

Murdaugh's defense faces major hurdle: apparent lies

BY THAD MOORE, AVERY G. WILKS and JOCELYN GRZESZCZAK
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WALTERBORO — After four weeks of testimony from five dozen witnesses, the prosecutors trying Alex Murdaugh for murder have finally shown their hand.

In hundreds of exhibits admitted so far in the trial, there is no single piece of evidence that definitively connects the disbarred attorney to the brutal shootings of his wife and son. There is no smoking gun, nor any gun at all: Investigators did not find either of the murder weapons.

Instead, the state has revealed a dense thicket of indirect evidence. It centers on Murdaugh's tenuous finances and impending investigations into them, shell casings at the scene seemingly linking a family gun to at least one killing and a cellphone video showing the family together soon before the shootings began. Those are the highlights of a case otherwise mired with ambiguous DNA results and cellphone data.

If prosecutors have a trump card with the jury, it may be this: Murdaugh apparently lied to investigators, his friends and his family about where he'd been the night his wife, Maggie, and son Paul died.

And in a series of interactions with police, he compounded one big apparent lie with a trail of inconsistencies, omissions and incorrect statements about what happened June 7, 2021. Plus, at least two people — both employees of Murdaugh and his family — have testified he approached them in an apparent effort to align their stories with his.

Jurors have heard no shortage of testimony about Murdaugh's tendency to deceive. Prosecutors' case explored in depth how he allegedly stole millions from his law firm and clients, a fact that they have theorized motivated the killings. They also heard Murdaugh, 54, admit on tape that he lied to police about being attacked on the side of the road months later, even apologizing to agents for his dishonesty.

But explaining why he would lie after Maggie and Paul's deaths is perhaps the single biggest challenge Murdaugh's defense team faces as it begins to present its case.

The challenges run throughout the timeline of June 7, according to a *Post and Courier* review of his statements to police and others' testimony about his conduct. They start with why Maggie Murdaugh was home that night to begin with.

DINNERTIME

Murdaugh to State Law Enforcement Division agents, Aug. 11: "Maggie wasn't supposed to be coming home. I've since found out she was worried about me, and me worrying about my dad. And so she came home."

Maggie, 52, had been in Charleston for a doctor's appointment most of the day June 7, and her phone records suggest she wanted to spend the night at the family's house on Edisto Beach.

SEE **MURDAUGH**, PAGE A6

Sheriff's deputies meet with group to build relationship and reduce violent crimes



PHOTOS BY SHELBBIE GOULDING / THE SUMTER ITEM

Sumter County Sheriff's Office Sgt. Joshua Phillips meets with the Turkey Creek Neighborhood Association on Thursday, Feb. 16. There have been more violent crime reports in the Turkey Creek-Mooneyham area in the past 30 days than in the whole county during the same period, and the group wanted to ask what they can do to help and share ideas with the sheriff's office.

Turkey Creek group concerned about increase in violent crimes in past year

BY SHELBBIE GOULDING
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Inside the South HOPE Center conference room sat nearly 15 people of different backgrounds. Although all were unique, the reason for the meeting was not so unique to their neighborhood.

A majority of the attendees were Turkey Creek Neighborhood Association members looking for a solution to their problem, to feel safe in the place they call home.

Leading the group was Sgt. Joshua Phillips of the Sumter County Sheriff's Office, who met with the neighborhood association to not only connect with the residents, but also to give them back the safe haven they deserve. This meeting was the first step.

"The areas of Patricia Drive, Dollard Drive, the whole area of the Manning Road area on that end of Highway 15 all the way across to Mooneyham area; we've had a drastic increase in shootings just in those areas within the past 12 months," Phillips said. "Just in this area, there have been 43 reported reports, actual incident reports, made in reference to a violent crime. Forty-three, just in this area."

That did not include undocu-



Members of the Turkey Creek Neighborhood Association speak with the Sumter County Sheriff's Office.

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If you have any information pertaining to these crimes that could lead to an arrest, you are encouraged to contact the Sumter County Sheriff's Office at (803) 436-2000 or Crime Stoppers 1-888-CRIME-SC.

mented reports like shots-fired calls.

"We are dealing with some gang stuff in those areas," Phillips said.

In the past 30 days, Phillips shared there were eight documented violent crimes in the Turkey Creek-Mooneyham area alone. Looking at the county overall, he said there were only 10 docu-

umented reports in the last month.

"Sumter County is a big county," Phillips said. "That's what my concern is for y'all."

This was the first time Phillips met with the affected community. As the supervisor of violent crimes for the Sumter County Sheriff's Office, Phillips said it wasn't typical that he met with groups like the Turkey Creek Neighborhood Association. This situation is different than most based on recent activity.

According to Phillips, people have been injured or shot in these occurrences as bullets struck their homes. His biggest problem

SEE **VIOLENCE**, PAGE A6

Trump absent as Iowa 2024 GOP caucus train begins to roll

BY THOMAS BEAUMONT
Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — Nikki Haley is swinging through Iowa this week fresh off announcing her presidential campaign. Her fellow South Carolinian Republican, Sen. Tim Scott, will also be here as he decides his political future. And former Vice President Mike Pence was just in

the state courting influential evangelical Christian activists.

After a slow start, Republican presidential prospects are streaming into the lead-off presidential caucus state. Notably absent from the lineup, at least for now, is former President Donald Trump.



HALEY



SCOTT

Few of the White House hopefuls face the lofty expectations in Iowa that Trump does. He finished a competitive second to devout social conservative Ted Cruz in 2016 and went on to carry the state twice, by healthy margins, as the Republican presidential

nominee in the 2016 and 2020 elections.

"It is genuinely impossible for this guy to try to manage these expectations," said Luke Martz, a veteran Iowa Republican strategist who helped lead Mitt Romney's 2012 Iowa caucus campaign. "They are enormous. They are self-made. I don't see how anyone who is saying 'I'm the guy' can come in and even get even a

second-place finish."

Yet, in the three months since he announced his bid for a comeback, Trump has not set foot in Iowa, the first place his claim of party dominance will be tested early next year.

To be sure, Trump is making moves in Iowa. On Monday, his team announced it

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DEATHS, B4

Coleen McCoy Cook Reyling
Virginia Jackson Champion
Daniel H. Cromer III
John Henry Johnson Jr.
Bobby J. Pollard
Bobby Spann

Willie Lee Burton
Ramona Thompson Brooks
Crystal Michelle Richburg
Elijah Miller Sr.
Marion Henry

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BREEZY BUT WARM

Breezy in the morning; mostly cloudy and mild tonight

HIGH 78, LOW 58

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Sumter County Gallery of Art to celebrate 20 years in Cultural Center with 3rd collection exhibition

BY ALAYSHA MAPLE
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The Sumter County Gallery of Art will celebrate 20 years in the Sumter County Cultural Center with its third collection of artwork from art collectors throughout the city.

In 2003, the gallery moved from the Elizabeth White house on North Main to the “modern and wonderful space” at 200 Hasel St. Executive Director Karen Watson described the period of relocation as “exciting” and one of “pride and accomplishment” as the hard work of Roger Ackerman and Katie Levi, who raised the money for the gallery, became a reality.

The first exhibition to celebrate the relocation was Sumter Collects, an exhibition of art collected by Sumterites, curated by Kay Teer, then-executive director Booth Chilcutt and Peggy Chilcutt, artistic director. In 2013, Sumter Collects II exhibition was curated to celebrate 10 years in the Hasel Street location.

Now, a decade later, the gallery will keep the tradition alive by celebrating 20 years with Sumter Collects III.

Watson thinks this will be “the best Sumter Collects exhibition thus far!” She and curator and assistant director Eric Lachance have visited 30 homes of art collectors throughout the city to present a comprehensive collection of traditional and contemporary paintings, sculpture, fine decorative items, limited-edition prints, photography



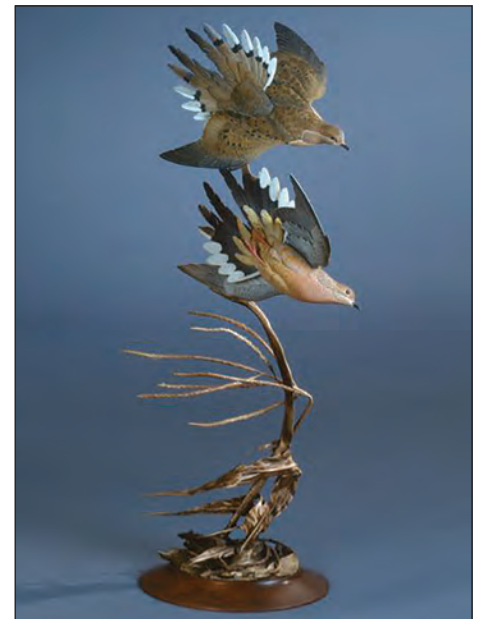
and, for the first time, furniture. Lachance, who has knowledge of industrial and functional design, will open the docket up to include furniture pieces of note. The subject of such artwork will appeal to everyone, Watson said, from landscapes, abstracts and florals to portraits and narrative paintings.

There are a number of Sumterites who have loaned their artwork for the public to browse as “Sumter Collects III is by, for, and about Sumterites and our community,” Watson said.

Watson also thanks its sponsors for their generosity, including presenting sponsor Deane and Roger Ackerman



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PHOTOS PROVIDED

Sumter Collects III is an exhibit of works on loan from a number of Sumterites at the Sumter County Gallery of Art.

Thompson Turner Construction.

The exhibition will be open to the public at 11 a.m. Friday, Feb. 24, at 200 Hasel St. There will be a catered opening reception on Thursday, Feb. 23, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. for gallery members and collectors only.

Anyone interested in attending the reception can renew their gallery membership or become a member of the gallery Thursday evening upon arrival.

Colligo Coffee opens brick-and-mortar on Bultman Drive

Plant Haven joins in with 2nd location

BY SHELBY GOULDING
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Sumter coffee lovers now have a new place to enjoy a cup of joe with a homelike atmosphere.

Nestled at 724 Bultman Drive, adjacent to J.J. Hardee, is Colligo Coffee's brick-and-mortar, a project that has been in the works since last fall.

In September 2022, Jake Gary, owner of Colligo Coffee, shared his plans with *The Sumter Item* to construct a home base for his coffee that was served for a long time at the American Legion Farmers Market.

Gary's passion for the coffee bean began back at home in Texas, where he worked at numerous coffee shops. When he came to Sumter, he knew the community could use a local source for caffeine and a place to gather.

“I'm super excited to see people kind of gathering together, which the name means — in Latin — to gather together, so it's really cool to sit back and just watch people



Colligo Coffee, 724 Bultman Drive, is packed with customers at its brick-and-mortar grand opening on Feb. 18. Besides coffee concoctions, the shop sells pastries from Brubaker's Café & Bakery and serves as a second location for Plant Haven.

PHOTOS BY SHELBY GOULDING / THE SUMTER ITEM



gather together,” Gary said, “to enjoy the coffee and sit with friends.” Colligo Coffee serves a signature

blend of coffee roasted from Indah Coffee, of Columbia, South Carolina. Since serving his creations at the farmers

market in the soft opening two weeks ago, Gary said the most popular drink is the Steamy Bean, an espresso concoction made with Colligo cream, a secret recipe infused with cinnamon, he said.

On Feb. 18, Gary held a grand opening for the shop where they served about 225 drinks from opening time to 1 p.m., he said. It was a nonstop grind for his baristas. Customers filled inside the shop and outside for the full-day event, which included door prizes, free coffee drawings, a

ribbon cutting and fellowship.

Gary introduced a full menu with different coffee and tea options. Another popular drink was the affogato, espresso and ice cream.

He also had pastries from Brubaker's Café & Bakery and Colligo Coffee merchandise on display and available for purchase.

Gary said he teamed up with his competition for baked goods because he likes to think of the non-chain coffee shops as friends in the in-



Shannon Strickler, left, owner of Plant Haven, and Jake Gary, owner of Colligo Coffee, are all smiles at the ribbon cutting for Colligo Coffee's grand opening.

dustry. Purchasing the baked goods from a local source also allowed him to focus on what's important to Colligo: the coffee and its quality.

“I love local supporting local,” he said.

Joining Gary was also Plant Haven owner Shannon Strickler, a partner in the brick-and-mortar who uses the space as a second location for her green thumb business headquartered at 1140 Broad St.

Not only does it give Strickler another location to sell succulents and house plants, but it's also a place to showcase how her greenery can make a space feel cozy.

“This has been a long time coming, and at the same time, I'm so glad it's here,” Strickler said. “What's nice about it is next week when you come in, it will look totally different because you'll have different plants.”

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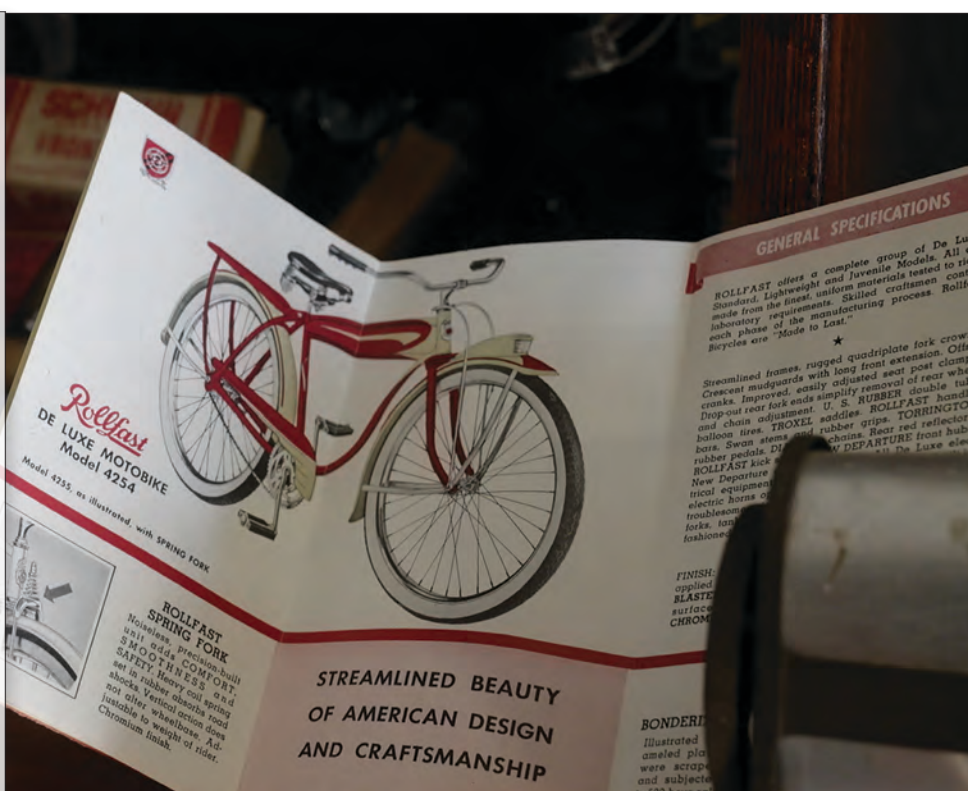



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Alice Drive Middle named state winner for national STEM contest

10 national finalists to be named in May by Samsung

BY BRUCE MILLS
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A Sumter School District school will represent the entire state of South Carolina in a national STEM competition.

Alice Drive Middle School was selected as the state winner in the 13th-annual Samsung Solve for Tomorrow STEM competition and will receive \$12,000 in prize money for technology and school supplies. The school is focusing on a solution that will help sustain biodiversity and natural habitats in the City of Sumter for the competition, according to a news release.

The annual Samsung competition challenges public school students in grades 6-12 to explore the role science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) subject matter play in addressing issues of vital concern in their local communities. Project goals include for participating students to engage in active, hands-on learning that can be applied to real-world problems — making STEM more tangible and illustrating its value beyond the classroom.

In December, the 40 Miller Road school was named as a top-five state finalist in the



PHOTO PROVIDED

Alice Drive Middle School's state championship team in the Samsung Solve for Tomorrow STEM competition is shown last week in a classroom at the school.

competition.

"Every year, Samsung Solve for Tomorrow entries provide a unique snapshot of the concerns and issues on the minds of America's students — identifying what they perceive as pressing community issues they want to help solve," said Ann Woo, senior director, Corporate Citizenship, Samsung Electronics America. "This year, what stood out for us was how frequently global issues of environmental sustainability found relevance in a local community issue our students wanted to address. Fully a quarter of all submissions fell into that category, followed by safety issues for schools and communities, water conservation and mental and physical health."

Overall, \$2 million in prizes will be awarded during

this year's edition of Solve for Tomorrow.

Alice Drive Middle and the other state winners must submit a three-minute video demonstrating how they are using STEM to address the issue raised in their lesson plan.

The school's STEM lead teacher is Marina Mosneaguta, who is better known as "Dr. M" at the school.

Based on those video submissions, the field of 50 will be whittled down to 10 national finalists who will pitch their project to a team of judges during an in-person event in May.

Samsung employees will once again serve as mentors. They will be assigned to the state winners on a one-to-one basis to help guide teams as they develop their projects and build a prototype.

Volunteers for Guardian ad Litem program needed, free online training Feb. 27

BY ASHLEY MILLER
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The need for volunteers advocating for abused or neglected children is still at an all-time high in the tri-county area, and residents are encouraged to join the free training program to become an advocate.

The online training will be held on Monday, Feb. 27, through The Cass Elias McCarter Guardian ad Litem Program, which will be available to Lee, Clarendon and Sumter residents who have a concern for victims of child abuse and neglect.

"A volunteer guardian ad litem once told me, 'Kids want to be listened to and know that you care,' and right now our biggest challenge is finding enough volunteers in our local communities who can do just that for every child we serve," said Cassandra Hilton with the S.C. Department of Children's Advocacy Guardian ad Litem Program.

According to a news release, the Guardian ad Litem Program was founded in 1984 and offers free training courses throughout South Carolina at various times during the year to teach community volunteers how to advocate as guardians ad litem for abused and neglected children who are involved in family court legal proceedings through the Department of Social Services. It is a division of the South Carolina Department of Children's Advocacy, an independent state agency led

by Director and State Child Advocate Amanda Whittle.

"As a volunteer guardian ad litem, you have a direct effect on the lives of children by advocating for them in the courtroom and ensuring their voice is heard," Hilton said.

Hilton is asking people over the age of 21 who have a clean criminal record and no previous DSS case history and can spare four to five hours a month to take part and "change a child's life." Potential volunteers will go through a background check.

Once approved, volunteers will complete a 30-hour training during six weeks, and once appointed to a child by a judge, volunteers get to know the child and everyone involved in the child's life to better understand the child and their needs. The volunteer will then give recommendations to the court, which helps the judge make an informed decision about the child's future, according to Hilton.

"GAL volunteers provide a stable presence in a child's life, remaining on each case until the child is placed in a safe, permanent home," the release said.

Residents interested in becoming a volunteer must have an application submitted by Feb. 25. For more information and to download the application, visit www.gal.sc.gov.

To learn more about volunteer and training opportunities, call Hilton at (803) 530-9190.

'Afternoon of World Music' to be held Feb. 26 at First Presbyterian Church

BY ALAYSHA MAPLE
 alaysha@theitem.com

The Woman's Afternoon Music Club invites the public to its annual — and newly named — music program on Sunday, Feb. 26.

For more than 100 years, the club has shared its expertise and talents in music with the Sumter community through monthly meetings and annual music programs. After its first "Afternoon of Sacred Music" concert since COVID-19 in March 2022, the ensemble is back with this annual program, featuring a new name.

Now called "Afternoon of World Music," this year's program will focus on music from around the world, as early as the Renaissance to present

day. Through music, audience members will travel the European continent — from France to Germany to Italy and Spain before moving on to Serbia. The program will also include traditional Jewish, American Jazz and hymns before ending with a rousing South African song, said Lauren Decker, chairwoman of the program committee.

Alongside members of the club's ensemble, Kipper Ackerman, Joni Brown, Lauren Decker, Caroline Mack, Annette Matthews, Kay Rasmussen, Elizabeth Ryan, Jane Luther Smith, Hamilton Stoddard, Emmett Anglin and Eddie Huss will also perform.

The program will begin at 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 26, at First Presbyterian Church, 9 W. Calhoun St. The event is free and open to the public.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

A public meeting is scheduled for Friday, March 24, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. for public schools, private schools, parents, and citizens of Sumter School District to provide information and gather feedback and make recommendations regarding the development of the 2023-2024 Federal Programs projects. Sumter School District Administrative Office (1345 Wilson Hall Road)

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Record 6,542 guns intercepted at U.S. airport security in '22

BY REBECCA SANTANA
Associated Press

ATLANTA — The woman flying out of Philadelphia's airport last year remembered to pack snacks, prescription medicine and a cellphone in her handbag. But what was more important was what she forgot to unpack: a loaded .380-caliber handgun in a black holster.

The weapon was one of the 6,542 guns the Transportation Security Administration intercepted last year at airport checkpoints across the country. The number — roughly 18 per day — was an all-time high for guns intercepted at U.S. airports and is sparking concern at a time when more Americans are armed.

"What we see in our checkpoints really reflects what we're seeing in society, and in society there are more people carrying firearms nowadays," TSA administrator David Pekoske said.

With the exception of pandemic-disrupted 2020, the number of weapons intercepted at airport checkpoints has climbed every year since 2010. Experts don't think this is an epidemic of would-be hijackers — nearly everyone caught claims to have forgotten they had a gun with them — but they emphasize the danger even one gun can pose in the wrong hands on a plane or at a checkpoint.

Guns have been intercepted literally from Burbank, California, to Bangor, Maine. But it tends to happen more at bigger airports in areas with laws more friendly to carrying a gun, Pekoske said.

The top 10 list for gun interceptions in 2022 includes Dallas, Austin and Houston in Texas; three airports in Florida; Nashville, Tennessee; Atlanta; Phoenix; and Denver.

Pekoske isn't sure the "I forgot" excuse is always true or whether it's a natural reaction to getting caught. Regardless, he said, it's a problem that must stop.

When TSA staffers see what they think to be a weapon on the X-ray machine, they usually stop the belt so the bag stays inside the machine and the passenger can't get to it. Then they call in local police.

Repercussions vary depending on local and state laws. The person may be arrested and have the gun confiscated. But sometimes they're allowed to give the gun to a companion not flying with them and continue on their way. Unloaded guns can also be placed in checked bags assuming they follow proper procedures. The woman in Philadelphia saw her gun confiscated and was slated to be fined.

Those federal fines are the TSA's tool to punish those who bring a gun to a checkpoint. Last year TSA raised the maximum fine to \$14,950 as a deterrent. Passengers also lose their PreCheck status — it allows them to bypass some types of screening — for five years. It used to be three years, but about a year ago the agency increased the time and changed the rules. Passengers may also miss their flight as well as lose their gun. If federal officials can prove the



A television displays a "no guns" sign at the Transportation Security Administration security area at the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport on Jan. 25, 2023, in Atlanta.

AP FILE PHOTO

person intended to bring the gun past the checkpoint into what's called the airport's sterile area, it's a federal offense.

Retired TSA official Keith Jeffries said gun interceptions can also slow other passengers in line.

"It's disruptive no matter what," Jeffries said. "It's a dangerous, prohibited item and, let's face it, you should know where your gun is at, for crying out loud."

Experts and officials say the rise in gun interceptions simply reflects that more Americans are carrying guns.

The National Shooting Sports Foundation, an industry trade group, tracks FBI data about background checks completed for a firearm sale. The numbers were a little more than 7 million in 2000 and about 16.4 million last year. They went even higher during the coronavirus pandemic.

For the TSA officers searching for prohibited items, it can be jarring.

In Atlanta, Janecia Howard was monitoring the X-ray machine when she realized she was looking at a gun in a passenger's laptop bag. She immediately flagged it as a "high-threat" item and police were notified.

Howard said it felt like her heart dropped, and she was worried the passenger might try to get the gun. It turns out the passenger was a very apologetic businessman who said he simply forgot. Howard says she understands travel can be stressful but that people have to take care when they're

getting ready for a flight.

"You have to be alert and pay attention," she said. "It's your property."

Atlanta's airport, one of the world's busiest with roughly 85,000 people going through checkpoints on a busy day, had the most guns intercepted in 2022 — 448 — but that number was actually lower than the year before. Robert Spinden, the TSA's top official in Atlanta, says the agency and the airport made a big effort in 2021 to try to address the large number of guns being intercepted at checkpoints.

An incident in November 2021 reinforced the need for their efforts. A TSA officer noticed a suspected gun in a passenger's bag. When the officer opened the suitcase the man reached for the gun, and it went off. People ran for the exits, and the airport was shut down for 2 1/2 hours, the airport's general manager Balram Bheodari said during a congressional hearing last year.

Officials put in new signage to catch the attention of gun owners. A hologram over a checkpoint shows the image of a revolving blue gun with a red circle over the gun with a line through it. Numerous 70-inch television screens flash rotating messages that guns are not allowed.

"There's signage all over the airport. There is announcements, holograms, TVs. There's quite a bit of information that is sort of flashing before your eyes to just try to remind you as a last-ditch effort that if you do own a firearm, do you know where it's at?" Spinden said.

In experiment, zaps to spine help 2 stroke survivors move arms

BY LAURAN NEERGAARD
AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON — A stroke left Heather Rendulic with little use of her left hand and arm, putting certain everyday tasks like tying shoes or cutting foods out of reach.

"I live one-handed in a two-handed world, and you don't realize how many things you need two hands for until you only have one good one," the Pittsburgh woman told The Associated Press.

So Rendulic volunteered for a first-of-its-kind experiment: Researchers implanted a device that zaps her spinal cord in spots that control hand and arm motion. When they switched it on, she could grasp and manipulate objects — moving a soup can, opening a lock and by the end of the four-week study, cutting her own steak.

It's not a cure — the improvements ended after scientists removed the temporary implant — and the pilot study included only Rendulic and one other stroke survivor. But the preliminary results, published Monday, mark a step toward one day restoring mobility for this extremely common type of paralysis.

"They're not just getting flickers of movement. They're getting something important," said Dr. Jason Carmel, a Columbia University neurologist who wasn't involved with the new experiment but also studies ways to recover upper-limb function. "It's a very exciting proof of concept."

Nearly 800,000 people in the U.S. alone suffer a stroke each year. Even after months of rehabilitation, well over half are left with permanently impaired arm and hand function that can range from muscle weakness to paralysis.

Experiments by multiple research groups have found that implanting electrodes to stimulate the lower spine shows promise for restoring leg and foot movement to people paralyzed after a spinal cord injury — some have even taken steps.

But upper-limb paralysis has gotten little attention and is inherently more challenging. The brain must signal multiple nerves that control how the shoulder lifts, the wrist turns and the hand flexes. Stroke damage makes it harder for those messages to get through.

"People still retain some of this connection, they're just

not enough to enable movement," said University of Pittsburgh assistant professor Marco Capogrosso, who led the new research with colleagues at Carnegie Mellon University. "These messages are weaker than normal."

His idea: Stimulate a pathway of related nerve cells so they're better able to sense and pick up the brain's weak signal.

"We're not bypassing their control. We're enhancing their capabilities to move their own arm," he said.

Researchers turned to implants the size of spaghetti strands that already are used to stimulate the spine for chronic pain treatment. The implants carry electrodes that

are placed on the surface of the spinal cord to deliver pulses of electricity to the targeted nerve cells — which for hand and arm control are in the spine's neck region.

Rendulic and a second, more severely impaired volunteer could move better as soon as the stimulator was switched on — and by the study's end showed improved muscle strength, dexterity and range of motion, researchers reported Monday in the journal *Nature Medicine*. Surprisingly, both participants retained some improvement for about a month after the implants were removed.

Rendulic, now 33, was performing some fine-motor tasks for the first time since

suffering a stroke in her 20s. That unusually young stroke, caused by weak blood vessels that bled inside her brain, initially paralyzed her entire left side. She learned to walk again but — with the exception of those four weeks with spinal stimulation — cannot fully open her left hand or completely raise that arm.

"You feel like there's a barrier between your brain and your arm," Rendulic said. But with the stimulation on, "I could immediately sense that, like, oh my arm and hand are still there."

Two other researchers who helped pioneer experiments restimulating the lower limbs of people with spinal cord injuries say it's logical to now try

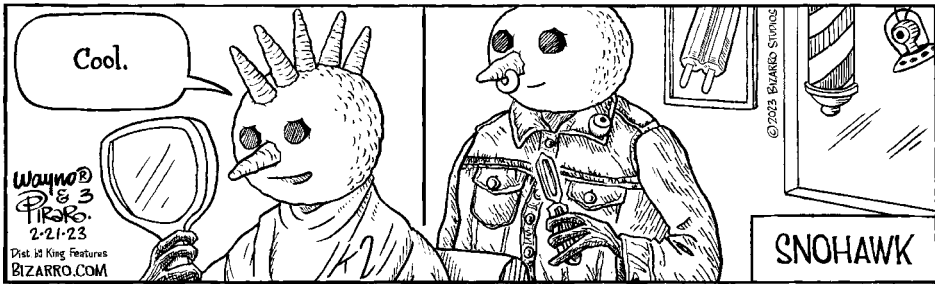
the technology for stroke.

While bigger and longer studies are needed, the new results "are really promising," said Mayo Clinic assistant professor Peter Grahn.

Scientists have learned from research with lower limbs that "it may not matter where that injury occurs, if it's something in the brain or it's a spinal cord injury," added University of Louisville professor Susan Harkema. "Targeting the human spinal cord circuitry has a lot of potential."

With National Institutes of Health funding, Capogrosso is studying the approach in a few more stroke survivors. The researchers also have formed a company to further develop the technology.

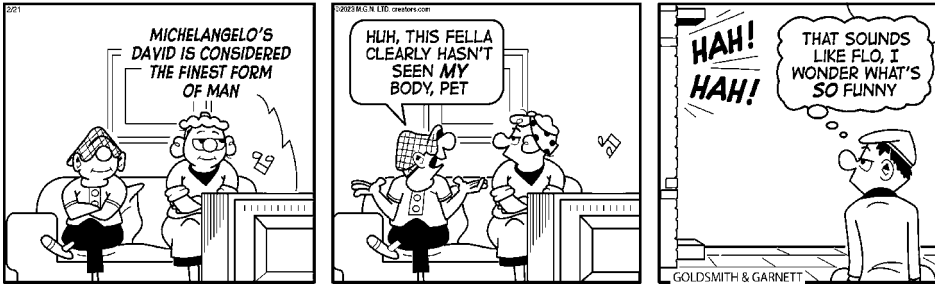
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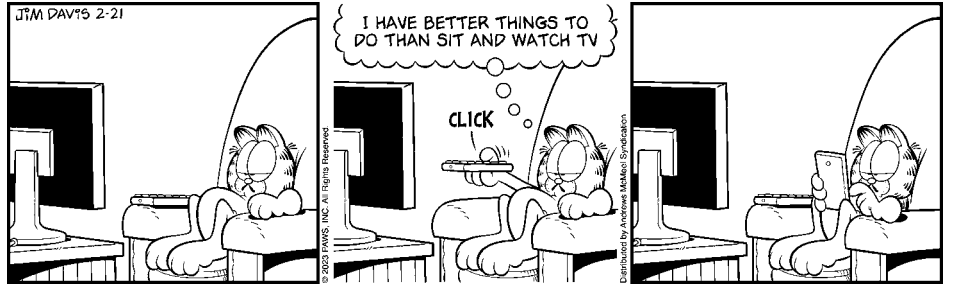
WALLACE THE BRAVE



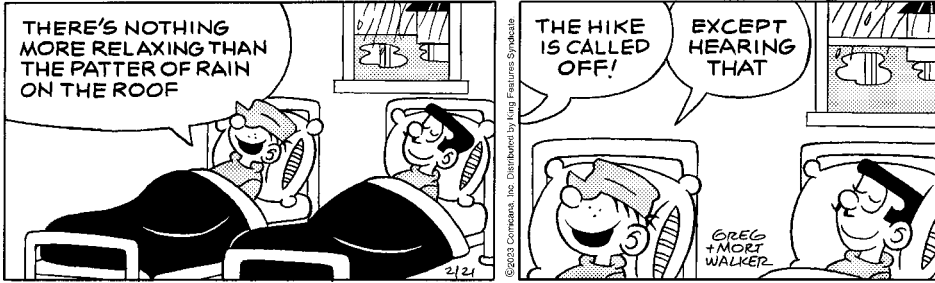
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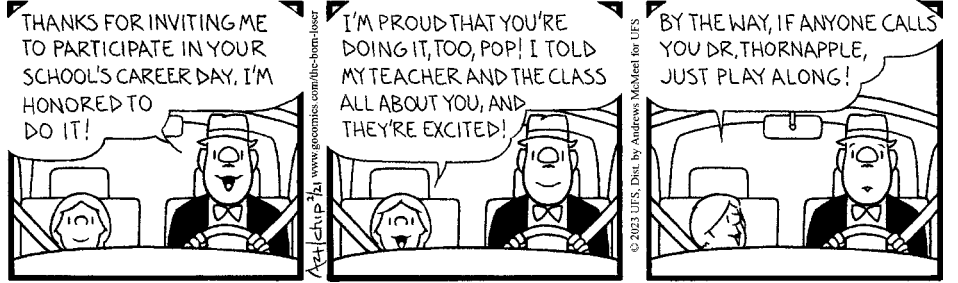
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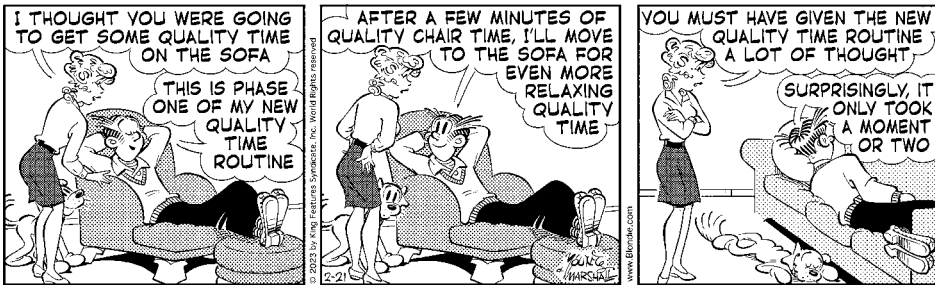
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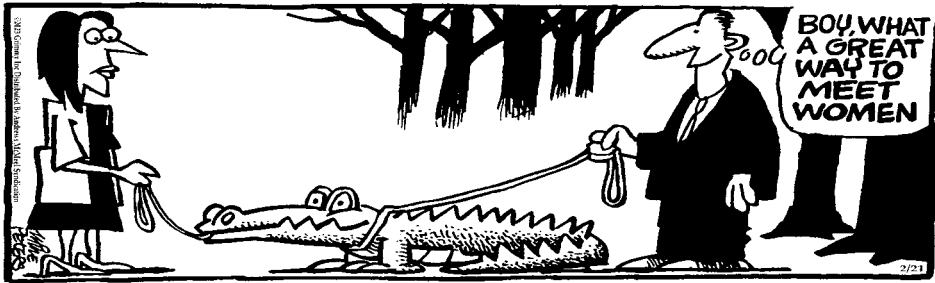
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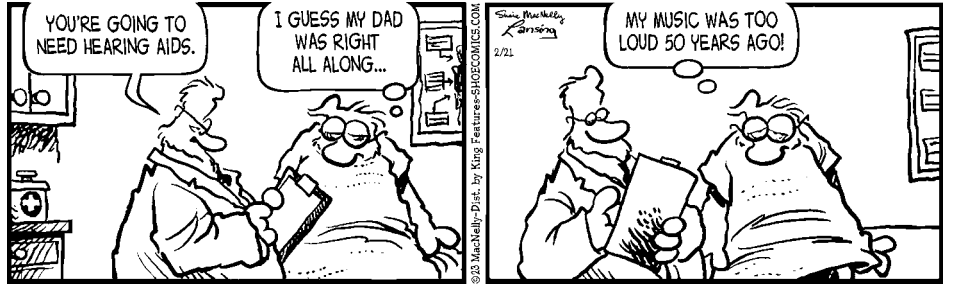
HERB AND JAMAAL



DILBERT



JEFF MACNELLY'S SHOE



Betrayal wrecks marriage at beginning of retirement



Dear Abby
ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY — I'm in mourning for my husband. He's still alive, but he up and left six months ago and sent me a text saying he's done. He is living with another

counselor seems to think he is leaving the door open to one day return. He still comes once a month to pay the bills. However, when he does, he doesn't want me there. He texts to make sure I will be gone for a few hours, so I leave.

think he is going to come walking back in like nothing happened?
Abandoned in Minnesota

woman. I didn't see it coming. We were planning our retirement move up to our cabin. One weekend he kicked me out of the cabin, and three hours later had her join him there.

I miss him, but I can't get beyond the pain and betrayal. He has lost a ton of weight and looks terrible. He has aged so much. He's 66, clinically depressed and an alcoholic. He's also a narcissist. He would never admit he did something wrong; it was always "my fault." I never knew what I would be facing after work.

DEAR ABANDONED — I hope not! And if he did show up, why on Earth would you want him back? (Frankly, I am surprised that your therapist would suggest you would open the door to him.) You are free. Consult an attorney, clear out the physical and emotional debris in your life and enjoy it.

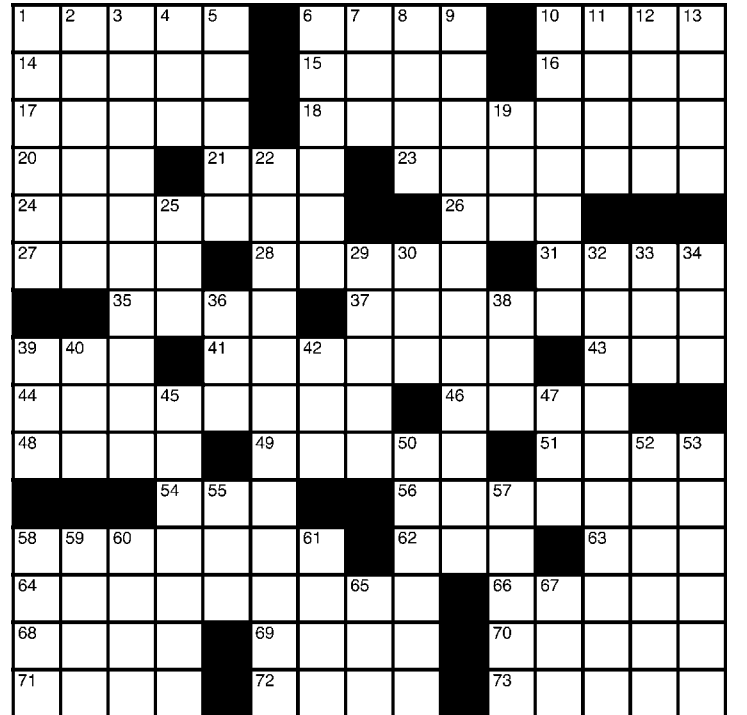
I feel so lost. At this point, I don't want him back because I feel he has committed the ultimate betrayal. I have started counseling because I'm so confused, grieving and upset. My

I'm still in the house and slowly packing up his clutter that I was never allowed to touch. (He is a hoarder.) I'm lonely, but I'm enjoying my peace. We don't communicate at all. My question is, do you

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

THE DAILY CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Erica Hsiung Wojcik

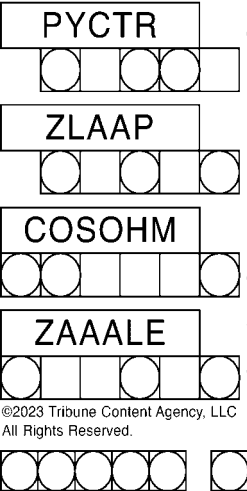
2/8/22

- ACROSS**
- 1 Opera solos
 - 6 Afrobeat pioneer Fela
 - 10 Atlas pages
 - 14 Birdcage feature
 - 15 Part of, as a plan
 - 16 __ vera
 - 17 Creamy dip for French fries
 - 18 Attractive person with gray hair
 - 20 Anderson Cooper's channel
 - 21 Female sib
 - 23 Like some restrictions
 - 24 Pea soup flavor
 - 26 Hit the slopes
 - 27 Genesis twin
 - 28 Many a Farsi speaker
 - 31 Singer Simone
 - 35 Hep "Gotcha"
 - 37 Scripture-related
 - 39 Perform a simple operation?
 - 41 Safe to drink
 - 43 Org. that ensures water is 41-Across
 - 44 No-win situations?
 - 46 Medical checkup
 - 48 Singer Del Rey
 - 49 Greek theater
 - 51 Scandinavian people
 - 54 "Encanto" songwriter
 - 56 Recorder mounted to a windshield
 - 58 Dawn on
 - 62 Political org. with a donkey symbol
 - 63 Stashed
 - 64 "I can be better"
 - 66 __ acid
 - 68 Speech therapy subject
 - 69 Average gestation period for a dolphin
 - 70 Button on a library app
 - 71 Vow
 - 72 "This might be broken" shorthand
 - 73 No-nonsense
 - 9 *Ralph Ellison novel about the Black American experience
 - 10 "Dirty" cocktail
 - 11 Automaker
 - 12 Shoddy
 - 13 Erotic
 - 19 Shriek of fear
 - 22 *Fencer seeking revenge in "The Princess Bride"
 - 25 Future flower
 - 29 Demean
 - 30 Quill tip
 - 32 *Noisy amenity in a motel hallway
 - 33 Siesta
 - 34 In the style of
 - 36 Bitter brew, briefly
 - 38 Supervillain
 - 39 Georgia airport: Abbr.
 - 40 Part of una semana
 - 42 Actor Danson
 - 45 Walk oafishly, like the Jabberwock slayer
 - 47 Campfire residue
 - 50 Calf feeders
 - 52 Pine Tree State resident
 - 53 "Count me in!" or an apt description of the answers to the starred clues
 - 55 Burning anger
 - 57 Surgery marks
 - 58 Norway's capital
 - 59 __ seeds: smoothie choice
 - 60 Assign to a role
 - 61 Small bills
 - 65 __ tai: cocktail
 - 67 Came together

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.



THE BIVALVE WAS RELAXING ON THE REEF AND WAS ---

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

Yesterday's Jumbles: MOUTH FUNNY SCENIC MEADOW
Answer: The people who decided to put Abraham Lincoln on a coin had a lot of — COMMON "CENTS"

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

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ☆☆☆☆☆

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

Previous Puzzle Solved



VIOLENCE

FROM PAGE A1

on the law enforcement side is victims and witnesses not coming forward with information.

"We're in the dark. People don't want to give us video footage of anything because they're afraid of retaliation," he said. "The main purpose of that meeting was to ask the community for some help. It's their community; we want to help them any way we can to stop the violence."

During the meeting, Phillips asked the community to provide him with their suggestions on how law enforcement could assist. He promised that he would take the time to work through the suggestions that could lead to an arrest.

"That's what my job is. To stop this stuff," he stated.

What really led Phillips to meet with the neighborhood association was a recent call from a resident who shared how afraid she was to go outside and even boarded up her

windows and doors for protection.

"I have an issue with that," Phillips said. "People should not have to live in fear like that for their own safety and in their own home. That is your home. That is your safe haven."

One member suggested putting a sheriff's office substation back in the area, which was previously placed on Manning Avenue, to have officers more established in the area.

Phillips agreed with the suggestion but said deputies are always on the go when it comes to patrol and cannot sit in one place for too long. He also noted there is a shortage across the country for law enforcement, making it even more difficult to have an operating substation.

Another Turkey Creek resident suggested more patrol presence in the area at night when there's more activity.

"Most definitely presence, and that's what we've been doing," Phillips said. "We'll go into the area, we'll be present in those areas, but as soon as we leave, it happens."

According to reports, the crimes occur most between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. However, more recently, they've occurred in the middle of the day. Phillips said the last two or three shootings took place in daylight.

"It makes it challenging," Phillips said, not having a pattern to follow. Property crimes tend to have a pattern and can be planned for, but violent crimes like a shooting are at random and hard to track or preplan for, according to Phillips.

A member asked Phillips if there was anything they could do as residents to assist in solving the problem, and he encouraged them to be watchdogs for unknown individuals, suspicious cars driving slowly and other things that look out of place in their community.

He encourages the community to contact him directly for information if not the sheriff's office non-emergency line.

"If you see something, say something. If you see a suspicious car riding around, call us. Let us come check it out. It can be anonymous,"

he said. "Just communally be more vigilant on what's happening in the area."

However, in the case of an emergency, residents should call 911.

"My main purpose is to try and build a relationship back with the community to show we're here to help; we're not here to be bad police. This is y'all's community, and we want to make y'all's community safe," Phillips said. "Because this is unacceptable."

Some arrests have been made in connection to the Turkey Creek and Mooneyham area violent crimes, but both the Sumter County Sheriff's Office and Sumter Police Department continue to seek information and follow leads for other possible suspects as shootings and other violent crimes continue in the area.

If you have any information pertaining to these crimes that could lead to an arrest, you are encouraged to contact the Sumter County Sheriff's Office at (803) 436-2000 or Crime Stoppers 1-888-CRIME-SC.

MURDAUGH

FROM PAGE A1

In the summer, she preferred the beach to the family's inland hunting estate, Moselle, where Murdaugh generally stayed. It was hot and buggy, and on June 7, there'd been people working on the beach house, according to her sister, Marian Proctor, and her text message records.

She decided to trust the workers to lock up and go to Moselle anyway. Murdaugh's father was in poor health, and that day, he was readmitted to the hospital, apparently near death. Proctor urged her sister to go to be with her husband and support him. She thought the couple planned to visit Murdaugh's parents.

But contrary to what Murdaugh told SLED agents months later, the idea of coming home was not hers alone. Maggie's text messages indicate that Murdaugh asked her to come back. And Proctor testified that when she talked to her sister around 4 p.m. that day, Maggie told her Murdaugh "needed her to come back."

She didn't speak with her sister again.

AFTER DINNER

Murdaugh to SLED agent and a sheriff's deputy, the night of the killings: "I was up at the house. I laid down, took a nap on the couch probably 25-30 minutes."

Murdaugh to SLED agents, June 10: "It wasn't much time between me waking up and me leaving the house."

Murdaugh, asked by SLED agents Aug. 11 if he'd been to the Moselle property's dog kennels that night: "At 9 p.m.? No sir."

Law partner Ronnie Crosby, on whether Murdaugh told him he'd gone to the kennels: "He specifically said that he did not."

Proctor knew Murdaugh had a habit of dozing off on

the couch after work, so the story he told after the killings was not out of place.

Murdaugh told police, his law partners and Maggie's mother that he'd fallen asleep, while either watching TV or scrolling on his phone, according to witness testimony and recorded statements.

He gave similar information to the 911 dispatcher and the first Colleton County sheriff's deputy to arrive on scene. He told each of them it had been some time — roughly two hours — from when he last saw Maggie and Paul to when he found them dead. That timeline correlates to when they left after dinner to visit the dog kennels.

Murdaugh's phone was conspicuously quiet for nearly an hour — from 8:10 p.m. to 9:02 p.m. — though he normally used it heavily. That would seem to bolster the nap story, but investigators came to think Murdaugh had actually joined Maggie and Paul at the kennels.

At 8:40 p.m., Paul talked on the phone with a close friend, Rogan Gibson, whose puppy Cash he was looking after. Gibson, who said he considered the Murdaughs a second family, wanted Paul to show him an injury his dog might have suffered. He heard Maggie in the background of the call; he was sure of that, and he later told police he was fairly certain he heard Alex Murdaugh's voice, too.

It took months for investigators to get access to Paul's cellphone, but when they got in, they found a video he'd taken of Cash at 8:45 p.m. Several witnesses — Paul's friends, one of Murdaugh's law partners, his brother-in-law and his dogs' caretaker — have said they recognize Murdaugh's voice in the background.

Yet when his law partners asked him if he'd been to the kennels, Murdaugh said no, according to Crosby. He gave the same answer when SLED agents asked him the question point-blank in August.

Prosecutors have estimated the time Maggie and Paul were killed by tracking when they stopped answering calls, responding to messages and otherwise using their phones. They did not put forward testimony from a coroner or pathologist to estimate their times of death by any other means.

Their phones' activity ended when each locked around 8:49 p.m.

Murdaugh left the house at 9:06 p.m. to visit his mother.

HOUSE CALL

Murdaugh to the first responding officer on June 7: "I was probably gone an hour and a half for my mom's."

Murdaugh, asked by SLED agents Aug. 11 how often he visited his mother late at night: "It wasn't infrequent. It wasn't all the time. I mean, I visited her all times of day."

Murdaugh's mother, Libby, was suffering severe Alzheimer's disease in June 2021, and she had two caregivers to watch after her around the clock at her home, about a 20-minute drive from Moselle. Shelley Smith worked the night shift.

She said it was odd to receive visitors on her shift, which started around 8 p.m. She testified Murdaugh may have come see his mother at night before, but it was an unusual occurrence. He told police he felt compelled to go comfort his mother since his father had gone to the hospital, though the woman was asleep when he arrived.

CAUCUS

FROM PAGE A1

had named a state campaign director, Marshall Moreau, who managed the 2022 campaign of Republican attorney general candidate Brenna Bird. Bird defeated Democrat Tom Miller, who had been the longest-serving attorney general in the country, first elected in 1978.

Trump has maintained an Iowa political presence, with a national campaign team member, Alex Latcham, based in the state. But Trump held a kickoff rally on Jan. 28 in South Carolina, where his 2016 primary victory sealed his status as GOP frontrunner. And he squeezed in a speaking spot earlier that day at the annual state GOP meeting in New Hampshire, where he also won the first-in-the-nation primary seven years ago.

Though the caucuses remain nearly a year off, they remain the first event on the calendar, and some Iowa GOP activists have taken notice of Trump's absence.

"I found that quite interesting," Gloria Mazza, chairwoman of the Polk County GOP, said of Trump's New Hampshire and South Carolina stops. "Because Iowa is first in the nation, doesn't everybody come here first?"

Meanwhile, others are making inroads.

Though Pence is not yet a candidate, his advocacy group Advancing American Values last week launched a

campaign to organize opposition to school policies like one in an eastern Iowa district that has become a flashpoint among conservatives.

Pence was in Cedar Rapids on Wednesday rallying opponents of a policy by the nearby Linn-Mar Community School District that's at issue in a federal lawsuit. The school board last year enacted a measure allowing transgender students to request a gender support plan to begin socially transitioning at school without the permission of their parents.

The issue, an early focus of 2024 Republican presidential prospects, is particularly contentious among Christian conservatives, with whom Pence routinely says he identifies. And at Wednesday's event at a pizza restaurant — it had the feel of an early caucus campaign stop — Pence illustrated its traction.

"We don't co-parent with government," Pence told a cheering audience of more than 100. "We trust parents to protect their children and no one will ever protect America's children better than their moms and dads."

Haley had rallies planned in the Des Moines and Cedar Rapids areas on Monday and Tuesday. Meanwhile, Scott is speaking at an event at Drake University on Wednesday, part of what aides call a national listening tour aimed at informing his plans, before addressing the annual Polk County Republican fundraiser in suburban Des Moines that evening.

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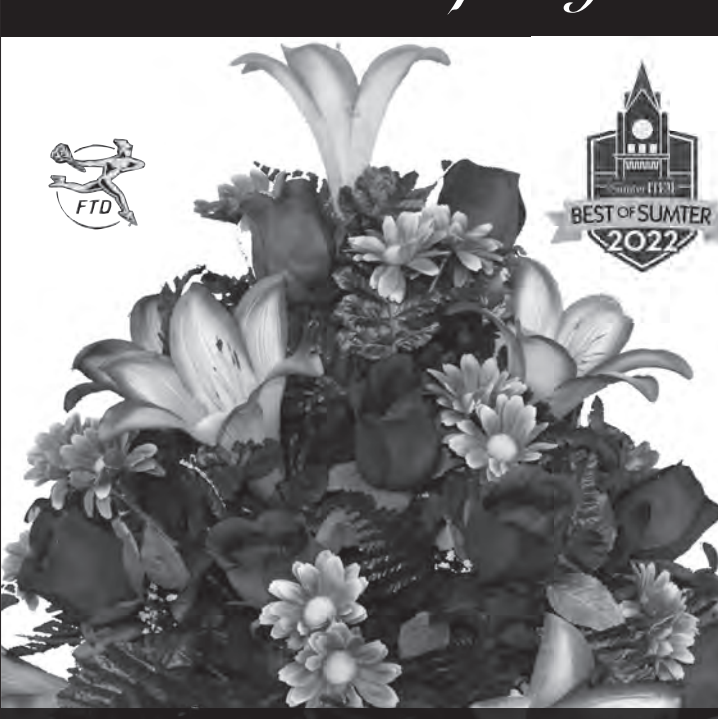
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The Sumter Item is bringing back the Hines Furniture Athlete of the Week contest for the third year. Four finalists are chosen by Item sports staff based on performance from the previous week. Readers can vote once per day at <https://www.theitem.com/athlete-of-the-week-2022> through Wednesday. The winner will be announced in Thursday's paper.

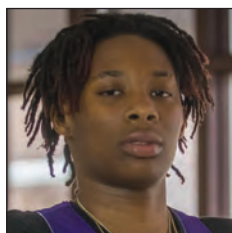
KEZIYAH SANDERS SUMTER HIGH

Sanders averaged 10.1 points along with 10 assists, 10 steals and seven rebounds as the Gamecocks won playoff games against Cane Bay and White Knoll, advancing to the lower state semifinals.



TASHIANA FARMER CRESTWOOD HIGH

Farmer averaged 14 points in playoff wins against Manning and Phillip Simmons as the Lady Knights advanced to the lower state semifinals.



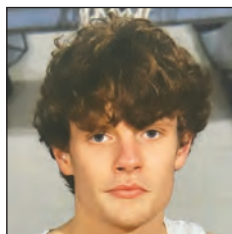
DAVID ROGERS LAKEWOOD HIGH

The freshman wrestler finished fourth at the individual lower state meet in the heavyweight division, qualifying for the state meet.



HUGH HUMPHRIES WILSON HALL

Humphries averaged 11.3 points, eight rebounds and three deflections as the Barons went 2-1 and advanced to the second round of the SCISA 4A playoffs.



PLAYOFF MADNESS

4 tri-county SCHSL squads advance to lower state semis; 4 SCISA teams get out of first round



The Scott's Branch boys basketball team celebrates after beating Whale Branch in the second round of the SCHSL 1A playoffs on Saturday.

CAL CARY / THE SUMTER ITEM

Scott's Branch sinks Whale Branch

BY ISAIAH LUCAS
isaiah@theitem.com

The Scott's Branch boys basketball team continued their journey toward the SCHSL 1A championship against Whale Branch on Saturday. It wasn't an easy game in the slightest for Scott's

Branch, and the majority of the game was closer than the final score, but the Eagles advanced, beating Whale Branch 78-65 in round two of the 1A state playoffs.

"The train is still on the track," head coach

SEE EAGLES, PAGE B2

Lady Knights upset Phillip Simmons

BY TIM LEIBLE
tim@theitem.com

The Crestwood girls basketball team hit the road for the second round of the playoffs, playing No. 1 seed Phillip Simmons. The Lady Knights used a big second quarter to take control of the game and took home a 54-48 win.

"We came out focused and ready to play tonight," head coach Tony Wilson said. "We knew going down to Phillip Simmons, a hostile environment, it was going to be tough, but we came out and played from the start to the finish. Through-

out the game, we had some missed communication, but I was proud of the way the girls fought in a hostile environment."

The first quarter ended deadlocked in a 16-16 tie, but the Lady Knights flipped a switch in the second. Their defense was lights out, as Phillip Simmons managed just eight points. Tashiana Farmer battled through foul trouble to score six in the quarter, leading Crestwood into the half with a 31-24 lead.

"We wanted to mix it up tonight, run some 2-3 zone, some 1-3-1 zone, and we did some half-court trap," Wilson said of Crestwood's defensive game plan. "We mixed it up to throw them off because we knew they had some good guard play. We wanted to trap them and throw them off their rhythm. In the second quarter, that's what we did and went into halftime up."

Crestwood maintained their lead throughout the rest of the game. Saniya Williams stepped up in the third, knocking down a three on her way to seven points in the frame as the Lady Knights went into the fourth with a 42-37 lead.

"The sky is the limit for Saniya because this her first year playing since middle school," Wilson said of Williams, who finished with a team-high 15 points. "I tell her once she gets the rhythm down and get the feel back, she's going to be a really

SEE KNIGHTS, PAGE B2

The Crestwood boys basketball team also advanced to the lower state semifinals with a win over Dreher on Friday. They hosted Lower Richland on Monday for their chance to play for the lower state title. That game was not completed by press time, so head to theitem.com and pick up tomorrow's edition of the paper to read about the game.

Ragin Prep earns 1st playoff win in program history, tops JDA

BY TIM LEIBLE
tim@theitem.com

The firsts keep coming for Ragin Prep.

The Rams are in their first season in a SCISA region, won a regular season region title and made the postseason for the first time even.

On Saturday, they won their first playoff game on their first attempt.

Ragin Prep won a back-and-forth game that turned into a free throw contest with Jefferson Davis on Saturday at the Sumter County Civic Center 57-49. With the win, they advance to face Richard Winn on Tuesday in the second round of the SCISA 1A playoffs.

"We hit just enough," head coach Anthony Jackson said of the 43 free throws the Rams attempted on Saturday. "We missed enough in the beginning of the game. I think a lot of it is we've got a bunch of eighth- and ninth-graders out there, so they're very young. I tried to tell them before the game, 'You have nothing to lose; just live in the moment.'" The first half of the opening

quarter was all Ragin Prep. The young Rams scored the game's first six points, but JDA came right back to tie the game at 8-8 with 2:40 left in the frame. The ensuing two minutes were a battle, with Jefferson Davis taking a 13-10 lead on a pair of free throws from Garrison Hiers. They carried that lead into the second quarter.

Cordell Sims came back and tied the game with a three to open the second frame. Zymir Robinson-Hill then added a layup to take a short-lived lead. JDA punched back only to see Robinson-Hill pop a mid-range jumper before a Tyren McMillian free throw. Hiers responded with a three to tie the game at 18. Colson Loadholt then gave the Raiders a lead with a basket before a series of turnovers by both squads.

Like the start of the quarter, Sims stepped up at the end. He dropped in a layup to tie the game at 20. After Ragin Prep drew a charge, Sims found room on the block and



Ragin Prep's Jamie Richardson handles the ball against Jefferson Davis in the first round of the SCISA 1A playoffs on Saturday.

NICH PITTS / SPECIAL TO THE SUMTER ITEM

SCISA GIRLS SECOND ROUND PLAYED MONDAY

The second round of the SCISA state playoffs were played at multiple host sites Monday night. Locally, 2A No. 3 Lee Academy faced off against No. 2 Patrick Henry at Wilson Hall, while No. 4 Clarendon Hall faced

No. 1 Beaufort Academy. Those games were not completed by press time, so for full results of those games, head to theitem.com and pick up tomorrow's edition of the paper.

SEE RAMS, PAGE B3

KNIGHTS

FROM PAGE B1

good basketball player for us.

"She stepped in and hit some big threes for us. She's getting her confidence levels up."

Phillip Simmons tried to make a late push, hitting a trio of threes in the final frame, but Crestwood took care of business at the charity stripe to close out the game. The Lady Knights made seven of their 10 free throw attempts in the fourth to ice the victory. London Vaughn led the charge with five of her 12 points, three of which came at the line.

"We work on that every day in practice," Wilson said. "Free throws are a big part of the game, so we work on it at least 20 minutes a day. They really stepped up today and knocked down their free throws."

Farmer finished the game with four fouls but still managed to score 11 points in the win. Wilson was proud of the way his All-State forward persevered.

"I told her she has to stay the course," Wilson said. "Some of the fouls were kinda questionable, but she stayed the course and was big down the stretch."

With Farmer in foul trouble, along with Javia Martin, Crestwood needed some unsung heroes to step up. One of

those players was Taliyah Harris, who finished with eight points.

"She stepped up tonight; I was proud of her," Wilson said of Harris. "I told her and Tashiana going into the game that Phillip Simmons doesn't have many big girls, so they should be able to dominate, and that's what they did." While they didn't put points on the board, Wilson also loved what he saw from Joelle Gillins and Janiyah Bradley. "We had a lot of girls that contributed in the game," Wilson said. "We played some different girls at different positions. I was proud of Joelle Gillins. She gave us some big minutes along with Janiyah Bradley and spelled Farmer and Lucy (Javia Martin) at times in the game."

Crestwood now travels to Lower Richland on Tuesday, following a matchup between the boys teams from both schools on Monday. The Lady Knights thought they would be at home based on how the bracket lined up, but they will hit the road as the lower seed. Wilson knows LR will provide a steep challenge.

"They like to full-court man-to-man, put a lot of pressure on the ball," Wilson said. "We need to take care of the ball, we're going to work on that in practice, and get back on defense because they like to run. It'll be a challenge to take care of the ball, but we'll be up for the challenge."

EAGLES

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Kevin Miller said. "Whale Branch, ever since last season when they played Hannah Pamplico in the second round, I was watching that game and thinking they had something going on. When I saw film on them this year, I saw they were a lot better on defense in the halfcourt, so I knew we had to do something to offset that.

"I figured if we could offset it and get late in the game, it would end similar to what you just saw, where we could milk it out. Those kids, man, they put it on their shoulders once again, and they demand to win. I'm blessed to be in this position with these types of guys."

The start of the game was intense. A lot of emotions were displayed from both teams' players, coaches and fans. The scoring was back and forth, and the Eagles had to sit Ernie Calloway and Jordan Kind due to foul trouble. Emorji Stephens came in for Calloway and contributed a quick four points. As a result, the Eagles led 14-12 at the end of the first quarter.

The second quarter was high-scoring, with both teams scoring at least 20 points. Randy "RJ" Gibson had 10 of his 16 first-half points in the quarter. Calloway picked up his third and fourth fouls of the game within seconds of each other and had to sit the majority of the quarter.

Scott's Branch was up by nine early, but the Warriors fought back and made it a 28-25 game. The Eagles extended their lead to seven before it dwindled down to three again. Gibson and Tyler Kind closed the half out strong, combining for six of Scott's Branch's last 10 points to help the Eagles take a 40-32 lead into the break.

Whale Branch made it a 40-37 game in the opening minute. A free throw from Calloway and a putback layup from Jordan Kind put the Eagles back up six. The Eagles led 43-39 before Gibson hit a three to put them up 46-39.

After forcing a turnover with 5:38 to play in the third, momentum shifted in the Eagles' favor, and it was all due to the play of Ernie Calloway. Calloway took over the game for about three minutes, scoring six points and getting an assist to push the Scott's Branch lead to 59-45. The Eagles led 61-50 with just under two minutes to play in the third but allowed for the Warriors to score six unanswered and led 61-56 going into the final eight minutes. "He kind of lost it when he

got that fourth foul," Miller said of Calloway. "We made it to halftime without putting him back in the game, and he came back in fresh. He came back in and went on that run. He played like a beast. He told me, 'Coach I believe. We are built for this.' The boy is a winner, and he trusts what we instilled in him this season, and that showed during that stretch."

A layup by J. Kind was the first basket for the Eagles in the fourth quarter, and a layup by Gibson about two minutes later gave the Eagles a nine-point lead. The Warriors would make a free throw the next possession, and J. Kind responded with a putback attempt to put the Eagles up 67-57. A Whale Branch three-pointer made it a 67-60 game, but that would be the closest the Warriors got to getting back in the game.

Gibson made a nice pass to Chris Barringer for a layup to put the Eagles up nine. Calloway found Kaleb Rolle for a layup to put the Eagles up 11, and then Gibson found Rolle on the next possession to put Scott's Branch up 73-60 and ultimately ice the game with 3:06 remaining. The Eagles would go on to grab their largest lead of the game when they went up 77-61 with under a minute to play.

Gibson led the way with 24 points, J. Kind had 15 points, T. Kind had 14 points, and Calloway finished the game with 11 points.

It was a big game for Rolle, who didn't log many minutes in the Eagles' playoff opener. The junior was called on to step up because of the foul trouble the Eagles faced and did exactly that, finishing with eight points off the bench.

"He only played a couple of minutes last week," Miller explained. "The boy came in and came close to double figures. He played with energy, and he played on fire. That's what you want as a coach, you can reach back and grab somebody and say, 'go get it'. Initially I put him in there because he's a little stocky, and I wanted to match size. He turned out to play really well, especially on defense." Next for the Eagles will be a matchup with the Burke Bulldogs on Tuesday.

"They are Charleston kids, and if you know Charleston, they're gonna come hard and play hard. They will bring a fight to you," Miller explained. "So we will have to be prepared for what they've got. I'll get to watch some film tonight, but people are kind of funny in the Charleston area; they don't like to share a film. To be honest with you, I think we'll be prepared."



Sumter High fans celebrate a three-pointer from Rickell Brown (4) during the Lady Gamecocks' win over Cane Bay in the second round of the SCHSL 5A playoffs on Friday.

CAL CARY / THE SUMTER ITEM

Lady Gamecocks outlast Cane Bay, home matchup with Stall next

BY ISAIAH LUCAS

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The Sumter girls basketball team continued their run in the SCHSL 5A state playoffs on Friday with a second-round matchup against Cane Bay.

It was truly a game of runs, with the Lady Gamecocks having to fight off two separate ones to get the win. In the end, Sumter High had the final run to pull out an 11-1 streak to pull out a 52-38 win.

"Basketball is a game of runs," Lady Gamecock head coach Jeff Schaffer said. "We've talked about that at length. I can't say enough about how proud I am. They came out flat in that third quarter. But in the second quarter and the fourth quarter and the end of the third quarter, we really picked up the defensive pressure and, obviously, that was the difference in the game."

Sumter led 9-6 at the end of the first quarter, and a 10-3 run to close the second quarter gave the Lady Gamecocks a 23-12 lead at halftime. Rickell Brown and Shamira Andrews each had eight points in the opening half.

It was a slow start to the third quarter for Sumter. The Lady Gamecocks didn't score for the first five minutes of the frame. Meanwhile, Cane Bay started the second half strong and went on a 13-2 run to tie the game at 25 with two minutes left in the third quarter. Brown was able to hit a big three for a Sumter response and moved the Lady Gamecocks to a 29-27 lead into the fourth quarter.

Dalashia Brunson and Brown got things started in the fourth quarter on the defensive end for the Lady Gamecocks. As a result, Sumter led by as many as 12 points in

the fourth, but Cane Bay wouldn't go away. The Lady Cobras went on a 6-0 run to turn a 40-28 Sumter lead into a 40-34 Sumter lead with a little over two minutes left to play.

Sumter was able to get stops and then convert free throws to get the lead back up to double digits before closing things out.

Brown finished with a team-high 20 points, and Andrews finished in double figures with 11 points.

The Lady Gamecocks played great in multiple aspects. Most importantly, they were able to contain 5A Player of the Year Alaina Nettles, holding her to just eight points.

The gym was rocking the whole night. The students made their presence felt, and it was the type of environment that makes home court advantageous. Schaffer was pleased with the turnout and the change he's seen in student attendance.

"Our kids are starting to get more involved in the games," Schaffer explained. "They want to come out and support. Last night, it was crazy with the boys game. I would love to see our student body get back to that. We used to have that here years ago. We used to have a big section, it was bigger than what we even had tonight. The more these kids see that they can come out and enjoy things, hopefully that's going to grow. I think the ability for them to get in here and see some of their fellow classmates do stuff, it's special for our kids and obviously we play so much better at home."

Sumter will continue their playoff journey at home on Wednesday as Stall comes to town. The Lady Warriors topped Dutch Fork 69-63 to advance to the game. The winner will play in the lower state championship at the Florence Center on Feb. 27.

Gamecocks fall short against Goose Creek

BY TIM LEIBLE

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Points were exceedingly hard to come by when Sumter High made the trip to Goose Creek on Saturday.

The teams combined to score just 25 points in the opening half, with Sumter holding a narrow one-point lead. But Goose Creek was able to get the ball in the hole enough in the third to build a lead. Sumter made a stirring comeback, but the Gators hit their free throws down the stretch and held on for a 36-28 win that sent the Gamecocks home for the season.

"It was a really high-level defensive game. Both teams were playing really hard; they were athletic. It was two teams that really were prepared to face each other," Sumter High head coach Bryan Brown said. "The real difference in the game, and it's something I've been screaming about all year, is our experience. The difference was they had 10 seniors, and we had three with our football guys."

Neither team got much going early. Each squad knocked down a three in the opening quarter, with Sumter's coming from senior Khalil Bledsoe. The Gamecocks led 7-6 after a quarter before each team scored just six in the second.

In the third, the Gamecock offense remained stagnant. They scored just four points, while Goose Creek found a rhythm. They got the ball out in transition and surpassed their first-half production with 14

points, leaving Sumter in a 26-17 hole.

"I don't think it was any adjustment that they made," Coach Brown said. "They started doing that 1-3-1 press and they got one or two steals and got some free layups. They got a couple of athletic baskets we couldn't stop."

"They got away from us in the third quarter, and I think it's inexperience. We had a couple of plays where we missed assignments on defense and the pressure of the game, playing against a good team, our younger guys weren't able to connect on any shots."

Sumter sparked a comeback in the fourth, getting a three from Bledsoe and four points from Caleb Jenkins to get within two points. The Gamecocks sent Goose Creek to the line throughout the fourth and they hit their shots, going 10-14 from the charity stripe to hold off the SHS rally.

"My guys really got out there and got after it," Coach Brown said. "They all just locked in and played extremely well on defense and got us back in the game. We were put in a position to foul, and they hit their free throws down the stretch and they pulled away."

While the Gamecocks would've loved a deeper playoff run, Coach Brown sees the year as a resounding success.

"We were so close this year," the Gamecock coach said. "We came into this year not thinking that we'd be able to make a lot of noise. We really didn't know what to expect, but we knew we had some good young talent. Winning 16 games, I think we at least met our expectations if not exceeding them. This year was a good year for us."

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RAMS FROM PAGE B1

scored with two seconds before the buzzer.

"We kinda settled in before the half, got two dumps inside to Cordell just before the half," Jackson said. "We tried to feed off that energy and come back out. We got in some foul trouble with our bigs but stayed the course and finished it out in the end."

Sims started the second half where he left off, scoring the first two points. JDA responded with a bucket before Jamie Richardson and Sims scored on consecutive possessions to push the lead to 28-22 midway through the quarter. Jefferson Davis came back with a free throw before a three from K'Den Shannon, his lone points for the game. Loadholt responded with a three of his own to bring the score to 31-27 with less than a minute to go in the quarter. A JDA bucket at the buzzer cut the Ragin lead to 33-31 heading into the fourth quarter.

Baskets flew fast in the fourth quarter. Richardson started with a three, but Nasir Void responded with a basket of his own, followed by a free throw. Richardson scored again before teams traded free throws. Richardson then scored again and was fouled. He missed the free throw, but the Rams jumped on the offensive board. Robinson-Hill then added a bucket before a JDA basket to bring the score to 43-38.

Then came the free throws. Richardson would score one more time from the field, then the rest of Ragin Prep's points came from the charity stripe. Richardson attempted a staggering 15 free throws in the fourth quarter alone, making seven of them. He finished with 20 points, all of which came after halftime.

"That's major, man," Jackson said of Richardson's second-half performance. "That's a big tribute to Jamie. I think part of it was he arrived a little late, so I think he had to tune in and get focused. He actually got us a technical foul for putting the wrong jersey on. But when he settled in, Jamie Richardson is an exciting player. He's got a very high ceiling.

Robinson-Hill attempted 10 free throws in the fourth, making half of them. He would finish with 12 points.

"He took one to the basket and he got himself going once he got to the basket," Jackson said. "With Zymir, it's about keeping him under control in those big games. He loves to live in those moments, he wants to be noticed, and I try to tell him to let the game come to him. He kinda settled down and got it going, and it worked out for us in the end."

Jefferson Davis would never get closer than within three points as the Rams hit just enough down the stretch to maintain their lead. The Raiders attempted their own share of free throws, going 8-16 as a team in the fourth, but never closed the gap as Ragin finished off the win.

Sims was limited by foul trouble in the fourth but finished with 13 before collecting his fifth foul.

Jackson was also quick to shout out Jefferson Davis head coach Anthony Reitenour, who previously led Clarendon Hall to consecutive state championships. Clarendon Hall was one of the Rams' primary opponents when they first started playing games last season, so he was a fitting first playoff opponent. It was also an opportunity for revenge after the Raiders beat them by double figures twice earlier this season.

"Big shoutout to Coach Anthony Reitenour over there, we've got a little history these one or two years at Clarendon Hall and Jefferson Davis," Jackson said. "He was going to make some adjustments; he knew I was going to make some adjustments. We just had to wait it out and see what the result was going to be."

The Rams will remember this win for years to come. "You should've heard it in the locker room," Jackson said. "I think they're hungry, so I'm anxious to see how they come out (Tuesday). We've got a tough task ahead of us with a tough Richard Winn. We've never beaten Richard Winn, so that would be big for us to try to steal that win."

Barons thump Northwood; Cardinals loom

BY TIM LEIBLE
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The Wilson Hall boys basketball team faced Northwood Academy to open the SCISA 4A playoffs on Saturday at the Sumter County Civic Center. The Barons struck first and led nearly the entire game in a comfortable 58-43 win.

"I was super proud of the way we came out and played," head coach Rip Ripley said. "After the result we had here on Tuesday where we didn't give our best effort in the region championship, it's always a tough challenge for a young team to come back and see how we respond. I thought we did well."

Senior Jerry Brown was the first to strike for the Barons, scoring the game's first four points as Wilson Hall jumped ahead quickly. The Barons used sharp ball movement to work around Northwood's zone defense and stretched their lead to 10-5 in the game's first five minutes.

The WH reserve guards struggled a little handling the ball early, giving Northwood a couple of free possessions late in the frame. As a result, Northwood made a small run, scoring six straight points to score their only lead of the game with 1:10 left. A three from Daniel Burton squashed the run and gave Wilson Hall a 13-11 lead at the end of the quarter that they would not surrender.

After trading baskets to open the second, Burton knocked down his second three of the game to push the Baron lead back to five. A pair of free throws from Hugh Humphries stretched it to seven before an easy bucket from Burton in the post.

Northwood started to ramp up its defensive pressure in the frame, but the Baron starters handled it well, for the most part. After a series of travels by both teams halted scoring for more than a minute, Brown scored in transition to extend the WH lead into double figures for the first time. Shawn Michael Matthews added a three, giving Wilson Hall 12 unanswered points. Northwood finally snapped the streak on a layup with 38 seconds left in the half, but Wilson Hall still went into the break with a cozy 27-15 lead.

The Barons carried that momentum into the second half. Jones DesChamps started with a three, which saw a response from Northwood. Humphries then laid in a basket to put Wilson Hall ahead 32-17. On their next possession, the Barons had some excellent ball movement, and Brown was eventually able to drop in a shot to extend the lead to 17. Burton then made quick work of a defender on the block for another easy bucket.

Then the reserves got in on the fun, with Ford Wilder and Tucker Burnette scoring on consecutive possessions as the lead extended to 40-20. Northwood made a run to cut the lead to 16, but Matthews slashed to the lane, made a layup and converted on a free throw



Wilson Hall's Daniel Burton drives to the basket against Northwood Academy in the first round of the SCISA 4A playoffs on Saturday.

NICH PITTS / SPECIAL TO THE SUMTER ITEM

after drawing a foul to push the lead to 43-24 in the final 10 seconds of the quarter.

Northwood didn't back down in the final frame, connecting from long range twice on their way to cutting the Baron lead to 12 with 3:18 to go, but Wilson Hall responded. Three straight scores from Burton, Matthews and Wilder extended the lead back out to 19 as the Barons cruised to victory.

Burton led a balanced scoring attack with 12 points in the win. Ripley loved seeing his junior forward extending his range from behind the arc.

"The last couple of games, our bigs are starting to stretch and hit some shots, which we need," Ripley said.

"It's something we struggled with early on. In that game a couple of weeks ago in Manning, I think we were 0-14 from three, so seeing some of those go in the last couple of games is really huge for us."

The rest of Wilson Hall's Big Three, Humphries and Matthews, each had 10 to lead the offense.

"The great thing about having those three young guys is they work in tandem together," Ripley said. "They pick each other up and when one guy is down, the other one is able to step up a little bit."

"Shawn did a great job tonight with the ball in his hands, Daniel's presence is huge, Hugh had a big game last week. That's what's exciting about this group. I think we have a good roster, I think we've got a good team, and that's what makes it a lot of fun to coach."

The game also provided the more inexperienced Wilson Hall reserves an opportunity to see extended postseason action for the first time in their careers. While there were some hiccups, they improved throughout the game. Wilder finished with nine points to show noteworthy growth after turning the ball over early.

"Freshman Ford Wilder really took a step forward," Ripley said. "He's starting to get comfortable in the game a little bit, too. He's someone we're trusting down the stretch to really make some big plays for us."

Ripley was also impressed by the continued development of Brown, who

finished with eight points. The two Baron seniors, Brown and Boykin Wilder, had to transition head coaches for the first time in their varsity careers and have welcomed Ripley, who had previously served as an assistant to Eddie Talley, with open arms.

"I'm really proud of my two seniors," Ripley said. "Any time you go through a coaching change your senior year, that can be tough. They knew me, I was an assistant, but still, we have different principles and culture ideas and they could've easily been like, 'Ah man, I'm kinda a transition guy, I'm not able to do that.' But the way they've responded, the way they've stepped up and been leaders, both of them, really, have done a tremendous job and have been huge parts of our success."

"Jerry's evolution over the course of the season has been incredible. Boykin has battled some injuries and some things, but he goes out there and gives us great minutes, as well. Those two seniors really have been a big part of what we're doing."

Wilson Hall's next challenge is one of the favorites in SCISA 4A, Cardinal Newman. The two squads met on Feb. 1, and the Cardinals won handily 61-24. Ripley hopes his team learned from the first matchup and can carry some confidence from the win over Northwood when they meet in the civic center on Tuesday.

"We've seen Cardinal Newman before; they put it on us pretty good at our place," Ripley said. "They've got a great team, they get after it and fly around. They hit shots, they have a good, big, young guy inside that can finish. It's certainly a challenge, but this is what it's all about."

"We're just excited to get three more days with this group. I told the guys before the game that, at the end of the day, we have the opportunity to extend our season. We had to be able to go to that locker room at the end of the day and know we gave the effort to win, and I think we did that. Now we get two more days of practice and at least one more game under our belts to try to go out and make something happen."

Lee Academy fights back to take down AJA

BY TIM LEIBLE
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The Lee Academy girls basketball team got out to an impressive start to the postseason, taking down Andrew Jackson Academy 51-37 on Friday.

Lee Academy head coach Kim Langston said her team is carrying inspirating from Galatians 6:9, which reads, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

"We're focusing on Galatians 6:9 and trying to carry it through to the end," Langston said. "We're just trying to take it one game at a time and focus on the things at hand. They had a good run in the conference tournament and carried through (against AJA) and hopefully it carries into Monday night."

While the final score looked great for Lee Academy, it was a grind from the beginning. Star guard Savannah Price picked up two early fouls, opening the door for Andrew Jackson to grab an early lead, which they maintained most of the first three quarters.

"I looked up, and it was 15-4," Langston said of the first quarter. "We had to make some adjustments. That's when Alleigh (Brown) kinda took charge

and said, 'Savanna's out, it's me.' They passed the ball around, made the defense shift a little bit, and we were able to get some looks."

The Lady Cavaliers cut that deficit to 22-16 at the half, but still had some work to do. As Lee Academy chipped away at that lead, an unexpected hero stepped up. Raylee Catoe, who primarily played JV this season, was able to tie the game with a crucial basket, her only two points of the game, and sparked a run that saw Lee run away with the win.

"She just nailed that shot," Langston said. "That was a real big bucket." Despite the early foul trouble, Price was a one-woman wrecking crew. She fell one rebound short of a double-double, but still managed 29 points, nine rebounds, four steals, two assists and a block.

"She's probably the most improved player on the team," Langston said of her star. "From Day 1 when we started this season up to this point, she has just improved her game tremendously in every aspect. She's a huge part of our team, and she has really done an outstanding job for us."

When Price was out, Brown stepped up. She finished with 11 rebounds and eight steals to go along with six points and four assists.

Clarendon Hall girls top Colleton Prep

BY TIM LEIBLE
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The Clarendon Hall girls basketball went into Friday night hungry.

The Lady Saints haven't had the taste of playoff success in years. While members of the team won the SCISA 1A title in softball last spring, they were anxious to do the same thing on the basketball court. That journey started on Friday against Colleton Prep in the side gym at Wilson Hall. After a back-and-forth opening half, Clarendon Hall took the game over for a 59-35 win.

"The girls were excited. It's the first time in a long time, the Clarendon Hall girls won. It's a trip," head coach Johnny Horton said of the win. "Keeping their composure the way they did, it was tough, but we were able to keep it together."

The first half was a feeling-out period as the Lady Saints got an idea of what playoff basketball was all about. Once they flipped the switch, however, it was all Clarendon Hall.

"We were able to impose our will on defense a little bit in that third quarter, and that kinda broke it open," Horton

said. "Having a team full of sophomores and juniors, it means a lot because they understand the further we go this year, the more experience we'll have next year. This is uncharted territory for them. They're just living it up."

"I am always joking around with them, 'We're not supposed to win, we're not supposed to be here, so let's just go out and play ball.' And they did that."

Sidney Berry was electric for the Lady Saints, scoring 20 points, while pulling down 10 rebounds. "She is the leader, she is our anchor," Horton said. "The other girls feed off her. Once she gets it going, everyone else falls into line."

Ashley Timmons and Mandy Wells each added eight points for the Lady Saints in the win. Now Clarendon Hall will face top-seeded Beaufort Academy on Monday. Horton is looking forward to seeing if the Lady Saints can keep the ball rolling.

"Just staying loose, staying within our offense, within ourself and believing in ourself," Horton said. "That's the key, just playing Clarendon Hall basketball."

Lady Eagles fall to Allendale-Fairfax on late free throw

BY TIM LEIBLE
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The Scott's Branch girls basketball team saw their season come to an end on Friday thanks to one late free throw. The Lady Eagles came back from a 19-4 halftime deficit to take a lead in the fourth quarter. With 30 seconds remaining the game tied at 29, Scott's Branch grabbed a defensive rebound and immediately turned the ball over. Allendale got the ball back under the basket and MiCayah Carter drew a foul. She missed the first attempt, but sank the second, giving A-F a narrow one-point lead. Scott's Branch had one last chance to score, but couldn't get a shot to fall.

"We had a chance to score, we just didn't get the same call," head coach Lucinda Stukes said.

It was a heartbreaking end to a redemptive season for the Lady Eagles. After losing their first 10 games, they closed the regular season 6-3. They finished second in Region V-1A and won their playoff opener over St. John's on their home court.

"It's a tough way to end the season, but these kids fought," Stukes said. "We took some beatings early, but I think it made us better. I looked on the floor and we had three freshmen, a sophomore and Rosandra Bennett. I'll take that any day. For that it means growth and foundation. Friday's game, in many ways, was a symbol of the season for Scott's Branch. The Lady Eagles played well defensively, holding Allendale to 19 in the opening half, but could not get the ball in the basket. But they didn't surrender.

Senior Rosandra Bennett led an inspired comeback, knocking down two threes in the third and scored eight of the team's 13 points as they whittled the deficit down to 25-17. They completed the comeback in the fourth, taking a one-point lead that would be traded back and forth for the rest of the game.

O-W downs Lakewood after tough second half

STAFF REPORT

The Lakewood boys basketball team knew it had its hands full in the second round of the SCHSL 3A playoffs on Friday.

After defeating No. 5 Loris in the first round, the Gators traveled to No. 2 Orangeburg-Wilkinson on Friday. Lakewood hung around for a half but had their offense slowed after the break in a 64-41 loss.

As they have all season, Lakewood lived and died by their big man, Myles Squirewell.

In the first half, Lakewood matched OW shot for shot, largely thanks to the senior's success down low. In the first quarter, some clutch shooting from Arntrez Ross and Cedric Cisse loosened up the OW defense, and the game was tied 12-12.

In the second, Squirewell took over.

He scored 10 points in the quarter, all but two of the Gators' points, and Lakewood went into the half deadlocked in a 24-24 tie with the No. 2 team in 3A.

After halftime, Orange-

burg-Wilkinson was determined to not have anyone else beat them.

Squirewell was tripled-teamed at times and managed just three points after the break, all of which came from the free throw line. Lakewood's offense completely dried up. They scored seven points in the third, and OW broke away with an 18-point frame. Orangeburg Wilkinson then hit their free throws in the fourth, going 10-14 to salt the game away.

Squirewell finished with 18, while Ross added 11 and Cisse added eight.

Manning's season ends

BY TIM LEIBLE
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All season long, Justin Daniels has been the engine for the Manning boys basketball team.

The All-State guard has been a prolific scorer and tone-setter.

When Lower Richland came to town for the second round of the SCHSL 3A playoffs, their goal was obvious: Don't let Daniels be the one that beats us.

The Diamond Hornets hit the Monarchs with a box-and-1 defense, playing zone while leaving a man defender on Daniels, who finished with 11. For most of the game, Manning didn't seem to have an answer.

While they made a few runs, they never fully closed the gap after Lower Richland took an early lead.

Instead of a reunion between former region foes, Lower Richland advanced to face Crestwood in the lower state semifinals with a 61-49 win.

"We tried to make some adjustments but we weren't connecting," Monarch head coach Lamont Britt said after the game. "I took an early time out to tell them how to handle

that box-and-1 situation, and we let that get us off our game and the other guys didn't really step up like they needed to. I guess there was some disconnect with what we were trying to do, and we got away from our gameplan."

Lower Richland scored the first points of the game and never trailed. A consistent trend also appeared. Lower Richland would push their lead, and Manning would whittle it back down near the end of the quarter. But every quarter ended with a response from the Diamond Hornets that swiped any Monarch momentum.

Jeffery Ceasar led Manning with 19 in the loss, while Hilton added 16. Daniels was held to 11, all but one of which came in the third quarter.

While it was a tough loss to end the season, Britt didn't want the end of the season to define a great year for the Monarchs.

"I told the guys, 'Don't let this loss symbolize our season,'" Britt said. "We finished 20-6, and I told them, 'That's all y'all guys.' Our goal at the beginning of the season was win the region and be home for a couple of playoff games, and we did that."

LCHSL loses to Bishop England

STAFF REPORT

The Lee Central girls saw their postseason run come to an end on Friday when they were upset by Bishop England in the second round of the SCHSL 2A playoffs. The Lady Stallions led at the half but struggled after the break in a 50-37 loss.

Bishop England, which lost to Camden in the 3A semifinals a year ago, moved down to 2A this season and proved to be a difficult second round matchup.

After a nearly even first half, Bishop England exploded for 27 points in the third quarter behind 12 points from Madison Riley. Lee Central just couldn't keep pace, managing just eight points in response and trailed 38-23 and couldn't close the gap Hanah Reames led the Lady Stallions with nine points, while Ke'Myra Dennis added seven and Natalie Pitts scored six.

OBITUARIES

COLEEN MCCOY COOK REYLING

OSWEGO — Coleen McCoy Cook Reyling, 97, passed away on Saturday, Feb. 11, 2023, at Florence Assisted Living.



Born on Nov. 1, 1925, in Sumter, she was a daughter of the late Wesley DeLay McCoy and Eunice Azile Mellette McCoy. She attended Limestone College and was a member of the Sumter Limestone Alumni. She was a member of Bethel United Methodist Church in Oswego, where she served in numerous positions, including church historian and president of the Women's Society of Christian Service. She was a very active member and held numerous offices in the Sumter Garden Club. She served on the Sumter County Historical Commission and was responsible for the S.C. Church Historical Marker which stands beside Bethel United Methodist Church. She was employed by Central Carolina Technical College for 24 years.

Survivors include her husband, John James "Jack" Reyling; a daughter, Christine Cook Mixon (Dean); grandchildren, Mike Cook, Ben Cook, James Cook (Christine) and Mellette Lyles; great-grandchildren, Allison Shaw (Mark), Allana Ingram, Cate Cook, Caroline Cook, Sam Cook and Wade Cook; twin great-great-grandchildren, Langston Shaw and Lyles Shaw; stepchildren, Mary Smith, Debbie Mills (Pat), Renee Crews (Mike) and John Reyling (Christine); and step-grandchildren, Christopher Mills (Elizabeth), Elizabeth Sun (Peter), Laura Compton (Ben), Travis Smith (Molly), McRae Wood, Nicole Crews and Erica McClusky.

She was preceded in death by her first husband, Ellis P. Cook; a son, Michael Cook and his wife, Judy; and a brother, Wesley Julian McCoy.

A funeral service was held at 11 a.m. on Saturday at Bethel United Methodist Church with the Rev. Tim Whited and the Rev. Michael Henderson officiating. Burial will be in the church cem-

etry.

Pallbearers were Mike Cook, Ben Cook, James Cook, Rich Pring, Taylor Huneycutt and Mark Shaw.

Honorary pallbearers were members of the John Edens Sunday School Class, Marvin Skinner, Randy Cabbage, Billy McCoy and Ryan Pring.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Bethel United Methodist Church, 5575 Lodebar Road, Sumter, SC 29153.

Elmore-Cannon-Stephens Funeral Home and Crematorium of Sumter is in charge of the arrangements.

VIRGINIA JACKSON CHAMPION

Virginia Jackson Champion, 77, wife of Marion William Champion, was born on Nov. 8, 1945, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a daughter of the late Abe Jackson and Paulean Lane Jackson Bradley. She departed this life on Friday, Feb. 10, 2023, at her residence in Charlotte, North Carolina.

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

Funeral services will be held at 1 p.m. on Wednesday at New Hope Ministries COOLJC Apostolic Faith Church, 95 Community St., Sumter, SC 29150 with Elder John R. Rogers officiating. Interment will follow at Heaven's Gate Cemetery, Wedgefield, SC 29168.

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.

DANIEL H. CROMER III

Daniel H. Cromer III, 59, finally found peace on Thursday, Feb. 16, 2023.

He was born on April 24, 1963, in Gainesville, Florida, and was currently residing in his longtime home of Sumter. If you knew Daniel, you knew his life to have been a journey, with roads not always best chosen. His heart was always genuine, as were his words. He had a quick wit and a dry sense of humor. He loved his friends, animals and his momma.

He is leaving behind his be-

loved mother, Lynda S. Carter; his sister, Jennifer Cromer Elliott; his two nieces, Shayla Kassen and Mackenzie Collins; great-niece, Eliza Grae; stepmother, Julie Alfred Cromer; half-siblings, David Cromer, Melissa Cromer and Edward Cromer; and his father, Daniel H. Cromer Jr.

Daniel's wishes would have been to keep it simple. A service will not be held.

We ask, that in lieu of flowers, you please send any monetary donations to the Samaritan House, 320 W. Oakland St, Sumter, SC 29150.

A service of Inman Ward Funeral Home and Crematory of Tabor City, North Carolina.

JOHN HENRY JOHNSON JR.

MANNING — John Henry Johnson Jr., 60, died on Saturday, Feb. 18, 2023, at McLeod Hospice House, Florence.

He was born on Aug. 2, 1962, a son of Minnie Pearl Samuel Johnson and the late John Henry Johnson Sr.

These services have been entrusted to Samuels Funeral Home LLC of Manning.

BOBBY J. POLLARD

Bobby J. Pollard, 79, was born on Sept. 27, 1943, in Ker-shaw County, a son of the late Ramson Pollard and Lula Razor Pollard. He departed this life on Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023, at Prisma Health Tuomey Hospital in Sumter.

Public viewing will be held from 2 to 6 p.m. today at Sumter Funeral Services.

Funeral services will be held at 1 p.m. on Wednesday at Salem Chapel & Heritage Center, 101 S. Salem Ave., Sumter, SC 29150 with the Rev. Dr. Lewis Walker Jr. officiating. Interment will follow at Rafting Creek Baptist Church Cemetery, Rembert, SC 29128.

The family will receive friends from 2 to 6 p.m. daily at the home, 4980 Dennis Road, Rembert, SC 29128. Masks are required in accordance with the COVID-19 guidelines.

Sumter Funeral Service, 623 Manning Ave., Sumter, is in charge of arrangements.

Online memorials may be sent to the family at sumterfuneralservice2@gmail.com.

BOBBY SPANN

Bobby Spann, 77, husband of Gertrude Harvey Spann, departed this life on Sunday, Feb. 19, 2023, at his residence

in Rembert.

He was born on Jan. 14, 1946, in Sumter County, a son of the late Thomas and Ora Davis Spann.

In accordance with COVID-19 guidelines, the family is requesting no visitation at the home.

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

WILLIE LEE BURTON

Willie Lee Burton, 77, widower of Jewel Mathis Burton, died on Saturday, Feb. 18, 2023, at his home.

Born in Greenville, he was a son of the late William Henry Burton and Annie Mae Thrift Burton. Mr. Burton was a member of Concord Baptist Church. He was a U.S. Marine Corps veteran and a member of the Marine League. He was a former S.C. Highway Patrolman and retired from Glasscock Co. as a truck driver instructor.

Surviving are a son, Michael W. Burton (Donna) of Sumter; two grandchildren, Brantley Baker (Kasey) and Alyson Cascio (James); one great-grandchild, Wesley Baker; and two brothers, Donnie Burton (Pattie) of Greenville and Billy Burton (Borgia) of Gray Court.

He was preceded in death by a sister, Paula Thames; and two brothers, Johnny Burton and Kenneth LeRoy Burton.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. on Thursday at Concord Baptist Church with Pastor Tim Clark officiating. Burial will be in Evergreen Memorial Park cemetery.

The family will receive friends from 4 to 6 p.m. on Wednesday at Elmore Hill McCreight Funeral Home and other times at the home of his son, 9210 Ridgehill Drive.

Memorials may be made to Marine Toys for Tots Foundation, Gift Processing Administrator, 18251 Gateway Drive, Quantico, VA 22172.

Online condolences may be made at www.sumterfunerals.com.

Elmore Hill McCreight Funeral Home & Crematory, 221 Broad St., Sumter, is in charge of the arrangements, (803) 775-9386.

Elmore Hill McCreight
FUNERAL HOME AND CREMATORY

RAMONA THOMPSON BROOKS

Ramona Thompson Brooks, 65, wife of William Brooks Jr., departed this life on Sunday, Feb. 19, 2023, at Prisma Health Richland Hospital in Columbia.

She was born on Oct. 18, 1957, in Andrews, a daughter of the late Olin and Martha Richardson Thompson.

The family will receive friends from 3 to 7 p.m. daily at the home, 145 Elkhorn Trail, Sumter, SC 29154. Masks are required.

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

CRYSTAL MICHELLE RICHBURG

Crystal Michelle Richburg, 45, departed this life on Saturday, Feb. 18, 2023, at Oak Hollow of Georgetown Rehabilitation Center.

She was born on Sept. 30, 1977, in Manhattan, New York, a daughter of the late Clifton and Hattie Brunson Richburg.

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

ELIJAH MILLER SR.

Elijah "Pason" Miller Sr., 93, entered eternal rest on Monday, Feb. 20, 2023, in Sumter.

He was born on Sept. 17, 1929, in Mayesville, a son of the late Wash Miller and Anna Harvin Miller Benjamin and raised by the late Parrish Benjamin.

The family requests that face masks and social distancing be observed during the 3 to 7 p.m. daily visitation at the home of Elijah "Henry" Miller Jr., 355 Planters Drive.

Funeral arrangements are incomplete and will be announced by Williams Funeral Home Inc.

MARION HENRY

Marion Henry, 86, husband of Ruby Scott Henry, died on Saturday, Feb. 18, 2023, in Sumter.

He was born on Aug. 30, 1936, in Lee County, a son of the late Cleveland and Hattie Washington Henry.

The family requests that face masks and social distancing be observed during visitation at the home, 1667 Freedom Road, Elliott.

Funeral arrangements are incomplete and will be announced by Williams Funeral Home Inc.

TUESDAY EVENING FEBRUARY 21
Table with columns for time slots (7 PM, 7:30, 8 PM, 8:30, 9 PM, 9:30, 10 PM, 10:30, 11 PM, 11:30, 12 AM) and rows for various TV channels (WIS, WLTX, WOLO, WRJA, WACH, WKTC, A&E, AMC, ANPL, BET, BRAVO, BSSE, CNBC, CNN, COM, DISN, DSC, ESPN, ESP2, FOOD, FOXN, FREE, HALL, HGTV, HIST, ION, LIFE, MSNBC, NICK, NWSN, PARMT, SYFY, TBS, TCM, TLC, TNT, TRUTV, TV LAND, USA, WE).

MTV documentary showcases Ukraine's exiled youth

BY KEVIN McDONOUGH

Where were you when the world stopped turning? Country songwriter Alan Jackson spoke to millions of frightened Americans with his ballad about the terror attacks on 9/11.

Magnify that one-day terror over the course of a year, the destruction of a country and an effort to erase a people and you begin to approach the sense of terror among Ukraine's population, suffering the effects of a Russian invasion begun last Feb. 24.

MTV departs from its generally lighthearted programming to air the documentary "Don't Leave Me Behind: Stories of Young Ukrainian Survival" (10 p.m., TV-14), which follows a handful of young people in their teens and 20s who are among the millions who fled to neighboring countries in the aftermath of Vladimir Putin's invasion.

The film does a good job of humanizing their dilemma. On one hand, they have endured a gruesome national calamity. But at the same time, they are young people with their own hopes and dreams. One girl, now in Poland, grieves for her country while also mourning the loss of her individual dancing career, a passion that had been at the center of her life until the bombs began to fall.

This film dovetails with the "Frontline" documentary "Ukraine: Life Under Russia's Attack," which was broadcast last Tuesday and can be streamed at pbs.org/frontline or with the PBS app.

A number of past "Frontline" documentaries can be accessed in this manner. For viewers who want to dig deeper into the subjects covered in these films, "Frontline" has created its "Transparency Project," which makes available footage of interviews of the subjects who are participants in each documentary. Some films include some 30 to 50 interviews, all available to watch.

For those who prefer to get their journalism via podcasts, "Frontline" creates

podcasts that feature the audio from its documentaries. You can download them at www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/podcasts/.

At a time when so many formerly dependable and substantial sources of news and journalism have been eliminated or neutered by corporate acquisition and mergers, "Frontline" stands out as a serious source of substantive reporting.

Real Sports With Bryant Gumbel (10 p.m., HBO, TV-PG) reports on the cozy relationship between sporting organizations, including soccer's FIFA and the Swiss government. Many of these organizations have located their headquarters in that European country; some contend it's because Switzerland turns a blind eye to bribery and corruption scandals.

Another report profiles Aaron "Wheelz" Fotheringham. Born with spina bifida, he is considered the godfather of extreme wheelchair sports, where jumping, flipping and crashing have become the norm.

There's also a group profile of lifeguards who work the beaches on Oahu's North Shore, a surfing mecca with some of the world's most dangerous waves, as well as a look at a Philadelphia country club whose members teach the rudiments of their symbolically elite sport to inner-city youth.

TONIGHT'S OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

- A rash of robberies on "FBI" (8 p.m., CBS, TV-14).
Two brothers care for ailing hawks and kites that have fallen from the sky due to New Delhi's extreme air pollution in the Oscar-nominated documentary "All That Breathes" (8:35 p.m., HBO Signature, TV-14).
An expat lawyer expires in Budapest on "FBI: International" (9 p.m., CBS, TV-14).
A refugee teen from Somalia goes missing on "FBI: Most Wanted" (10 p.m., CBS, TV-14).

CULT CHOICE

The emergence of synthetic diamonds rattles the mo-



Special Agent Scott Forrester (Luke Kleintank) and the Fly Team investigate the death of an American lawyer working in Budapest after he is killed by a car bomb in tonight's episode of "FBI: International," airing at 9 p.m. on CBS.

nopolized gem trade in the 2022 documentary "Nothing Lasts Forever" (10 p.m., Showcase, TV-14).

SERIES NOTES

Abby presides over subway justice on "Night Court" (8 p.m., NBC, TV-PG) * Ethics charges roil the force on "9-1-1: Lone Star" (8 p.m., Fox, TV-14) * A bomb-crazy militia must be stopped on "The Rookie" (8 p.m., ABC, TV-14) * A search for new tech unearths scam artists on "American Auto" (8:30 p.m., NBC, TV-PG) * On two episodes of "La Brea" (NBC, TV-PG): out of the past (9 p.m.); a wild horde (10 p.m.) * A drag performer's affair with a closeted man ends badly on "Accused" (9 p.m., Fox, TV-14) * Cupid's arrow on "The Rookie: Feds" (9 p.m., ABC, TV-14) * The FBI trails neo-Nazis on "Will Trent" (10 p.m., ABC, TV-14).

LATE NIGHT

Pink and Jonathan Majors are booked on "The Late Show With Stephen Colbert" (11:35 p.m., CBS) * Jimmy Fallon welcomes Austin Butler, Rob Gronkowski and Tyler Hubbard on "The Tonight Show"

(11:35 p.m., NBC, r) * Allison Williams, S.S. Rajamouli and Fab Moretti visit "Late Night with Seth Meyers" (12:35 a.m., NBC, r). Copyright 2023 United Feature Syndicate

Advertisement for The Sumter Item featuring the headline 'Not sure why BUSINESS IS SLOW?' and 'OUT OF SIGHT OUT OF MIND... is not just a saying in business.' Includes contact information for The Sumter Item at 36 W. Liberty Street, Sumter, SC.

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BELLA

My name is BELLA and I'm a 6 year old chocolate and tan female Shepherd mix.



BOBBY

My name is BOBBY and I'm a 2 year old gray tabby and white male American Shorthair.



CINDER

My name is CINDER and I'm a 1 year old tan and white female Catahoula Leopard Dog/Lab mix.



DESMOND

My name is DESMOND and I'm a 1 year old gray tabby male American Shorthair.



HALO

My name is HALO and I'm an 8 year old black and white female Lab mix.



HARLOW

My name is HARLOW and I'm a 6 year old tricolored male Hound.



LILO

My name is LILO and I'm a 1 year old brown tabby and white female American Shorthair.



MICHELANGELO

My name is MICHELANGELO and I'm a 9 week old orange tabby and white male American Shorthair.



NAOMI

My name is NAOMI and I'm a 1 year old black and white female Lab/Husky mix.



SARAH

My name is SARAH and I'm a 7 month old chocolate female Lab mix.



SASHA

My name is SASHA and I'm a 1 year old black and white female Lab mix.



SKITTLES

My name is SKITTLES and I'm a 2 year old gray tabby and white female American Shorthair.



SWEETNESS

My name is SWEETNESS and I'm a 1 year old gray male American Shorthair.



SYPHUS

My name is SYPHUS and I'm a 5 year old black male Lab mix.



TOPANGA

My name is TOPANGA and I'm a 10 month old tortoiseshell/tabby female American Shorthair.



VIOLET

My name is VIOLET and I'm a 2 year old gray tabby and white female American Shorthair.

Other things you can do to help

Though not everyone can take a pet home, the SPCA is always accepting donations.

Monetary Donations • Collars • Animal Food • Leashes Cat Litter • Treats
 Beds • Clean Newspapers • Blankets • Trash Bags • Towels • Paper Towels

Adoption Fee: Dogs - \$175.00 • Cats - \$75.00

This includes the first vaccinations, first deworming and a voucher towards the spaying or neutering of the animal.

Hours of Operation: 11:00 am to 5:00 pm • Closed Wednesday and Sunday



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