Bishopville No. 1 — Fire Station #1, 122 E Church St, Bishopville

Bishopville No. 2 — Old Fire Department, 113 E Council St, Bishopville

Bishopville No. 3 — The Pilot Home, 120 Barnett Dr, Bishopville

Bishopville No. 4 — Lee County School District Office Annex, 310 Roland St, Bishopville

Cedar Creek — Cedar Creek Baptist Church, 3002 Camden Hwy, Bishopville

Cypress — Fire Station #8, 2346 15 N, Bishopville

Elliott — St Paul United Methodist Church, 16 Clarence McFadden Rd, Lynchburg

Hickory Hill — Fire Station #5, 763 McCaskill Rd, Camden

Ionia — Fire Station #5, 763 McCaskill Rd, Camden

Lynchburg — Ryanne's Catering Hall, 154 Main St, Lynchburg

Manville — St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church, 510 Manville-Wisacky Rd, Bishopville

Mt. Clio — New Zion AME Church, 789 Coopers Mill Rd, Bishopville

Rattlesnake Springs — St. Andrew Church Of God, 4238 Red Hill Rd, Camden

Schrocks Mill/Lucknow — Concord United Methodist Church, 354 Old Camden Rd, Bishopville

South Lynchburg — Warren Chapel UM Church, 24 Back Swamp Rd, Lynchburg

Spring Hill — Spring Hill Lodge 188 AFM, 3980 Springhill Rd, Rembert

St. Charles — Lower Lee Elementary, 26 Lower Lee School Rd, Mayesville

St. Matthews — St Matthews Methodist Church, 2144 Stokes Bridge Rd W, Bishopville

Turkey Creek — Fire Station #6, 2386 Hubb Kelley Rd, Bishopville

Woodrow — Mt Olive AME Church, 2738 Woodrow Rd, Sumter

ABSENTEE FROM PAGE D2

- You will be mailed an application.
- Step 2: Complete, sign and return the application
 - Return the application by U.S. mail or personal delivery to your county voter registration office as soon as possible.
 - The deadline to return your application is 5 p.m. on the 11th day prior to the election.
- Step 3: Receive your absentee ballot in the mail
 - Voters who have applied early will be mailed their absentee ballot approximately 30 days before the election.
- Step 4: Vote and return the ballot
 - Return your ballot to your county voter registration office or an early voting center either by mail or personal delivery.
 - Must present photo ID when returning the ballot return envelope.

- Acceptable photo IDs:
 - Driver's license issued by a state within the United States
 - Another form of identification containing a photograph issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles or its equivalent by a state within the United States
 - Passport
 - Military

- identification containing a photograph issued by the federal government
 - South Carolina voter registration card containing a photograph of the voter.
 - Place the ballot in the "ballot here-in" envelope and place the "ballot here-in" envelope in the return envelope.
 - Be sure to sign the voter's oath and have your signature witnessed. Anyone age 18 or older can witness your signature. A notary is not necessary.
 - Ballots must be received by the county voter registration office by 7 p.m. on Election Day.
 - Ballots returned by mail should be mailed no later than one week prior to Election Day to help ensure timely delivery.

- Requesting an application for another voter**
 - Immediate family member
 - Includes spouse, parent, child, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law.
 - May request the voter's application by calling or visiting your county voter

- registration office or sending the request via the U.S. Postal Service to your county voter registration office.
 - Must provide the voter's name, date of birth and last four digits of voter's Social Security number.
 - Must provide the requestor's name, address, date of birth and relation to the voter.
 - Requestors are limited to five requests in addition to their own per election.

- Authorized representative**
 - Must sign an oath that he meets the requirements of being an authorized representative by completing the authorized representative form.
 - Must request application in person or by mail (may not request by phone).
 - Must be a registered voter.
 - Must have permission to act on behalf of a voter who is unable to go to the polls because of illness or disability resulting in his confinement in a hospital, sanatorium, nursing home or place of residence, or is unable because of a physical handicap to go to his polling place or because of a handicap is unable to vote at his polling place due to existing architectural barriers that deny him physical access to the polling place, voting booth, or voting apparatus or

- machinery.
 - A candidate, a member of a candidate's paid campaign staff or a campaign volunteer may not serve as an authorized representative unless the person is a member of the voter's immediate family.
 - Requestors are limited to five requests in addition to their own per election.

- Returning an application for another voter**
 - Immediate family members and authorized representatives must return the voter's application to the voter's county voter registration office in person (mailing NOT allowed).

- Returning an absentee ballot for another voter**
 - Immediate family members and authorized representative
 - Voter and person returning the ballot must complete and sign the authorized returnee form.
 - Must return the ballot return envelope in person at the voter's county voter registration office or an early voting center in the voter's county of residence (mailing is NOT allowed).
 - Must present the authorized returnee form and photo ID when returning the ballot return envelope.

- Acceptable photo IDs:
 - Driver's license issued by a state within the United States
 - Another form of identification containing a photograph issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles or its equivalent by a state within the United States
 - Passport
 - Military identification containing a photograph issued by the federal government
 - South Carolina voter registration card containing a photograph of the voter.
 - Returnees are limited to five returns in addition to their own per election.
 - Returning more than five ballots for other voters is now a felony crime punishable by up to a \$1,000 fine or five years in prison, or both.

- Voters admitted to hospital as emergency patient**
 - Voters admitted to the hospital as an emergency patient on the day of the election or within four days of the election can have an immediate family member apply for and deliver a ballot to them.

Source: S.C. Election Commission/SCVotes.gov

AN EXPLAINER: WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT SUMTER'S PENNY FOR PROGRESS INITIATIVE



County website, the first Penny for Progress funded 16 projects with roughly \$75 million collected in a seven-year timeframe. The second penny funded 28 projects with a total of \$75.6 million collected since 2014.

With the past two pennies, both the city and county have seen improvements in four categories the penny initiatives fund: public safety, infrastructure and facilities, transportation and quality of life.

A few completed projects from the last two initiatives include the following: the Shot Pouch Greenway, major intersection improvements, a new Sumter Police Department and Fire Department headquarters at the city's center, renovations to government office buildings, Dillon Park, road paving and resurfacing, demolition of dilapidated structures, and a new 9-1-1 facility.

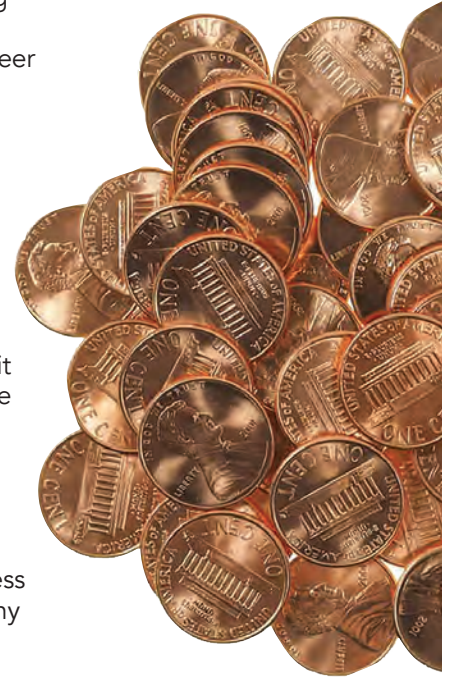
The third penny is projected to reel in a larger amount of funding due to the economy's current standing. The commission created a list of 34 Capital Sales Tax projects to get a total of \$107,266,500 in projected revenue.

Ranging from supporting efforts to the Sumter Fire Department and its volunteer fire stations, improving infrastructure for first responders, road repaving and surfacing, industrial growth, public safety improvements, downtown revitalization, city and county parks, county community centers and more, projects are split in the city and county while still supporting rural community projects.

If approved, the third penny sales tax would begin in spring 2023.

A 2022 Penny for Progress brochure on the third penny and how the referendum questions will appear on

ballots on Nov. 8 was created to inform and prepare voters prior to the election day. It can be found at Sumter County and city offices across town and at the Greater Sumter Chamber of Commerce.



Sumter officials are once again pushing for the continuation of a penny sales tax for a third consecutive time with 34 city and county projects proposed. However, it's up to Sumter County voters to decide.

Appearing on the midterm election ballots will be a referendum question on a third Capital Penny Sales Tax proposal, created by a six-member Capital Projects Sales Tax Commission that selected projects submitted by the community.

The penny sales tax, also known as Penny for Progress,

is a tax referendum that Sumter voters first approved in 2008 and again in 2014 to fund infrastructure, construction and renovation projects across both the city and county by raising the sales tax in the county by 1 cent and funneling those pennies to the initiative. Because it is a sales tax, anyone who spends money in Sumter County would contribute to the efforts, not just residents.

If approved a third time, the one-cent tax would again be maintained, not increased.

According to the Sumter

S.C. Democrats call on their party's U.S. Senate nominee to quit

BY MEG KINNARD
Associated Press

COLUMBIA — The South Carolina Democrat vying to oust Republican U.S. Sen. Tim Scott is facing calls from within her own party to fold her campaign, following the publication of additional leaked audio in which she appears to make disparaging remarks about her constituents.

The calls for state Rep. Krystle Matthews to withdraw just two months ahead of the general election came Thursday in reaction to leaked audio published by conservative activist group Project Veritas of Matthews speaking to one of its members, without her knowledge.

Sitting in a restaurant, Matthews, who is Black, is heard saying that she represents a "mostly white" district, adding, of white voters: "I keep them right here — like under my thumbs. ... Otherwise, they get out of control — like kids."

"You ought to know who

you're dealing with," Matthews goes on to say. "You've got to treat them like s—. That's the only way they'll respect you."

In a statement, Matthews acknowledged her voice on the recording, calling Project Veritas a "satirical MAGA Powered news outlet."

The compilation also features more of Matthews' conversation, parts of which were previously published by Project Veritas, in which she spoke to an inmate about funding her campaign with "dope boy money" and having Democrats run as Republicans, saying "secret sleepers" represent "the only way you're gonna change the dynamics in South Carolina."

At the time of the earlier release, ahead of South Carolina's June primary runoff, Matthews confirmed to The Associated Press that it was her voice on the tape but said the edited audio of a "tongue-in-cheek" exchange didn't reflect the full picture.

Matthews won the runoff to face Scott, who is seeking what he's said will be his final Senate term and is among South Carolina's most popular politicians. The Black Republican is widely expected to win the general election in South Carolina, where no Democrat has won a statewide race in more than 15 years.

On Thursday, Democrats including gubernatorial nominee Joe Cunningham said he concurred with state Rep. Justin Bamberg, who in an op-ed published online called Matthews "toxic."

"If any of our white counterparts had said the same thing with regards to blacks, the minority community, including myself, would be up in arms calling for that member's immediate resignation," Bamberg added.

In a statement provided to AP, Cunningham said that "there is absolutely no place in our political discourse" for Matthews' comments, adding that "the

Democratic Party cannot and should not tolerate such behavior from our elected officials and candidates."

State Sen. Brad Hutto, Democrats' leader in that chamber — who was also his party's nominee to challenge U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham in 2014 — echoed Cunningham's comments about Matthews' Senate bid, telling AP, "When candidates of either party start making irresponsible statements, beyond what party they're from, they need to reevaluate their candidacy, and that's what needs to happen here."

One of the fellow Democrats Matthews defeated, Catherine Fleming Bruce, told AP she agreed with the calls for Matthews to step aside, saying the nominee "has made it impossible for her to be that standard bearer, representing our state's diverse population."


Trav Robertson, chairman of the state's Democrats, empha-

sized on Thursday that Matthews didn't represent the party's perspective but stopped short of urging her to quit her campaign, which he said was "becoming a distraction to other Democrats on the ballot."

"If I were advising her campaign, I would focus on her getting reelected to the (state) House of Representatives," Robertson told AP.

Were Matthews to suspend her campaign, her name would likely still remain on ballots, which party officials said were already being produced for overseas voters. With no third-party candidate in the race, Scott's name is the only other that would appear.

"Regardless of race, I love everyone," Matthews said in her statement. "One thing you can learn from Project Veritas's first audio attack on me, is obviously I have no biases toward a certain ethnic group."



Dr. Johnny Hilton

My roots in Area 3 and Sumter's public schools are deep and strong. Devoting my career and post-retirement years to supporting our public schools has given me great joy! It would be an honor to serve you again on our school board.

Qualifications

- 34 Years of experience as a teacher and administrator
- Proven record of success at Sumter High as Teacher and at Millwood as Principal
- 8 Years of Service on Sumter School Board of Trustees
- Ph.D. in Education Administration – University of South Carolina

Goals

- Tutoring opportunities for our students to make up for losses due to the pandemic.
- Prioritize Teacher recruitment and retention including increasing teachers' salaries.
- Work with the community and parents to establish a vision that will improve educational opportunities.
- Organize an Education Summit with business, industry, and government to make that vision a reality.
- Hold students accountable for inappropriate behavior.
- Enhance STEM Education with construction of a state of the art "Center for Advanced Technical Studies."
- Put School Zone Realignment Plan on hold. Current plan moves too many students and teachers and should be revised.

I humbly ask for your vote on November 8.

"An Expectation of Excellence"

Paid for By Johnny Hilton



GOVERNOR



JOE CUNNINGHAM
DEMOCRATIC

Why are you running for governor?

The freedoms of South Carolinians are under attack like never before, and I want to protect and expand those freedoms. Contrary to what our current leaders believe, I want a government that doesn't seek to control its citizens, but instead empowers them by increasing their personal liberties, improving access to opportunity, and investing in our people, not career politicians, lobbyists, or big corporations.

Please summarize your political timeline/career.

I first ran for Congress in 2018. I was

successful, so I served South Carolina's First Congressional District from 2019-2021. Unfortunately, in 2020 I lost my race by less than a percentage point. I launched my campaign for governor in 2021.

How long have you lived in South Carolina? In what city/county do you currently live?

I have lived in South Carolina for over 20 years. I currently live in Charleston.

Current job/profession:

I am an attorney.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

I have served in Congress, where I was ranked one of the most effective freshman members of Congress and two of my bills passed a divided Congress and were signed into law by a Republican president.

What challenges/concerns do you see in the state (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

1. Keeping the government out of medical decisions. Whether it's abortion or vaccine mandates, the four walls of a doctor's office aren't big enough for you, your doctor and the state government. As governor, I will fight to protect medical freedom by vetoing any bill that would limit abortion. 2. Increasing teacher pay and improving education. Our teachers are underpaid and overworked, and it's past time we give them a raise. As governor, I will increase salaries for teachers and aides by 10% and increase the starting salary from \$36,000 to \$50,000 by 2030. 3. Creating new streams of revenue for our state by legalizing marijuana and sports betting.

What successes have you seen South Carolina enjoy that you want to build on?

Early childhood education. South Carolina has a solid foundation for its early childhood education, and the First Steps 4K program has been vital in helping to close achievement gaps and ease childcare struggles for low-income families, but I believe we can expand and improve our early childhood education system to reach even more families.

Anything else you want to add?

South Carolina's animal shelters have faced an incredible burden, so I'd encourage anyone who is able to adopt a shelter pet to help these organizations.

Incumbent Henry McMaster (Republican) and challengers Bruce Reeves (Libertarian) and Gary Votour (Labor) did not submit responses.

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION



ELLEN WEAVER
REPUBLICAN

Why are you running for State Superintendent of Education?

I am running because it's time to stop talking about our education challenges and do what it takes to send them. That's the action-oriented mindset you'll see if I'm elected.

South Carolina's education system has been at the bottom for far too long. We need strong leadership with a fresh perspective that listens to people, provides a bold policy vision and quarterback the team it will take to move that agenda through the process.

Throughout my career, I have been honored to build trusted relationships with policy, parental, educational, business, and faith leaders of diverse backgrounds across this state.

I am humbled to have earned endorsements from U.S. Senator Tim Scott, SC Speaker of the House Murrell Smith, Congressmen Ralph Norman and Jeff Duncan, former U.S. Senator Jim DeMint, former State Superintendents Dr. Mick Zais and Dr. Barbara Nielsen, and dozens of state lawmakers. These proven public servants know the challenges ahead and I'm honored by their trust and belief that I am the best-qualified candidate to do what this job takes.

They have confidence in my ability to lead on Day 1 and to build the kind of top-flight team it will take to make significant strides forward for the children and educational future of our state.

Please summarize your political timeline/career.

I have never run for political office before.

Please summarize your education timeline/career, personal and/or professional.

Bob Jones University, BA in Political Science (2001, Summa Cum Laude, Class Rank: 1 of 497);

Currently pursuing MS in Educational Leadership (expected completion Oct, 2022)

Various Positions – U.S. Representative/ Senator Jim DeMint (2021-2009)

State Director – U.S. Senator Jim DeMint (2010-2012)

Founding President and CEO – Palmetto Promise (2013-Present)

Education Oversight Committee (2016-Present; Chair – 2019-2021)

How long have you lived in South Carolina? In what city/county do you currently live?

I was born in Greenville, where Dad's family is from. We moved to Iowa to be near Mom's family when I was young. I returned often to SC to visit family and my immediate family moved back to South Carolina permanently while I was in college at Bob Jones. Since then, I've lived in SC 15 of the last 23 years, other than the time I spend working in U.S. Senator Jim DeMint's Washington D.C. office. I currently live in Columbia, South Carolina.

Current job/profession:

President and CEO of Palmetto Promise Institute

What makes you qualified for the seat?

For 12 years, I had the honor of working with Sen. Jim DeMint and eventually worked my way up to leading his state office. I learned by example the value of standing strong for common-sense principles and conservative values.

In 2013, alongside Senator DeMint, we launched Palmetto Promise Institute, South Carolina's premier free-market public policy research and solutions organization. Over the last 9 years, I have worked to improve the lives of South Carolinians by fighting for smaller government, less regulation, and conservative policies that enhance freedoms.

In addition to managing a large U.S. Senate office staff ad budget and founding a thriving non-profit, I have also chaired the SC Education Oversight Committee — a state legislative agency — through a leadership transition and strategic planning process. From that vantage point, I have had a front-row seat to the misalignment of policy and resources across our educational system, which has given me first-hand insight into what we need to change in Columbia to make a difference for our student, parents, and teachers.

The job I am running for is an executive leadership and policy position, running a multi-billion-dollar state agency. I have that policy and executive leadership experience and I'm looking forward to putting it to work on behalf of our students, parents, and teachers.

What challenges/concerns do you see with education in South Carolina (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

My Student, Teachers, Parents ("STP") Plan is will revolutionize education in South Carolina by prioritizing students, supporting teachers, and empowering

parents.

First, student learning must always be our #1 priority. Too many students are behind in basic math and reading skills. This is an urgent situation. We must focus on these foundational skills which children need to be successful in other vitally important subject areas like history, the sciences, and the arts. This means a strong focus on phonics and knowledge-building — the proven science of reading — especially in the early grades. I will also prioritize school safety and celebrating ALL pathways to success whether that be college, a trade, or the military.

Second, we must support teachers, principals and all our school staff. This means simplifying our standards and cutting bureaucratic red tape to allow educators to do what they do best: teach. We need to stand with teachers to restore classroom discipline and empower teachers to be the CEOs of their classrooms and principals to be CEOs of their schools. And of course we must continue to raise teacher pay. With an ongoing teacher shortage, South Carolina must find new ways to recognize teachers who are making a difference and attract new teachers to the profession — both new college graduates and second-career educators.

Lastly, we must restore parental trust by insisting on total transparency for all materials and resources used with students and empower teachers and parents to speak up against any political indoctrination in South Carolina schools, while teaching complete and accurate history. We must expand education choices to ensure that parents of every income level can chose the right environment to support the safety, well-being, values, and unique educational needs of their child. And finally, we must defend the unequivocal right to be fully informed about and make decisions on behalf of their child: educational, medical, or otherwise. South Carolina schools will partner with — not usurp — parents.

Voters may learn more about my Students, Teachers, & Parents (STP) Plan at <https://ellenforeducation.com/stp/>.

What successes have you seen with education in South Carolina that you want to build on?

There are certainly bright spots in education across South Carolina, especially the incredible dedication our teachers and principals showed during COVID: what a tough few years it has been for everyone in our education system, including our students and parents! I have been very encouraged to see Superintendent

Spearman's push to prioritize phonics and the science of reading. As you're your next Superintendent, continuing and growing that critical work will be a top priority of mine.

I have also been particularly hearted to see major pockets of innovation growing across the state, such as the Continuum which is growing dual enrollment opportunities in Florence County and rural communities around the state; the Meeting Street schools of innovation in Charleston and Spartanburg excellent new charter schools such as Liberty Steam in Sumter or Belton Prep in the Upstate; and incredible career and technical Education partnerships with the South Carolina business community like we see in Anderson's Institute for Technology, to name just a few! The common denominator: each of these initiatives are built on deep public education and community partnerships, an innovation mindset, and a "can do" spirit that I truly believe can transform our industrial era education system into the system of the 21st century that prepare students for their future.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Rotary International (2010-2015)
First Presbyterian Church (2010-present, deacon, chorister, music leader for Friendship Club, a class for young people with special needs)
SC Education Oversight Committee (2016-present, Chairman 2019-21)
Ex Officio Board Member, SC Governor's School for the Arts & Humanities (2018-present)
Honors/Awards: Paul Harris Fellow (Rotary International); American Legion Good Citizen Award (given to one male and one female graduate)

Anything else you want to add?

South Carolina faces significant educational challenges, but I believe deeply in our ability to work together to overcome them and build a better Palmetto State for all of us.

I am honored to ask for your vote and, if I am privileged to win this election, your volunteerism. It will take all of us working together to turn our educational system around. But I am confident that with strong leadership and an even stronger team, South Carolina can become a beacon of hope where every child in our state has the opportunity to reach their full, God-given potential.

Lisa Ellis (Democratic) and Patricia Mickel (Green) did not submit responses.

U.S. SENATE 2

Neither candidate submitted responses. Voters will see Krystle Matthews, a Democrat, challenge Republican incumbent Tim Scott.

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, DISTRICT 5



EVANGELINE HUNDLEY
DEMOCRATIC

Why are you running?

My vision is to see the people of the 5th Congressional District and all South Carolinians be healthier, wealthier and wiser. I believe that South Carolinians are ready to see actual progress. By progress, I mean health care for all, living wages, paid family leave, universal Pre-k and free public college education. I plan to fight unwaveringly to maintain our right to vote and women's rights. We need to invest in our people and communities, and I will vote for those policies and others that restore and rebuild our working families, the middle class.

I'm running so the residents of the 5th Congressional District no longer accept mediocrity and no longer accept no as the final answer.

Have you run for political office before?

No. I am a lifelong South Carolinian. Newberry County, which was in the 5th Congressional District until just before the primaries, is my hometown.

Current job/profession:

I am a licensed S.C. residential builder, developer and Realtor. I started a construction company in 2005 to develop a 10-acre tract of land that my dad originally owned into a 23-lot subdivision.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

I have had a real-life interview for this position since 2005. I thrived in a male-dominated industry of construction and broke barriers for Black women in one of the reddest states in America. I have worked with people across the aisles, on boards and commissions, to create policy affecting the lives of residents in my county. I understand policy and the needs of people, and I have a proven record of getting things done despite challenges.

I've been a lifelong fighter for working families, women and voting rights.

What challenges/concerns do you see in your district (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

1) Lack of health care access, affordability and outcomes in South Carolina
As a U.S. Congresswoman, I will advocate for the opening up of the Medicaid Exchanges in S.C. and then working to pass universal health care like Medicare for All.

2) Protection of voting rights and women's rights
Voting rights and women's rights are the most fundamental rights that we have in a democracy. As a U.S. Congresswoman, to protect our citizens and our human rights, I will vote for the immediate passage of HR1 (now S1) For the People Act and HR4 John Lewis Voting Rights Act. To restore women's reproductive rights, I will vote to codify Roe vs. Wade so it is the law of the land.

3) Living wages for working families

South Carolina is a poverty-driven, right-to-work state and maintains the current minimum wage of \$7.25/per hour. A living wage in S.C. would exceed \$17 per hour per working adult. As a U.S.

Congresswoman, I will vote for bills that include raising the minimum to at least \$15 per hour, offer paid family leave and make the child care tax credit permanent.

What successes have you seen in your district that you want to build on?

I am sure that with some of the recent Biden administration policies, there are stories of personal successes by individuals and families who have experienced them. But by far, the people in this state do not feel how any policies made at the federal level could actually make their lives better due to the solid red wall in S.C. that blocks it.

Due to 20 years of Republican leadership, South Carolina has recently been

U.S. HOUSE, DISTRICT 5 FROM PAGE D6

ranked as one of the top 10 worst places to live due to poor health care, education investment, voting rights, poor infrastructure and crime. So, it's hard to build on bad leadership.

The good news is that we can change the leadership by voting on Nov. 8, 2022.



RALPH NORMAN
REPUBLICAN
INCUMBENT

What are you running for?

U.S. House of Representatives for South Carolina's 5th congressional district

Why are you running?

I've been in Congress just long enough to see firsthand the policies that made our nation strong and prosperous. Unfortunately, we've seen much of that unraveled under Democrat leadership in Congress and the White House.

So, I'm running for re-election because we have to reverse course on policies that have worsened inflation, encouraged illegal immigration and weakened our nation on the international stage. We need fiscal sanity, secure borders, a strong military, better policies to fight inflation, and we need to better support our law enforcement officers.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

I have represented South Carolina's 5th congressional district in the U.S. House of Representatives since 2017. Before then, I served in the South Carolina House of Representatives for approximately 11 years, from 2004 until 2006 and again from 2008 until being elected to the U.S. Congress in 2017.

How long have you lived in your district?

All my life, save the four years I attended Presbyterian College in Clinton, South Carolina.

Current job/profession:

Outside of politics, I have spent over 40 years running and growing a small real estate business. My private sector expertise is in residential construction, commercial development, brokerage, infrastructure and finance.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

Although I've served in this seat for five years, incumbency is not necessarily a measure of qualifications. Instead, I ask voters to simply look at my record in Congress.

I have consistently voted for lower taxes and smaller government. I have fought relentlessly for our military, veterans, law enforcement and first responders. Often breaking with the Republican

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Yes. I am primarily involved in voter education with the focus on increasing voter participation in the state of S.C. I have always been active in my community.

establishment in Washington, I routinely vote against wasteful, unnecessary spending. I believe we must pay down our federal debt and balance the budget for the sake of our children and grandchildren's generations. I am a pro-life, pro-Second Amendment conservative with a voting record and endorsements to back it up.

Meanwhile, at home here in South Carolina, my staff and I have helped tens of thousands of constituents who need assistance with the federal government. This includes agencies like the Veterans Administration, Department of Defense, Social Security and the IRS. The most important job I have in Congress is helping others.

What challenges/concerns do you see in your district (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

It's important to remember many important issues, like roads and education, fall under the purview of our state government, not the federal government.

First on the federal level is skyrocketing inflation, which is a major concern for people in our district. A significant cause of this has been excessive, wasteful government stimulus under the guise of COVID-19 relief, which is something I was sounding the alarm on back when the White House was still calling this inflation "transitory" and proposing trillions in additional unnecessary stimulus.

To help inflation, the federal government needs to reduce taxes and regulations to help businesses keep their costs low, which in turn will help keep their prices low.

Second, but in no particular order, is illegal immigration. According to government data, more than 3 million illegal immigrants have been encountered along our southern border since 2021. I believe that is a direct result of this president's policies. Since taking office, he has stopped new border wall construction, tried to halt his predecessor's "remain in Mexico" asylum policy, tried to reinstate a policy to "catch and release" migrants into the interior of the United States, tried to halt the removal of individuals with active deportation orders and is currently trying to end Title 42, which allows border officials to remove illegal migrants as a COVID-19 mitigation policy.

Since President Biden took office, more than twice the population of Sumter County, every single month, and it doesn't even include those who make it across our border undetected. This is unsustainable on multiple levels. The solution is simple:

I served on the Building and Zoning Commission in Newberry. I was later selected to chair that very committee. In addition, I sat on the board for the Newberry Chamber of Commerce.

Anything else you want to add?

In the November 2022 election, our entire democracy is at stake. For South Carolinians, our entire wellbeing is at stake. We must ensure everyone gets out to vote.

I invite anyone who is ready to build a better S.C. and be healthier, wealthier and wiser to join our campaign in canvassing, knocking on doors and making phone calls. Your vote is your power!

Follow us at:

Evangeline Hundley For Congress, @district5eva, district 5eva

The entrepreneurial spirit in this congressional district is strong, so in Congress, I will continue to help fight for ways to help our businesses thrive, including the fight to keep taxes low and reduce unnecessary regulation.

The list goes on, but let's not forget one critical fact: Sumter and our entire congressional district are incredible gems not because of government and what government can do but because of our people and what they can do.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Absolutely. Over the years, I've been part of the Rotary Club and have also served on the board of directors of numerous organizations like the Salvation Army, United Way, South State Bank, Medical University of South Carolina's Board of Visitors and the Children's Attention Home.

These days when I'm not in Washington, you'll find me constantly traveling throughout our congressional district, touring businesses and meeting with constituents and local leaders. I also enjoy town halls and other public events. For example, recently I was part of a congressional forum for our farmers and those in the agriculture industry. These are among the many ways I try to stay active and in touch with our local community.

Anything else you want to add?

It brings me no pleasure to point out the abysmal failures of Democrat leadership in Washington. They are in complete control of the White House, the Senate and the House of Representatives. Since President Biden took office, we've had skyrocketing inflation, record levels of illegal immigration, rising violent crime, a disastrous foreign policy, a weakened America on the international stage, a loss of our energy independence and so many other problems.

What we desperately need is a return to the values and policies that made our nation great. We need to secure our borders. We must have a strong military. We need to stand behind our law enforcement. We need fiscal responsibility and a balanced budget. And we need a return to moral and spiritual decency in this country. That's what I will continue to pursue if re-elected to the House of Representatives.

Larry Gathier (Green) did not submit a Q&A response.

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, DISTRICT 6



DUKE BUCKNER
REPUBLICAN

What are you running for?

United States Congress, S.C. District 6

Why are you running?

For the last 30 years, the 6th Congressional District has been neglected economically and educationally, and it's time for the suffering to end. South Carolina is growing and prospering, yet the "forgotten" counties of District 6 are just that forgotten. The "forgotten" counties are losing population. Young people have little opportunity, so they leave and go elsewhere to find a decent job to take care of their family. Our schools are not doing a good job educating our children. As a result, crime has increased and is a major problem. District 6 seems to get attention only during election season. I am running to change that.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

I won a seat on the Walterboro City Council in 2009.

I also ran for United States Senate in 2020.

How long have you lived in your district?

I have lived in my district for pretty much my whole life outside of law school. I moved to South Florida in 2003 to earn my law degree and practice there for a short time. I came back home to Walterboro in 2009 and have lived there ever since.

Current job/profession:

I am a practicing attorney in Walterboro. I am licensed to practice in South Carolina

and Florida. I started Buckner Law Firm, P.A., in 2012. This August, we would have been in business for 10 years.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

I believe many of the problems facing District 6 can be solved by getting people and groups to sit down and work together. I am a licensed attorney in South Carolina and a trained mediator. I was a middle and high school English teacher and owned and operated a weekly newspaper. I know how important planning is for success. I believe I can be a catalyst for positive change and also be a positive role model that can bring people together to help come up with solutions for the problems facing the 6th District.

What challenges/concerns do you see in your district (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

According to <https://scmap.literacy2030.org>, in one of our District 6 counties (Allendale), only about 15% of the 8th-graders can read on grade level. That is totally unacceptable. How can our young people succeed if many are not able to read? We can improve education by implementing school choice so that the money follows the child and not the institution. Children should not be forced to stay in a failing school. In addition, we must increase standards and focus on reading, writing and arithmetic and not critical race theory indoctrination of our children. Last, we must look to abolish the Department of Education, raise teacher pay, enforce discipline and ensure that parents have a say in the direction of the education of their children.

Lack of good-paying jobs is another serious problem. South Carolina is thriving, but the "forgotten" counties in the 6th Congressional District are not. District 6 is the poorest district in the state with

a median income of \$41,000 while the national average is \$65,000. People are having to drive an hour to an hour and a half just to get to work every day because good-paying jobs are not plentiful in the district. With gas and food prices being high, this hurts a family's ability to make ends meet. Furthermore, factories and small businesses have closed. As a result, the population in some counties in the 6th District has diminished. To bring jobs and economic growth to the 6th Congressional District, we must first reduce the corporate tax rate and burdensome regulations on businesses that stifle their ability to grow and expand. Second, we need to secure our borders. Last, we must bring back manufacturing jobs by providing incentives for companies to locate in the 6th District through the use of the opportunity zones legislation and dissuade companies to ship their jobs overseas. We have I-95, railroad access, available land and people who have a mind to work. Good-paying jobs belong to the 6th District, and as your Congressman, I am going to fight to make sure we get them.

Crime is a serious problem. When there is a lack of jobs, some people become desperate and turn to crime as a way to get money. We have to fix the root problem of crime, which is to ensure that our children get a quality education and that good-paying jobs are plentiful within the district.

What successes have you seen in your district that you want to build on?

District 6 contains the I-95 corridor, one of the busiest interstates in the country. However, because of neglect, many parts of it have fallen in desperate need of repair. As your congressman, I will work to expand I-95 to three lanes, resurface areas that have potholes and beautify the landscape to make it pristine. In addition,

we have great colleges and universities in the 6th District. I would like to coordinate efforts with industry leaders and school officials to make sure that graduates are obtaining marketable skills. Last, we need a representative who will look at the big picture and work to get our district booming. South Carolina's economy is ranked 18 out of 50, according to U.S. News and World Report. It is time for the 6th District to enjoy the economic prosperity that the rest of the state has enjoyed.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

I have been active in my local church for many years. In addition, I also served as member of Rotary International in Hampton County. I have supported the athletic department and the band program at Colleton County High School. Furthermore, I have represented the good people of the 6th District in legal matters for the last 10 years as a practicing attorney. I want to utilize my skills as a former English teacher, newspaperman and attorney to serve the people of the 6th Congressional District.

Anything else you want to add?

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, South Carolina grew by 12% (565,341 people) between 2010 and 2020. The "forgotten" counties (Allendale, Bamberg, Hampton, Clarendon, Williamsburg, Orangeburg and Calhoun) shrank by 11% (they lost 24,917 people). The situation in those "forgotten" counties is desperate. We need leaders in Congress who care about the people they represent, who sincerely want to see the lives of the people they serve improve. Something is wrong when the shepherd is feeding himself and getting fat while the sheep are starving in the wilderness.

U.S. HOUSE, DISTRICT 6 FROM PAGE D7



JAMES E. CLYBURN
DEMOCRATIC
INCUMBENT

What are you running for?
U.S. House District 6

Why are you running?
To continue my mission of making America's greatness accessible and affordable for all.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain

This will be my 15th election for the U.S. House of Representatives.

How long have you lived in your district?

I have lived in my district for as long as I have been alive. I was born and raised in Sumter, where my mother was a beautician, and my father was a minister. I attended college at South Carolina State University in Orangeburg and when I graduated, I began teaching English and Social Studies at Simonton Middle School and World History at C.A. Brown High School in Charleston. In 1972, my late wife, Emily, and I moved to the Greenview neighborhood of Columbia and called it home for nearly 50 years.

Current job/profession:

I currently represent the people of South Carolina's Sixth Congressional District and serve as the House Majority Whip in the U.S. House of Representatives.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

As someone who has worked at both the state and federal levels, I understand what it takes to build consensus to get things done. When John West was elected governor of South Carolina, he brought me on board to serve as his advisor and

later appointed me as commissioner of the South Carolina Human Affairs Commission. As commissioner, I worked closely with state leaders to address many of the racial issues that were happening across the state at that time. I led that agency for 18 years, and in 1992 decided to run for Congress.

I was elected president of my freshman class for the 2nd Session of the 103rd Congress and was subsequently elected chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus; vice-chair and later chair of the House Democratic Caucus; and now House Majority Whip. It has been because of those positions and my time in Congress that I have built the necessary relationships with other members to get legislation passed for the American people.

What challenges/concerns do you see in your district (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

The biggest challenge I have seen in my district is the issue of accessibility and affordability. America is great. It has always been great. Our challenge, however, is ensuring that we make America's greatness accessible and affordable for all. When it comes to education, healthcare, housing, broadband, and all the other things we need to live prosperous lives, I am fighting to ensure they are all accessible and affordable. That is why for the last 30 years, my record in Congress has shown that I have worked hard to address the challenges South Carolinians are facing every day.

I worked hard to help enact the Affordable Care Act to help thousands of South Carolinians get insured and I am currently working in Congress to close the Medicaid coverage gap to ensure all South Carolinians have access to affordable healthcare.

After many said it could not be done, I worked to get millions in federal funding to create the Lake Marion Regional Water

Agency to address the water issues in this region and ensure residents had access to clean and potable water.

I continue to fight to ensure that no communities are left behind and have pushed for my 10-20-30 program to be included in future federal funding proposals. This program stipulates that at least 10% of any agency's appropriated programmatic funds be invested in communities where 20% or more of the population has lived below the poverty line for the last 30 years. Just recently, the House passed my bipartisan legislation, H.R. 6531, the Targeting Resources to Communities in Need Act, which builds on my 10-20-30 program and combats poverty across the country.

I have also worked tirelessly to ensure every household in South Carolina has access to affordable broadband. According to the South Carolina Broadband Office, about \$600 million is needed to bring high-speed internet access to every unserved South Carolinian. Because of my work with South Carolina leaders and my efforts in getting the American Rescue Plan Act and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act passed into law, millions in federal funding will be made available to meet that goal.

Another top priority for me in Congress has been preserving and protecting Historically Black Colleges and Universities across the country and in South Carolina. That is why I worked hard to get language included in the Natural Resources Management Act to reauthorize the HBCU Historic Preservation program and ensure its funding until 2025. To date, the HBCU Historic Preservation program has awarded more than \$60 million in grants to more than 80 HBCUs.

What successes have you seen in your district that you want to build on?

After securing millions in funding for the Regional Transportation Center, and

millions for the North Main Street and Manning Avenue street-scaping projects, I was proud to get more than \$2 million in federal funding for Sumter County and the City of Sumter in this year's Consolidated Appropriations Act. This funding includes \$246,000 to replace Sumter Police Department's aging in-car cameras, desktop computers, and to update servers that will allow storage for the body-worn camera videos. Also included is \$750,000 to eliminate vacant and dilapidated properties that create a physical hazard and impede community development, and an additional \$1.6 million for Sumter County to demolish 220 vacant and dilapidated structures in South Sumter. Through additional investments from the federal government, I am confident we can continue to build on Sumter and other cities like it to bring economic growth and job creation.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Apart from my work in Congress, I have also been heavily involved in the community through my private, non-profit foundation that my late wife and I formed before I was elected to Congress. To date, my foundation has awarded scholarships to more than 2,000 high school graduates and contributed more than \$6 million to them in college aid. We also established a \$1.7 million endowment at S.C. State University for what is now the Dr. Emily England Clyburn Honors College. Emily and I also endowed more than \$475,000 in scholarships at several colleges throughout South Carolina, including Allen, Benedict, Claflin, Morris, the Medical University of South Carolina, the University of South Carolina, and Voorhees.

Anything else you want to add? N/A.

STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, DISTRICT 50



MARVIN JONES
REPUBLICAN

Why are you running?
I am running because I am a pastor, a husband and a daddy to three children, and I want to help make a change

for a brighter future for our state. I believe in working together as a team with our communities, and I plan to be the voice that promotes change.

Have you run for political office before?

This is my first time running for a political office.

How long have you lived in your district?

I have lived and worked in all three counties in my district all my life.

Current job/profession:

I have been in the ministry for 23 years. I have worked in a fast-food restaurant, cotton mill, car dealership in Sumter and have been a business owner. I am currently the pastor of Second Chance Fellowship in Camden and have been there since the

church started 12 years ago.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

I am not a politician, but what makes me qualified is my passion to see a change for a better future for our communities and state. I am also a good listener and am experienced in working with people to help lead them. I have a fire in my belly to see things change for the better and am not scared to be the voice our state needs to stand up for our rights and for what is right.

What challenges/concerns do you see in your district (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

The area I would like to help improve is education. I plan to work with educators, administrators, students and parents to develop a plan to increase the graduation rate and the career and college readiness rates. A plan that would help our students be self-motivated to want to stay in school and become a valuable member of our society so they can contribute to our state's success. Also, a plan to help make sure all are schools are safe and teachers are compensated and appreciated graciously. Another area I would like to focus on is supporting our first responders.

I believe we need to provide the finances and resources they need to do their jobs efficiently. We need to stand up, show our appreciation and be a voice for them as they put their lives on the line for safety and well-being every day. The third major concern I have is the government infiltrating our churches, which became evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our churches need a voice, too. Keeping the government out of our churches and allowing us to worship and function freely from government control is of the utmost importance today. As a pastor of 23 years, I have seen firsthand how the government is trying to influence the church and take away our rights. I believe we must stand up for our rights to worship and operate the way we feel the Lord is leading us to.

What successes have you seen in your district that you want to build on?

I would like to see us bring in more businesses in our communities. In order to do that, we must improve education in our district and state. No business wants to move into a community with a one out of five high school dropout rate.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

As a pastor and father to three children, I am very involved in our community. From reaching out to people in the community who are hurting and are in need to providing food from our food pantry, I am very involved in doing my part to better our communities. I have worked with the homeless to help them make a better life and help them get back on the right track. I have also served on my children's school improvement council, district committees, and I support businesses and youth organizations in the community through sponsorship.

Anything else you want to add?

To see the change our community earnestly needs, we must work together in order to see these outcomes. Our community needs to get out and vote on Nov. 8 in order to see a better tomorrow. If you do not want change and are satisfied with the current state of our community, then do not vote for me. I am striving to become a voice of change. I will stand up for what is not only right, but biblically right. I am excited to work with the communities in my district to help make the change for a brighter future for our state.



WILL WHEELER
DEMOCRATIC
INCUMBENT

What are you running for?
S.C. House of Representatives District 50

Why are you running?

To continue serving citizens of District 50 in Kershaw, Lee and Sumter counties

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

Yes, I first ran for office and was elected in 2016. I have served continuously since that time.

How long have you lived in your

district?

My entire life with exception of college and law school.

Current job/profession:

Attorney/partner with Jennings Law Firm in Bishopville.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

My professional experience of over 20 years and volunteer service on many boards and commissions over the years, both public and private. For example, serving on the Lee County DSN, USC Sumter and Central Carolina Technical College Foundation boards. Since 2016, I have worked to further develop leadership skills through participating in the S.C. Health Policy Fellowship and Liberty Fellowship. I have also enjoyed and learned much from serving on the

executive board of Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments.

What challenges/concerns do you see in your district (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

Lack of population growth, education and workforce development have been problematic for rural areas in particular. We must continue to invest in infrastructure, education and quality of life measures that encourage healthy and vibrant communities, regardless of size.

What successes have you seen in your district that you want to build on?

We have seen success in retaining access to health care at critical junctures. We have been able to maintain health care providers in Bishopville and Bethune that were in danger of being lost, and pediatric dental care is now available in Lee County.

Since 2016, we have seen significant economic development investment and job growth. We have also seen significant improvements in cleaning up and development in downtown Bishopville.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

I regularly attend local government, civic and community organization meetings within the district and regularly meet with constituents who have individual concerns, problems or issues.

Anything else you want to add?

I have served on the Judiciary Committee since my first term in the House, and my secondary assignment has been to the Rules Committee since my second term.

STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, DISTRICT 64



KIMBERLY O. JOHNSON
DEMOCRATIC
INCUMBENT

What are you running for?

I am running for re-election to SC House of Representatives,

District 64 (Clarendon and parts of Sumter Counties).

Why are you running?

I am completing my first term as a member of the SC House. I have become and continue to be acutely aware of

issues of importance to the State of South Carolina and more specifically District 64. I am running so that I will be able to continue to address those issues and others that may arise during the next term. I want to use my "Proven Leadership" as a military veteran, a former healthcare director, a former school board chairperson, and community leader to continue to deliver the results for the hardworking families of District 64. Together, working with democrats and republicans, we can improve the quality of life for all South Carolinians.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

When I successfully ran for this position in 2020, that was my first time running for a political office. I am currently in my first term.

How long have you lived in your district?

I am a lifelong resident of this district. I was born and raised in Manning. Other than my service in the United States Army and my time away earning my Bachelor's and Master's Degree from the University of South Carolina, I have been a resident of Manning. I built and purchased my home here in 2009.

Current job/profession:

I currently serve as the Assistant Director of the F.E. DuBose Career Center which is part of the Clarendon County School District.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

I am the incumbent, currently representing SC House District 64. I have built relationships and continue to make connections all around the state to better this district. My "proven leadership" continues to allow me in meetings to boost economic development, as a Chamber Board Member, this benefits larger companies as well as small businesses.

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I think my military service along with my educational achievements make me uniquely qualified to serve in this position and I have developed a great relationship with my counterparts. The full extent of my involvement throughout our community and state, even prior to my election in 2020 also adds to the qualifications that I have.

What challenges/concerns do you see in your district (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

There are many challenges rural districts face. I think the most important challenges that we face in our district lie in the area of public education. Much work has been done since I was first elected to improve the quality of our educational system but much work remains to be done. I feel that the quality of life for the constituents is District 64 is in direct correlation to the quality of the education that is provided. Other concerns lie in the area of healthcare which is why I remain a strong advocate for Medicaid Expansion and for more available resources toward mental health issues. Other concerns are broadband accessibility, which we are close to resolving, and continued efforts toward economic development and the creation of more jobs that offer good pay and benefits. Like many rural areas, we lack access to clean drinking water in a part of this district. At the state level, we can continue to work with the federal government as infrastructure funds are released and ensure these monies are

appropriated to the communities in need.

What successes have you seen in your district that you want to build on?

One success I've seen is collaboration. There was a recent economic development project in our district that took a few years to come to fruition. It took the local, county and state entities working together to make this happen. The core of this effort was collaboration. We have a leadership team in place that wants what is best for the people we represent. We don't use social media platforms or the local media to bash each other. We meet, we discuss, we set goals and we collaborate and more often than not, we produce a WIN. AS a small rural county, we need to have proven leaders who have good relationships to see more projects in our area through. And our success in our collaborative efforts isn't just seen in projects. Even before being elected, I've always been proud about the large group of individuals who show up and help build Habitat homes, those who show up and pick up trash and litter from our roads and highways, those who show up and mentor children in our schools, those who donate and sponsor when the need arises, those who help celebrate our cancer overcomers in the community and those support the family, friends and community members when there is a loss. As I alluded to earlier, although we must continue to work, there have been a lot of success in the field of education. School consolidation and an

elected school board were requested and we delivered on that. We must continue to work hard to make sure that success in that area continues. Another success is the fact that we achieved \$42 million to replace Walker Gamble Elementary School and that I was able to secure funding to build a county library in Turbeville. We have been successful in the area of securing funding to replace and repair our highway infrastructure to include bridges and sidewalks and we must continue to work on that. Economic Development continues to improve as we work together to make our area more appealing in an attempt to attract and retain industry. And of course, thanks to McLeod Clarendon and federally qualified health centers like Hope Health and Tandem Health (located in District 64) great strides are being made in reference to healthcare. I look forward to continuing to work with them on additional improvements so that our citizens can receive the majority of their healthcare needs locally.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

As I mentioned earlier, long before I became an elected official I was heavily involved in many aspects of our community that worked to improve the quality of life for our citizens. After my time in the military I made the choice to stay in Manning in an attempt to be a positive influence. I've served in the past as a member of the Clarendon 2 school board (former chairman) and was nominated and elected to serve on the Board of Directors for the SC School Boards Association, representing Region

5. I also served as a member of the SC School Board Association's Insurance Trust Board of Directors. I served on the United Way Board and the board for Habitat for Humanity where I helped build 5 houses for deserving citizens. I also served in the past on the HopeHealth Board of Directors as well as the Board for the Santee Lynches Regional Education Council Advisory Board. I currently serve on the board for the Clarendon County Chamber of Commerce and the Friends of McLeod Clarendon Hospital Advisory Board.

I have a Bachelor's Degree in Religious Studies and a Master's Degree of Social Work, both from USC. I am a graduate of the SC Bankers School sponsored by the SC Bankers Association and a graduate of the American Bankers Association School of Marketing and Management. I am also a graduate of Leadership Clarendon and Leadership South Carolina. I am a Riley Fellow having graduated from The Riley Institute of Diversity Leadership sponsored by Furman University and I am an Education Fellow having graduated from the SC Education Policy Fellows Program.

Anything else you want to add?

I am the candidate with the highest education and the greatest amount of experience. I have worked my entire adult life on behalf of others, before my election and after being elected. I just ask that the voters cast their vote in this race for the person deemed must qualified to continue to serve them in this position. How do you know what someone will do when given your vote, examine what they have done prior to getting your vote.



FAWN PEDALINO
REPUBLICAN

What are you running for?

House of Representatives, District 64

Why are you

running?

I chose to run for District 64's House seat because we need leadership that is willing to put the community first and be their voice. Someone who is going to vote in the House to protect and elevate our district. As a parent who has children in the public school system and as a small business owner in this district, I have realized how much that is needed.

Have you run for political office before?

I have not, but it is never too late to get involved for change.

How long have you lived in your district?

I have been in District 64 (Clarendon County side) since 2010.

Current job/profession:

I own a small business in Manning that specializes in computer and phone repair. We also do UPS returns and printing and promotional products. The other side of our business specializes in commercial IT for businesses. I am also a Realtor who has helped several homeowners find their forever home or sell their home.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

Qualifications for this seat extend to knowing what your district is struggling with, hearing what the community is telling you they want/need and implementing that into how you vote for your district. True leadership is about serving the people. I have been doing that since 2010 when I worked for the 911 system for EMS and even now as I serve the people of our community in our storefront. I know what it takes to work in stressful environments from being in EMS, and I also know how to implement a plan of action to get things done from starting a business from the ground up. Nothing in my life has ever been handed to me, so I am not afraid to put in the work. I am also not afraid to stand against the majority when I feel that something isn't right.

What challenges/concerns do you see in

your district (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

1. Mismanagement of taxpayers' money - My plan is to shine light on the areas where we are needlessly wasting taxpayers' dollars and to hold accountable those who are mismanaging said funds. It will take leaders in place that will uphold their fiduciary duty to the people to fix this. I also want to make sure we are appropriating funds the correct way to save taxpayers from having constant increasing in taxes due to the mismanagement.

2. Minimal job opportunities - My plan is to try to bring more business to our area, to create more jobs, so that we can get our community on track for growth and prosperity.

3. Lack of transparency in our local government - I plan to keep the community as involved as I can on what is going on in the Statehouse and what is going on in our district. Most of those that I have spoken with have no idea of the things that are being discussed for our county and our state.

What successes have you seen in your district that you want to build on?

I have seen some progress with roads being repaved. I think that is a huge

issue in our state, and I think it would be beneficial to have a representative who is willing to take time out to continuously ride our district and work with the highway commissioner to get even more done with our roads that are in disrepair.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

As mentioned before, I worked in EMS serving our community for several years. To date, I am heavily involved in the community through my store, being a Realtor, and I have also been a part of several back-to-school drives. I was able to join forces with several local businesses and local organizations to give away over 200 fully loaded backpacks to students in need in our district. Just to name a few of the ways.

Anything else you want to add?

I decided to run for District 64's House seat to fight for the changes that I saw were needed. If you would allow me the opportunity, that is exactly what I will do. I ask for your vote in November, and I hope to serve you in the Statehouse in January.

SUMTER CITY COUNCIL, DISTRICT 1



JOE BROWN
NONPARTISAN

Why are you running?

I am running because I believe in Sumter and its residents. I will be a strong voice for

the people advocating job and business growth, youth growth and development and pushing to ensure the City of Sumter is an eco-friendly, safe and innovative city.

Have you run for political office before?

No. I have not sought nor served in previous elected office before.

How long have you lived in your district?

I'm a product of the Sumter community, originally from the South side to Morris College.

Current job/profession:

Bail bondsman

What makes you qualified for the seat?

What makes me qualified for this seat is my ability to be outspoken for the public and the community, my ability to connect to people and my willingness to work with all for the betterment of the community.

What challenges/concerns do you see in your district (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

There are many challenges that we face

as a city. A few that my district faces are:

- Advocating job and business growth: a training program specifically designed for people who want to start a business in a local community targeted to the BIPOC community, women and youth.

- Youth and growth development: strength co-op program for those particularly aged 18-21 in high school to ensure a solid plan, also a heavier focus on finance, budget and civic involvement; in-district tutorial program K-12 with tutors being education majors from the local college at no cost to parents; and City Youth Council to get students in grades 5-12 civically involved and engaged in the process.

- Eco-friendly, safe and innovative city: This all works hand in hand by making the city and district innovative. It will allow

us to become eco-friendly like a solar-powered community.

What successes have you seen in your district that you want to build on?

There have been many, such as The Beach Forest subdivision, but we have a long way to go.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Yes, I am active in the Sumter community as an outspoken small business owner of 23 years working with many organizations. I'm also serving on the countywide Litter Advisory Board as one of its chairpersons.



REGINALD "REGGIE" EVANS
NONPARTISAN

What are you running for?

Sumter City Council Ward 1

Why are you running?

Work to unite Sumter and improve the quality of life for all residents.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

Yes, I ran for school board in 1998.

How long have you lived in your district?

My family built a house in the district in 1977. The family owned and operated a Shell Station across from Roy's Supermarket on North Main Street. While serving in the military, the district was always my home of record. Also lived on Milton Road behind Shuler Hardware.

Current job/profession:

Medically retired and part-time consultant. Two main projects currently are an online art gallery, www.Wawuart.com.

com, and Grace Achievement Centers for Excellence Academies Inc. First phase is an all-boys academy with grades 6, 7 and 8 to open August 2024.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

I have been a law-abiding taxpayer and property owner for years in Sumter, so I have a vested interest in working to improve the conditions within the county. I am not seeking fame or glory. Nor financial gains. I just want to serve. My focus will be on seniors, disabled and our children. I have been blessed to live and travel in cities in this state such as Greenville, Charleston, Columbia and Florence and cities across the country like Raleigh-Durham; Jacksonville; Washington, D.C.; and San Diego. There I saw the remarkable things being done in those cities. I believe Sumter can do just as well.

What challenges/concerns do you see in your district (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

1. The way the city awards contracts to private businesses. The city does not have minorities and women in senior decision-making positions. Our elected officials should make sure that companies awarded contracts have an effective

affirmative action plan. The elected officials should have an affirmative action plan for their business or employment. Once on council, I will move that the city adopts the Small Business Administration set-aside program and certified businesses based on their race and sex. Also require subcontractors to have an affirmative action plan. I will motion that the city works with the local colleges and universities along with SCORE of the SBA to develop minority and women businesses and award the local businesses city contracts first before opening to others in the state and country.

2. Stop the racism and classism at the North HOPE Center and Sumter RTA. Only improvement is a fresh staff and leaders.

3. North Main Street and Lafayette Drive should look the same as Alice Drive. I will improve by replacing staff in code enforcement and community development.

What successes have you seen in your district that you want to build on?

I have not seen or know of any noteworthy improvement or success in my district. Roads have not been paved in 40 years. I never saw the city cut trees that are

hanging over into the street. I never saw the fire hydrants tested but saw rust in our drinking water for the children. The speed limit in our neighborhoods is 30 to 40 mph. Grandparents fear for their grandchildren's lives. The drainage creates fishing ponds on some streets.

Police patrol patterns and presence are nonexistent in the area. The community development office takes up to five years to process an application. The basketball court near Riley Park has no restroom or drinking water for the children. Code Enforcement does not condemn buildings and issues fines.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

I have been and worked as a United Methodist man in several churches for over 40 years. I helped form and worked with the Northside Neighborhood Association for over 20 years. I coached little league baseball and helped with American Legion baseball. I am so proud some of my players are now head coaches and athletic directors of high schools. I was one of the founders of a men's group called Men-N-

SUMTER CITY COUNCIL, DISTRICT 1

FROM PAGE D9

Deeds.

Anything else you want to add?

Once elected, I will work for: 1. Vote no on the penny sales tax referendum on Nov. 8 and place it on the 2024 ballot. 2. All city police and county deputies are

required to have body and dash cameras always operating on duty. 3 More street lights in your neighborhood. 4. Place utility lines underground on main roads in the city. 5. More equity and transparency in city budget and staff. 6. Revise the county and city's 2040 plan to include all the city.

7. More affordable and safe housing in the city. 8. Create more jobs and locally owned businesses. 9. Have retirement and teachers' income exempt of state income taxes. 10. Expand Medicaid for the poor, seniors aged 62 to 64 and a children's dental plan. 11. Change lottery fund law to fund benefits for the disabled and seniors. To pay for Part B of Medicare, public transportation and utilities expenses. 12. Fix the Robert Graham Freeway (North Pike

Road) so no more children are killed by a traffic accident.

I would like to thank in advance all the family, friends and voters for considering and voting and in many other ways supporting my run for office. I take your willingness to entrust me with helping with your family well-being and quality of life very seriously and pray I will not disappoint.



DEREK GAMBLE
NONPARTISAN

What are you running for?

Sumter City Council Ward 1

Why are you running?

I see the need for new progressive leadership in Ward 1.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

I have never run for political office before.

How long have you lived in your district?

Five years

Current job/profession:

Executive director of Clean Slate Re-entry Program / Workforce Development instructor

What makes you qualified for the seat?

Many years of leadership experience in my profession, along with being heavily involved in community projects and events.

What challenges/concerns do you see in your district (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

Litter – I would like to work closely with Codes Enforcement and litter officers to come up with a comprehensive plan to combat this problem. This plan would include installation of high-definition cameras in areas with litter/dumping problems

and giving out hefty fines to those who violate the law.

Programs for teenagers – Many after-school programs age children out after 12 years old. Helping to develop programs for our teenagers to participate in is paramount. This would help to cut down on juvenile delinquency and give them a head start learning the principles of adulthood.

Affordable housing – We have an issue, that is also seen nationwide, with affordable housing. It would be to the benefit of our community to identify homes that can be listed to the general public for purchase through the proper channels. We have many vacant homes throughout the community that need to be occupied. Remember homeownership builds a sense of pride in our community.

What successes have you seen in your district that you want to build on?

Upgrades to the North HOPE Center park area have been beneficial to Ward. I would like to find funding to build a basketball/park area similar to that recently developed in the Crosswell community to be built on the vacant lot that faces Miller Road between Jackson Street, Montreat Street and Dixie Drive. This would give residents a place to enjoy without having to commute out of the neighborhood.

Sidewalks installed on Highland Avenue have also been beneficial to this ward. It would be a great service to the residents to identify areas of high foot traffic and install more sidewalks in those areas to prevent people from having to walk in the road while commuting to their destinations.

Removal of derelict houses and

structures has been beneficial to this ward. Once a home or structure has been deemed uninhabitable, have it demolished to make room for newer affordable housing to be developed. Reducing the amount of these homes and structures increases community safety and maintains property value.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Yes, I am very active in the community. I was voted one of the 2022 Hometown Heroes for my community involvement. Here are a few more outreach projects I am involved in:

- Founded Operation Summer Salvation in 2016, which provides air conditioners to the elderly and disabled around the state through partnerships with the Council on Aging and other organizations.

- Sponsors free job training for workforce development by offering ServSafe Food & Alcohol Training to those who apply.

- Sponsors expungement and pardon workshops to aid justice-involved individuals with restoring their rights after criminal convictions.

- South Carolina Department of Corrections volunteer who teaches reentry classes and offers reentry services to the formerly incarcerated.

- Adopt A Highway sponsor for five years.

- Hosted several pandemic food box drives to aid residents during a worldwide crisis.

Anything else you want to add?

After moving into my current residence, I noticed very high foot traffic from a large hole in the perimeter fence at an adjacent property. The hole in the fence was literally the width of the entire street. My neighbors are predominantly women ranging between the ages of 50 and 75 years old. They have complained about this issue for many years with no remedy.

I decided to start a petition and submit it to Sumter City Council and Codes Enforcement. I was not successful in getting the fencing fixed initially, but I was able to get local law enforcement to assist in installing LED streetlights to make the area brighter at night to deter crime and increase visibility.

Despite what seemed like a defeat with stopping the foot traffic in my area, I continued to do research on viable solutions. I was able to come up with applying for an encroachment permit through the South Carolina Department of Transportation to solve the problem. Once the permit was approved, I was given permission to install fencing at the border of the adjacent property to stop the foot traffic at my expense and upkeep.

At a cost of \$3,000, I was able to rent heavy equipment and purchase fencing supplies to remedy this problem. My neighbors and I feel safer on our street without foot pursuits from law enforcement trying to catch criminals who used that path to elude capture. My sons can play outside safely now.

We need leadership that goes the extra mile to find solutions to problems that affect our residents no matter how large or small.



ANTHONY GIBSON
NONPARTISAN

What are you running for?

Sumter City Council Ward 1

Why are you running?

I am running because I love our city. I asked myself a question, "Can I do more to better our city?" The answer is yes, I can. We all want to see growth in our city. I want to help ensure that our residents have a better quality of life.

Have you ever run for political office before?

No, I have never run for any political office in the past.

How long have you lived in your district?

I have lived in my district since 2007.

What is your current job/position?

I am currently the senior pastor of Grace Cathedral Ministries located right here in Sumter. I am also a Realtor with Keller Williams Columbia, serving Sumter, Clarendon and Richland counties.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

What qualifies me for this seat is I have years of proven leadership. It has been my privilege to serve the residents of Sumter for over 20 years in various capacities, whether it's guiding souls spiritually, coaching our youth in athletic sportsmanship, mentoring our youth to pursue academic excellence or working with small businesses to ensure success. The common theme has been to serve people. This new role will allow me to continue to serve Sumter residents in a greater capacity.

What challenges/concerns do you see in your district (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

1. One issue that I have is the current rise in crime. We want to create a partnership between the community and law enforcement to help ensure safety in our community.

2. The communication gap between our city and our senior residents. We want to ensure that our seniors have access to resources that will aid in improving their overall quality of life.

What successes have you seen in your district that you want to build on?

1. Our HOPE Centers have been a beacon of light in our communities. I would like to come alongside them to help push their vision and help expand the programs there to reach more people.

2. We have seen an increase of small businesses downtown. We want to continue to stimulate the revitalization of down-

town Sumter. It is our goal to maximize on this revitalization and create more opportunities for small business and large business and large business investments.

Are you currently involved in the community? How so?

I am currently serving as a mentor in our public schools. I am also overseeing a prison ministry, local food pantries and the Samaritan House Meal Program. Lastly, I am also a part of our Adopt-A-School program.

Anything else you want to add?

Leadership is not about a title or position. It's about action. Leadership cannot only identify problems - they can also identify solutions. I am optimistic about the future of Sumter. I am looking forward to working with city leaders and residents to create one Sumter with one people.



BARBETTE THAMES
NONPARTISAN

What are you running for?

Sumter City Council Ward 1

How long have you lived in your district?

I have been a resident of this community for the past 11 years.

Why are you running?

I am running for city council for various reasons. I want to be proactive in making decisions on affordable housing, public safety, strengthening youth and families, transportation and growing local businesses. I am an advocate who values giving back and contributing in ways that will create a stronger community.

Have you run for political office before?

No, I have never run for office before.

Current job/profession:

Procurement coordinator for the state of South Carolina.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

I graduated from Morris College. I actively participate in my community. I see an opportunity for change in numerous areas, and I want to be an integral part of helping implement those changes.

What challenges/concerns do you see in your district (up to 3)? How do you intend to improve them?

As I speak to residents throughout the community, many stated that something needs to be done about the cars speeding up and down the streets.

I spoke with another resident about the homeless living in an abandoned house near her home. She stated that they walk through her yard day and night. She said she cannot enjoy sitting on her porch any longer because she does not feel safe.

I have seen many abandoned houses that are burned and overgrown with bushes and trees. These houses bring no value to the neighborhood. This keeps potential buyers from moving to the area.

Installing speed bumps on various streets in the city.

Having more police patrolling in the neighborhoods to ensure safety.

Enforce ordinances that have already been established.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Yes, I served as a voter registration clerk for five years in Sumter. I am actively involved in encouraging residents to vote. I assisted with the "Summer Program," getting the children prepared for the new school year.

Anything else you want to add?

I am excited to be on the ballot. I hope to get the opportunity to implement some necessary changes which will make the

City of Sumter appealing to others and to make the area a safer place for everyone. I look forward to interacting with my fellow citizens.

What successes have you seen in your district that you want to build on?

- Parks: Continue the plans for the parks that include community engagement. Having events over the coming year that bring focus to the park to help local businesses.

- Local business exterior improvements: sharing awareness of the grants that may be available for the improvements on their business.

- Environmental concerns/litter control: Partner/coordinate with the City of Sumter and South Carolina Department of Transportation for the necessary bags, gloves, litter sticks and more.

- Sumter Economic Development: Continue sharing educational workforce training that is offered at Central Carolina Community College and Sumter County Adult Education.

SOIL AND WATER DISTRICT COMMISSION



Three candidates are in the running for two open seats in Sumter County's Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

According to Districts Manager Anna Makiewicz, the volunteer-based commission of five commissioners – two appointed and three elected – has two seats open in the midterm election: Tommy Laney and John Lee Newman.

Both Laney and Newman filed for reelection and have served the commission and its conservation efforts for years, Makiewicz said.

"We're partnered with the NRCS, so we do do work with them," she said. "We also hold several environmental easements in

Sumter County, including part of the Pocatigo. We share a portion of it in taking care of by Clarendon County and a portion is taken care of by Sumter County."

Some past work of the commission's included the planting of 300 cypress trees along the Sumter County bank's side of the river last year, she said. They also have a fellowship program offering scholarships to get hands-on experience in conservation and environmental work.

The Soil and Water Conservation Districts is also responsible for sponsoring an Emerging Leader through The LINK's program, a year-round leadership experience for high school juniors that introduces

economic and community development concepts in Sumter. They also attend festivals and other gatherings to educate the community on environmental issues throughout the year.

Neither Laney or Newman submitted a Q&A. *The Sumter Item* contacted both by phone and email. Newman was unresponsive, and Laney was unable to submit it in time because of a personal matter.



JOHN EARL PERRY
NONPARTISAN

What are you running for?

Soil and Water Conservation Board

Why are you running?

To assist in the preservation and expansion of our natural resources.

Have you run for political office before?

SOIL AND WATER FROM PAGE D10

I have never held a political office.

How long have you lived in your district?

I am a lifelong resident of Sumter County.

Current job/profession?

Transportation support for Ragin Preparatory Christian Academy

What makes you qualified for the seat?

I am passionate about Sumter County. It is my desire to resolve issues and concerns, especially those that affect the people of this county. I am extremely familiar with the landscape of Sumter County, and many generations of my family were farmers. The

land affected our lives, and my family continues to own and respect that land today. I intend to ensure open, easy and transparent communication. Finally, I am open and willing to explore new relationships.

What challenges/concerns do you see in your district (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

Sumter County is rich in lush greenlands and beautiful landscapes. There are some areas across this county where there are overgrown ditches. I would ensure these ditches are properly maintained to ensure there is not improper runoff on our roadways. It has been an ongoing issue with Shaw Air Force Base and water purity in portions of our county. I will continue

to work with the residents and officials to ensure safe, clean water is accessible.

What successes have you seen in your district that you want to build on?

There has been great improvement in the communications between officials and our farmers. This open line of communication directly affects the entire county. I would ensure communication remains open and transparent. With some of the recent Biden administration policies, there are stories of major successes by farmers who have received the resources. I am committed to farmers and making certain they have all resources available at every level.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

This community is the backbone of who

I am, and I proudly serve in it to the best of my ability. I am a member of Rafting Creek Baptist Church, where I currently serve as a trustee and media ministry production manager. I also serve as the church photographer. Beyond my service to the church, I am active with the Sumter School District. Finally, I have been working with the Sumter County Voter Registration and Elections Office since November 1996.

Anything else you want to add?

I look forward to serving the citizens and residents of our beloved Sumter County. Together we can do great things to foster a healthier community by fostering and promoting our natural resources.

Tommy Laney and John Lee Newman did not submit Q&A responses. This is a nonpartisan race.

SUMTER SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 1



BRIAN L. ALSTON
INCUMBENT

What are you running for?

Sumter School District Board of Trustees, Area 1

Why are you running?

I believe educator Rita Pierson said it best: "Every child deserves a champion: an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists they become the best they can possibly be." I am running to ensure we continue to put children first in every decision that we make as a board. As a product of Area 1 and its great public schools, committed educators and high-quality after-school programming, I want to ensure every child is afforded the same opportunities and more to reach their full potential. As I stated in 2014 and 2018, Area 1 and Sumter School District deserve a board member who will strengthen the policies; work to improve the budget; and work with the Sumter County Legislative Delegation, Sumter County Council and our towns and communities on issues of importance to the schools and oversee the efficient operation of the district. I will continue to listen and lead with the voices of our students, staff and communities at the forefront. Service is heart work, and advocacy will always be my first priority; I am ready and equipped to continue representing our interest in ensuring our students are college, career and/or military ready upon graduation.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

I ran for South Carolina State House of Representatives, District 50, in 2014 and 2016. In addition, I ran for Sumter School District Board of Trustees, Area 1, in 2014 and 2018.

It is a privilege and honor of my life to serve the constituents of Sumter School District and Sumter County, in particular those in Area 1, for the past four years.

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

I have lived at the address in which I filed since I moved back to my family's Rembert estate in 2014 after graduating from Morehouse College and work experience in

Atlanta and Charlotte. The Alston Estate was purchased upon my great-grandfather's return from World War I with the support of my great-grandmother's service as a civilian at Shaw Field during the time. It became the family farm until the homestead was built in the 1960s and my maternal grandparents married, relocated a home and started the family businesses on the property. I am the beneficiary of my family's lifelong commitment to Area 1 and the Greater Rembert - Rafting Creek and Catchall-Shaw communities.

Current job/profession:

Grant administrator, state of South Carolina; apprentice funeral director/embalmer, Palmer Memorial Chapel; adjunct instructor, Ragin Preparatory Christian Academy

What makes you qualified for the seat?

I am qualified for the seat because I am a product of Area 1 (K-8th grade in Sumter School District and high school in Richland School District One).

Now, I bring the insight of being an adjunct classroom instructor. I know the concerns of our students, staff and communities firsthand. It is important to be able to listen to and lead in this seat. I worked as a Senate page/legislative aide in the office of state Sens. Marlon Kimpson and Assistant Minority Leader John W. Matthews Jr. This experience allowed me a front-row seat to the legislative process that is at the heart of being a member of our school board. As a school board, our primary function is to govern as a policymaking body with the adoption of policy. I understand that our power exists exclusively in my actions collectively with the other members. I actively attend professional development conferences to stay current on school law, trends and topics that are

vitaly important to our success. As a Purple Star School District, it was important to complete the MIC3 Compact 101 Training facilitated by the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission to welcome, support and serve our military families.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

The challenges/concerns I see in Sumter School District include academics, operations and school climate and safety:

A) Academics: We have seen the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our children academically, and we must address this issue head on. In response to the disruption of the learning

environment and learning loss experienced, we must continue to provide academic enrichment opportunities to our students to combat the months of virtual and hybrid learning. They deserve high-quality academic programming, tutoring opportunities during and after school, summer learning experiences and resources in their respective communities like the much-anticipated STEM and Cybersecurity buses. Together with invested stakeholders, we can work to close this learning loss and achievement gap in our schools across the district.

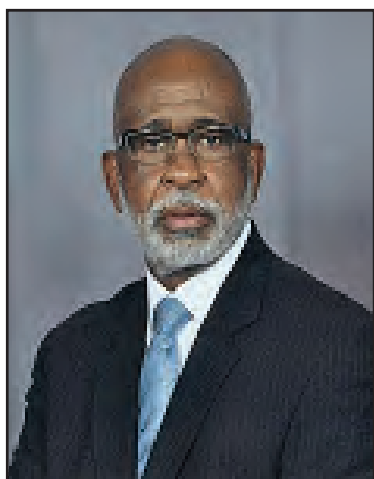
B) Operations: We must carefully examine staff recruitment and retention (teacher and support staff shortage, to include transportation) to ensure that we are providing our students with high-quality staff across the

district. Every facet of our district should be staffed with capable members of the team that fosters academic achievement for our students. This can be ensured by supporting the administration and a personal desire to see a comprehensive salary study completed to provide comparable and competitive salaries to staff. In addition, provide our staff with added benefits that are meaningful and beneficial to them such as paid parental leave and voluntary shared leave.

C) School climate and safety: Parents and stakeholders alike want to know that our children are safe and in a nurturing environment while in our schools.

SEE SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 1, PAGE D12

Ralph W. Canty, Sr., Candidate SUMTER SCHOOL DISTRICT Board Election Seat Three (3)



Ralph W. Canty, Sr.

As a member of the Sumter School District Board of Trustees I will be an advocate for the following:

- 1) The creation of a committee commissioned to reimagine the district and to make recommendations for renewal and revitalization. The team shall be comprised of representatives of the board, district administrators, teachers, and parents; legislative delegation, city, and county government; business and industry; military and the public. The district shall engage a consultant to support the committee.
- 2) The engagement of a consultant to conduct an academic audit to point out strengths and weaknesses to facilitate necessary changes to produce a world class educational system. Note: We engage an auditor each year to examine and verify our financial accounts; we have never authorized a specialist to examine the product we offer to our clients ... our students.
- 3) The formation of a strategy to ensure that the district and every campus is a citadel of excellence, fully staffed with qualified teachers and all the tools essential for an equitable and cultivating learning experience.
- 4) The development of a curriculum, which weaves basics with digital learning while continuing to explore advanced teaching methods and technology.
- 5) Members of the community serving as non-voting members of board committees.
- 6) Greater public participation in board matters through quarterly town hall meetings solely for the purpose of engaging the community in conversation.
- 7) The creation of a committee commissioned to reimagine for the district a Climate of Civility, where systems and standards will be highly esteemed, leadership will be honored, teachers and staff will be valued, students will be respectful, and every campus will be a sanctuary of safety. The team shall be comprised of representatives of administration, teachers, psychologists, parents, and the public. The district shall engage a consultant to support the committee.
- 8) The establishment of the Technical High School and the reimagining of the Career Center.
- 9) The creation of an Incentive Program to attract Retired Teachers to return to the classroom to fill the critical teacher shortage, which confronts the district and is certain to impede any progress that might be made in a progressive direction.
- 10) An immediate and extensive battery of professional development activities for the Board upon election.
- 11) The expansion of broadband so that every child in Sumter County will have access to Wi-Fi as a tool for information, research and learning.
- 12) The creation of an Incentive Program to recruit, reward, and retain educators and other key employees essential for a healthy and vibrant educational system.



PAID FOR BY RALPH CANTY, SR. – CANDIDATE

SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 1

FROM PAGE D11

We must invest in upgrading our facilities to meet the security and safety needs of the education environment. It requires us to provide professional development opportunities to our staff to build relationships and rapport with their students. In addition, we must address the social, academic, physical and mental health needs of our students with wraparound services to remove the barriers to success. As chair of the Policy Committee, it is equally important that we continuously examine and strengthen our policies and student code of conduct to address disciplinary concerns, classroom distributions, physical altercations and bullying incidents.

As a trustee, I know the challenges and concerns of Sumter School District can be addressed through collaborative and professional board-superintendent relations and relationship-building with stakeholders, with a focus on children.

What successes have you seen in Sumter School District that you want to build on?

One of the successes that does not get enough credit is that during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Sumter School District maintained its staff employment without layoffs and greatly contributed to the stability of the local economy. We must continue to focus on investing in human capital to stimulate the local economy and improve the quality of life for those that we employ.

We have also seen much success in the area of education equity, as we have expanded academic programming and opportunities across the district. REACH, Edmentum: Exact Path, Leader in Me, Project Lead The Way, GEAR Up and AVID programs are having a profound impact in the lives of our students and contribute to student success across schools and communities. This school year alone, we are witnessing schools implementing additional opportunities like foreign language

immersion at the elementary level as we equip students to be responsible, successful and productive citizens in a global society.

As a trustee and community stakeholder, I will continue to support our administration and staff who work tirelessly daily toward improving academic achievement, staff growth and morale, and be a champion for every child in Sumter School District and this county.

Do you think Sumter County Council should have funded Sumter School District's recent annual millage increase requests? Why or why not?

I believe that Sumter County Council should fund Sumter School District's annual millage increase requests because our children deserve endless opportunities and access to quality academic programming. Our staff deserve comparable and competitive salaries for the work they do and dedication to our students each and every day. Our communities deserve a better quality of life, to see our local economy grow and improve the perception of our schools. This can only be achieved with adequate funding, in part from our partners and valued stakeholders of Sumter County Council.

While I do understand Sumter County Council's reasonings over the years for not funding the requests, we must stop allowing the actions of adults to impede on the success of children, staff and communities and start holding adults accountable. It is imperative to the success of every citizen in Sumter County that Sumter School District and Sumter County Council truly become Team Sumter. Education and our schools are the cornerstones to our success, driving economic and workforce development, and maintains Shaw Air Force Base and Third Army presence in our community.

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District

police with recruiting video and giving back thousands of dollars to nonprofits and our schools.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

Our board needs to be diverse regarding career experience. I don't have any issues having one or two educators on the board, but having most of the board with the same career background is a recipe for failure. Why, you may ask? While in the Air Force, many teams are purposely made up of a variety of expertise to make us dependent on each other and force us to become a team. The current board has its own way of doing business and are always at odds. Our current district is hurting on recruiting teachers/staff, cannot keep our schools safe/secured and cannot figure out a way to budget.

I spent 10 years and earned multiple awards as a human resource manager/recruiter in the government and private sector. Also, I have six years of experience as a resource adviser, who managed a \$11 million budget, developed government spending plans, purchased \$8 million in security equipment and procured \$37,000 of maintenance contracts. Lastly, I served multiple years as a physical security program superintendent and flight chief, led a diverse 65-person division; managed, supervised and performed law enforcement activities including active shooter situations and the use of deadly force to protect students, personnel and resources worth \$3 billion.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

A. Our children are not learning, and you cannot blame it on the pandemic. I researched SC READY scores from 2016-'22, and the statistics show failure. In 2016, the average of the six grade levels in math was 37.21% and English was 35.21% "Did not meet expectations;" compared to 2022 math was 52.18% and English 41% also "Did not meet expectations."

So, how are students graduating if they don't meet expectations? We need to give our superintendent and the teachers the support needed to retain students until they gain the knowledge. We shouldn't be passing students to the next grade who cannot read, write or understand math. A diploma is not a participation trophy; students need to earn it or be retained and get the time needed to absorb the information.

B. I'm tired of hearing students constantly disrupting the classrooms or fighting daily. It is time to enforce behavior standards and establish automatic minimum mandated corrective disciplinary actions and lessen the discretionary options. I have spoken to teachers who feel they have zero backing from their leadership

school? Please specify (you don't need to give their names).

While I do not have biological children who attend a Sumter School District school, I view every child in Sumter County as my responsibility to ensure they receive the quality education that they are entitled to and deserve. The shared responsibility of educating children is beyond the physical boundaries of Sumter School District and its schools, as the citizens we produce impact the quality of life for all.

Would you change anything about the current attendance rezoning plan across Sumter School District that is scheduled to be implemented next school year?

I understand and hear the community's concerns regarding the proposed change. The attendance areas had not been realigned since the consolidation of districts, and inefficiencies exist across the district in terms of transportation and building utilization. It was important to allow a neutral, independent consultant guide this work to formulate a recommendation on an issue that plagues the district. We could not and cannot address transportation without examining the impact of building utilization. Students currently spend entirely too much time waiting and traveling to and from our school facilities on buses. Our elementary students are exhausted before the day starts, and our middle and high students are missing valuable instruction time in core classes, along with experiencing limited time in the afternoons for academic enrichment. We can change this experience and minimize the concern of disruption as we plan for the implementation in the 2023-24 school year for our children by ensuring our students' assigned schools are within close proximity to their homes and maximize busing efficiencies in transportation of students for staff. In addition, it provides an opportunity to address the transportation worker shortage that we see across the nation.

Are you actively involved in the

community? How so?

I am actively involved in the community and engaged in the lives of our students and staff. While it is important to discuss our involvement in community, it is important that we are actively involved in our students and staff success as a school board and school district. I have participated in "Real Men Read" at Rafting Creek Elementary, served as speaker at Ebenezer Middle for the National Junior Honor Society Induction Ceremony and honored at Sumter High, Kingsbury and Shaw Heights Elementary, respectively, for School Board Appreciation months to name a few.

In addition, I support our students at sporting events and performances and support our staff during professional development opportunities. I believe that the best way to understand the needs of our students and staff is to be actively engaged in our schools through school visits to engage with our students in classrooms and enjoy school lunch occasionally, and hear educator (teachers, paraprofessionals, building service/maintenance, food service and transportation) concerns in real time.

On a personal note, my family calls High Hills AME Church home and enjoys spending time in our community at the Rembert-Rafting Creek and Catchall-Shaw Community Centers. During my leisure, I support my fraternity, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc., and other civic organizations in the county.

Anything else about yourself you want to add?

As a current school board trustee, it has been and will be my continued commitment to ensure quality educational opportunities and outcomes for every student but also that we have good fiscal practices in place to be good stewards of our communities' resources and taxpayer dollars. We must have a neutral presence with a keen focus on putting students, staff and communities first. On Tuesday, Nov. 8, Your vote, your voice ... A proven leader, Brian L. Alston.



DANIEL PALUMBO
(MASTER SERGEANT,
RETIRED, U.S. AIR
FORCE)

What are you running for?

Sumter School District Board of Trustees, Area 1

Why are you running?

I have been living here for almost 10 years, and it has been constant school board drama and students seem defeated and their test scores keep dropping (see latest scores below in Question 8 response). I see students being disrespectful to teachers/peers, disruptive in the classroom, and it seems nobody is doing anything to fix it.

I feel my experiences in my life can be valuable and an asset to the community to assist with from my 20 years of military service/sacrifice, budgeting, discipline, securing facilities and human resource/recruiting background. I have always told my children when something is broken you must sacrifice your own time/money to fix it and to give back to your community or country. I am doing it for our local children and for my own children.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

No, I never had intentions to run for any office. I talk to students, teachers and parents on a daily basis, and it frustrates me observing so many problems in the Sumter school system. All the tools are here to make Sumter schools the greatest school district in the state except a board not willing to make the hard decisions. Over the last four years, I have seen teachers/principals being disrespected by students/parents, parents not caring about their child's education and our students looking defeated. I was taught looking away from a problem is being part of, and even contributing to, the problem.

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

Nine years. My travels around the world do bring a different aspect while serving on the school board.

Current job/profession:

I am a local small business owner for the last four years, who brings joy and happiness to the community. The community asked, why don't we have something for our families? I heard their request, invested in a franchise and bought three crazy trucks/kiosks that serve tropical shaved ice. Our motto is "Be Good, Do Good, For Good." I take this motto to heart by immersing my company in the community, by educating children about operating a food truck business with tours, assisting Sumter

and feel they cannot do anything to keep a good learning environment. It's time to increase the suspension or expel students who routinely cause issues in the schools, rehabilitate them and get them back into the traditional classroom. We cannot keep repeat agitators in the classrooms; it isn't fair to the rest of the class who expect to learn in a proper learning environment. In addition, we need cameras in every classroom to act as a deterrent to negative behavior and use them dual purpose for security threats to the schools.

C. Our teachers need to be concentrating on courses they are assigned to teach and eliminate political messaging in the classroom. We see division in our classrooms because it is constant race/sex questions from math problems to English assignments. We need to ensure Critical Race Theory or any version of indoctrination stays out of the classroom. Our children need to be taught what Dr. Martin Luther King taught us: "One day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but the content of the character."

What successes have you seen in Sumter School District that you want to build on?

I always see a positive even when things look bleak, but the one success is the quality of teachers the district recruits. We recruit few teachers, but the ones we do are very dedicated and genuinely care about our children. We just need to figure out ways to keep them, instead of losing them in two to three years or our veteran teachers to other districts. A simple benefit of allowing young teachers who have children in the district to choose where their child attends school is very meaningful and tells the teacher we care for you and your family. This is a low-cost benefit, so why wouldn't we provide this option?

Do you think Sumter County Council should have funded Sumter School District's recent annual millage increase requests? Why or why not?

No, until we get an independent audit of the budget and a job analysis is conducted in Sumter School District. As a school board member, I want transparency with the public, and still to this day much of the public has zero trust. After the report is published to the public, we can review and look at certain areas to save taxpayer funds or reallocate the funds to other areas that are needed. In addition, after the review of the reports and if additional funds are needed, we should not just petition Sumter County Council without providing benchmarks and a plan. We need to show improvements before we ask for even a penny more.

When we do show improvements, we can get an agreement from the council

for specific increases if necessary to move forward. The people in Sumter need to see an improvement before any more funds get allocated. It is hard to get any community support because of inflation, and the school board has let us down in the past.

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District school? Please specify (you don't need to give their names).

Yes, I have a daughter (freshman) and son (senior) attending Crestwood High School. My senior will be graduating in the top 10% of his class and have an associate degree from USC Sumter. My oldest son is an alumnus of Crestwood High School who also graduated with an associate degree from USC Sumter and will be graduating from Clemson with a Bachelor's Degree in Forestry Management next year. My wife and I are very proud parents.

Would you change anything about the current attendance rezoning plan across Sumter School District that is scheduled to be implemented next school year?

No, we spent money to pay for an expert independent company to provide solutions without emotions. They showed us ways to reduce cost, allow children to attend schools closer to their homes and may reduce class sizes for a better learning environment. We do need to look at some exceptions, and this needs to be case by case.

Ultimately, if I had it my way, parents pay taxes, and I feel they should have school choice. Parents should be allowed to have options, which I believe we will be seeing in the future.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Yes, I sit on the Sumter County Sheriff's Office Community Relations Board for the last three years and have been a coach/mentor for Sumter County Parks and Recreation Department for the last nine years.

Anything else about yourself you want to add?

There are a few people who I look up to who are very significant in my life. Of course, Jesus Christ is my savior, and I look to him for guidance. My wife, who keeps me in check, and provides me different views to situations. Lastly, my mother who, if it were not for her, I would be homeless. She gave her entire life to me and my brothers to ensure we had all the opportunities even when they were very few in the beginning.

I'm not a politician at all, but I'm a father first, and I will do everything I can to ensure our children have a first-class education.

SEE SCHOOL BOARD,
DISTRICT 1, PAGE D13

VOTE REGISTER TO VOTE TODAY BY VISITING
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SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 1

FROM PAGE D12



SHARON TEIGUE

What are you running for?

Sumter School District Board of Trustees, Area 1

Why are you running?

I am running because I have seen, in recent years, a number of good teachers leaving our district to seek employment in other districts; I have seen our student numbers decline, which in my mind signals a lack of trust among parents in our system; and I have seen a disconnect between the district office and the schools to include administration, teachers and staff.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

No

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

31 years

Current job/profession:

I am a recently retired school administrator.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

I have spent 40 years working in education. First, as a teacher (high school and college); then, as an administrator (community education coordinator, director of Sumter County Career Center and, finally, as director of Sumter Adult Education).

During my three years at our career center, I oversaw a \$1 million "facelift" to our center that entailed making upgrades to Culinary Arts, Automotive Technology, Health Sciences and more.

As Adult Education director for 21 years, I led one of the largest Adult Education programs in South Carolina, serving 2,000-plus students annually, and offered classes at more than 20 locations throughout Sumter County. We received numerous state as well as national awards for student achievement (i.e., educational functioning level increases, GED pass rate, diploma attainment and job acquisition and retention) as well as recognition for student and teacher/staff retention. I was also named by the state Department of Education as a regional director, which made me responsible for overseeing and providing technical assistance and training to 11 other counties.

I have also served on several boards.

One, in particular, stands out and is the regional Workforce Development Board. Serving on that board for 20 years allowed me to see the job shortages and trends for our region.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

First, the problem with teachers leaving our district needs to be addressed. Our district website, as of Sept. 7, shows 76 teaching vacancies. That is more than our three neighboring counties combined. Our board has to work together to develop a retention plan that includes incentives to keep good teachers; the board must insist that the various board policies - such as the discipline policy - are being followed and implemented by school administration daily.

New administrators, in their first year, should receive not just training and mentoring but monitoring to ensure their success. Many teachers I have spoken to say that they have no planning time because they are forced to cover classes for other teachers who are not there. This is very wearing on the teachers and does not encourage them to stay. When there is a school with a particularly low retention rate, district personnel need to investigate and find out why.

Secondly, our student numbers have declined. According to Public School Review, our student numbers have gone from 16,915 to 15,586, a decline of 1,329 students. Additionally, we rank below the state average in both reading and math proficiency and, sadly, rank in the bottom half of South Carolina's 82 school districts. We must do better!

That means a genuine plan to get and keep good teachers, and it also means board members understanding that we have a product to sell, and that product is public education. Each board member needs to be an advocate for public schools.

Thirdly, the board needs a plan to ensure that the district office staff is communicating with the "people in the trenches." When a teacher, clerical person, food service person, bus driver or a teaching assistant calls a department at the district office, that call should not be continuously met with "This person's mailbox is full."

Our employees deserve to be a priority. If we make them a priority, keeping them will not be nearly as difficult. In the past several years, we have exerted a tremendous amount of time and resources into

selecting the best person to be superintendent. And, by the way, we should do that to ensure we have great leadership; however, regardless of the district's best intentions, these efforts and resources have not produced, for example, better reading or math scores. Perhaps a similar effort toward hiring and keeping great teachers should be considered?

What successes have you seen in Sumter School District that you want to build on?

I think it was exciting that Alice Drive Middle School was named a nationally certified STEM School. STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) is important at all grade levels including Adult Education.

We must continue at the high school level, in particular, to prepare our students for, not just a four-year degree but for a technical college certification and the workplace. Working in tandem with Central Carolina Technical College to provide more dual-enrollment opportunities would be time and money well spent. I was also pleased when I read about the firefighter course being offered at our career center. The Career and Technology Center offers a number of great opportunities for students to become certified in areas such as auto technology, welding, health science and culinary arts, and we should continue to market and build on this center.

Do you think Sumter County Council should have funded Sumter School District's recent annual millage increase requests? Why or why not?

The county council continues to turn down requests from the school board for a millage increase. This is very unfortunate because a slim majority of council members are sending the message that education is not a priority in Sumter County. Industry and business continually asks the schools to prepare students with the basic skills as well as the soft skills needed to be successful in the workplace. County council needs to work together with the school district and share the goal of student success that our area businesses espouse.

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend Sumter School District school? Please specify (you don't need to give their names).

My children are both adults living out of state, but they did attend Sumter public schools. In fact, my first stop when we ar-

rived in Sumter was to enroll them at Shaw Heights Elementary School, where I served as PTA president for several years.

Would you change anything about the current attendance rezoning plan across Sumter School District that is scheduled to be implemented next school year?

No, for the most part, unfortunately when the decision was made to consolidate the two school districts, we knew that rezoning would occur. I feel the study did a good job of looking at student impact, utilization scores, transportation distance, the feeder pattern and demographic diversity. The study is available on the website. Again, this is very unfortunate, but after reading the study I have to agree with the very difficult decision that was made. I do wonder if it would be possible to have a "grace period" for high schoolers who started in one school to finish at the same school.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Yes, I volunteer with the ombudsman's office through Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments where I am tasked with visiting nursing homes and assisted-living facilities. I also volunteer with the Sumter Opera House and this year took part in The Beach Sweep where groups of volunteers went to various beaches (I was at Lake Murray) and took part in a clean-up.

Also, I serve as the chair of the South Sumter Resource Center Board.

Anything else about yourself you want to add?

One thing I would like to add is that I feel very strongly that having an outstanding public school system is a must. One of the many things that I am so proud of as an American is our public education system. We, in this country, serve every child regardless of race, creed, nationality, gender, sexual orientation or disability. We welcome these children and young adults with open arms and, hopefully, inspire each and every one to reach their full potential.

While we have much work to do in Sumter, it is important to note that we have great, dedicated people working hard to provide the best services they can each and every day. We must stand behind them and give them all the support we can.

It is heartbreaking, in my opinion, to read that our student numbers are down. We should be so thankful for public schools and take pride in the fact that it is available to all of our children.

SUMTER SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 2



J. FRANK BAKER
INCUMBENT

What are you running for?

Sumter School District Board of Trustees, Area 2

Why are you running?

I am running because I have been involved with the public schools of Sumter my entire life. I graduated from the former Hillcrest High and after college, I began my career as a teacher and went on to hold a variety of positions both at the school and district levels. I retired after serving as the Superintendent for 23 years. Because of my many years of experience in education in Sumter and my love and concern for the district and its students, employees, and all the families and stakeholders who are impacted by the public school system, I want to continue to offer my services.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

In 2018, I ran for one of the two at-large seats of the Sumter School District Board of Trustees. I was honored to receive the most votes from among the large slate of candidates who vied for the positions. I am running as an incumbent but because the at-large seats have been eliminated, I am running for Area 2.

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

I have lived in the Pisgah Crossroads area of Sumter County for my entire life. In fact, I live in the same house in which I was born.

Current job/profession:

I am retired from Sumter School District after 44 years of service. I am a farmer and raise cows, goats, chickens, and hogs. I plant and harvest Coastal Bermuda hay and bale it for my cattle. I also have a large garden that my entire family helps to cultivate and use. We enjoy sharing it with others as well.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

My experience and expertise in all aspects of the educational system make me uniquely qualified to serve. I understand the challenges of teachers and school counselors because I served in that capacity for many years. I was over the academic center, housed at USC Sumter, which served gifted students from all of the high schools. At the district level, I wore many different hats including director of personnel and eventually superintendent. I also served many years as an adjunct professor at USC Sumter, teaching a variety of courses in the teacher education curriculum. Because of all this professional experience, I have a rare skill set that includes not only knowledge of positions I held, but also an understanding of special education, sports, fine arts, ROTC, and many other special programs; budgeting; federal issues with Title I funds; policies and procedures related to the State Department of Education; and how funding works with local, state, and federal entities. As a farmer and land owner, I also possess business experience that is needed to be a successful board member.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

As with any school district, Sumter has its challenges. COVID set us back on several levels, and we need to work diligently and quickly to get back on track. I believe we need to get a better handle on discipline. The district has a good discipline code, but we need to insure it is followed consistently as written. Once discipline is addressed, we need to be sure the academic standards are followed and that the students make up the ground lost during the pandemic. We can begin to do this by insuring the integrity of the teachers' instructional time. Finally, we need to do a better job of recruiting and retaining teachers. While there is a definite shortage of teachers and this is a challenge everywhere, Sumter needs to investigate better ways

to attract them to our community. Students cannot learn without qualified teachers in every classroom. These are the top priorities that I see in Sumter School District; however, the Board must not attempt to micromanage our Superintendent. We should ensure that the priorities of the board are incorporated into his goals, and then we must give him

the resources and support needed to accomplish them.

What successes have seen in Sumter School District that you want to build in?

We have done a good job with our technology initiative. We have provided Chromebooks and other devices to the students. Remote learning is what got

us through the pandemic. The professional development that teachers were afforded enabled them to do an admirable job of reaching their students during trying times. Technology is in a constant state of change, and we need to ensure that we keep up

SEE **SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 2**, PAGE D14

VOTE TUESDAY NOV. 8th

A strong voice for real South Carolina values

- ✓ Ralph Norman warned liberals that their reckless, wasteful spending in Congress would cause your gas and grocery prices to skyrocket. He was right!
- ✓ While some Democrats said we should "defund the police," Ralph Norman stood up for law enforcement and says we need to get tough on rising crime.
- ✓ President Biden's border policies have enabled millions to illegally cross our southern border. Ralph Norman says we need to secure the border now!

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Paid for by Ralph Norman for Congress

SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 2 FROM PAGE D13

with the latest in that arena. Also, we have expanded our dual enrollment and early college programs, thus enabling many of our high school students to graduate with an associate's degree or varying number of college credit hours that they may use to get a jump start on their collegiate careers. These programs are tuition free to the students which helps our parents financially. County Council assisted with this funding as well.

Do you think Sumter County Council should have funded Sumter School District's recent annual millage increase requests? Why or why not?

I do not see this as a yes or no question. I understand why county council did not fund our request this year. They are responsible to all of the taxpayers in the county and must be fair to all. We have a healthy fund balance and still have money available from COVID funds. Another thing that some may not understand is that the District gets additional money annually from growth in the county's tax base. In

the past, county council has been very generous in funding the district when we need it, and I believe they will do so again. I think we, as a Board, need to do a better job of asking for what we need and not just what we would like to have. We too have a responsibility to taxpayers, as they are our constituents as well. I think we have a good, collaborative working relationship with council, and they want the school district to be successful just as we do. A strong public school system is a positive thing for the entire county.

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District school? Please specify (you do not need to give their names).

I do not have any children or grandchildren, but all of my family members who live in Sumter County have been educated here. I currently have great nieces and nephews at Alice Drive, Millwood, and Bates.

all students and their families. Creating both public and private partnerships will strengthen the district and the communities it serves.

And finally, I believe it is essential to develop a comprehensive strategy to retain current teachers and recruit and develop additional teaching staff.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

No

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

15 years

Current job/profession:

Facilities director, Alice Drive Baptist Church

What makes you qualified for the seat?

With over 25 years of leadership experience in both the military and fire service, I am able to effectively carry out the goals and objectives of the school district with honor and integrity. I will represent the interests of the entire district and rely on the facts and best available data to make informed decisions and not be swayed by special interest groups. I will seek regular communication between the school board and staff, parents, students and the community to ensure we always keep students first.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

Student academic improvement – provide equitable opportunities and resources for all students; focus on early childhood development and the prevention of academic difficulties and implement programs

Would you change anything about the current attendance rezoning plan across Sumter School District that is scheduled to be implemented next school year?

I served as chair of the committee for the attendance and rezoning plan. We hired an experienced and unbiased consultant who researched and worked diligently on the lines. The public was given lots of opportunities to share their thoughts and give feedback to several different plans. No one likes change when it comes to attendance zones or what school one attends, and I understand that. Although it should have been tackled right away, this is one of reasons the issue had never been addressed after consolidating the former Districts 2 and 17 in 2011. The new plan may not be perfect; we will see how it works. I believe we did the best job we could to make the lines better with the least amount of disruption to students and families. I think it is too soon to say whether any changes are needed, but if there is an issue that we overlooked or did not anticipate for some reason, I would be open to the board revisiting it.

and supports to address achievement gaps between racial, ethnic, ability and other identified groups. (supported by the entire learning community)

Fiscal responsibility – demonstrate fiscal responsibility and align district resources with raising student achievement.

School safety – schools must provide learning environments where students and staff (and parents) feel safe and secure.

What successes have you seen in Sumter School District that you want to build on?

Sumter School District has an excellent high school graduation rate (87%), and I would like to see it work collaboratively with Central Carolina Technical College, USC Sumter, Shaw AFB and local business to develop creative job-training initiatives that will enable local students to move seamlessly from school to the workforce, military or secondary education.

Do you think Sumter County Council should have funded Sumter School District's recent annual millage increase requests? Why or why not?

I do not know the current budget and have not seen the current board's millage request justification.

I believe the Sumter School District must demonstrate a commitment to putting students first and its ability to focus resources and assets on programs that produce measurable results for students before a millage increase is approved.

The superintendent has the overall responsibility for budget preparation (and will submit an annual budget to the board). There should be more transparency regarding how the district's funding is allocated. However, I would support legislation

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

I serve as a deacon, Sunday School teacher, and clerk of my church. I serve on the Sumter Senior Services board. Before my retirement, I was an adjunct professor, served on a variety of boards, and was a member of civic and professional organizations. Since my retirement, I spend more time on my farming business and with school board matters. I also attend many school functions and community events to keep myself busy in the community and to stay aware of the many things happening in the Sumter area.

Anything else about yourself you want to add?

I remain dedicated and committed to public education in Sumter County, and I imagine I will stay that way until the day I die. I have always enjoyed the students, parents, and teachers with which I interact. I believe I still have a lot to give and to would like to continue to share my knowledge and expertise to make Sumter School District the best it can be. I would appreciate the support of those in Area 2 on November 8.

and funding that will improve the educational opportunities and environment for students and staff once the district demonstrates a deeper commitment to student achievement.

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District school? Please specify (you don't need to give their names).

No

Would you change anything about the current attendance rezoning plan across Sumter School District that is scheduled to be implemented next school year?

Staff should have the benefit of school of choice.

The district should continue to evaluate the zoning plan as the community develops and be willing to make changes or additions to it if necessary.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

American Legion, Dalzell Shaw Post 175 Athletic Officer, a part of The American Legion's Youth and Children's programs; South Carolina American Legion Baseball League Director Active member of Alice Drive Baptist Church

Anything else about yourself you want to add?

Graduated Hillcrest High School, 1985 Retired Military – 29 Years Retired Firefighter – 28 years

Brittany English did not submit a Q&A response.



JOHN BOYD WRENN JR.

What are you running for?

Sumter School Board – Area 2

Why are you running?

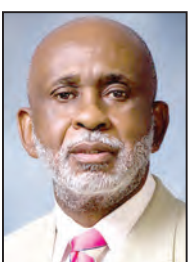
I want to continue to serve the Sumter community as an advocate for all the children in the district. We must put our children first and work together to provide them with the skills necessary to ensure their future success.

I believe it is essential to focus on improving student proficiency – particularly in reading and math. Sumter School District ranks in the bottom half of all districts in the state on reading and math scores and is well below the state average. While our high school graduation rate of 87% is one of the best in South Carolina, we must improve our students' math and reading skills and develop effective school-to-work programs if they are to find future success in the workforce or military.

The school district must demonstrate fiscal responsibility and align district resources with raising student achievement. I will work to ensure adequate resources are distributed equitably to students, staff and schools. It is essential to cut wasteful spending and to focus resources on student achievement. The district must also maximize the use of federal relief funding and evidence-based initiatives such as (intensive in-school tutoring) to help students recover learning loss due to COVID-19.

It is crucial for the school board and the district to encourage strong relationships with parents and the community to support

SUMTER SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 3



RALPH W. CANTY SR.

What are you running for?

Sumter School District Board of Trustees, Area 3

Why are you running?

I am running because I value education and I understand its importance in the lives of and in the health and vitality of our community. In a diverse community where we have private, parochial and charter schools, the need for a "world-class" public school in no less preeminent. We are currently in a "perfect place" to rethink, retool, redirect and rebrand our district and its schools. Whatever the state of affairs, the new superintendent is not responsible. But he can and must be the most critical person in the renewal process.

While the process will be multi-faceted, it should include: A professional academic audit. A self-study of each department and school. The creation of a committee to study, develop and recommend the renewal plan.

I'm convinced I can be a leader and catalyst for infusing these ideas with the ideas of other board members, the administration and community to forge a plan that will launch a new era in education in Sumter.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

Yes, I served in the S.C. House of Representatives and on the school boards for District 17 and Sumter School District.

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

39 years

Current job/profession:

I'm a pastor, funeral director and president of Job's Mortuary Inc. and Sumter Funeral Service.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

My love for the children and the desire

to see each of them succeed and to see this community flourish. As a former member and leader of the board, I crafted the original mission statement, the vision statement, wrote the policy which allowed the public to sit on board committees and led the board in the selection of Penelope Martin-Knox.

Note: Until the current board discontinued the policy, Sumter School District was the lone district in South Carolina which granted committee membership to the public.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

Discipline: Among the concepts I've envisioned to improve discipline includes the creation of a committee to reimagine climate civility. A critical component of that study must include developing a comprehensive plan to execute and administer discipline in an even and equitable manner.

While I agree alternative education shouldn't be a revolving door, punishment may not be the answer in all cases. Some students need support beyond the traditional classroom, alternative education and/or special education. We must be sensitive and creative enough to identify their problems and connect them with the appropriate programs. In some instances, we may need to design programs specific to their needs. Because "a mind is a terrible thing to waste, and we can ill afford to lose one!"

Bus transportation: It's appalling, we have students leaving home pre-dawn in the morning and others returning after six in the evening. Even worse, some students don't arrive at school until their first class has ended and the afternoon students wait hours for long bus rides home. I don't know if the late-arriving students get any assistance or support for the class they have missed. If they don't, that's another contributing factor to poor achievement and poor test scores. The students who wait in the afternoon are idle and restless; who wouldn't be? No planned activities, no structured homework sessions, no study hall, no computer lab open and no after-

noon snacks. What a missed opportunity to inspire and reinforce learning.

The district will need to increase the compensation and incentives for bus drivers, revisit school and bus schedules and reimagine structured programs to accommodate students when less than adequate conditions exist.

Infrastructure: Our infrastructure is aged, crumbling and inadequate. There was a facilities study completed a few years ago, but to my knowledge, there has been no serious and strategic action taken since. There are leaking roofs, broken windows, inadequate bathrooms, deteriorated flooring, malfunctioning and inadequate HVAC systems, etc.

The board and facilities committee must give immediate attention to the faulty conditions which exist and develop a plan to repair where feasible and replace where necessary.

What successes have you seen in Sumter School District that you want to build on?

The district has a number of successes including: the International Baccalaureate program at Sumter High and Bates Middle, mechatronics at the career center, STEM at Alice Drive Middle, foreign language at Lemira and technology and digital learning districtwide. As untimely and unfortunate as COVID-19 has been, our district's leadership with one-on-one technology in every school positioned us to provide a virtual platform for continued learning. I applaud all of these initiatives and others I didn't enumerate. Every success should be developed in intricate detail and replicated throughout the district. One of the distinguishing marks of a district of excellence is its offering of a litany of exciting, informative and innovative courses, programs and projects to the broadest possible range of students on all of our campuses. The International Baccalaureate program most definitely should be at every high school and possibly the middle schools. Constantly, new technological devices and digital learning methods are being introduced, and it is important that we stay on the cutting edge of this trend.



There are perhaps as many new innovative frontiers on the horizon than we have seen to date. The more reason we need to engage all stakeholders in conversations about the future of this district and this community. Mind you, though, the most critical initiatives, at this juncture, must be an intensive remediation program for students recovering from COVID-19 related losses and setbacks.

Do you think Sumter County Council should have funded Sumter School District's recent annual millage increase requests? Why or why not?

I would rather not pass judgment on that decision. As you may recall, the atmosphere was quite volatile, and the circumstances probably required a drastic response. In the main, there should be a relationship between council and the school board, which supersedes the budget negotiations. Council must acknowledge the growth, development and prosperity of the county is linked to the performance and rating of the school system. So, it is good business to invest in the schools. At the moment, it is costing the county more not to support the district than it would cost to support the district. So many military families refuse to be patrons of the system. I'm told, as much as 70% of them now live and/or send their children to schools in Kershaw or Richland counties and many others subscribe to non-public venues in the county. The current situation, by any stretch of the imagination, is bleak but will become dire if Shaw Air Force Base closes. The same is true of industry, whether they choose to come to Sumter or remain may in large measure be determined by the quality of our schools and the workforce they produce.

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District school?

Yes, I have a granddaughter and two great-grandchildren in the system.

SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 3 FROM PAGE D14

Would you change anything about the current attendance rezoning plan across Sumter School District that is scheduled to be implemented next school year?

I am open for further dialogue about

the plan. Unfortunately, I didn't get the opportunity to participate in any of the discussions last year. Here again, the board must work with the community, and if the community wants to engage in further

debate, I'd be for it.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Yes, I'm a member of the ministerial group Citizens for Progress and a fraternity.

Anything else about yourself you want

to add?

I'm a servant with a vision and a willing spirit to help improve our schools and our community. We deserve better, we must insist upon better and must work together to achieve better. There is "a more excellent way," and we must find it.



JOHN B. HILTON JR. (JOHNNY)

What are you running for?

Sumter School District Board of Trustees, Area 3

Why are you running?

I am running for reelection to the Sumter School District Board of Trustees in order to continue to work to provide our students the best opportunities we can for them to gain the skills, knowledge and attitudes they need to be successful, productive citizens of our community. I feel that my work is not done, and I want to continue to be a part of the team that will move our students and our community forward. The last few years have been very difficult. The pandemic has been a challenge, and many of our students have experienced difficulties unlike any they have faced before. However, we must look ahead and work together to see that our students and our community move forward to achieve new goals and new milestones.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain.

Yes, I have been a candidate for the school board twice before in 2014 and 2018 and was elected to office both times.

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

I live at 2691 Wedgefield Road. I grew up at this address as a child. I returned to my home place at this address 18 years ago.

Current job/profession:

Retired educator, part-time farmer, part-time musician, community volunteer

What makes you qualified for the seat?

I have been in public education for 43 years. I was a social studies teacher and assistant principal at Sumter High School. I then served as an assistant principal at Alice Drive Elementary School. After leaving Alice Drive, I worked as the principal of Millwood Elementary School for 25 years. For the past eight years, I have served on the Sumter School District board. I hold a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science,

a Master's Degree in Secondary Social Studies Education and a Ph.D. in Education Administration, all earned from the University of South Carolina.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

A. Decline in student academic achievement. Let me commend our teachers and parents on the heroic efforts made adjusting to virtual school. The loss of in-person instruction time because of the pandemic has had a significant negative impact on student learning. We should respond to this by providing enhanced learning opportunities for our students. ESSER funds, provided by the federal government, can be used for after-school tutoring programs. We must adopt an expectation of excellence for ourselves, our teachers and our students. By working smarter and harder, we can make up the ground we lost.

B. Teacher recruitment and retention. There is a nationwide teacher shortage and likewise a teacher shortage in Sumter. We need to make our district a more attractive place to work. Among our best teachers are those who were homegrown. The Teacher Cadet program should be in place and thriving at our three high schools. The SSD Human Resources department must step up its game. Every teaching application must be given immediate attention when it is received. We must pay our teachers at a rate that is commensurate with those districts that surround us. We should make our teachers feel valued both financially and professionally. Positive reinforcement and appreciation for the important work our teachers do will go a long way toward making them feel valued. We must communicate to teachers that we are ready to turn the tide on student behavior. We must show teachers that we will not tolerate disruptive behavior from students.

C. The way we are responding to inappropriate behavior from students. Students must be held accountable for their actions. When we do not teach our students that inappropriate behavior is hurting them, we do them a disservice. We must model respect for our students and demand that we are given respect in return. Moreover, it is not fair to those students who come to school to learn to have to deal with dis-

ruptions and disrespect that interrupt the instructional process and spread fear and anxiety across the school campus. We must raise our expectations for what is appropriate behavior.

What successes have you seen in Sumter School District that you want to build on?

There are many successes going on daily in our district. Teaching and learning are taking place every day, and there are success stories every day in all our schools. Of particular note are the successes of our STEM programs in some of our elementary and middle schools. We need to expand these STEM programs so that all students in all schools can participate. Our Career and Technology Center students are enjoying successes as well. We need to expand the opportunities provided at our current Career and Technology Center with the construction of a new "Center for Advanced Technical Studies." Many surrounding districts have new centers for advanced technical training, and we need to provide more "high-tech" opportunities for our students as well. We also have outstanding arts and athletics programs in our district. We should enhance these by providing additional funding and focus on our arts and athletics.

Do you think Sumter County Council should have funded Sumter School District's recent annual millage increase requests? Why or why not?

Yes, our funding request should have been granted. Our students deserve to have the funding needed to provide them with the best educational opportunities that are available. Our teachers deserve to be paid on a level that is commensurate with the other school districts in our area. Higher pay will help us attract the best teachers. We should be receiving the maximum amount allowed by law for our schools. Our community deserves for our students to be provided with the learning opportunities and skills they need to help our local economy grow and flourish.

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District school? Please specify (you don't need to give their names).

I have two grown children, John Hilton and Margaret Hilton, who attended the public schools in Sumter and graduated from Sumter High.

Would you change anything about the current attendance rezoning plan across Sumter School District that is scheduled to be implemented next school year?

Yes. The record will show that I voted against the current plan. The realignment plan to change school attendance zones needs significant revisions before it is implemented. The current plan calls for too many students to be moved from their current school to a different school. Consequently, if students are moved, then teachers must be moved as well. The current plan must be changed so that it does not impact so many students and teachers. These drastic changes will have a significant negative effect on student achievement. The realignment process should result in only minor changes and should also be done in phases, a little at a time.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

I am the immediate past president of the Sumter YMCA, where I currently serve on the board; member, past president and past Rotarian of the Year of the Sumter Rotary Club; vice president of finance and serve on the executive committee for the Rotary Coins for Alzheimer's Research Trust (CART Fund); member of the Sumter County Museum's Citizens Advisory Board; member of the Sumter Community Foundation Board; member of the Executive Board of the Sumter INSPIRE! Festival; member, past elder and deacon of First Presbyterian Church.

Anything else about yourself you want to add?

I am a life-long Sumter resident. My roots in Sumter and Sumter's public schools are deep and strong. I have spent my entire adult life working with students, teachers and parents in our public schools. Devoting my career and post-retirement years to supporting our public schools has given me great joy! It would be an honor to serve you again on the Sumter School District Board of Trustees. I humbly ask for your vote on Nov. 8.

SUMTER SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 4



TARAH COUSAR JOHNSON

What are you running for?

Sumter School District Board of Trustees, Area 4

Why are you running?

I am running to make a difference and be the difference I am running because it is time for change. This change includes new perspectives and ideas that help advance the district and benefit the students; it also includes greater transparency from school board members.

I have a history in education as a classroom teacher and assistant principal putting students first and making a difference in their lives. I have a vested interest in helping our students invest in their futures and prepare to live out their dreams.

Our students deserve champions who will put their educational interests first. Our parents deserve leaders who are focused outward on the education and well-being of their children; these things should never be secondary to personal agendas. Our inclusive school community deserves the best of the best leaders and teachers who can productively challenge to move beyond today.

Our greater community and students deserve equity throughout Sumter County schools and ample support staff (counselors, teacher assistants, bus drivers, food services and janitorial). In collaboration, these entities can serve as vehicles to yield a competitive, healthier and safer environment for children to learn.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

I have never run for political office. While I have held varying positions in organizations and groups of which I have been a member, or am currently a mem-

ber, this is my first time seeking a public office that represents a larger population.

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

I was reared in the home where I currently reside. I married and moved away for many years; however, I relocated back within the past two years. Overall, I have physically lived at the address for approximately 35 years.

Current job/profession:

Senior manager, communication and planning excellence / medical sales

What makes you qualified for the seat?

As a candidate, I get really excited, for several reasons when I am asked this question. First, I have a passion for education. My qualifications include my formal education and a strong desire to give back to a profession where I started my career. I was a classroom teacher for 12 years and an assistant principal for two years.

Second, based on experience, I have a clear vision of what is necessary for students and schools to excel. This is critical for any school board member to understand if he/she is to make decisions that always put students first.

Next, I have a burning desire and dream for every child to have an opportunity to receive quality education. This has been at my core of my being from the start. Even as I ventured into the sales profession, I continued to educate, albeit a different audience.

My education experience, coupled with my business experience, is a great recipe for school board leadership. My goals are clear:

- Seek more accountability and transparency
- Serve as a voice for students, parents and community
- Collaborate to bring about a safer and cleaner Sumter School District and community

Simply put, I was reared in Sumter County. I attended schools in Sumter County. I was an educa-

tor in Sumter County. And now, I am back to serve Sumter County.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

Having observed firsthand or from speaking with parents in the community:

- There is a lack of trust and transparency. I would host informational sessions within Area 4, so the community has an opportunity to voice concerns and provide feedback. As much as can be shared, I will keep the community abreast of hot topics and changes that may impact their children. This could be done through small group settings, in-person sessions and/or conference calls.
- Teacher shortage and structured time allocated daily for teacher preparation and planning. Due to a shortage of classroom teachers, some classes are being covered by staff from other departments during their designated preparation and planning time. When this happens, students, teachers and academics are adversely impacted. I would

like to dig deeper into how we can resolve this and understand what we are currently doing to address the teacher shortage in Sumter County schools. To really focus on a plan, more questions will need to be asked and answered.

- Test scores. I briefly reviewed the 2020-21 Sumter School District Academic Achievement Report Card. It shows how Sumter County compares to the state, and even to itself over time. I must admit I felt some disappointment with the results though I am sure many factors played into this. I would set proper expectations knowing that change will not happen overnight. However, to start, we should have the best of the best classroom teachers who receive competitive pay. We must ensure our teachers are receiving meaningful coaching, training and inservices throughout the year to build upon their skill set. And we must also ensure each classroom is staffed with a full-time certified/credentialed instructor for the subject matter or the equivalent. Secondly, there has to be greater collaboration between home and school. We can discuss how

this looks, but I feel as a former educator, one can help encourage this, and the importance thereof, through regular and periodic parental/community engagement. Take a look at overall student performance for Sumter schools:

Note: Additional Achievement results not shown here. For the full report, click into the link below. <https://screportcards.com/overview/?q=eT0yMDIxJnQ9RCZza-WQ9NDMwMTAwMA>

What successes have you seen in Sumter School District that you want to build on?

The successes I have seen and feel we should build upon include keeping school successes, activities and events alive and well published via social media. Let's also continue to build upon the Instructional Curriculum and STEM, vocational education and the arts. I may even challenge that we expand the programs to include more students seeking opportunities.

SEE SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 4, PAGE D16

vote *Sharon*

Teigue

School Board
Area 1

Paid for by Sharon Teigue

SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 4 FROM PAGE D15

Do you think Sumter County Council should have funded Sumter School District's recent annual millage increase requests? Why or why not?

Without key information regarding the district budget and spending, I believe county council should have funded the request. My rationale is in part due to inflation and the fact that everything is more expensive, comparatively speaking.

The greatest concern I have is what will be lost because of this and how will it impact Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and resources that teachers and students need for day-to-day operations. My questions are "How will it impact classroom size and teacher shortage?" "How will it impact auxiliary services, including hiring additional bus drivers?" By not increasing the millage, I also ask, "Does this lead to less spending per student as compared to even the past few years?"

There is more to understand regarding

this matter and its impact, and would require a more in-depth review, including past fiscal management. From there, I will likely be able to definitively say it was a good decision or not so much.

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District school? Please specify (you don't need to give their names).

I do not have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District school; however, I have a nephew for whom I am a guardian.

Would you change anything about the current attendance rezoning plan across Sumter School District that is scheduled to be implemented next school year?

As I contemplate a response to this question, I would like to take more time to study the map and gain greater insight into its implementation. I would need to further

review how new rezoning will impact lives factually, versus in theory. This also bears the questions, "How does equality for all students in the district play into the rezoned areas? How will this look from a test scores/ curriculum perspective? And will all schools be staffed equally?"

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

I serve on the Board of Shiloh Project Lift. This is a program in the northeastern part of the county and held at the Shiloh Community Center. It is designed as an after-school program that helps students beyond the classroom. This may be in the form of homework assistance, field trips, STEM activities and encouraging/nurturing respectful interactions and social skills. The program is dependent upon grants, gifts, donations and limited resources from the school district for operations. These resources are used for space rental, on-site security, stipends for teachers and teacher assistants, one-way bus transportation, materials/

books, snacks and other resources.

Anything else about yourself you want to add?

I am honored and humbled that several citizens in my immediate community, and the greater Sumter community, thought enough of me and my skill set to inquire about my interest as their candidate to run for the Area 4 seat. I am grateful to each. And now that I am all in, with a supportive team, I am committed to doing the best job to yield the best results for our students and greater community.

All students can learn regardless of their innate abilities. This leaves parents, community and the school board with the obligation to remove all or as many obstacles over which we have control for learning to happen. In turn, this should help position our children to thrive, explore limitless possibilities and compete on a global stage.

Now is the time, and I am the candidate for Area 4. I am Tarah Cousar Johnson, and I am ready to serve.



DARYL F. MCGHANEY
INCUMBENT

What are you running for?

Sumter School District Board of Trustees, Area 4

Why are you running?

I am currently serving as the School Board representative for Area 5 and am seeking re-election to continue to serve in the new area, Area 4, resulting from redistricting.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

Yes

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

Since 1999

Current job/profession:

Retired Sumter County Sheriff's Office Detention Center commander and pastor of

Bethany Missionary Baptist Church.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

I am a U.S. citizen and reside in the area in which I am running.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

Challenges — Support proactive measures that will help counteract behavior problems by providing social-emotional learning and other supports, equitable access of resources, programs and teacher retention.

Equitable access — Utilize the policy committee to advocate for an analysis of resource distribution and use results to correct past deficiencies and ensure future equity in future distributions to schools.

Programs — Advocate for our three high schools to offer the same programs, and ensure that elementary and middle schools have equitable access to high-quality resources — to include STEAM and STEM, the arts and music, agriculture/horticulture courses, athletics. Advance technology programs like mechatronics, aeronautics

and to support the concept of establishing a technical high school in Sumter.

What successes have you seen in Sumter School District that you want to build on?

Some of the successes that I would like to build upon are helping to support efforts that ensure thousands of dollars are awarded in scholarships to high school graduates; support efforts to continue a strong partnership with the military community, the LINK Economic Development, faith-based initiatives, Sumter city and county councils and Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments. I would also like to continue emphasis on AP courses afforded to high school seniors from Central Carolina Technical College, USC Sumter and promote collaboration with Morris College.

Do you think Sumter County Council should have funded Sumter School District's recent annual millage increase requests? Why or why not?

Yes, I think Sumter County should have funded the district; however, I understand the difficulty they experience because of the burdens placed on small businesses, rental

properties and properties because of state legislation enacted into law a few years ago.

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District school? Please specify (you don't need to give their names).

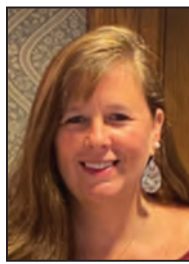
No

Would you change anything about the current attendance rezoning plan across Sumter School District that is scheduled to be implemented next school year?

Yes, I believe the parents have the right to send their children to the school of their choice.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

I have been pastoring for more than 20 years in the Sumter community — providing spiritual growth, mentoring and supporting after-school programs. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed some of my involvement; however, prior to the pandemic, I was active on the COPS Council.



MONICA DINKINS SQUIRES

What are you running for?

Sumter School District Board of Trustees – Area 4

Why are you running?

I have a passion for education in Sumter County. I am a lifelong resident of Sumter County and attended the public school system in Sumter. I also have two sons who graduated from the Sumter County schools who are now very successful adults. I want to focus on providing the students in Sumter with the very best education that will support them as they strive to become successful and productive citizens. I love the Sumter community and want to be part of making the school system the best it can be. I want to be a voice for the students, teachers, parents and all stakeholders in the community.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

Yes. I served as a Sumter School District board member from 2002-2011 serving Area 7. I also served one year on the consolidated school board.

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

I have lived at my current address for 28 years.

Current job/profession:

I have spent the past three years serv-

ing as a full-time caretaker for my husband who was diagnosed with cancer in 2019. He passed away in June, so I feel like I have the time and energy to commit to this position.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

I served on the Sumter District 2 board for nine years and one year after consolidation. I have experience with school board policy and procedures and feel as if we made a great deal of progress when I served on the board.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

Transparency from the board has not been a priority in recent years. I feel the public should be aware of everything that is happening in the district.

I feel teacher retention is a huge issue. Teachers are overworked and do not feel appreciated. We need to find ways to make them feel appreciated for the hard work they do every day to retain quality teachers.

What successes have you seen in Sumter School District that you want to build on?

Sumter School District offers many exceptional programs that allow students to achieve success. The career center, the IB program and dual enrollment are just a few. I would like to see these programs offered to more students in the district.

Do you think Sumter County Council should have funded Sumter School

District's recent annual millage increase requests? Why or why not?

I agree with the Sumter County Council that they should not have funded the recent millage increase request. The district has not been fiscally responsible in recent years and should be responsible for the money they receive prior to asking for a millage increase.

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District school? Please specify (you don't need to give their names).

I do not have children or grandchildren who currently attend a Sumter School District school but have two sons who attended and graduated from Sumter School District schools. One son graduated from Crestwood High School in 2011, and one son graduated from Lakewood High School in 2020. Both are very successful adults thanks to the education they received in Sumter School District schools. One chose to go to college and is currently a successful pastor in a surrounding community, and one chose to immediately take the career route and is now employed with the Department of Transportation.

Would you change anything about the current attendance rezoning plan across Sumter School District that is scheduled to be implemented next school year?

It is my understanding that the rezoning plan has been approved and will go into effect next school year. However, I would be interested to hear from those who will be directly impacted by this de-

cision and what is truly in the best interest of the students of Sumter School District.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

I am very involved in my church. I attend Lewis Chapel United Methodist Church. I serve as the superintendent of the Sunday school area and am very involved with the women's ministry.

Anything else about yourself you want to add?

I am recently widowed after being married to my husband, Terry Squires, for 33 years. He fought a long and hard three-year battle with cancer. We have two sons who successfully attended and graduated from Sumter schools. My oldest graduated from Crestwood High School in 2011, and my youngest graduated from Lakewood High School in 2020. Both are successful and prosperous adults. Champ (my oldest) has cerebral palsy. He successfully completed college and seminary and is now the pastor of three churches in Lee County. The educators and teachers in Sumter School District provided him with the tools he needed to successfully complete college and give back to his community despite his disabilities. Leighton chose a different course and went into the workforce upon graduation. He is currently working for the S.C. Department of Transportation and thriving in the workforce. Neither one of them would be where they are today without the dedication of the Sumter School District administrators and teachers.



LEON WINN

What are you running for?

Sumter School District Board of Trustees, Area 4

Why are you running?

I'm running to bring discipline because no matter how much money you put into a school district, learning will not ensue without discipline. Safety from within and without of the school system and total transparency.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

Yes. Senate District 36 and Congressional District 6

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

20 years

Current job/profession:

Pastor, Rockhill Baptist Church in Manning and Nissan of Sumter

What makes you qualified for the seat?

The qualifications for this seat extend to knowing what is best for the children and how to implement a plan to do just that.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

1. Discipline (To get parents involved with the discipline of their children)
2. Transparency (Make sure the tax payers know exactly how their money is spent)

3. Security (Make sure the schools are totally protected from people reckoning havoc, and to make sure no havoc is being displayed from children within)

What successes have you seen in Sumter School District that you want to build on?

At this stage, I think we need to create some successes.

Do you think Sumter County Council should have funded Sumter School District's recent annual millage increase requests? Why or why not?

No, for two reasons:
1. Mismanagement of funds
2. No matter how much money you put into the school district if there is no discipline, there is no learning

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District school? Please specify (you don't need to give their names).

No.

Would you change anything about the current attendance rezoning plan across Sumter School District that is scheduled to be implemented next school year?

No.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Yes. In every aspect that you can be.

Anything else about yourself you want to add?

I am totally committed to anything I put my mind to. (I never quit, and I never give up.)



The following Constitutional amendment question will appear on ballots in the Nov. 8 general election.

AMENDMENT 1

Must Section 36(A), Article III of the Constitution of this State, relating to the General

Reserve Fund, be amended so as to provide that the General Reserve Fund of five percent of general fund revenue of the latest completed fiscal year must be increased each year by one-half of one percent of the general fund revenue of the latest completed fiscal year until it equals seven percent of such revenues?

EXPLANATION

A 'Yes' vote will increase the amount of money state government must keep in the General Reserve Fund (its "rainy day" fund) from 5% of the previous year's revenue to 7% of the previous year's revenue.

SUMTER SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 5



SHAWN RAGIN
INCUMBENT

What are you running for?

Sumter School Board Area 5

Why are you running?

As a career educator, it is my responsibility to be the voice of the community and most importantly, the voice for our children. In efforts to provide our community with an example of what integrity, honest character and proven leadership looks like, I have decided to offer myself once more to provide a service to our community as a Sumter School District board member. The work to improve our Sumter School District is ongoing, and much is still needed to get accomplished.

My why is our children. I am determined to be the voice that will assist to meet our children's educational needs every day. I believe all of our children deserve a quality education to properly prepare them for the real work ahead. My time and talents as an elected member of the board provides me an opportunity to share my business skillset, classroom experience and life experiences to inspire and impact the lives of all children and our school district as a whole.

As I support my why, I will ensure the work of children and our educators are top priority. Making children first in our decision-making process while strengthening the district's policies is also top priority. There is still a greater need to work closely beside city and county officials, ensuring that our students are college and career ready to succeed in a global society.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

Yes, to be exact in 2012, I ran a successful campaign and was elected Sumter County coroner by the people of Sumter County. A memorable moment and one to never be forgotten by the citizens who participated in the election and decided to vote for a change. I realized the intense hard work to become elected was managed to be overthrown to later discredit the work of citizens who voted for change. This particular event in history provided me a clear resistance to push forward, overcome obstacles and understand how much service is embedded on the inside of me. In November 2018, I was elected to the Sumter School District Board of Trustees as the seat number nine at-large member and have served without any reservation to see improvement in the lives of our school district.

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

As a forever native of the Pinewood Rimini community, I have lived at the address for over 20 years.

Current job/profession:

Currently, I serve as an educator as the founder and head of school at The Ragin Preparatory Christian Academy and Ragin Preparatory Christian Academy Little Lambs Learning Center childcare facility. An independently owned and operated educational establishment.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

My 13 years in education shows my passions and dedication to the education profession alone. My understanding of our district's vision, mission, goals and policies; its current successes, challenges and opportunities; and the educational environment within our community all ensures my qualification to seek re-election and continue to provide a service to the Sumter School District as a school board trustee. My drive to actively participate in professional development opportunities to stay current

with new laws that impact the future of our school district, staff and students. As well as commit my time and energy necessary to be informed and to be an effective leader for my fellow constituents.

In my current role as school board member, my ability to actively participate and engage in our schools, spend time listening to the voice of our community, working closely with the community stakeholders, speaking to the youth and mentoring our children all qualifies me to properly do the work to be an effective member of the Sumter School Board.

Lastly, I must say I understand children. With the privilege to impact the lives of children and their families each day, unequivocally, I carry a strong belief in the value of public education. I, too, have a public K-12 education upbringing and beyond proud of my education from Head Start to high school. This truly ignites the fire inside of me to fight for all children and staff of the great Sumter School District.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

As I continue to serve on the Sumter School District board, many challenges have a tendency to arise and bring upon alarming concerns. I must admit when such instances have occurred, the appropriate response from district leadership is the key to resolving the challenges and concerns at hand.

Board superintendent relationship - As a member of the Sumter School District board, it has always been my desire to develop a working relationship with the individual deemed as the superintendent of schools. To improve and or correct the challenges that may arise, we as a board must always remember the role of a board member and the role of who we have brought to lead our school district.

District facilities - As the current chair of the facilities committee, a current challenge is keeping our buildings and district facilities up to date. With recent studies showing 15 to 20-plus years with no renovations being done in buildings as old as 50 years of age is a sure challenge. Active work and collaborative partnerships joined with the current facilities study done will initiate the work as it relates to improving the quality of our school facilities. This hope will bring upon newly renovated as well as new school facilities for our district.

Individual student achievement while navigating through the season of a pandemic - The learning gaps and inequities that already existed for many students starts to widen by the minute. While this was a challenge for the Sumter School District, it was no doubt the guidance and leadership provided to our staff, students and community to keep us all on the court to success. Taking advantage of the funding allotted will be keep to focus as much as possible on the area of learning gaps.

Staff shortages across the district - While no challenge has been so acute, the operational and staffing challenges that have occurred from the COVID-19 pandemic has brought upon concerns in the classroom. The Sumter School District faced a great challenge and still today, an ongoing challenge to fill vacancies for building service staff, bus drivers, teacher aides, substitute teachers and classroom teachers. Building a career ladder for teachers to pursue, providing opportunities for collaboration and facilitating development and creating a supportive environment that encourages creativity can be key in creating incentives for all staff to stay in the profession and in our Sumter School District.

Good fiscal practices - As a member of the finance committee and chair of the facilities, the work must continue. Maintaining good fiscal responsibilities of the district will be more of a concern and a challenge at this

very point. It clearly noted the work of our past superintendent, with sound fiscal practice, we can compete and offer competitive salaries that will later leverage the playing field to promote qualified teaching staff

What successes have you seen in Sumter School District that you want to build on?

Overall, I have seen a number of improvements needed to drive the Sumter School District to what is to be known as a premier school district in the state of South Carolina. First, a continued leverage to the fund balance to operate effectively allowing an increase in funding supply and provide incentives to support the work of our school district staff. As we reflect on the current fiscal state of the district, make the comparison to where we once were as a district financially; our current position is surely a success and a practice to build on as we provide students with quality instruction and manages to adequately pay quality and capable staff a desired salary for future longevity in our Sumter School District.

Gaining recognition as Purple Star district is a great success this district has worked so profoundly to accomplish. It is important this work continues, as it ensures our military families are supported and a smooth transition is provided to all military families as they transition into the Sumter School District community.

Recognition of student achievement is a must when it comes to the practice of district successes. Summer graduation was a highlight and confidence booster that proved to strengthen the success of student achievement. The summer commencement ceremony provides our high school students a second opportunity expanding on a second chance while allowing another shot to unleash their potential then released to the world as a college- and career-ready individual.

Do you think Sumter County Council should have funded Sumter School District's recent annual millage increase requests? Why or why not?

With similar situations being presented in countless other areas of our state and nation, we as a school district and Sumter community is not at all exempt from challenges of not having the full support of a millage increase from the local county council. Regardless of differences, there is clearly a need to meet with county council on a regular schedule where a working relationship is well established and the needs of our school district are at the forefront to ensure the needs of our children and staff members are met and top priority.

I believe 2021 mileage increase was a step in the right direction. While with high hopes and great expectations for the future of the Sumter School District, a new approach and relationship is developed to ensure the millage increase for our children is not a constant denial when requested.

I cannot express enough how important this funding need is for the children of Sumter School District. We must stop and assess the needs of our children and staff first when making the final decision to consider a millage increase. In order to properly utilize this source of funding, the district will have to receive the proper amount of mileage needed so that the Sumter School District is equally competitive with local district salaries and work to assist increase in the cost of living for our staff such as our teachers, administrators, teacher assistance, food service staff, bus drivers and building service staff. Allowing a way to provide better opportunities for staff, children and our district as a whole.

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District school? Please specify (you don't need to give their names).

students a list of supplies before coming to school at the beginning of the school year, my recommendation would be to bring back instructional fees. Maybe \$25 per child. This way it is not a strain on parents to supply teachers with classroom supplies.

Bus routing. There is a growing number of latchkey kids due to working parents. I would suggest rerouting the buses and school dismissal time so that high school students would get home first to meet and care for their younger siblings until their parents get home.

What successes have you seen in Sumter School District that you want to build on?

I would love to expand the STEM program so that Sumter School District students are walking away with highly recognized certifications that can be used in the real world, making them more marketable for jobs regardless of where they live and are able to compete with real world experience.

Do you think Sumter County Council should have funded Sumter School District's recent annual millage increase requests? Why or why not?

While I do not have children nor grandchildren of my own, I do have quite a few family members who attend the Sumter School District. I view every individual child attached to our school district to be considered my responsibility.

Would you change anything about the current attendance rezoning plan across Sumter School District that is scheduled to be implemented next school year?

The attendance areas have not been realigned since the consolidation took place, and inefficiencies exist across the current district in terms of transportation and building utilization. The primary objective is to examine the district's attendance areas at all three grade levels, our elementary, middle and high schools, with a focus on establishing a feeder system that best meets the needs of ALL students in the county.

With a positive outlook, there are benefits for our children, and from a fiscal aspect, a cost saving would be ideal if done correctly. The work at the end of the day is necessary because all the work we do should support the work of all of our children. The data shows that there is a need to continue the steps to complete this work. I strongly believe we will continue to engage our stakeholder and community partners as best we possibly can.

As a district, we continue the work to ensure the process is smooth for all. In doing so, we must choose the path that is least disruptive to our children. As we review the realignment criteria set before us, the need for us to streamline transportation to ensure our children arrive in a timely manner and in the safest manner possible, address the imbalances in the utilization of schools with some schools being over-utilized and others being under-utilized.

The ultimate goal should be to ensure we as a board work closely with the superintendent to ensure our children get to school on time to avoid any interruptions to the learning environment of our schools.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Yes, I am actively involved each and every day. My time and attention are geared toward serving my community as a whole. My dedication to wanting to see better in the lives of our community and in the lives of others.

It is essential for me as a current member of the board I continue to work and have conversations with district stakeholders and all county and city officials. My community involvement never ends. I currently serve as a member of the school district finance committee, chair the facilities committees and participate on numerous school and local community committees to strengthen our Sumter community as a whole.

Anything else about yourself you want to add?

I am committed each day to placing our students and the staff who work so diligently at the forefront of the important work and the agenda to ensure educational needs are met and equally addressed. I am committed to taking a stand against all biasedness and assist to provide equitable opportunities for every student. I believe a strong lasting school governance is creating a mature relationship with the public. As an effective trustee for Sumter School District, I respect the Sumter community. I encourage this community's trust in our district opportunity to expand, improve and develop global citizens of the future. I have always believed the Sumter School District has the ability to be a premier model district for others in South Carolina and beyond.

I have no comment.

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District school? Please specify (you don't need to give their names).

Both my children and grandchildren attended Sumter School District. They have all graduated at this point.

Would you change anything about the current attendance rezoning plan across Sumter School District that is scheduled to be implemented next school year?

No. I would not change anything about the rezoning plan as long as all children are served equally once implemented.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Yes. I am actively involved in the community. I am a part of the NAACP, and I volunteer to help agencies feed children during the summer.

Anything else about yourself you want to add?

Vote Mary Singleton for Sumter School Board, Area 5



MARY F. SINGLETON

What are you running for?

Sumter School Board, District 5

Why are you running?

I am running to represent District 5 because I feel that it is an underserved area when it comes to education. With my representation, I am hoping to magnify what is needed to ensure that no child is left behind.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

I have never run for political office.

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

I was born and raised in Sumter at this address. I went to school from this address, and I have been living at this address for the past 16 years.

Current job/profession:

I am retired from the Massachusetts Transportation Authority.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

I have lived in District 5 for most of my life. I am very familiar with this area and the people in this area. I am an active member of the community. I was also educated in the public schools assigned to this area. My children and grandchildren attended school in this area as well. I feel that I am best qualified to run for District 5 because I know the area.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

Sumter school ranking. According to U.S. News, Sumter High School ranks 166 of 221 high schools within S.C. This means that we are at the bottom. High school is the transition for students to go into the working world and/or attend college. We must ensure that our students are armed and ready for either. I intend to improve Sumter School District by recommending placing more emphasis on trade skills within STEM fields. In other words, our students can graduate with technology and/ medical certifications that are accepted and recognized worldwide. Instructional fees. Instead of giving the

of the vote plus one vote, the top two vote-getters will move on to a runoff. This applies to every race on the ballot, whether they are partisan or nonpartisan.

Sumter City Council and Sumter School Board races are nonpartisan.

Sumter City Council and Sumter School Board races are nonpartisan.



WHEN IS A RUNOFF NEEDED?

For races with more than two candidates, someone must get more than 50% of the vote to win outright. If no one earns 50%

of the vote plus one vote, the top two vote-getters will move on to a runoff. This applies to every race on the ballot, whether they are partisan or nonpartisan.

Sumter City Council and Sumter School Board races are nonpartisan.

SUMTER SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 6



MATTHEW "MAC" MCLEOD
INCUMBENT

What are you running for?

Sumter School District Board of Trustees, Area 6

Why are you running?

I want to help improve the education system and learning opportunities for our students.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

I have run for school board, and I am currently on the school board.

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

16 years

Current job/profession:
School teacher

What makes you qualified for the seat?
I meet all of the state qualifications.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

One of the main issues we have is discipline problems.

We have hired a new superintendent who recognizes and is working on these issues.

Securing funding to give employees much-deserved raises.

Work with our local and state government to help fund our district.

What successes have you seen in Sumter School District that you want to build on?

Budget improvements and graduation

rates.

Do you think Sumter County Council should have funded Sumter School District's recent annual millage increase requests? Why or why not?

I think we should support one another across our county in order to educate our children and to provide for a better future for Sumter.

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District school? Please specify (you don't need to give their names).

Yes, I have a grandson attending our schools.

Would you change anything about the current attendance rezoning plan across Sumter School District that is scheduled to be implemented next school year?

Yes, I would allow district employees to

have a choice of their child's school.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Sumter School District Board member
Member of Sumter Shag Club

Anything else about yourself you want to add?

I attended Willow Drive Elementary, Alice Drive Middle and graduated from Furman High School. My wife and children attended our public schools and now have a grandchild attending our public schools. I have coached and mentored students in our district. Served on the School Improvement Council of Lakewood High School. Served as president of the Lakewood Booster Club. I am a small business owner as well as a high school teacher at Thomas Sumter Academy. Was youth leader for a church in the community.



VENITIA REEBEL

What are you running for?

School School District Board of Trustees, Area 6

Why are you running?

The reason I

am running is because I believe in a high-quality education for all, with academics and especially history being taught at the center. We need to get back to the foundational structures of school, including: reading, science, arithmetic, and of course, history. And when we teach history, we need to go back to the facts, and nothing less. Teaching should be about the academics and creating well-educated and well-rounded citizens. As well as getting social indoctrination, such as SEL, out of the classroom.

We also need transparency. That means getting the parents, and the taxpayer, back into the discussion, and making the information freely available and easy to access. Be it online, or otherwise.

As a mom of a 16-year-old son and a teacher for over a decade, I know how influential and important the role of the parent is and how the parent is primary in the role of teaching. The teacher's role is to come alongside the parents in the journey of bettering our youth. Always considering the parent and the children they teach.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

No, I have not run for political office before.

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

From 2004-2009, then 2019 to present

Current job/profession:

Private Christian school, not in Sumter County. Social studies teacher.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

- Over a decade in the private sector, teaching.
- I have taught preschool to 12th grade, including dual-enrollment classes
- PTO Executive Board member at Bannockburn Christian Academy as Parliamentarian, in Austin, Texas, for two years dealing with budgets and fundraising
- Bannockburn Christian Academy Fall Festival Event Chair (2014)
- I hold a BA in Liberal Studies from the University of South Carolina and an MA in History from Texas State University, so education is important to me as an individual

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

Safety in school: In order to keep our schools' campuses safe for our students to learn, I would suggest hiring veterans for additional security on the grounds and in all of the buildings. In addition to installing webcams all over the campus, I would make sure they have metal detectors at all major entrances.

Education: A rigorous academic edu-

cation, emphasizing critical thinking skills, morals and virtues being at the center, and with a Classical type of learning environment.

Patriotism: We need unity. What brings us together is love of country and what it means to be a good citizen. Students should be taught a strong civics course before they exit the school. Just as someone who has migrated here from other nations, they should know and understand what it means to be a citizen of the United States.

What successes have you seen in Sumter School District that you want to build on?

I would like to see more charter and STEAM schools, as Trevor Ivey has initiated. More schools like these would better serve our communities and foster competition, which would continue to create a better education for all.

Do you think Sumter County Council should have funded Sumter School District's recent annual millage increase requests? Why or why not?

No, more money will not solve the core issues; however, accountability and a line-by-line review of how funds are being used is absolutely necessary.

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District school? Please specify (you don't need to give their names).

No, but I do have family that does. As a community, I believe that we should all be responsible for all of the children who

make up America's future.

Would you change anything about the current attendance rezoning plan across Sumter School District that is scheduled to be implemented next school year?

As long as parents are given enough time to decide where their children are going and have voiced their concerns, I have no problem with the changes.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

I am a member of Alice Drive Baptist Church, Moms for Liberty – Sumter Chapter, as well as the Sumter County Republican Party

Anything else about yourself you want to add?

Colossians 2:2-3 states, "2 that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

This is my hope for our students, that they will begin to foster a love for learning and will learn to love all subjects they are taught, as well as be in an environment that delights ultimately in their learning. That they would be encouraged to understand that we are all interwoven together. Last, they will be encouraged to further their pursuits and know that there is a purpose to it all.



ROBBY ROBINSON

What are you running for?

Sumter School District Board of Trustees, Area 6

Why are you running?

A change is needed in our school board with more transparency and accountability to the parents. As well as security in our schools for and from the children in them. We need to make sure our children are learning the correct things in school, age appropriate and not teachers' ideology.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

No

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

20 years

Current job/profession:

Retired

What makes you qualified for the seat?

Father of four, two graduated from the Sumter School District, all four are raising families on their own. Grandfather of seven with three currently in the school district. Small business owner for over 15 years with 10 years in our community. Sat on Advisory Council for the Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club for five years and for Sumter Senior Services for three years.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

Transparency - Making the board more responsive to the public.

Safety - Ensuring we put into place policies to make our children, teachers, employees and schools safer from outside threats as well as those in the classroom.

What successes have you seen in Sumter School District that you want to build on?

The welcoming of our military families. Helping arriving families choose Sumter schools for their children to attend.

Do you think Sumter County Council should have funded Sumter School District's recent annual millage increase requests? Why or why not?

No, this school board has not shown it can be fiscally responsible, and their transparency to the public is lacking.

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District school? Please specify (you don't need

to give their names).

Three grandchildren, one is moving so it will be two soon.

Would you change anything about the current attendance rezoning plan across Sumter School District that is scheduled to be implemented next school year?

No, not currently.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Yes. By helping our elected officials know what is needed in the areas of our community they represent.

Anything else about yourself you want to add?

As an individual that wants what is best for our children, our community and that transparency is a must, I believe I am the best candidate for Sumter School District 6.

SUMTER SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 7



DR. GLORIA ROSE LEE
INCUMBENT

What are you running for?

Sumter School District Board of Trustees, Area 7

Why are you running?

After serving two years as a member of the Sumter School District Board of Trustees for Area 6, I would like to continue offering my talents while collaborating with the other board members. I value the opportunity to share my professional and life experiences to benefit my community and ensure that others have a voice in making educational and sound decisions for the children. I have an interest in preserving and improving the quality of Sumter School District. I would love to assist with the fiscal health of the district and provide input of where voters' and taxpayers' money is spent. I believe in quality public education for current and future students.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

Yes, I ran to promote, support, be a voice and enhance a fundamentally sound educational system for all children in Sum-

ter School District.

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

28 years

Current job/profession:

Program coordinator, Division of Program, Reentry and Rehabilitative Services, Lee Correctional Institution, South Carolina Department of Corrections

I work hand in hand with Lee Correctional Education Department, responsible for all core programs at the facility, and help individuals with volunteers to provide tools for inmates being released.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

After serving two years previously on Sumter school board, I have been involved in numerous leadership training opportunities provided by South Carolina School Board Association and maintain dialogue with the superintendent as well as the board members. I am a member of the Policy committee, get along well with others, love children and making sound decisions for the good of Sumter School District and the community. As a minister over faith-based community outreach, I have helped many children and parents with counseling and educational support, as well as encourage students to place

their dreams on paper.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

Funding – Work with Sumter School District financial staff and the Sumter School Board in identifying potential funding sources.

Bullying - Review resources for Anti-Bullying Program, provide bullying prevention awareness training for school personnel, parents, volunteers and students.

Parent involvement - Community collaboration between the school and parents as well as develop partnerships with neighboring businesses and organizations to provide services to the community. Parents want to be involved in important school decisions. Schools need to encourage the opportunity for conducting surveys, PTO meetings and community discussion to find solutions to parental involvement.

What successes have you seen in Sumter School District that you want to build on?

Sumter School District has done very well with infusing 21st-century teaching by emphasizing STEM, technology and digital libraries. Students have access to foreign language in kindergarten – grade 5, fine arts, Career and Technology Center,

International Baccalaureate program, gifted and talented and numerous other programs. Our schools and staff have earned numerous prestigious recognitions. The district strives to promote excellent successful students and is committed to its mission.

Do you think Sumter County Council should have funded Sumter School District's recent annual millage increase requests? Why or why not?

Yes, most definitely because one of the responsibilities of county council is to support public education so that there will be a highly skilled and technically trained workforce to attract business and industries to pay above-average salaries. It also would have afforded the district the opportunity to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers and pay them the salary at or above our surrounding districts.

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District school? Please specify (you don't need to give their names).

No, I have two adult children, both of whom graduated from Sumter School District, and I have two grandsons, and one is

SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 7

FROM PAGE D18

attending public school in S.C.

Would you change anything about the current attendance rezoning plan across Sumter School District that is scheduled to be implemented next school year?

If there's a proven, sound need to revise the rezoning plan, I would be willing to collaborate with the board to study and

review new recommendations for the good of children.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Yes, I am actively involved in the community. I am the chaplain of the South Sumter COP (Community Organization Programs) and have been a member for

20-plus years. Our organization provides back-to-school supplies twice a year, assists with community cleanup and provides aid to community businesses and programs.

I am the assistant financial clerk and youth pageant coordinator for Lincoln High School Preservation Alumni Association.

I am a member of the State Employee Association, Correctional Peace Office Association of the South Carolina Correctional Association, International Critical

Incident Stress Foundation and Core Motivational Entering Back into Society.

I am a minister, member of the Sumter Woman Ministry and member of the Morris College Sumter and National Alumni Association, life member.

Anything else about yourself you want to add?

I solicit your vote on Nov. 8, 2022.



SHERY SMITH

What are you running for?

Sumter School District Board of Trustees, Area 7

Why are you running?

I want to bring accountability, transparency and common sense to the school board. The school board must be accountable to the children, their parents and the taxpayers for all of their decisions. The processes by which these decisions are reached should be totally transparent to the public, as allowed by law. All decisions need to be filtered through the lens of common sense. It has become clear that the focus of the board has not been on the best interest of the children. Common sense, with a focus on the total well being of the child, has to return to the Sumter School District.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

No

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

26 years

Current job/profession:

Legal assistant, specializing in immigration law

What makes you qualified for the seat?

I previously served on the Sumter school board during the transition from divided districts to a unified district. I was appointed to that position by the legislative delegation and the governor because of the unique skill set I could bring to such a huge endeavor. My experience in corporate troubleshooting proved invaluable through the transition.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

The board is too detached from the classrooms. I want to see the board more active in curriculum oversight. I would also like more accountability for what is happening in the classrooms. Core curriculum is vital, with more emphasis on making sure a student is following the path that is suited to their talents.

Discipline is practically nonexistent in our schools. There are no real consequences for bad behavior. We need to return control of the classroom back to the teachers, not the students. This can be accomplished through clear conduct requirements and corresponding consequences that are clear and equally applied.

There has been too much laxity in

budget oversight. There needs to be a line-item review of the budget. We need to use the taxpayers' money in the most efficient way possible. That includes making sure the district is not top heavy. That means making sure there is more money in the classroom, even if it means less money in the district office.

What successes have you seen in Sumter School District that you want to build on?

The district has made great plans to connect students with technical education and local industry. But the follow through is lacking. We need to start evaluating students' aptitudes at a younger age and targeting their classes and curriculum accordingly. Having technical education available is pointless if students are not provided a pathway to access.

Do you think Sumter County Council should have funded Sumter School District's recent annual millage increase requests? Why or why not?

No. The school district is provided with sufficient funds to provide a great education to the students. It is just not being managed correctly. That is why we need a line-item review of the budget.

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District

school? Please specify (you don't need to give their names).

No

Would you change anything about the current attendance rezoning plan across Sumter School District that is scheduled to be implemented next school year?

The rezoning should not require students to spend so much time on a school bus. That is a waste of time and resources. We need to be more creative in how students are placed in schools, including parental involvement and which school will provide the best education for each child.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Yes. I am active in church and currently serve on the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging. I am also working with various agencies and government officials to improve the quality of life and medical care for our veterans.

Anything else about yourself you want to add?

It is hard to quantify the contribution to our community that I believe I can make through service on our school board. I have cross-functional experience in health care as well as corporate and legal entities that would bring a multi-faceted pool of knowledge to the board.

SUMTER SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 8



PHIL LEVENTIS

What are you running for?

Sumter School District Board of Trustees, Area 8

Why are you running?

My wife and I have lived in Sumter for almost 50 years. The most important challenge for our community, the only way we can continue to grow and prosper, is to make our Sumter public schools our top priority.

Think about it. Every business, industry, military unit, public service, in fact, any endeavor can't be successful unless there are well-educated people to staff them. The majority of the people whose efforts will shape Sumter's future are public school graduates. I have worked on industrial and commercial development, military relations, support of government and nonprofits. After much thought and counsel with many people across our community, it is clear to me that the most productive and constructive thing I can do would be to give my time, energy and experience supporting teachers and staff and promoting progress for students and their parents. Nothing would be more gratifying than being a part of helping provide our children a great education in a safe, secure and happy environment. My goal is now and would be working with other board members and staff, listening to our teachers and parents and serving as an advocate for our students in our Sumter public schools.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

I proudly served as your state senator representing Sumter and surrounding counties from 1980 through 2012. I ran for lieutenant governor in 2002. Before I was elected to office, I was appointed to the Sumter Airport Commission. After I left office, I served a term on the Sumter Housing Authority Board. I was a commissioned officer in the Air Force and Air National Guard for almost 30 years. These were not political offices; in fact, the military is apolitical. However, these were experiences that are leadership building for service in everything I do.

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

31 years

Current job/profession:

I am retired from the U.S. Air Force/S.C. Air National Guard, several business inter-

ests and the S.C. Senate.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

We moved to Sumter in 1974. Since then, I have been involved in several businesses including wholesale distribution, aviation maintenance, banking and real estate. I have created and taught two courses at USC in Columbia. While I realize this is far different from what our public-school teachers do every day, it did give me an appreciation for just how much work is involved in presentations to students and what a huge responsibility it is. We have been active in church, civic and school activities. We educated our four children in Sumter public schools. I believe I have actually been in every public-school building, most private and church school buildings and visited with many homeschool groups throughout Sumter. I have the time to serve and an intense desire to build a brighter future for students, teachers and parents in Sumter.

The young are strong; however, old folks can show the way. I would be the oldest board member and proud to serve. Serving on the board is certainly an honor; however, I view it much more as a huge responsibility. I'm committed to the challenge. I am committed to a brighter future for Sumter through even greater success in our schools.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

In order to move forward on anything we want to happen in the district, first there has to be order, decorum, civility and respect among the students. Respect for the teachers, respect for their families and most importantly, respect for themselves. This must be fostered by the teachers and staff with the teachers supported by the administration up to and including the school board. Without a better environment in schools, effective learning is extremely difficult. We have to develop a vision for the district that includes concepts for recruiting more teachers and appreciating teachers we already have. And yes, that means more pay. Even more significantly, more listening to and respecting teachers. Teachers and administrators are leaving. I believe, if we can improve decorum and order, listen to our professional staff and stand behind them, there are teachers and administrators we could win back. Sumter schools would be better.

What successes have you seen in Sumter School District that you want to build on?

Everywhere you look in our county, indeed across our country, you see great things being done by graduates of the

Sumter School District. You can point to the International Baccalaureate program, the Early College program coordinated with USC Sumter or the Dual College Credit program coordinated with Central Carolina Technical College as great successes for the district offering wonderful opportunities for our students. Read the profiles of the school and district teachers of the year, and you will be impressed with their successes for students. Read in The Item about the wonderful program at Lemira Elementary School where students are being offered Spanish. The students and parents love it. The successes the district builds on every day, however, happen at the individual student level. These successes, however, are because teachers help individual students prepare for college and receive scholarships. The real successes are when teachers prepare individual students for careers so they can walk out the school door into a productive job leading to a meaningful career. Or when a special-needs child makes progress toward independent living and a more rewarding life. Now those are the successes that change lives.

Do you think Sumter County Council should have funded Sumter School District's recent annual millage increase requests? Why or why not?

The county council is an independent elected body. They make decisions based on the presentation made by the district and the confidence council has in the district. The district needs to earn respect and confidence to win support of council. Part of this could have been the public advisory committee established to help the board examine its financial plan and execution. The fact that this committee was dismissed may have contributed to a lack of confidence by council. I can't speak for council; however, I can, as a member of the board, work to rebuild trust and a working relationship with council. I can and will advocate for an advisory committee to help the board with input and suggestions on our fiscal plans and actions. There was a citizens committee to assist with curriculum, which was eliminated. How did council receive these moves to "close off" public input from some very capable and competent citizens? I can't imagine council thought the eliminations were good. As a private citizen, I certainly did not. I will work for more transparency and inclusiveness. I will try to build a team using all of Sumter to make the district more productive.

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District school? Please specify (you don't need

to give their names).

Our children attended public schools in Sumter from first through 12th grade, graduating from SHS in 1991, 1993, 1996 and 1999. Each was prepared well for life which included post-secondary learning. My wife and I have grandnephews currently attending Sumter schools. Most significantly, we had a niece who taught in elementary school while she was living with us. I will always remember what incredibly demanding work that was for her. I saw firsthand what a huge responsibility she had. It brought me and my wife a better understanding of the respect teachers and staff earn and deserve.

Would you change anything about the current attendance rezoning plan across Sumter School District that is scheduled to be implemented next school year?

I believe I can ask significant questions as a member of the board. On this issue, I would ask. 1. Describe the problem with the attendance zones. 2. What are the least changes we could make to solve the problems? 3. Will we create unintended consequences? Has that issue been examined? These are some important facts that need to be determined to see if any change, small change or sweeping change is necessary.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Our family continues to be members of important activities in our community such as the Little Theatre, the Sumter County Art Museum, Rotary, the Cotton Museum and the Chamber of Commerce. I am a member of Daedalians, a fellowship for military aviators. My wife and I are long-time members of the Church of the Holy Comforter.

Anything else about yourself you want to add?

My greatest role in life has been as a son, a brother, a husband, father and grandfather. Our intense involvement helping our children through school and to mature is a life experience we will always treasure. Now we are enjoying helping our children guide their children through school just as our parents helped us.

I can think of nothing more gratifying than being a part of helping provide our children of Sumter County – our next generation and beyond – a great education so they become productive adults in our community. Or as the Army's slogan once stated, so we can empower all of our students to "be all you can be". Our community will be better when we can help each student in the district "be all they can be."



SHERRIL RAY
INCUMBENT

What are you running for?

Sumter School District Board of Trustees, Area 8

Why are you running?

When I was elected to the board

four years ago, I wanted to improve the public image of the school district and the board. I have advocated for transparency and supported eliminating executive sessions during committee meetings and limiting board executive sessions to what can legally be discussed. Many positive things going on in the district are overshadowed

by problems, such as discipline, class sizes, transportation and finances. Over the past four years that I have served, the board has made some progress addressing these problems, and I would like to continue to be a part of that process.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

I was elected to the Sumter school board four years ago. That was my first time running for political office.

SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 8

FROM PAGE D19

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

I have lived at my current address for 26 years.

Current job/profession:

I am a retired educator. I serve as the organist for Grace Baptist Church and teach piano and organ lessons.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

As an educator, I served as an English teacher, an assistant principal and principal of Furman Middle and Lakewood High. My experience as an educator gives me the knowledge and insight that is valuable as the board works with the superintendent to determine the direction of the school district. Before I retired, I served as the district disciplinary hearing officer, which gave me additional expertise in managing school discipline and understanding board policies and procedures. Serving on the board the past four years has given me even more insight to enable me to effectively serve the district.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

A major concern is discipline. The Code of Conduct needs to be reviewed, and the board needs to ensure that administrators enforce the code and administer discipline consistently throughout the district. Another concern is instruction, which needs to be evaluated to address the learning loss that happened during the pandemic shutdown. Principals must be the instructional leaders and monitor classroom teaching to ensure students are receiving the best instruction that can be delivered. Another problem that affects instruction is the teacher shortage. Our district must find ways to attract and retain teachers. Respecting teachers as professionals and creating good working conditions are important. Also providing salaries for all staff that are competitive with the surrounding districts will help with all of the staff shortages.

What successes have you seen in Sumter School District that you want to build on?

One of the main functions of a school board is to hire a superintendent who can effectively lead the district. The current board hired a new superintendent who has a vision for our district, and I am

confident he will focus on areas that need improvement. I will work with the other board members to develop an effective working relationship with him so that we can accomplish our goals. Our financial situation has improved due to budget cuts and, unfortunately, not hiring all the positions that were in the budget. We need to continue to work on funding and building public trust in our fiscal management.

Do you think Sumter County Council should have funded Sumter School District's recent annual millage increase requests? Why or why not?

Yes, the district needs to receive funds to operate more effectively. Educating the young people in our county is an investment in the future. The district staff salaries are lower than those in the surrounding school districts. We have cut positions that need to be reinstated. To get the results that are desired, county council needs to fund the district at the highest level possible.

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District school? Please specify (you don't need to give their names).

My three sons all graduated from Sumter public schools. I do not currently have any children or grandchildren attending

Sumter School District schools.

Would you change anything about the current attendance rezoning plan across Sumter School District that is scheduled to be implemented next school year?

The board needs to review the plan submitted by the consultant and ensure that the plan sends students to the closest school possible and that neighborhoods are not divided. A carefully constructed implementation plan for rezoning that is least disruptive to our students needs to be constructed along with a timeline to complete the rezoning process.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

I serve as a donor ambassador for the American Red Cross at blood drives throughout Sumter. I lead one of the groups at my church that works with United Ministries to provide meals for the homeless. I am a member of the Mayor's Compassionate City Committee.

Anything else about yourself you want to add?

I consider it a privilege to serve on the Sumter school board and work to improve our educational system. I will continue to be an advocate for all students.



PAUL E. ROBBINS

What are you running for?

Sumter School District Board of Trustees, Area 8

Why are you running?

I am running for Sumter school board as a concerned citizen and as a parent of a Sumter High School alum (class of 2021), looking to help prepare the current and future students of Sumter schools for life after high school. This could be a career in the workforce (directly or indirectly through a technical or career center school), a career in the armed forces or continuing their education through either a two-year or four-year school. We as parent(s), district office, principals, teachers, school board and community need to prepare our students for the future. As a school board, we need to be prepared to adapt to the changes and make decisions quickly to keep our students ready for the future.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

No. This will be the first time running for an elected position.

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

My family and I moved to Sumter in June 2012 and have lived on Sparkleberry Lane since moving to Sumter.

Current job/profession:

I am the market executive/vice president of The Citizens Bank branch in Sumter. I have been in the banking/financial sector for the last 30 years after graduating with a Bachelor's in Accounting.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

I believe I am a qualified candidate for the Sumter school board due to the following: my work experience as a business/commercial banker in managing

relationships, underwriting cash flow financial needs of businesses/organizations in order to better understand strengths and weaknesses, knowing when to say yes and when to say no, my experience as a board member of past and present boards. Being able to make changes and decisions on programs, personnel and finances that in the short term may be tough but in the long term have a beneficial outcome. I believe an asset that I have is the ability to work with other members of the board, through keeping an open mind and communication to the vision of the organization even though we may not all agree with each other.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

As with any organization, nothing is perfect, and there is always room for improvements. This is also true with Sumter School District. There are many challenges Sumter School District has that students, parents, teachers, administration, Shaw Air Force Base and community have voiced. Not all can be fixed at once, nor can it be done overnight. As a candidate, I want to see us go back to the basics of ABCs and 123s.

A is for Accountability (and Discipline). This is a two-way street. Within the schools, it starts with the school board and flows to the superintendent, to the district office (administration), to the principals, to the teachers, to the students and to the parents. Within the community, the parents need to make sure their children are held accountable and prepared for school.

B is for Budget (and Finances). Though the district is education based, this is a business with a large fiscal budget. The district has been through a financial crisis recently, and no one wants to see that happen again. There are many aspects to the finances of the district that need to be reviewed. I believe the district will find efficiencies that will allow the district to strengthen and grow.

C is for Curriculum (and Careers).

Though the district must follow state guidelines, we as the district must keep in mind the future our students, what other options are there and what else can we teach our children to get them ready for their next step.

Which brings me to the 123s. Changes will not fix the issues overnight, but having a plan with steps will get us to our goal. One cannot run without walking first. Rewards will come from hard work that is planned out.

What successes have you seen in Sumter School District that you want to build on?

Since July 1, 2011, after the consolidation of two school districts and a financial crisis, there have been little successes that the district can build on with a revolving door at the superintendent position. New leadership generally means a new plan and a new vision. The district has been able to dig out of the financial crisis, but there is still room for improvement. The school district continues to have its students and graduates excel in and outside the classroom, whether it is through sports, music, clubs, organizations and academics.

The school district has a new superintendent in Dr. William Wright Jr., who started this fiscal year, and with all board seats up for election, this is an opportunity for the school district and community to step forward and have Sumter School District be the leading star for education opportunities in the state of South Carolina.

Do you think Sumter County Council should have funded Sumter School District's recent annual millage increase requests? Why or why not?

I am unable to say whether it was the correct or incorrect decision without knowledge of the board's intent and discussion prior to presenting the request to Sumter County Council in June 2022. What I do know and understand is the fiduciary responsibility that the board has to both the district and the community. The

board must review the district's current finances and proposed new fiscal budget before asking for millage increases. Revenue changes are based upon a number of factors, including but not limited to the number of students in the district, state funding and county assessments of property.

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District school? Please specify (you don't need to give their names).

Currently I do not have any children attending the Sumter School District. My son graduated from Sumter High School in May 2021 as the valedictorian.

Would you change anything about the current attendance rezoning plan across Sumter School District that is scheduled to be implemented next school year?

No, as rezoning needed to be reviewed since July 2011. A study by a third party was completed, presented, reviewed and voted on by the school board in the 2021-22 school year with implementation starting the 2023-24 school year. Change is sometimes tough to accept, might not seem fair and doesn't seem to happen at a good time, but change is needed when trying to move forward successfully.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Yes, I have been and I am still active within the community. Past boards and service organizations that I have held officer/director positions within Sumter include: Rotary Club of Sumter Palmetto (president), Sumter Habitat for Humanity (president and treasurer), Greater Sumter Chamber of Commerce (board chair) and USC Sumter Partnership Board (treasurer). I am currently sitting on two non-profit boards: Santee-Lynches Affordable Housing and Community Development Corporation (president) and Sumter County Disabilities and Special Needs Board (treasurer).



JEFF ZELL

What are you running for?

Sumter School District Board of Trustees, Area 8

Why are you running?

To provide accountability and transparency from the school board and strengthen the parental rights of Sumter families.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

No

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

Five years

Current job/profession:

Active-duty Air Force, senior non-commissioned officer

What makes you qualified for the seat?

I have a long and decorated service to our nation and the communities I was stationed in over my career. I have been on numerous executive committees of successful organizations throughout my career. While I was a resource adviser at Dover Air Force Base, I had a budget of \$3 million I was directly in charge of and responsible for, as well as 17 accounts that I oversaw and approved funding for. I have experience as the president of the Aviano Parents Advisory Group (two years, DoD school liaison to parents), Shaw Air Force Base Top III Company Grade Officer Mentor (one year), Sumter American Legion Post 15 committeeman (Americanism Chairman, 2021), president of Dolomite Chapter Air Force Association (Aviano Air

Base, Italy, numerous awards for growth and effective leadership), former public relations chairman, South Carolina grassroots organization Businesses for Liberty.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

Accountability is the very foundation of an effective organization. In Sumter County, there have been significant accountability issues going back to the S.C. Board of Education's declaration of financial emergency for Sumter County schools and as recently as Superintendent Penelope Martin-Knox's contract and replacement and many in between.

I will go line by line in the budget and position by position within the Sumter School District administration to determine the necessity of the budget line item and the need of the position. We must show that we are effective stewards of taxpayers' money and free up monies to hire more teachers and fund essential programs.

Transparency is very much lacking within the Sumter County school board.

Parental rights need to be respected and put at the forefront of everything we do as a board. Parents deserve a voice in the education and direction of their child's future.

What successes have you seen in Sumter School District that you want to build on?

I believe that Sumter School District does an excellent job recognizing teachers and their accomplishments and would like to continue that initiative.

I also believe that the school board has done better at being responsible with the budget. However, that's easy to do

when the Sumter County School District is seeing declining school enrollment while still collecting taxpayer money, while the taxpayer is sending their kids to local private schools.

Do you think Sumter County Council should have funded Sumter School District's recent annual millage increase requests? Why or why not?

I do not believe that the Sumter County Council should have increased the demand at a time. Asking for more money when enrollment has fallen across the county in public schools but increased in private schools and test scores have stagnated is not a plan; it is just throwing money at a problem, hoping it will solve itself. I want to review the budget line by line, position by position, and force the district to justify all spending. I believe this will allow us to determine if all the money is being spent correctly and if any adjustments can or need to be made. Once we can determine if all funding is utilized correctly and needs more funds, I would fully support requesting more funding for the budget, if justified.

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District school? Please specify (you don't need to give their names).

I have one child that currently attends a local private Christian school. My child attended Alice Drive Elementary before the schools were closed due to COVID-19. When COVID-19 hit, I was deployed to the Middle East, and my wife, a critical front-line nurse, couldn't stay home or even begin to humor virtual education. Simply it was just not an option for us. Neither one of us could stay at home to school our child, so we were forced by

the school board's closure of the public schools to send our child to private school at our own expense while we both served our community and our country. We were the fortunate ones. Many other families and children in Sumter suffered because of the school board and district's decision. Character is tested when times are hard, and unfortunately, the board and the district failed Sumter families and children; we cannot forget that.

Would you change anything about the current attendance rezoning plan across Sumter School District that is scheduled to be implemented next school year?

I want to explore why the school district seems to be leaving schools with very little attendance open when consolidation with several other schools would better utilize funding and allow for better class sizes. Several schools have huge classes, while some rural schools have tiny courses. There will be some logistic issues undoubtedly, but it can be done and should be done.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Yes, I am a very active member of the Sumter American Legion Post 15. I am an active participant in the church.

Anything else about yourself you want to add?

I am a very passionate, dedicated and focused person who cannot wait to serve Sumter School District. I look forward to working with parents, teachers, administrators and students to push Sumter School District to new heights and make it the best district in the state and an ex-

SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 8

FROM PAGE B20

ample for all others to follow. A very lofty goal but attainable. We have got to infuse

new and innovative ideas while strictly enforcing behavior standards, which isn't just for the student but for the teachers, administrators and board members. My

goal is to make Sumter public schools competitive with our sister private schools regarding discipline and academic results.

SUMTER SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 9



BONNIE DISNEY

What are you running for?

Sumter School District Board of Trustees, Area 9

Why are you running?

I want to use my knowledge, expertise and my experience with effective public school systems to help our district excel and be a model district for excellence and achievement. Our community has many assets that will support our educational system. We have a major military base, a vibrant Economic and Development Board that constantly brings in major industries to our county, a supportive business community, students with unlimited abilities, outstanding principals, teachers and support personnel in our schools, and a community that wants our school district to prepare student learners to be career and/or college ready, as state standards require.

As a board member for Area 9, I will work as a team with the eight other newly elected board members to set a vision for excellence in Sumter County's educational system. As a team, we can advance policy to set practical, needed guidelines for transforming the vision into reality, and, through policy, we can influence nearly every aspect of our schools' operations. Additionally, as a team member, we can work to achieve and maintain high academic standards, transparency and accountability. I believe a dedicated Sumter school board must work to regain the Sumter community's trust and confidence.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain.

In 2017, our legislative delegation appointed me to serve on the Sumter school board, a nonpartisan position. I served through 2018 according to the terms of the law at the time. I then ran for the at-large position in 2018 but did not win. In 2020, I ran unsuccessfully in Area 6. Now, because new districts have been established, Area 9 is my current area.

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

My husband and I have lived at our current address for 22 years.

Current job/profession:

I am a retired, lifelong educator and English Language Arts consultant.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

I am uniquely qualified because I have experience in every aspect of the school

business. In addition, my track record through my professional leadership, education and life experience demonstrate that I am qualified for the Area 9 school board seat.

Experience
2017-18: Served on the local school board of Sumter -- appointed by the legislative delegation; 2006-2018: English Language Arts consultant in S.C.; 2008-12: Served on the South Carolina State Board of Education for the Third Judicial Circuit; 2001-05: Teacher specialist on site in Clarendon and Lee counties; 1980-2001: Teacher in public schools in Texas, Arizona, California, Ohio and South Carolina; 1970-80: Teacher for Department of Defense Dependent Schools in Japan and Turkey

Professional Leadership
Sumter School District 17 Teacher of the Year; recipient of Star Teacher award;

National Board certification; published in a national English journal; fellowship recipient to post-graduate school; consultant for the Writing Improvement Network; presenter for benchmark testing, SC READY and SAT/ACT preparation; co-presenter for the National Writing Project

Life and Education
Five children -- all went to public schools; 18 grandchildren -- live in S.C. and Texas; Bachelor's -- Baylor University; Master's -- Wayne State University; Master's Plus 30 -- USC and Middlebury College; Law Degree -- Capital University; member of the S.C. Bar

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3) and how you intend to improve them?

A. I know how important teachers are because I have been an educator in the classroom, and our children and grandchildren have been blessed with exceptionally gifted teachers. Having qualified teachers who are masters of their content in addition to having a variety of pedagogical best practices is essential in high-performing schools. Also, schools must have teachers who are teaching in face-to-face classroom settings to ensure that our children become world-class learners. Our teachers are the backbone of an educational system, and if we don't support our teachers, we may lose them. Student behavior resulting in fights and gross disrespect toward teachers needs to be controlled through a uniform discipline code and a hearing panel, if necessary.

B. Academic achievement needs to be a primary concern to SSD and particularly for the school board members. We need to revive the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Committee and allow community representatives to serve as

well as select board members. The test scores that our children earn on state and national tests as well as the report card score our district receives each year need to be of great concern to our school board, our community and our parents. Families moving into our county may go to the state website (ed.sc.gov) to determine whether they trust our schools and whether they choose to live in Columbia or Kershaw County rather than Sumter County due to our schools' and district's scores. What our children learn, and the rigor of the academics, is of utmost importance in our classrooms.

C. We need to improve SSD's public image by ensuring that our public schools' opportunities and achievements are being promoted and shared vigorously and properly within our Sumter County community. One negative incident may become overblown, while 90 noteworthy and positive events may be ignored or even unknown to our community. Our schools' programs and achievements must be highlighted. I will be an outspoken advocate for our public schools.

What successes have you seen in SSD that you want to build on?

We have many outstanding programs and opportunities in our 24 schools, but I can only highlight a few of them due to space:

- Our gifted and talented programs (QUEST) are offered in our schools to many children and taught by dedicated and talented teachers;
- Our fine arts classes and programs include opportunities for students to participate in music (choirs, strings, orchestra, symphonic and marching bands), drama and art classes;
- Our PE classes, sports programs and AFJROTC programs offer many opportunities for students to become involved;
- We have many specialized academic programs including an International Baccalaureate program, Advanced Placement courses, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program, STEM and STEAM programs and Early College and dual-credit programs coordinated by USC Sumter and Central Carolina.

Although I am only listing a few of the opportunities that SSD schools offer our students, we have hundreds of programs and opportunities that I have not mentioned. Families need to study the opportunities offered in each school and help their children take advantage of programs that interest them.

Do you think Sumter County Council should have funded Sumter School



REGINALD (REGGIE) EVANS

What are you running for?

Sumter School District Board of Trustees, Area 9

Why are you running?

The children are our future, and I want to help our children prepare for the 21st century, for a fruitful, abundant life and career. If my reading of the Department of Education Report Card is correct, only 25% of our children are reading and performing math at their grade level? The mayor, county council chairman and S.C. Speaker of the House, along with current and past school board members, should be ashamed and owe the voters an explanation.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

Yes, I ran for school board in 1998.

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

My family built a house in the Morris College ward in 1977 and opened the family owned and -operated Shell Station across from Roy's Supermarket. While serving in the military, it was always my home of record. I also lived on Milton Road, behind Shuler Hardware.

Current job/profession:

Medically retired and part-time consultant. Two main projects currently are an online art gallery, named Wawuart.com, and Grace Achievement Centers for Excel-

lence Academies Inc. The first phase is an All-Boys Academy for sixth, seventh and eighth grades to open in August 2024.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

I have been a law-abiding, tax-paying citizen and property owner for years in Sumter; so, I have a vested interest in working to improve the conditions within the county. I am not seeking fame or glory, nor financial gains. I just want to serve.

My focus will be on teachers, staff, ADA compliance and our children. I have been blessed to live and travel to cities in this state such as Greenville, Charleston, Columbia and Florence and cities across the country like Raleigh-Durham; Jacksonville; Washington, D.C., and San Diego and saw the remarkable things being done. I believe Sumter can do just as well as those cities have done.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

A. All schools in the district should be STEM certified, and all children should have a laptop computer and fiber internet access.

B. The mayor, county council chairman and the S.C. Speaker of the House, along with current and past school board members, should be ashamed and owe the voters an explanation of the district report card results, given by the S.C. Department of Education.

C. Financial Accountability. Improvement plan is below.

What successes have you seen in the Sumter School District that you want to build on?

After reviewing the S.C. Department of Education Report Card for Sumter, I see the district is embarrassingly behind other school districts and the state average. Some of our students go on to Harvard, Clemson, USC, Claflin and The Citadel. What happened to No Child Left Behind? Was it just a slogan?

I would ask The Sumter Item to publish the report cards of Sumter, Lee and Clarendon school districts in a series of articles before the election in November and ask the mayor, county council chairman and S.C. Speaker of the House, along with current and past school board members, to explain to the voters the failing grades.

The link is here: <https://bit.ly/3S2s6Jj>

Do you think Sumter County Council should have funded Sumter School District's recent annual millage increase requests? Why or why not?

I read somewhere that money answers all questions. We should not engage in finger pointing or the blame game. We are all to blame for the mediocre performance and failing grades given to Sumter School District by the South Carolina Department of Education due to funding. The mayor, county council chairman and S.C. Speaker of the House, along with Team Sumter, current and past school board members, should be ashamed and owe the voters an explanation.

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District school? Please specify (you do not need to give their names).

I have no immediate family in Sumter School District.

Would you change anything about the current attendance rezoning plan across Sumter School District that is scheduled to be implemented next school year?

I will make sure the open enrollment process to choose a school maintains a racial and social-economic balance. I will make sure that a child is not denied an opportunity to attend a school because of their inability to afford transportation.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

I have been and worked as a United Methodist Man in several churches for over 40 years. I helped form and worked with the Northside Neighborhood Association for over 20 years. I previously coached little league baseball and help with American Legion baseball. I am so proud of some of my players who are now head coaches and athletic directors of high schools. I am also one of the founders of a men's group called Men-N-Deeds.

Anything else about yourself you want to add?

I first would like to thank in advance all the family, friends and voters for considering me, voting and in many other ways supporting my run for office. I take your willingness to entrust me with your children very seriously and pray that I will not disappoint.

Lastly, we should view education not as a cost but as an investment. When we compare spending \$10,000 per student versus \$30,000 per inmate, the obvious choice is education. I will request at the next school board meeting that Chestnut Oaks Middle School be renamed the Mary Jane McLeod Bethune Academy.

The following Constitutional amendment question will appear on ballots in the Nov. 8 general election.

AMENDMENT 2

Must Section 36(B), Article III of the Constitution of this State be amended so as to provide that the Capital Reserve Fund of two percent of the general fund revenue of the latest completed fiscal year

be increased to three percent of the general fund revenue of the latest completed fiscal year and to provide that the first use of the Capital Reserve Fund must be to offset midyear budget reductions?

EXPLANATION

A 'Yes' vote will increase the amount of

money state government must appropriate to the Capital Reserve Fund (the "reserve and capital improvements" fund) from 2% of the previous year's revenue to 3% of the previous year's revenue and require that the Capital Reserve Fund's first priority is to offset midyear budget cuts at state agencies.

CLARENDON COUNTY COUNCIL, DISTRICT 1



JOSEPH A. PEDALINO
REPUBLICAN

What are you running for?
Clarendon County Council

Why are you running?

Would like to contribute a conservative voice to the decision making for Clarendon County.

Have you run for political office before?
No

How long have you lived in your district?
17 years

Current job/profession:
Retired

What makes you qualified for the seat?
I have been a business owner for over 40 years.

What challenges/concerns do you see in your district (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

Clean drinking water, keeping taxes low and smaller government. I would be vigilant on watching the water companies providing the water and would stay in contact with residents. On taxes, I would always put the Clarendon County taxpayer first. In my voting decisions, I would put smaller government first.

What successes have you seen in your district that you want to build on?
When they brought in the bicycle

industry to our local job market to provide good-paying jobs for our area. I would try to open doors to provide more industry for better-paying job opportunities for our local residents.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

I have been attending most county council, town and election board meetings to be more informed on our local issues.

Incumbent Billy Richardson (Democrat) did not submit a Q&A response.

CLARENDON COUNTY COUNCIL, DISTRICT 3



Neither candidate submitted a Q&A response. The race will feature incumbent Benton Blakely (Democratic) and Pat Coker (Republican).

SAMPLE BALLOT

SAMPLE BALLOT

- This is NOT your ballot. This is a Sample Ballot showing a representation of the offices and candidates that will appear on your official ballot and is provided for informational purposes only.
- While your actual ballot will look different, this sample ballot contains all the offices and questions for which you will be eligible to vote at the time this sample ballot was produced. Sometimes candidates withdraw or are disqualified prior to an election. Also, if you move and update your address, your sample ballot will likely change. Sample ballots are made available approximately 100 days prior to an election. It is best to check your sample ballot close to election day to check for any changes in offices and candidates.
- Your Sample Ballot may differ from other voters' ballots in your precinct.
- Straight Party:** For partisan elections, your actual ballot will provide a straight party selection option. If you make a straight party selection on your ballot, you will be selecting all candidates of that party on your ballot. Any vote cast for an individual candidate will take precedence over any straight party selection. Nonpartisan offices and questions are not included in the straight party vote and must be marked individually. There is no straight party option in primaries and nonpartisan elections.
- Contact your county voter registration office to vote absentee or go to your polling place to vote on election day.
- You may take this Sample Ballot with you to your polling place, but do NOT display or distribute it at the polling place.

COUNTY: SUMTER
VOTING PRECINCT: Burns-Downs
PRECINCT LOCATION: Alice Drive Middle School **PRECINCT ADDRESS:** 40 Miller Road Sumter SC 29150
VOTING DISTRICTS:
 US Congressional District: 05 SC Senate District: 35 SC House District: 067
 County Council: 06 School District: 09 City Council District: 34
 Municipality: 645 Magistrate Jury Area: 431

SUMTER COUNTY BOARD OF VOTER REGISTRATION & ELECTIONS
 141 N Main St Rm 114
 Sumter SC 29150
Phone Number: (803)4362313
Email: pjefferson@sumtercountysc.org

THE FOLLOWING ELECTIONS ARE INCLUDED IN THIS SAMPLE BALLOT
Statewide General Election

SAMPLE BALLOT - SUMTER COUNTY

STATEWIDE GENERAL ELECTION

Governor and Lieutenant Governor

- You may vote for One.
- Henry McMaster / Pamela Evette (Republican)
 - Bruce Reeves / Jessica Ethridge (Libertarian)
 - Joe Cunningham / Tally Parham Casey (Democratic)
 -

Secretary of State

- You may vote for One.
- Mark Hammond (Republican)
 - Rosemounda Peggy Butler (Democratic)
 -

State Treasurer

- You may vote for One.
- Curtis Loftis (Republican)
 - Sarah E Work (Alliance)
 -

Attorney General

- You may vote for One.
- Alan Wilson (Republican)
 -

Comptroller General

- You may vote for One.
- Richard Eckstrom (Republican)
 -

State Superintendent of Education

- You may vote for One.
- Patricia M Mickel (Green)
 - Ellen Weaver (Republican)
 - Lisa Ellis (Alliance)
 - Lisa Ellis (Democratic)
 -

Commissioner of Agriculture

- You may vote for One.
- Chris Nelums (United Citizens)
 - David Edmond (Green)
 - Hugh Weathers (Republican)
 -

U.S. Senate 2

- You may vote for One.
- Tim Scott (Republican)
 - Krystle Matthews (Democratic)
 -

U.S. House of Representatives District 05

- You may vote for One.
- Larry Gaither (Green)
 - Ralph Norman (Republican)
 - Evangeline Hundley (Democratic)
 -

State House of Representatives District 67

- You may vote for One.
- Murrell Smith (Republican)
 -

Solicitor Circuit 3

- You may vote for One.
- Ernest Chip Finney (Democratic)
 -

Probate Judge

You may vote for One.
 Dale Atkinson (Democratic)

County Council District 06

You may vote for One.
 James T McCain Jr (Democratic)

Soil and Water District Commission

You may vote for Two, less than Two, but not more than Two.
 Tommy Laney (Nonpartisan)
 John Lee Newman (Nonpartisan)
 John Earl Perry (Nonpartisan)

School Board District 09

You may vote for One.
 Bonnie Disney (Nonpartisan)
 Reginald 'Reggie' Evans (Nonpartisan)

Statewide Constitutional Amendments

Must Section 36(A), Article III of the Constitution of this State, relating to the General Reserve Fund, be amended so as to provide that the General Reserve Fund shall be five percent of general fund revenue of the latest completed fiscal year must be increased each year by one-half of one percent of the general fund revenue of the latest completed fiscal year until it equals seven percent of such revenues? Explanation A 'Yes' vote will increase the amount of money state government must keep in the General Reserve Fund (its "rainy day" fund) from 5% of the previous year's revenue to 7% of the previous year's revenue.

Yes
 No

Must Section 36(B), Article III of the Constitution of this State be amended so as to provide that the Capital Reserve Fund of two percent of the general fund revenue of the latest completed fiscal year be increased to three percent of the general fund revenue of the latest completed fiscal year and to provide that the first use of the Capital Reserve Fund must be to offset midyear budget reductions? Explanation A 'Yes' vote will increase the amount of money state government must appropriate to the Capital Reserve Fund (the "reserve and capital improvements" fund) from 2% of the previous year's revenue to 3% of the previous year's revenue and require that the Capital Reserve Fund's first priority is to offset midyear budget cuts at state agencies.

Yes
 No

Local Questions

Must a special One Percent Sales And Use Tax be imposed in Sumter County (the "County") for not more than seven (7) years, to begin when the current Capital Projects Sales Tax ends on or before April 30, 2023, to raise the amounts specified for the following purposes and in order to pay the costs (including rights-of-way acquisition and architectural, engineering, legal, administrative costs, and related fees) of the projects described below: pending the receipt of such sales and use tax, must the County also be authorized to issue and sell, either as a single issue or as several separate issues, General Obligation Bonds (the "Bonds") of the County in the aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$40,000,000.00 to be paid from the Sales And Use Tax to be received and to pledge the Sales And Use Tax to be received to the payment of the principal of and interest on the Bonds? 1. \$10,000,000 – County Fire Trucks. Replace dated fire trucks throughout the County. Rural fire stations are Cherrylave, Pinewood, Graham, Pleasant Grove, Mayesville, Dalzell, Wedgefield, Rembert, Concord, Horatio, Dubose, Bethel, Oswego, Beech Creek, Byrd's, Dabbs and Manning Road. 2. \$8,800,000 – Emergency Radio and Pager Upgrades-EMS/Fire/Police. New communications technology infrastructure to meet mandated digital radio and pager services, allowing county-wide coverage, and replace the obsolete radios and pagers. 3. \$16,000,000 – County Paving/Resurfacing. New paving road projects on 20.89 miles of dirt roads to ease public travel and emergency vehicle accessibility and to improve maintenance service on other Sumter County roads. Roads to be paved include: Ambrose Drive, Bainbridge Road, Benehaley Road, Bunneau Street, Campbell Court, Cannery Road, Coastal Drive, Gaymon Road, Hejrs Drive, Hugh Ryan Road, Jaguar Run, James Quincy Court, James Quincy Road, Keystone Road, Loblolly Road, Lynx Lane, Mayrant Court, McLean Street, Millhouse Road, Mundy Street, Munn Street, N. Mayrant Circle, Northridge Drive, Old Stone Road, Ott Street, Pasture Road, Pratt Avenue, Rosehill Road, Rufus Drive, Scotts Branch, S. Mayrant Circle, Sparkberry Road, Statesburg Hills, Stukes Road, Tate Street, Teakwood Drive, Walters Avenue, and Way-cross Circle. Resurfacing road projects on 7.07 miles of road to include: Meadowcroft Dr., Ashlynn Way, Caitlynn Drive, Tamarah Way, Kiri Drive, Candelite Court, Fallingwater Lane, Sun Valley Drive, Christopher Court, Malone Drive, Inabinet Drive, Wind Tree Drive, Steeplechase Drive, Soye Drive, Longbranch Drive, Soye Circle, Bend K Drive, Colts Run Court, and Cliffwood Court. 4. \$2,800,000 – City Fire Trucks. Purchase fire trucks to service City and local industries. 5. \$2,500,000 – Forensics, Cemik (Sheriff). Construct a 6,500 sq. ft. state of the art facility to include various criminal labs, fingerprints, DNA analysis, drug analysis, ballistic analysis and vehicle bay. 6. \$3,000,000 – Stadium Road Fire Station Reconstruction. Renovate the Stadium Road Fire Station. 7. \$1,600,000 – Industrial Land Purchase (Gibbs Site). The 76-acre site will provide a marketable rail served site for recruiting manufacturing companies for further growth of the industrial sector. 8. \$1,800,000 – Black River Industrial Park Infrastructure. Road extensions, sitework, and utility extensions to further enhance the marketability and readiness of this site for recruiting global manufacturing clients. 10. \$6,000,000 – US-378 Safety Connection Project. Reconnect the communities and services north and south of the US-378 Bypass at Wesmark and Miller Roads to improve safety for drivers and pedestrians and enhance mobility for all travelers. Funds will be used to leverage State and Federal Transportation project. 11. \$1,500,000 – Intersection Safety Improvements. Improve safety for travelers at intersections near key facilities to include schools and community centers. 12. \$1,750,000 – Bobby Richardson Park Improvements. Installation of new fences and six (6) baseball fields along with high wall netting for spectator safety. 13. \$2,750,000 – S. Main Street Building. Purchase building to renovate and house government services. 14. \$3,500,000 – Rural Gymnatoriums. Construct two stand-alone gymnatoriums adjacent to existing rural recreation community centers at Rafiting Creek and Shiloh. 15. \$1,800,000 – Delaine and Dubose Community Centers. Construct one community center (\$900,000) in the Dubose area, and construct one community center (\$900,000) near Delaine School. 16. \$3,500,000 – South Sumter Gym. Reconstruction and expansion of a gym that provides the surrounding community with recreational and flex space that would serve the community for meetings, events, etc. 17. \$900,000 – Patriot Park Expansion. Purchase a 90-acre tract of land adjacent to Patriot Park, for ingress and egress onto Loring Mill Road. Will allow for other amenities such as walking trails and community amphitheater. 18. \$1,500,000 – Mayesville Town Hall Center. Construct a new Town Hall for meetings. Also, space that can be used for community activities. 19. \$1,750,000 – Downtown Accessibility Renovations. Improve Historic Downtown Sumter's public parking and pedestrian accessibility to connect retail and public services buildings. 20. \$1,000,000 – Museum Complex. Complete improvements to support the Sumter Museum Complex (Military Museum, Jewish History Center, and Sumter County Museum) 21. \$1,850,000 – Swan Lake Trailhead and Accessible Playground. Provide trailhead parking for access to the newly built Shot Pouch Greenway at Swan Lake, an information kiosk, green space, picnic area accessible playground. 22. \$1,800,000 – Accessible Playgrounds Improvements (County-wide). To install new modern playground systems at the rural county community centers. New equipment will be designed with latest ADA standard surfaces. 23. \$4,750,000 – Accessible Playgrounds Improvements (City-wide). Enhance Sumter's public playgrounds with uniform up to date playground equipment accessible for all children. 24. \$1,300,000 – Pinewood Sports Complex. Construct a new community park to include walking trails, playground equipment, out-door basketball courts, picnic shelter and stage area, concession area and parking lot. 25. \$5,500,000 – Public Services Building. Construct a new Public Services Administration Building that is easily accessible, with ample parking, and updated technology to support the infrastructure needs of the community. 26. \$2,500,000 – Shot Pouch Park and Greenway Trailhead Enhancement. A new park, and additional trailhead parking for access to the Shot Pouch Greenway at Broad Street; to include accessible playground, pump track, modern skate park, and event space. 27. \$6,500,000 – Downtown Parking Facility. Construct a two-story parking garage to support downtown development and provide needed infrastructure. 28. \$1,000,000 – Airport Facility Upgrade. Construct a 10,000 sq. ft. box hangar to enhance industrial recruitment. 29. \$1,000,000 – CCTC Classroom Conversion. Renovation of the D1000 Health Center building into classroom space for additional Health Sciences programs. Create walkways to connect the D1000 Health Center, H2000 Health Science building, and the Annex. 30. \$900,000 – Pinewood Area Road Paving. New road paving on 1.11 miles of dirt roads to ease public travel and emergency vehicle accessibility and to improve maintenance service on other Sumter County roads. Roads to be paved in the downtown area. 31. \$3,500,000 – City and County Community Side-walks / Activity Paths. Expands the community sidewalk network, providing safe walking connections to neighborhoods, schools, parks, and commercial areas to include Patriot Parkway, Ebenezer Road, Oswego Hwy., Winn St., Mason Rd., S. Harvin St., E. Charlotte St., Wise Dr., Calhoun Dr., Boulevard Rd., S. Sumter St., Miller Rd., Hoyt St., Stadium Rd., and Club Ln. 32. \$900,000 – Pinewood Area Sidewalks / Bus Shelters. Expands the community sidewalk network, providing safe walking connections to neighborhoods, schools, parks, and commercial areas to include Highway 120, from Clark Street to Highway 120, parallel with Highway 261. S. Hampton Street to N. Hampton Street and connect at Reynolds Road. Repair existing sidewalks. Install bus shelters to provide shelter for school children and others awaiting transportation that will be strategically located throughout the Town of Pinewood. 33. \$2,500,000 Community-wide Acquisition of Distressed Structures. To improve the community by acquiring and removing distressed structures that degrade neighborhoods and major corridors. 34. \$16,500 – Pinewood Area Blight Removal. Remove 11 blight structures in the town limits of Pinewood. Project will leverage CDBG grant of \$164,439. [TOTAL COST OF ALL CAPITAL PROJECTS: \$107,266,500.00] The maximum amount of net proceeds of the Sales And Use Tax which may be applied to the payment of the principal of and interest on the County's General Obligation Bonds (the "Bonds") must not exceed \$50,000,000 (based upon expected Sales And Use Tax collections of \$117,266,500.00 less administrative expenses of collection). The not-to-exceed \$40,000,000.00 principal amount of Bonds to be issued shall be repaid from the net proceeds of the Sales And Use Tax which shall be pledged for the repayment of the Bonds.

YES, in favor of imposing the tax and issuing General Obligation Bonds
 NO, opposed to imposing the tax and issuing General Obligation Bonds



Debating over debates: Campaign tradition faces skepticism

BY MEG KINNARD

Associated Press

COLUMBIA — Under pressure from his Republican rival, Pennsylvania Democratic Senate candidate John Fetterman said this week he would participate in one debate before the November election.

In Georgia, Democratic Sen. Raphael Warnock and Republican challenger Herschel Walker are still working through the details of what a debate might look like, though they appear to be inching closer to a deal. And in Arizona, Democratic gubernatorial hopeful Katie Hobbs has declined a televised debate with Republican Kari Lake.

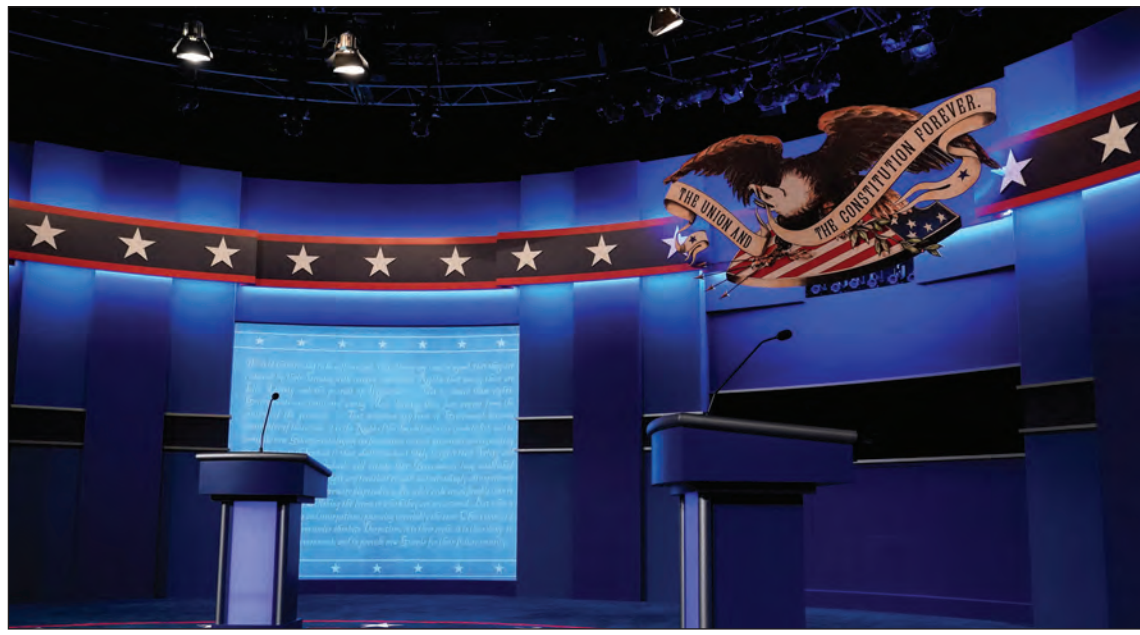
With the fall campaign rapidly approaching, the time-honored tradition of televised debates as a forum for voters to evaluate candidates may be the latest casualty of constant media coverage and powerful digital platforms, as well as the nation's polarized political climate. For some Republicans, eschewing debates is a chance to sidestep a media structure some in the party deride as biased and align with Donald Trump, who has blasted presidential debates. Some Democrats, including Hobbs, have pointed to raucous GOP debates from the primary season as a reason to avoid tangling with their opponents.

Despite such skepticism, veteran political consultant Terry Sullivan defended debates as "the one forum where candidates are forced into answering questions that they don't want to answer."

"They're not going to do it in their TV commercials," added Sullivan, who managed GOP Sen. Jim DeMint's 2004 bid in South Carolina and handled media for Florida Sen. Marco Rubio's 2016 presidential effort. "And in stump appearances, press conferences, they can evade, they can dodge."

And sometimes, Sullivan added, it's the media coverage of what happens onstage, rather than the back-and-forth itself, that can make a bigger impression.

In what "should have been the most boring debate in the history of mankind," Sullivan said that a 2004 panelist ques-



AP/PATRICK SEMANSKY

The debate stage is set ahead of the start of the second and final presidential debate Oct. 22, 2020, at Belmont University in Nashville, Tenn. With the fall campaign rapidly approaching, the time-honored tradition of debates as a forum for voters to evaluate candidates may be the latest casualty of the nation's polarized political climate.

tioning DeMint and Democrat Inez Tenenbaum asked DeMint if he agreed with a state GOP platform tenet in opposition of openly gay teachers in South Carolina's public schools.

"That kind of turned the race on its head for the next three months," Sullivan said, noting headlines he characterized as "DeMint wants to fire gay teachers."

DeMint went on to win the open seat by nearly 10 percentage points, a margin typical in recent South Carolina statewide elections. But in more competitive states, Sullivan said, a debate can serve as "a good way to find out where candidates are on the issues."

In addition to winning candidates thousands of impressions in earned media and repackaged video clips, debate footage can also propel candidates' messages far more broadly — and cheaply — than could television ad buys, said Michael Wukela, a South Carolina Democratic media consultant and veteran of Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders' presidential bids.

"You're getting that in one shot," Wukela said, of a debate appearance being worth airtime that would otherwise cost millions. "That's like a Super Bowl ad."

Refusal to participate can

draw ire from rivals. The Republicans whom Walker refused to debate ahead of Georgia's primary critiqued him as ill-prepared to take on Warnock, a skilled orator.

"If you can't get on the stage and debate fellow Republicans, how the heck are you going to debate with Raphael Warnock in the general election?" Latham Saddler, a Navy veteran and former Trump administration official who was among five Republicans challenging Walker, asked. "Usually if you're hiding, you're hiding for a reason."

Walker repeatedly proclaimed his eagerness to face off with Warnock in the fall but, instead of agreeing to Warnock's challenge to three debates, accepted an invitation to a different one altogether. This week, Warnock said he would participate in that debate, if Walker agreed to another forum Warnock wants. That back-and-forth remains unresolved.

Other Senate contests are playing out similarly.

In North Carolina, where U.S. Rep. Ted Budd skipped four Republican primary debates in his U.S. Senate bid, said Friday he wouldn't accept an invitation from the North Carolina Association of Broadcasters to debate Democrat Cheri Beasley, as the two head for a presumably close general election. Budd said he

had accepted a cable debate invite, but there's no agreement with Beasley on that appearance.

Dr. Mehmet Oz, the Republican Senate candidate in Pennsylvania, mused to reporters this week about what would happen if voters elected a senator who never has "answered a legitimate question from a voter, from a newscaster in a non-taped setting, in a debate stage?" citing Fetterman's campaign-trail absence as he recovers from a stroke.

Fetterman's campaign said he will participate in a televised debate in October but gave no other details, including why he would agree to just one debate. Oz's campaign immediately dubbed it a "secret debate," with no details on when or where.

In Pennsylvania's governor's race, the Republican nominee Doug Mastriano has rejected a media-moderated debate and instead reserved a hotel ballroom on Oct. 22 and picked a partisan moderator for himself: Mercedes Schlapp, who served as Trump's White House strategic communications director and is married to the chair of the American Conservative Union.

The campaign of Democrat Josh Shapiro said Mastriano's refusal to accept an independent moderator blew up about a doz-

en invitations from news organizations and other groups.

Some incumbents with an edge on their rivals have rebuffed requests for multiple debates, uninterested in taking a risk on stage that might change the course of their campaign.

South Carolina Democrat Joe Cunningham called for four general-election debates with Republican Gov. Henry McMaster, whose campaign dismissed the request as a "stunt" and ultimately agreed to one matchup. In Texas, GOP Gov. Greg Abbott has granted a single debate to Democratic challenger Beto O'Rourke — on a Friday night in the thick of high school football season, which will be broadcast as distracted voters are instead at games kicking off around the state.

Florida Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis initially committed to a statewide televised debate with his Democratic opponent before U.S. Rep. Charlie Crist — who came under fire for not agreeing to primary debates — won his party's nomination. Now, the two are set to spar in a single debate, shown only on a West Palm Beach TV station.

Michigan Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Republican nominee Tudor Dixon finally agreed to a single October debate after a scheduling flap. Whitmer announced last month she would participate in two statewide, televised debates, a decision her campaign said was "consistent with past precedent." Dixon, who criticized Whitmer for not debating before voter are able to send in absentee ballots, ultimately agreed to the solo meeting.

Noting that the uncertainty of debates can be "terrifying" for all involved, Wukela acknowledged incumbents' reticence to allowing their challengers prominent opportunities to equate themselves with the office, or its existing occupant.

"Strom Thurmond refused to debate any of his opponents," Wukela said of the longtime South Carolina Democrat-turned-Republican governor and senator. "If I've got a four-touchdown lead, why would I ever throw the ball?"

In South Carolina, Harris urges students to vote in midterms

BY MEG KINNARD

Associated Press

COLUMBIA — Vice President Kamala Harris visited two historically Black colleges in South Carolina to push for voter registration as she focuses on places and demographics that will be key to Democrats' chances to hold on to Congress in the midterm elections.

In remarks Tuesday to first-year students at South Carolina State University, an Orangeburg HBCU where President Joe Biden addressed graduates last year, Harris highlighted what she characterized as the need for young voters to participate in political pushes to protect voting rights and oppose efforts to restrict abortion.

"Once again, your nation turns to you," Harris said, highlighting the fight for civil rights by House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn — a S.C. State alumnus and South Carolina's lone congressional Democrat — when he was arrested during protests while in his early 20s. "Because to move America forward, we need you. We need your passion, your purpose and your excellence."

The South Carolina trip, Harris' third to the state as vice president, is part of her increased travel schedule ahead of the midterms. She talked reproductive rights in Chicago on Friday, and she's heading to Wisconsin on Thursday to speak at the

Democratic Attorneys General Conference. Earlier this month, she traveled to Houston for the National Baptist Convention.

Harris' trips are designed to prevent, or at least limit, any drop-off in turnout among voters of color and young people, important parts of the Democratic coalition. Earlier Tuesday — National Voter Registration Day — she participated in a roundtable with students at Claflin University, another HBCU, where she touted the administration's actions around race and education and emphasized the need to invest in mental health.

"We recognize that over the last couple of years through the pandemic, we literally told people to isolate, which means people were literally by themselves," Harris said. "Suffering from all that the pandemic represented in terms of loss of life, loss of normalcy, for so many people, loss of job. And so the effects of that all still linger in a very profound way."

In South Carolina, which holds the first presidential balloting in the South, Black voters play an outsized role in the Democratic voting electorate. During a June visit to the state, Harris expressed appreciation for South Carolina Democrats, whose key support for Biden in the first-in-the-South primary in 2020 helped turn around his campaign and build momentum in later



AP/JAMES POLLARD

Vice President Kamala Harris speaks to students at Claflin University, one of two historically Black universities she visited in Orangeburg on Tuesday, Sept. 20, 2022. Harris pushed for voter registration as her party seeks to hold onto majorities in Congress.

contests that led to the party's nomination.

Harris' arrival in South Carolina follows shortly after Biden's noncommittal response to CBS' "60 Minutes" when asked if he would run again in 2024.

"My intention, as I said to begin with, is that I would run again," the president said during a wide-ranging interview that aired Sunday. "But it's just an intention. But is it a firm decision that I run again? That remains to be seen."

Biden noted in the interview that declaring his intention to seek reelection would put him

afoul of campaign finance laws, which could have complicated spending by the Democratic National Committee ahead of the midterms.

White House officials said Biden is continuing to lay the groundwork for a 2024 run. Allies, though, acknowledge that he could always decide against seeking reelection before a formal announcement, which is expected in the first half of 2023.

Earlier this year, Biden committed to tapping Harris as his running mate for the 2024 reelection campaign. Her visit comes as Republicans consid-

ering White House bids of their own — including former Vice President Mike Pence, former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis — continue to crisscross the state.

Some native South Carolina Republicans have also been testing the 2024 waters. Nikki Haley, who served the state for six years as governor before joining the Trump administration as U.N. ambassador, lives in the Charleston area and has been visiting other early voting states, as has U.S. Sen. Tim Scott.



FOR REP. MURRELL SMITH SUMTER COUNTY IS PRIORITY #1

Though I am honored to have been elected Speaker of the SC House of Representatives, my first priority is always to the people of District 67. I will never stop working on your behalf to improve our great community.

Here are just a few of our recent legislative achievements that directly affect Sumter County:

ELIMINATED MILITARY INCOME TAX

South Carolina is proud of its military and to enact legislation that eliminates income tax for those who have served our state and nation is the right thing to do.

VETERANS NURSING HOME

Completed funding for the Sumter Veterans Nursing Home that will provide care and facilities for our military service men and women. I am proud to have played a small role in helping these amazing patriots.

VETERANS TRANSITION HOME

For too many years we have allowed the plight of our veterans and those returning from service to go unaddressed. By investing in the statewide and local movement to provide transition homes we are “doing right” by our heroes and defenders of liberty.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Obtained funding to build trails, install outdoor lighting, re-surface tennis courts and improve community baseball, soccer and football fields.

SHAW AIR FORCE BASE BUFFER ZONE

Purchased 1000 acres that will help protect the viability and long-term plans for our local base. This acquisition will help limit encroachment and allow Shaw to expand should the need arise.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Increased funding for both USC-Sumter and Central Carolina Technical College.



As Speaker of the SC House of Representatives, it will be my goal to improve our state infrastructure, education system, tax code and access to healthcare. And there is no limit to how much we can do in attracting and retaining good paying jobs for our residents!

Thank you for allowing me to work on your behalf and fight for these goals.

VOTE MURRELL SMITH FOR SC STATEHOUSE

▶ **CONSERVATIVE** ▶ **COMMITTED** ▶ **PROVEN LEADERSHIP**

PLEASE VOTE ON TUESDAY, NOV. 8TH



**MURRELL
SMITH**

REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT 67