



**INSIDE WEEKEND:**  
Dalzell native  
Dillard making  
a splash in  
international  
F1 racing **B1**

# The Item to change delivery days

Will also add free monthly paper to reach 28,000 households

**STAFF REPORT**

Starting in March, *The Sumter Item* will print newspapers twice a week, a weekday edition on Wednesday and a weekend edition on Saturday.

The paper will be mailed to subscribers and still available at racks across the community as well as at *The Item's* office in downtown Sumter. Each paper will be larger and filled with more local news per edition, offering a longer shelf life for articles and advertisers.

"We know some people don't like to see any changes to their local newspaper, but if we don't change we won't survive. Our family appreciates our readers and advertisers and being a part of the Sumter community, and these changes we're making moving forward will ensure we remain able to bring local news to Sumter, Clarendon and Lee counties for years to come," *Item* co-owners Kyle and Jack Osteen said in a joint statement.

The change comes as the cost to produce news, espe-

## The Sumter **ITEM** IMPACT Local News for Everyone

**MORE INSIDE**

**Item Publisher Vince Johnson:** Changes at *The Item* will make larger community impact, benefit advertisers

**Item Executive Editor Kayla Green:** Amid time of uncertainty for newspapers, *Item* changes will increase access to news

**A12**

cially related to printing and delivery, continues to increase and impact *The Item's* ability

to maintain a business model that is becoming increasingly outdated in today's digi-

tal-first world. Traditional print advertising that is out of any employee's control, like inserts from big-box companies and classifieds, continues to contract, making large-scale innovation necessary.

"These challenges are not unique to *The Sumter Item*," said Vince Johnson, publisher. "Every newspaper across the country is facing similar challenges as consumer behavior has changed, and *The Item's* strong performance around consistent innovation and building community trust has enabled us to be where we are today."

As *The Item*, which has been printing news since 1894

SEE **ITEM**, PAGE A8

Sumter School Board Chairman The Rev. Ralph Canty talks during a school board meeting in 2023 at the district office.

BRUCE MILLS / THE SUMTER ITEM



## School board members and attorney say recent Sumter NAACP allegations not true

In letters, group says trustees have harassed Wright and question correspondence with other schools

**BY BRUCE MILLS**

bruce@theitem.com

Sumter school board members and their attorney say accusations of racial mistreatment and harassment of the superintendent and concern about a sup-

posed merger with Liberty STEAM Charter School and Wilson Hall are unfounded.

Sumter School District Board of Trustees Chairman Ralph Canty, Vice Chairwoman Bonnie Disney and district attorney Allen Smith spoke this week after

the Sumter Branch of the NAACP distributed two letters in recent weeks accusing the board of efforts to "intimidate" and "brow beat" Superintendent William Wright Jr.

The letters also make reference to Wright's employment contract with the board and an extension that he could have received at the

SEE **DISTRICT**, PAGE A11

## Residents take advantage of early voting for primary



PHOTOS BY ADAM FLASH / THE SUMTER ITEM

Early voters visited Sumter County Courthouse on Friday to cast their ballots ahead of the S.C. Democratic primaries on Saturday, Feb. 3, voting both inside the building and curbside. Polls will be open on Saturday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. The Republican primaries will take place at the end of the month. For results, check [www.theitem.com](http://www.theitem.com).



## BLACK HISTORY MONTH — BOOSTING BLACK VOICES

### Item reporter Maple to explore self-expression through arts in February series

Here we are again, Sumter — same month, same mission, new people.

Last year at this time, I was gearing up to get real with you all about my inhibitions of growing up and becoming who



**Alaysha Maple**

I'm destined to be. That journey of self-exploration started with a series called "Where I Stand." Michaela Angela Davis, Erika Williams and Sumter County Councilman Jim McCain were the trio that accompanied me on this journey, sharing their own testaments of what it took to be seated

in the positions they hold. I laughed, I cried, I lived, and my eyebrow did that weird twitchy thing out of confusion every now and then — but overall, I realized that my journey of self-exploration

SEE **VOICES**, PAGE A8



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## DEATHS, B5

Tommy Edward Samuel  
Mildred Lee Streater English  
Josephine Fraiser  
Ivory Rose Burgess Wilson  
Richard McBride  
Reginald McFadden

James Ervin Francis  
Demetre Terrell Gayle  
Marion Green Jr.  
Richard Thomas Walley  
Wendell Miller  
Jimmy Lee Thames

## WEATHER, A14

**NOT A BAD WEEKEND**

Partly sunny Saturday and mainly clear at night; mainly cloudy Sunday

**HIGH 60, LOW 33**

## INSIDE

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Sports B1  
Opinion A12-13  
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Yesteryear A7




**SUMTER TODAY**

**NOW STREAMING ON INSTAGRAM, YOUTUBE AND FACEBOOK**

Morris College students and Sumter locals heard from multiple state and national Democratic figures Thursday, Jan. 25. Coming ahead of the Democratic primary on Feb. 3, speakers California Gov. Gavin Newsom, Congressman Dean Phillips and DNC Chairman Jaime Harrison encouraged Morris College students to get out and vote.


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KjbRIMub-W4>

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## Court filing discloses personal relationship between Fani Willis, prosecutor hired in Trump case

BY KATE BRUMBACK  
Associated Press

ATLANTA — A court filing Friday disclosed that Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis is involved in a "personal relationship" with a special prosecutor she hired for the Georgia election interference case against former President Donald Trump, but she argues there are no grounds to dismiss the case or to remove her from the prosecution.



WILLIS

Willis hired special prosecutor Nathan Wade in November 2021 to assist her investigation into whether the Republican ex-president and others broke any laws as they tried to overturn his loss in the 2020 presidential election in Georgia. Since Trump and 18 others were indicted in August, Wade has led the team of lawyers Willis assembled to prosecute

the case.

In an affidavit accompanying the filing, Wade said that in 2022, he and the district attorney had developed a personal relationship in addition to their "professional association and friendship."

But he also said that he had never lived with Willis or shared a financial account or household expenses with her. He said that none of the funds paid to him as part of the job have been shared with Willis, an attempt to undercut defense lawyer claims of a conflict of interest.

Wade described himself and Willis as "both financially independent professionals; expenses or personal travel were roughly divided equally between us."

"At times," Wade said, "I have made and purchased travel for District Attorney Willis and myself from my personal funds. At other times District Attorney Willis has made and purchased travel for she and I from her

personal funds."

"I have no financial interest in the outcome of the 2020 election interference case or in the conviction of any defendant," he wrote.

The Friday filing by Willis' team came in response to a motion filed last month by defense attorney Ashleigh Merchant, who represents Trump co-defendant Michael Roman. The motion alleged that Willis and Wade were in an inappropriate romantic relationship that created a conflict of interest. The filing seeks to dismiss the case and to have Willis and Wade and their offices barred from further prosecuting the case.

Trump and at least one other co-defendant, Georgia attorney Robert Cheeley, have filed motions to join Roman's effort to dismiss the indictment and remove Willis from the case.

Fulton County Superior Court Judge Scott McAfee, who's presiding over the election case, has set a Feb. 15 hearing on Roman's motion. Willis and Wade are among a dozen witnesses Merchant has subpoenaed to testify at that hearing.

The Friday filing asks McAfee to dismiss Roman's motion without a hearing.

Trump and other Willis critics have capitalized on allega-

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Willis, an elected Democrat, is up for reelection this year. The allegations could become a campaign issue if anyone decides to challenge her.

Roman's motion questions Wade's qualifications to be involved in a complex prosecution under Georgia's anti-racketeering law. It also accuses Willis of personally profiting from the case, saying she had paid Wade more than \$650,000 for his work and then benefited when Wade used his earnings to pay for vacations the pair took together.

For weeks after the motion was filed on Jan. 8, neither Willis nor Wade publicly addressed the allegations of a secret romantic relationship. But Willis defended Wade's qualifications and her decision to hire him during an impassioned address Jan. 14 when she was the invited speaker at a service honoring the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. at a historic Black church

in Atlanta.

Roman's motion did not include any concrete proof for the allegations of a romantic relationship between Willis and Wade. But in a filing in Wade's divorce case, his wife included credit card statements that showed Wade had bought plane tickets for Willis to travel with him to San Francisco and Miami.

Also Friday, U.S. Rep. Jim Jordan, chair of the House Judiciary Committee, sent Willis a subpoena for any documents or communications related to her office's receipt and use of federal funds, as well as any documents or communications referring or relating to any allegations of the misuse of federal funds by her office.

"We are proud of our grant programs and our partnership with the Department of Justice that makes Fulton County a safer, more just place," Willis said Friday in a statement responding to Jordan's subpoena.

Jordan has sent several letters to Willis since September requesting information. Each time, she has refused to send the requested information, saying the congressman's requests violate the principles of federalism and separation of powers and accusing him of trying to interfere with a criminal prosecution.



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# Tales of Quail

It was a very cold morning, and I was out for a walk on our property. The sun was up, and the weeds and broom straw glistened in the early light. A big covey of quail thundered up from the ditch bank and sailed over the dog fennel toward the woods. They have always startled me with their sudden burst into flight. But I was very pleased to see them.

We hear them from our front porch and see them scurry across the driveway during the summer months. The familiar bobwhite calls start in April, peak during the mating season in May and linger on through June and July. The calls dwindle in August and September. We do not hear them or see them very much through the fall and winter. Occasionally I'll hear a soft assembly call late in the afternoon.

The quail are here on our land. They are here because the habitat is here. They are not hunted here. When I hear them or see them, I think back to my younger days when wild quail were more plentiful, and we hunted them around our home in Clarendon County.

We could walk from our house in almost any direction and hunt quail over farms and fields. We kept a bird dog and did most of our quail hunting after the deer season and duck seasons ended. Late January and the whole month of February was quail hunting time. There were a few trips farther from home to hunt the "birds," but we didn't need to go too far. There was good quail habitat everywhere.

I guess it was just coincidence that there was habitat. There were smaller farms, bushy ditch banks and idle farm land. There were less predators, too. We shot every hawk and owl that we encountered. They were quail killers, and we didn't want them taking the birds.

I shot my first quail when I was a youngster 9 or 10 years old. I remember that morning like it was just yesterday. We drove out to a small farm

just out of town. It was cold, and we sat in the car with the heater running for a little while. When my dad, my brother and I stepped out, there was frost on the grasses and our breaths billowed out like steam.

Daddy let the dog out of the trunk, and off we went. I remember he made stern commands to our English pointer, who was very eager. We crossed a cut cornfield, and the dog froze in a point just ahead of us. As we approached, a covey of birds burst from the field and sailed over a nearby fence line. I managed to focus on the last quail in the group, aimed and fired. I was amazed to see the puff of feathers and to see the bird go down.

We hunted quail for years until deer hunting, duck hunting and eventually rabbit hunting became our focus. The landscape changed so much that it got hard to find enough birds to hunt. The habitat was changing, and it was just coincidence.

Several years ago, I was invited to a quail hunt on a preserve by a business associate. The birds were farm raised and put out in the field ahead of the hunt. It was not the same. I was disappointed and vowed not to do that again. There are a few places now where landowners have invested efforts to make prime habitat for bobwhite quail. The habitat work is expensive but can produce good numbers of wild birds. There are also USDA programs designed to help restore quail habitat.

I think I'll just live with my memories and home-grown "birds," but recently my friend and Sumter native Jon Wongrey has written a book on quail hunting. "A Covey of Tales" is a collection of quail hunting stories about the dogs, the people and the land of the bobwhite quail. It's good reading and includes a foreword by baseball great Bobby Richardson.

Jon has published several other books recently and will have a book signing next Saturday at Simpson Hardware on Wesmark Boulevard. One of his books would make an excellent gift at Valentine's Day for your significant other or sweetheart. Stop by and check it out. Tell him I sent you.

Reach Dan Geddings at [cdgeddings@gmail.com](mailto:cdgeddings@gmail.com).



**Dan Geddings**

# S.C. Wildlife Federation hosts Spring Soirée March 2, ticket sales end Feb. 16

**SUBMITTED**

The South Carolina Wildlife Federation is hosting a Spring Soirée fundraiser on Saturday, March 2, from 6 to 9 p.m. at Saluda Shoals River Center in Columbia. In celebration of World Wildlife Day, join SCWF staff, board and friends for an evening celebrating local wildlife in South Carolina. The event will include food by Scott Hall and Paella South, an open bar by Twist, live music by John Emil and raffles to win prizes. Buy tickets and sponsorships before sales close on Friday, Feb. 16.

The spotted salamander, Venus flytrap, loggerhead sea turtle, prothonotary warbler, monarch butterfly, shortnose sturgeon and bottlenose dolphin have been chosen as the signature species for the event to show their connection to the world and the uniqueness of South Carolina.

The spotted salamander is the state amphibian and the only amphibian indigenous to South Carolina. The rare Venus flytrap can only be found in the wild in the Carolinas and recently be-

came the official state carnivorous plant. The loggerhead sea turtle migrates long distances to S.C., nesting along the beaches and swimming all the way to their foraging grounds in the Sargasso Sea. Prothonotary warblers and monarch butterflies also travel impressively long distances, flying thousands of miles from their wintering grounds to South Carolina. Shortnose sturgeon is an endangered fish that migrates through our rivers and coastal waters. Charismatic bottlenose dolphins glide through the coastal waters and can be found strand-feeding along the beaches, one of the only places in the world where you can see this spectacular feeding behavior.

Sponsorships for the event include early entry to a VIP hour from 5 to 6 p.m. All donations made to SCWF, including the proceeds from the event, stay in the state to help local wildlife and their habitats.

For more information about the event and to purchase tickets and sponsorships, visit [www.scwf.org/events/2024/3/2/spring-soiree](http://www.scwf.org/events/2024/3/2/spring-soiree).

## Western monarch butterflies overwintering in California dropped by 30% last year

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — The number of western monarch butterflies overwintering in California dropped by 30% last year, likely because of how wet it was, researchers said this week.

Volunteers who visited sites in California and Arizona around Thanksgiving tallied more than 230,000 butterflies, compared to 330,000 in 2022, according to the Xerces Society, an environmental nonprofit that focuses on the conservation of invertebrates.

The population of orange-and-black insects has rebounded in recent years to the hundreds of thousands after it plummeted in 2020 to just 2,000 butterflies, which was a record low. But even though the butterfly bounced back, its numbers are still well below what they were in the 1980s, when monarchs numbered in the millions.

Scientists say the butterflies are at critically low levels in western states because of destruction to their milkweed habitat along their migratory route due to housing construction and the increased use of pesticides and herbicides. Climate change is also one of the

main drivers of the monarch's threatened extinction, disrupting the butterfly's annual 3,000-mile migration synched to springtime and the blossoming of wildflowers.

"Climate change is making things harder for a lot of wildlife species, and monarchs are no exception," said Emma Pelton, a monarch conservation biologist with the Xerces Society. "We know that the severe storms seen in California last winter, the atmospheric rivers back to back, are linked at some level to our changing climate."

Western monarchs head south from the Pacific Northwest to California each winter, returning to the same places and even the same trees, where they cluster to keep warm. They breed multiple generations along the route before reaching California, where they generally arrive in early November. Once warmer weather arrives in March, they spread east of California.

On the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains, another monarch population travels from southern Canada and the northeastern United States to central Mexico. Scientists estimate that the monarch population in the eastern U.S. has fallen by about 80% since the mid-1990s, but the drop-off in the western U.S. has been even steeper.



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# U.S. hits hard at militias in Iraq and Syria in retaliation for fatal drone attack

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. military launched an air assault on dozens of sites in Iraq and Syria used by Iranian-backed militias and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard on Friday, in the opening salvo of retaliation for the drone strike that killed three U.S. troops in Jordan last weekend, according to the U.S. military and officials.

President Joe Biden and other top U.S. leaders had been warning for days that America would strike back at the militias, and they made it clear it wouldn't be just one hit but a "tiered response" over time.

"This afternoon, at my direction, U.S. military forces struck targets at facilities in Iraq and Syria that the IRGC and affiliated militia use to attack U.S. forces," Biden said in a statement Friday. "Our response began today. It will continue at times and places of our choosing."

The massive barrage of strikes by

manned and unmanned aircraft hit more than 85 targets at seven locations, including command and control headquarters, intelligence centers, rockets and missiles, drone and ammunition storage sites and other facilities that were connected to the militias or the IRGC's Quds Force, the Guard's expeditionary unit that handles Tehran's relationship and arming of regional militias.

U.S. Central Command said the strikes used more than 125 precision munitions, and they were delivered by numerous aircraft, including long-range bombers flown from the United States. One official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss details of the operation, said B-1 bombers were used.

Two Iraqi militia officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to journalists said that three houses used

as headquarters were targeted in al-Qaim, Iraq, including a weapons storage area. An operations headquarters of the Popular Mobilization Forces, a coalition of Iranian-backed militias, in Akashat, Iraq, and weapons stores were targeted.

The assault came just hours after Biden and top defense leaders joined grieving families to watch as the remains of the three Army Reserve soldiers were returned to the U.S. at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware.

It was unclear what the next steps will be, or whether the days of U.S. warnings have sent militia members scattering into hiding, making it more difficult to detect and strike them. But it was evident that the recent statement released by Kataeb Hezbollah, one of the main Iran-backed militias, saying it was suspending attacks on American troops had no impact on the administration's plans.

The U.S. strikes appeared to stop short of directly targeting Iran or senior leaders of the Revolutionary Guard Quds Force within its borders, as the U.S. tries to prevent the conflict from escalating even further. Iran has denied it was behind the Jordan attack.

Just Friday morning, Iran's hard-line President Ebrahim Raisi reiterated earlier promises by Tehran to potentially retaliate for any U.S. strikes targeting its interests. We "will not start a war, but if a country, if a cruel force wants to bully us, the Islamic Republic of Iran will give a strong response," Raisi said.

In a statement this week, Kataib Hezbollah announced "the suspension of military and security operations against the occupation forces in order to prevent embarrassment to the Iraqi government." But Harakat al-Nujaba, one of the other major Iran-backed groups, vowed Friday to continue military operations against U.S. troops.

## Senators reach deal on border policy bill. Now it faces uphill fight to passage

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate negotiators on Friday reached a deal on a proposal to overhaul the asylum system at the U.S. border with Mexico, clearing the way for Democratic and Republican Senate leaders to begin the difficult task of convincing Congress to pass a national security package that will include tens of billions of dollars for Ukraine and immigration enforcement, as well as funding for Israel and other American allies.

Sen. Chris Murphy, the lead Democratic negotiator, posted on social media Friday that a deal had been reached and that text of the bill would be released over the weekend. Senators are still working on finishing the rest of the package, which was initiated by a request from President Joe Biden for \$110 billion for wartime aid for allies, domestic defense manufacturing, humanitarian

assistance for conflicts around the world and managing the influx of migrants at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Senators are preparing for a key test vote on the package next week, but it already faces a steep climb through Congress. Republicans in both chambers have balked at compromises on border security policy. Senate Republicans had initially demanded that the package include border policy changes, but Donald Trump, the GOP's likely presidential nominee, has become a vocal opponent of the legislation.

"Republicans said the border is a priority and we should craft a bipartisan bill to help control the border. We did that. We have a deal," Murphy said on the platform X, formerly Twitter. He added: "It's decision time."

The core group of negotiators has been laboring for

months to craft a package that can win support from a bipartisan coalition of moderates in Congress. As they prepared to allow the details of the bill to be scrutinized, it remained to be seen whether they could cobble together the requisite support from both sides of the aisle.

"The criticisms are based on rumors and misconceptions," Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, an Arizona independent who was central to crafting the bill, said on Thursday.

Senate Democrats, increasingly wary of the political vulnerabilities facing Biden and their party on immigration, have become more comfortable with the contours of the package, though progressive and Hispanic members of the House are still expected to oppose the border policy changes in droves if it passes the Senate.

On the right, many conservatives oppose both continued

funding for Ukraine as well as compromises on border enforcement. House Speaker Mike Johnson has repeatedly declared he won't compromise on hardline border enforcement measures, but he has said he will not pass final judgment until he is able to read the bill.

As GOP lawmakers view the political repercussions of enacting immigration laws in the midst of an election year, many Trump allies have argued that Congress does not even need to act because presidents already have enough authority on the border. And in a sign they will try to stop the bill from advancing to a final vote, some have lobbied leaders to give them weeks to make further changes through committee hearings.

The legislation, according to Sinema, largely focuses on how to tamp down the growing number of people who come to the border seeking protection from persecution for their race, religion, political affiliation or membership in a discriminated group.

Asylum is a key part of international law and the U.S.'s ability

to advance human rights, but the system has become overwhelmed in recent years with asylum applications, creating years-long waits for asylum cases to be heard, even though many migrants fail to prove their asylum case in the end.

The bill seeks to address that by dramatically speeding up the process, making it tougher for people to enter the asylum system and denying them the ability to apply for asylum if illegal border crossings grow to become unmanageable for authorities. Most migrants who seek asylum would receive an initial interview, known as a credible fear screening, within days of arriving at the border. They would then either be expelled from the country or given a work permit during a months-long wait to have their case heard by an immigration judge.

Immigration advocates are concerned the proposal would deprive asylum seekers of the ability to make full cases, especially when they have just made arduous and often traumatic journeys to get to the U.S.



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# REFLECTIONS

## Bill Brown, World War II glider pilot

This issue of Reflections focuses on the introduction of the glider into military applications. Several men assigned to this new weapon completed their training at Shaw Field before enlisting in the glider pilot school at Twenty-Nine



Sammy Way  
REFLECTIONS

Palms, California. Robert N. Boykin, William H. Brown, John W. Chastain, Jackson L.

DuBose, William Harrison, William Moody, Walter S. Osborne and Charles P. Osteen were the first contingent of glider trainees from Sumter to enter glider school. This report focuses on the career of William H. "Bill" Brown, who received numerous medals for his outstanding military career.

Information and photos used to prepare this piece were acquired from *The Sumter Item* archives, Wikipedia Encyclopedia and the writings of Cassie Nichols.

The son of Mr. and Mrs. R. T. Brown, Flight Officer Brown graduated from Sumter High School in 1941. He was employed by the South Carolina Highway Patrol before entering the service. He was in continual training as a glider pilot both in the United States and in England. According to Wikipedia Encyclopedia, the aircraft used to train the pilots was the CG-4A Glider. This glider was "constructed of fabric covering wood and metal and was operated by a pilot and copilot. It had two fixed mainwheels and a tailwheel. The CG-4A could carry 13 troops and their equipment. Cargo loads could be a ¼-ton truck (i. e. Jeep), a 75 mm howitzer



Col. William Brown

or a ¾-ton trailer, loaded through the upward hinged nose section.

"Douglas C-47 SkyTrains were usually used to tow the aircraft. A few Curtiss C-46 Commando tugs were also used during and after Operation Plunder, the crossing of the Rhine River in March 1945. A USAAF CG-4A tow line consisted of a 350-foot section of nylon."

"The CG-4s went into operation in July 1943 during the invasion of Sicily. They were flown 450 miles across the Mediterranean from North Africa for nighttime assaults such as Operation Ladbroke. They participated in the American airborne landings in Normandy on June 6, 1944, and in the China-Burma-India Theater. Although not the intention of the Army Air Forces, gliders were generally considered expendable by high-ranking European Theater officers and combat personnel; the gliders were abandoned or destroyed after landing."

Flight Officer William H. Brown was a member of the 73rd Troop Carrier Squadron, 9th Air Force. He participated in a number of combat operations including the Normandy D-Day invasion. He was awarded a Purple Heart for injuries received in this action. He also participated in Operation Market Garden on Sept. 19, 1944, and the invasion of Germany on March 24, 1945. His glider was hit by machine gun fire and crash landed outside the glider landing zone. He carried a squad of 17th Airborne troopers who fought their way back to the Allied line. For this and numerous acts of heroism, Flight Officer Brown received the



SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTOS

Col. William H. Brown served as a glider pilot during World War II, serving on D-Day in France and receiving the Purple Heart and other awards for his service.



This group of civilians arrived at Shaw Field recruiting station in June 1942 all set to "Soar to Victory," signing up for glider pilot training.

Bronze Star.

Flight Officer William H. Brown died in 2006. Models of the gliders he flew during WWII, which he constructed, can be viewed at the Sumter Military Museum.



Col. William Brown is seen with a glider. Flight Officer Brown was a member of the 73rd Troop Carrier Squadron, 9th Air Force, and served during several operations, including D-Day in Normandy, France.



Somewhere in England  
June 2, 1944

Dear Little Robert,

In a very little while the greatest war ever created by man will have begun, and as we sit here waiting for it to start, I'm writing you a letter that I think I owe to you. Yesterday I wrote the last letters that I had expected to write for sometime, but today I received your letter so am taking time to write to you. Tell Mother not to be hurt because I didn't write to her too, but I only have time for the one letter, so in a way it is to both of you.

Little Robert, you have been unfortunate in having come into this world at such a time of trouble and misery for everybody, but to offset that, you were born to the sweetest girl in the world, and you should consider yourself very lucky in that respect, because every little boy isn't lucky enough to have a mother like that. Then, too, you have the most wonderful people in the world for your grandparents. They think that you are a mighty fine little man, and I think so too, and for that reason it is up to you to keep on being a good boy and try to do everything to help Mother so that she doesn't have to worry because she has other things to worry about.

On the 25th of this month your father will have been in the Army for two years, and most of that time has been spent away from home, you and Mother. I have missed you and Mother every minute of that time more than either of you will ever know. I want you to know, and I want Net to know, that even though I seemed at times to be too serious about the military part of my life, I was only trying to carry out what seemed to me to be my part in making this world a place that people would be proud and unafraid to live in. If we succeed in doing that, then it will not have been in vain. I realize now that you and Mother have missed a part of life that can never be replaced, and for that matter I have too, these two years that we've been apart. A family should live and play together without separation, and I've missed living and playing with my little family, and I hope you've missed me as much.

Sometimes things don't work out as we expect them to, so in the event that something unexpected happens and I am unable to come home, I want you and Net to know that there was never a greater love in the world than the love I have in my heart for you, my family. If you should have to go through life without me, it will be up to you as you grow older to do all in your power to help Mother in every way that you possibly can and to respect her judgment in things concerning you and your life. She will lead you and guide you along the paths of life in a way that you will always be proud of yourself. Please remember that, and regardless of how you may feel about things, always remember that my request of you is to do as she says. Whatever you decide to do in later years concerning your personal life, I'm sure she will agree with and will do all in her power to see that your wishes come true.

That's about all I have time for now, my son, but know, that as I go into this big show, I go with the prayer that I will be permitted to return to you and Mother, and if it should work out otherwise, it will have been the will of God that I make the sacrifice.

I love you and Mother,

DADDY BILL

Col. William Brown wrote a letter to his son Robert Brown before D-Day in June 1944.

## Air Force introduces F-94; EMT wins award for saving woman's life

**75 YEARS AGO — 1949**

July 12 - 18

• The body of First Lt. Thomas L. Hutchings Jr., of Sumter, formerly of Georgetown, is scheduled to arrive in Georgetown on Friday afternoon. Funeral services will be held from the graveside in Elmwood Cemetery. Officiating will be the Rev. Dr. C. C. Herbert, Methodist minister of Georgetown. A native of Georgetown, Lt. Hutchings was a son of Thomas L. Hutchings and Sara Bourne Hutchings. He graduated from Sumter High School and attended The Citadel before enrolling at West Point, where he graduated. He was killed in action while serving in France.

• Sumter County Post 3034, Veterans of Foreign Wars, will sponsor the city's new traffic safety program in cooperation with the police department. The action was taken by the local VFW following an address by Mayor W.E. Bynum, who was a guest at the regular monthly combination business and supper meeting.

• Morris College in Sumter has been probationally re-accredited by the state for public school teacher training. The school was taken off the State Board of Education's accredited list a year ago. Probationary reinstatement usually precedes full reinstatement. The board said Director Ellison M. Smith of its certification division recommended reinstatement.

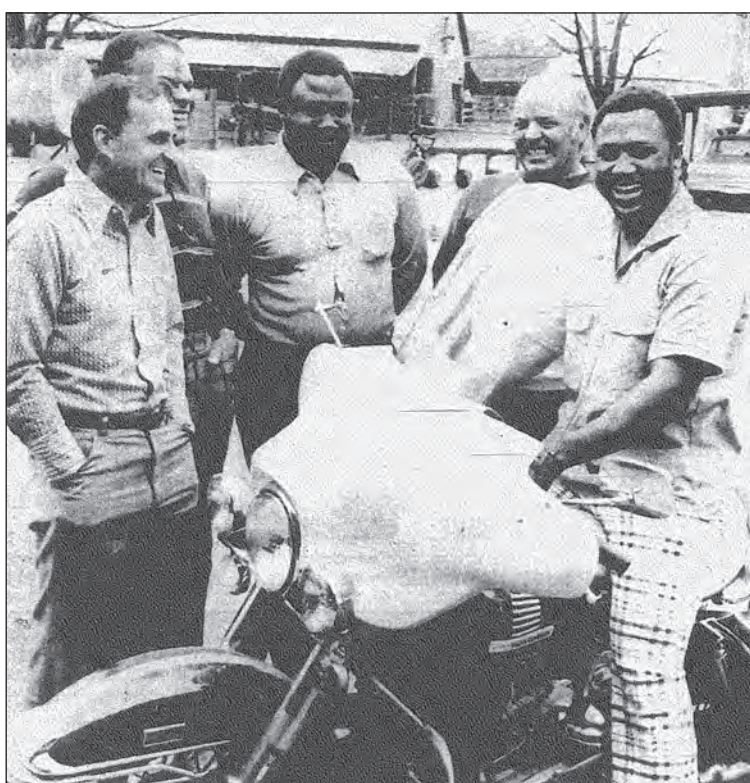
• Junior and senior swimming classes, under the direction of the Sumter chapter of the American Red Cross, will begin Monday at Second Mill and the Elks Club pool. The classes are now being organized. Those who wish to enroll have been asked to contact Mrs. George Thomas, executive secretary of the local Red Cross group.

• It seems to some observers, in the fourth estate, that the best way to see the world is to get a job with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Here in Washington the frequency with which officials of that department study, tour, investigate and observe crop conditions all over the world cannot be hidden.

• Speakers who will take part in the open meeting to be held here next week for the purpose of discussing the proposed Sumter Memorial Home have been allotted a specific number of minutes for their talks. The meeting, scheduled for Wednesday, July 20, in the main courtroom of the county courthouse, is designed to cover a period of 99 minutes. The session will include addresses, the selection of a steering committee to guide the affairs of the proposed home for the chronically ill, aged and helpless of this county and a general discussion from among those present.

• The SLC Shrine Club, of which Dr. D. O. Winter is president, has made its swimming facilities at Pocalla Springs available to the boys and girls of Silver Center and Jenkins Center, a city Recreation Department spokesman announced. The Shriners of Sumter, Lee and Clarendon counties are now using the Pocalla Springs building as a clubhouse, and in preparing the building for this purpose, work was also done on the swimming pool.

• The public is invited to an open house to be held by the Columbia branch of the South Carolina Area Trade School on Wednesday, July 20. The open house will feature a television broadcast in the school gymnasium received from WBT in Charlotte on a set assembled by the students in the radio course at the school, under the direction of instructor A. H. Burnett. The public will be invited to inspect the various night classes which will be in operation and to see the machinery and equipment which is available for teaching South Carolin-



Joe Frazier, on motorcycle, and his friends laugh at a joke March 26, 1974, at Ralph V. Graham farm in Alcolu. Standing around the motorcycle from left are Louis Deneaux, Simon Jinks, Johnny Frazier and Ralph Graham.

ians skilled trades.

• The Chicks ended a brief two-game home stand last night by sweeping both games of the series from Charlotte's Hornets. The latest score was 7 to 4. As had been the case the night before, the first half of the ball game was a pitching duel with Ed Zukowski and Frenchy Bourdette waging quite a struggle. Bourdette allowed two singles in the first, and with a stolen base thrown in, the Hornets were able to score one run. But from then on, until the seventh, the Bees didn't get a hit off his cross-fire offerings.

• A new jet fighter aircraft designed to fly and fight in pitch darkness was announced today by the United States Air Force. A radically advanced version of the new aircraft, designated the F-94 by the Air Force, is a 24-hour night fighter. Its mission will be high-altitude interception of enemy attack, particularly under conditions of weather visibility that would ground standard jet fighters.

• Service station operators who handle Gulf Oil Products in Sumter, Manning and Camden attended a meeting held by the company at Cuttino's Place under the direction of J.F. White, manager of the Gulf District Office at Florence. The meeting was held to award prizes to winners of a recently completed motor oil sales contest, to honor Gulf dealers who last year concluded 10 years of association with the company and to present a new program designed to increase service station sales volume.

**50 YEARS AGO — 1974**

March 22 - 28

• Sumter High's tennis team scored its first victory of the young season by downing McClenaghan of Florence, 8-1. The Gamecocks, now 1-1, swept every doubles match and all but one of the singles contests, while the singles match that was dropped featured close competition. Sumter High's netters have a busy week, as they host Orangeburg-Wilkinson today and then travel to Columbia for a match with A.C. Flora on Thursday.

• The Sumter Council of Garden Clubs presented its annual spring fashion show in a new form this year — many of the fashions shown were made and modeled by members of the garden clubs which make up the council. Held at the Alice Boyle Garden Center on Wednesday, three showings were given throughout the day with the first at 9:30 a.m.

• Members of the coaching staff of the Lakeland Community College in Mentor, Ohio, received keys to the city from Mayor Richard P. Moses. The coaches, along with their various teams, spent about a week in the Sumter area practicing for their spring sports and playing against several sports teams at the

University of South Carolina at Sumter. "We appreciate your coming to Sumter," said the mayor, as he presented each of the four coaches keys to the city at the City-County Office Building. "We hope if you like it here that you will come back again."

• Several structures in Sumter County sustained heavy damage from the high winds that struck Thursday morning. Two equipment sheds, one barn and one carport belonging to H.E. Kirven Sr., of Pinewood, were damaged by severe winds about 9 a.m. Thursday. According to H.E. Kirven Jr., Kirven's son, a 100-foot equipment shed was completely damaged. "Half of the roof of another equipment shed, which was about 50 feet long, was blown off, and half of the roof of the large barn was blown off," Kirven said. "A large tree was uprooted and blew down over the carport in the back yard."

• Beginning April 15, Charlie Hodgin will teach tennis lessons for the Parks and Recreation Department. Hodgin is a well-known tennis player who has won tournaments throughout the South. His two sons, Chuck and Mark, are following in their father's footsteps and are ranked nationally. The tennis clinics will be held at various courts depending on the number of children and adults registering.

• The Sumter County Chapter of the Morris College Alumni Association will host a "Meet the President-Elect Tea" on Sunday evening at 6:30 in Daniels Dining Hall on campus. Dr. Luns C. Richardson, the current vice president of Voorhees College and former acting president of Benedict College, will be the featured guest at the tea. He will assume presidential duties at Morris College on July 1, 1974.

• Wilson Hall pushed across a run in the top of the fourth inning and then held off several Thomas Sumter threats to pull out the victory, 6-5. Both teams erupted for big five-run innings, Wilson Hall in the second and Thomas Sumter in the third, but other than these big innings, only one other run was scored.

• As part of a "week of action learning," St. Jude High School of Sumter sent students to various firms and professional offices in the community for a first-hand look at different occupations. Beatrice Jones was assigned to *The Item* newsroom during the week. Her chief guide and friend for the week was Information Please writer Vickie Fickling, who was the first to introduce her to *The Item*. She learned the various duties of reporters and sometimes accompanied them on their rounds.

• The Santee-Wateree Mental Health Center recently began a volunteer program. One of the aims of the volunteer program, according to

Marie Land, a registered occupational therapist with the mental health center's partial patient program, is to involve as much of the community services and as much of a person's practical experience as possible with the activity programs. The program started after volunteers received in-service training. "Potential volunteers took a personality test," said Land, who coordinated the volunteers. Training included discussions and information on maintaining confidentiality of the patients, how to listen and to have empathy for patients.

**25 YEARS AGO — 1999**

Feb. 1 - 6

• The cooler, wetter weather of late has left some Sumter residents looking for help staying warm. Many of them have turned to *The Item's* Fireside Fund, which helps needy families buy kerosene, wood, fuel oil or electricity to heat their homes. "When they saw the weather advisory about it getting cool again, naturally I got a lot of calls," said Lucy Copeland, a case-worker with the Salvation Army, which administers the fund for the newspaper. Many of these families heat with kerosene and want to be prepared for a predicted cold snap, she said.

• Base closures. It's a phrase that can strike fear into the hearts of communities with close ties to the military. If Secretary of Defense William Cohen and other military officials get their way, another round of base closures is on the horizon. Since the early 1990s, the Sumter community has come together to keep Shaw Air Force Base from shutting down. Sumter Mayor Steve Creech said, "We'll never take (Shaw) for granted, and we'll always be working hard."

• Popular novelist Lois Battle will be the guest speaker at the annual Friends of the Library luncheon in May. Barbara Adams, chairwoman for the luncheon, says that Battle is "a very interesting, outspoken and colorful woman. We expect that this luncheon will be very entertaining." Battle is known for her strong narrative and characters in such best-selling novels as "War Brides," "Storyville" and "Bed and Breakfast" and for her candor about such issues as feminism and the changing South.

• Eddie Floyd always enjoyed barbecuing for his family and friends around the holidays. Now he does it three days a week for a living. Eddie's Bar-B-Q, on U.S. 378 in Turbeville, has been in business since October, fulfilling Floyd's dream of opening a business that one of his three children can one day take over. Floyd, 49, retired last February from Liberty Life Insurance and said he's always entertained the idea of opening a barbecue restaurant.

• If current Senate plans for military pay and benefits become law, 1999 will be the kind of year that comes along once, perhaps twice, in a service member's career. The good news continued Jan. 27 when Republicans and Democrats on the Senate Armed Services Committee went behind closed doors to mark up a bill that would boost compensation by \$42 billion over six years.

• At first, Leroy Woods thought the flames near Interstate 95 in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, were coming from a trash fire. But as the vacationing Sumter County emergency medical technician approached the blaze in the August pre-dawn darkness, Woods learned it was actually a Ford sedan on fire. Inside the car, engulfed in flames, was a woman screaming for help. What Woods did next earned him the honor of being named Sumter County's Emergency Medical Technician of the Year for 1998. The award was handed down

by American Legion Post No. 15 during the group's annual Law and Order Night. Woods called for help and then rushed to the car, which was being rocked by mini explosions coming from under the hood. He also flagged down a passing truck driver who had a fire extinguisher. The two used the extinguisher to hold back the flames as they pulled the Florida woman from the front passenger's seat minutes before the car exploded.

• Terrence Scriven wore a look of relief on his face after he and his Claflin College basketball team defeated Morris College 90-81. It wasn't so much the fact the Panthers had won — even though they were forced to fight back from an 18-point first-half deficit. Scriven's respite was due to the performance he had: 26 points on 6-of-14 shooting from the field, including 3-of-6 from 3-point range, while hitting 11 of 13 free throws. "It felt good to finally get out of the slump that I was in," said Scriven, a former Sumter High standout who is now a senior point guard for Claflin.

• To Joe Heriot, volunteering just means spending time outdoors and helping whom-ever he can. To the Sumter Family YMCA, Heriot's volunteering is worthy of its highest honor. Each year, the Y gives its Humanitarian of the Year award to someone who gives time and energy to help others, said Rand Bailey, the Y's chief executive officer. This year, the past five winners of the award chose Heriot, 68, to receive the honor. "Joe is one of those unsung heroes around the Y that never tells you no," Bailey said. "Anywhere from putting finish on the (gym) floor to soliciting money on the capital campaign, he's a guy who does what he says he's going to do."

• "It's a long story." That's what Sumter Police Chief Harold Johnson told city council members about the progress of a joint city-county project to upgrade the local 911 emergency phone system and the radios used by emergency workers. Johnson is spearheading Sumter's transition to Enhanced 911 — or E-911 — which will automatically show dispatchers for police, fire and medical services the location a telephone call is coming from as soon as the dispatchers answer the phone. Currently, callers have to tell emergency operators where they are calling from so authorities can respond.

• An apparent flu bug brought officials from a number of emergency service agencies to a nursing home on Sumter's North Main Street on Tuesday morning. Fearing something serious after some residents at the home reported weakness and shortness of breath, emergency workers quarantined the 60-bed Carriage House shortly after 10 a.m. and rerouted traffic on North Main to make way for ambulances and fire trucks. A crew from South Carolina Electricity and Gas checked the home for a gas leak but found nothing. It turned out it was just a flu bug.

• Sickle cell anemia is a painful genetic illness that affects 289 of every 100,000 Black Americans and thousands of other Americans of different ethnic origins. There is no effective treatment for sickle cell disease, but medical advances and early detection of the illness have greatly improved the life expectancy of those affected. Bertha Willis, a retired teacher and current member of VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), is the new representative of the James R. Clark Memorial Sickle Cell Foundation for Sumter and Clarendon counties. It's her mission to educate people about the illness, help them get screened for sickle cell trait and get genetic counseling.

# VOICES FROM PAGE A1

is a never-ending one, so I need to make the most of each opportunity I am given to learning and loving who I truly am.

But, as a true Aquarius, the wondering didn't stop there.

Many of you reached out to me about how "Where I Stand" touched you, and even some of your children, in a special way. You shared that you wonder the same questions and that hearing from people who triumphed over such tribulations made you feel valid and encouraged in working through your weighted wonderings.

But then that made me wonder if my journey out of the millions out there could move people, then why not share the journey of another — or six others?

Think of this series as an extension of the first. However, instead of where I stand, it's where we stand — we as in the arts community.

This Black History Month, we'll bring you — through both written and visual mediums — in on conversations between art lovers and local humanitarians on the importance of self-expression through the arts and adjacent skills in what we're calling this installment of the series, "Boosting Black Voices." The individuals fea-

tured this month will unveil the adversities that came along with pursuing their colorful passions and how, despite them, they have emerged confident in the exploration of their identity.

Let me just point out that word: identity. I've seen more of this word in the past year than in my two decades of living. It was a word that once felt foreign to me, as I never believed its meaning applied to me. "The distinguishing character or personality of an individual" is how Merriam-Webster defines it. This time last year, I didn't feel distinguished from my peers, solely because I didn't think what made me special was special.

Safe to say, I've given myself way more credit and grace at 24 than I have in my adolescent and teenage years; young Alaysha would be proud.

But I want this second installment of this self-exploration series to be one where you get to see how beautiful and diverse identities can be for people who look like me. You see us on stage and in your schools but never really know the depths of what makes us who we are.

Words can't express how honored I am to embark on this journey again, this time sharing the mic with some equally amazing people and their unbelievable talents, and I can't wait for you, Sumter, to see it for yourselves.

# ITEM FROM PAGE A1

and has remained family owned since its inception, embarks on a new era, those mission-driven priorities to consistently evolve and build community trust will not diminish. In fact, these changes will allow *The Item's* staff to refocus their efforts on the paper's most efficient products to bring subscribers and readers the best-quality reporters and promotions.

There will be an increased focus on areas of growth, such as newsletters, video storytelling and digital-first con-

tent. News itself is never going away. *The Item* will continue to produce reliable, fair, local news and storytelling daily across digital platforms.

One of those benefits of freeing up time and resources will be the creation of a brand-new newspaper serving Sumter. Published on the third Friday of each month, *The Item Impact* will be mailed directly — without the requirement of a paid subscription — to more than 28,000 households in Sumter.

"*The Item Impact* is 'Local News for Everyone,' the best we can produce," Johnson said. "And it will be the most

distributed local news product in decades."

This paper will be a platform for local advertisers to connect directly to mailboxes around Sumter County, promoting the growth of Sumter. It will impact change and better inform the public about the community and people around them.

"This next step in the long history of *The Sumter Item* will actually poise us to reach more people than we are right now," said Kayla Green, executive editor. "News has never been free to produce, but being able to offer a robust paper to the community with-

out requiring a subscription is a huge step toward creating more equitable access to information we all need to live better, more informed lives."

The first expanded Weekend Edition will be published Saturday, March 2. On Tuesday, March 5, there will be no paper, and the first expanded Weekday Edition will run on Wednesday, March 6.

The inaugural *Item Impact* cost-free monthly paper will land in mailboxes throughout Sumter on Friday, March 15.

There are special rates for advertisers who want to be part of this historic product for *The Sumter Item* and local

community. Email your sales representative or *advertising@theitem.com* to learn more.

The staff of *The Sumter Item* appreciates everyone who is a part of the community that supports local news. We would not be here — and would not want to be — without our subscribers, readers and advertisers. If you have questions, please call our customer service representatives at (803) 774-1200, extension 1, Monday-Thursday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., or email *circulation@theitem.com*.

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## Congratulations to Dr. Clark on his doctoral accomplishment and career accolades.

Dr. Marquice Clark is the son of Rev. James and Alethia Clark. Mister Clark is the youngest of four boys and thoroughly enjoys being the baby of the family. Dr. Clark is married to his high school sweetheart and together they have two children.

Dr. Clark was educated in the public schools of Sumter County. He now holds the Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education with a minor in History from Morris College. He also holds a Master of Arts Degree in Administration and Supervision and an Ed.S degree from Furman University. In December of 2023, Mister Clark received his Educational Doctorate from Clemson University.

Dr. Clark is the current principal of the Cleveland Academy of Leadership in Spartanburg, SC where under his leadership, the school received the first "Excellent" report card rating in the school's history.

Congratulations to Dr. Clark on his doctoral accomplishment and career accolades.

# A grainy sonar image reignites excitement, skepticism over Amelia Earhart's final flight

BY JAMES POLLARD and BEN FINLEY  
Associated Press

COLUMBIA — A grainy sonar image recorded by a private pilot has reinvigorated interest in one of the past century's most alluring mysteries: What happened to Amelia Earhart when her plane vanished during her flight around the world in 1937?

Numerous expeditions have turned up nothing, only confirming that swaths of ocean floor held no trace of her twin-tailed monoplane. Tony Romeo now thinks his new South Carolina-based sea exploration company captured an outline of the iconic American's Lockheed 10-E Electra.

Archaeologists and explorers are hopeful. But whether the tousled-haired pilot's plane lies at the roughly 16,000-foot depth remains to be seen. And debates about the proper handling of whatever object is discovered.

Archivists are hopeful that Romeo's Deep Sea Vision is close to solving the puzzle — if for no other reason than to return attention to Earhart's accomplishments.

Regardless, the search is on for the first woman to fly across the Atlantic Ocean.

## HOW DID DEEP SEA VISION DETECT THE OBJECT THAT COULD BE EARHART'S PLANE?

Romeo wanted more of an adventure than his commercial real estate career. His father flew for Pan American Airlines, his brother is an Air Force pilot, and he has a private pilot's license himself. Hailing from an "aviation family," he'd long held interest in the Earhart mystery.

Romeo said he sold his real estate interests to fund last year's search and buy a \$9 million underwater drone from a Norwegian company. The state-of-the-art technology is called the Hugin 6000 — a reference to its ability to break into the deepest layer of the ocean at 19,700 feet.

A 16-person crew began a roughly 100-day search in September 2023, scanning more than 5,200 square miles of seafloor. They narrowed their probe to the area around How-



AP FILE PHOTO

Amelia Earhart, the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean, vanished during her flight around the world in 1937.

land Island, a mid-Pacific atoll between Papua New Guinea and Hawaii.

But it wasn't until the team reviewed sonar data in December that they saw the fuzzy yellow outline of what resembles a plane.

"In the end, we came out with an image of a target that we believe very strongly is Amelia's aircraft," Romeo told The Associated Press.

The next step is taking a camera underwater to better examine the unidentified object. If the visuals confirm the explorers' greatest hopes, Romeo said the goal would be to raise the long-lost Electra.

Ultimately, Romeo said his team undertook the costly adventure to "solve aviation's greatest unsolved mystery." An open hatch could indicate that Earhart and her flight companion escaped after the initial impact, Romeo said, and a cockpit dial could lend insight into what, exactly, went wrong.

## FROM ALIEN ABDUCTION TO JAPANESE EXECUTION, THEORIES ABOUND

Earhart and her navigator, Fred Noonan, disappeared while flying from New Guinea to Howland Island as part of her attempt to become the first female pilot to circumnavigate the globe. She had radioed that she was running low on fuel.

The Navy searched but found no trace. The U.S. government's official position has been that Earhart and Noonan went down with their plane.

Since then, theories have

veered into the absurd, including abduction by aliens, or Earhart living in New Jersey under an alias. Others speculate she and Noonan were executed by the Japanese or died as castaways on an island.

"Amelia is America's favorite missing person," Romeo said.

Deep Sea Vision's is hardly the first foray. David Jourdan said his exploration company Nauticos searched in vain on three separate expeditions between 2002 and 2017, surveying an area of seafloor about the size of Connecticut. Those efforts were preceded by a \$1 million hunt in 1999 from Nevada-based Dana Timmer. As recently as 2014, Timmer had not given up and sought to raise nearly \$2 million for another go.

Between 1988 and 2002, the International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery made six trips to a different island in the western Pacific Ocean under the impression that Earhart crash-landed on a flat reef 1,800 miles south of Hawaii.

Hillary Clinton, then the U.S. Secretary of State, encouraged the group in 2012 when it launched a new search for the wreckage fueled by analysis of a 1937 photo thought to show the Lockheed Electra's landing gear jutting out of the island's shoreline.

## 'WE NEED TO SEE MORE'

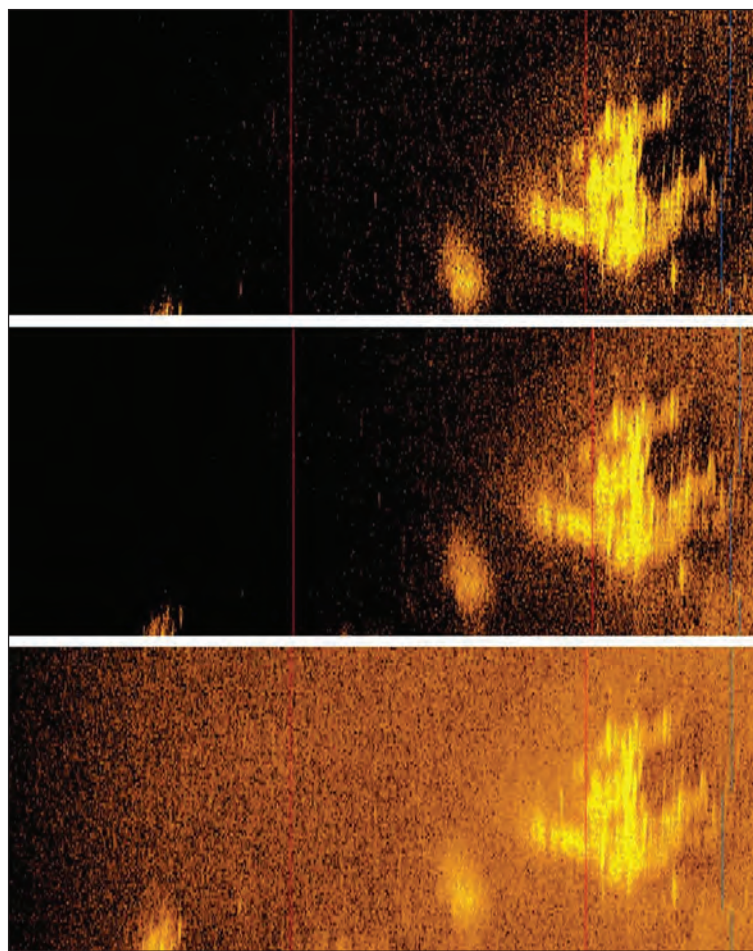
Maritime archaeologist James Delgado said Romeo's potential find would change the narrative, but "we need to see more."

"Let's drop some cameras down there and take a look," said Delgado, senior vice president of the archaeological firm SEARCH Inc.

Delgado said Romeo's expedition employed world-class, cutting-edge technology that was once classified and is "revolutionizing our understanding of the deep ocean."

But he said Romeo's team must provide "a forensic level of documentation" to prove it's Earhart's Lockheed. That could mean the patterns in the fuselage's aluminum, the configuration of its tail and details from the cockpit.

Jourdan, of Nauticos, would have expected to see straight wings and not swept wings, like



DEEP SEA VISION VIA AP

This photo combo shows a sonar image that appears to be Amelia Earhart's Lockheed 10-E Electra. This grainy image recorded by a private pilot has reinvigorated interest in one of the past century's most alluring mysteries: What happened to Amelia Earhart when her plane vanished during her flight around the world in 1937?

the new sonar suggests, as well as engines. But that could be explained by damage to the aircraft or reflections distorting the image, he acknowledged.

"It could be a plane. It certainly looks like a plane. It could be a geological feature that looks like a plane," he said.

Dorothy Cochrane, an aeronautics curator at the National Air and Space Museum, said Romeo's crew searched in the right place near Howland Island. That's where Earhart desperately sought a runway when she disappeared on the last leg of her flight.

If the object really is the historic aircraft, the question for Cochrane will be whether it is safe to raise. How much of the machinery is still intact would be determined in part by how smoothly Earhart landed, she added.

"That's where you have to really look at this image and say, 'What have we got here?'" said Cochrane.

## WHAT IF EARHART'S LOCKHEED ELECTRA HAS BEEN FOUND?

If the fuzzy sonar images turn out to be the plane, international standards for underwater archaeology would strongly suggest the aircraft remain where it is, said Ole Varmer, a retired attorney with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Adminis-

tration and a senior fellow at The Ocean Foundation.

Nonintrusive research can still be conducted to reveal why the plane possibly crashed, Varmer said.

"You preserve as much of the story as you can," Varmer said. "It's not just the wreck. It's where it is and its context on the seabed. That is part of the story as to how and why it got there. When you salvage it, you're destroying part of the site, which can provide information."

Raising the plane and placing it in a museum would likely cost hundreds of millions of dollars, Varmer said. And while Romeo could conceivably make a salvage claim in the courts, the plane's owner has the right to deny it.

Earhart bought the Lockheed with money raised, at least in part, by the Purdue Research Foundation, according to a blog post by Purdue University in Indiana. And she planned to return the aircraft to the school.

Romeo said the team thinks the plane belongs in the Smithsonian. Acknowledging the "uncharted territory" of potential legal issues, he said his exploration company will "deal with those as they come up."

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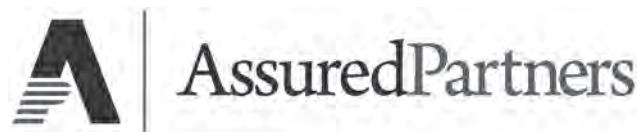
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# Haley insists she's staying in GOP race. Here's how that could cause problems for Trump

BY STEVE PEOPLES and JAMES POLLARD  
Associated Press

COLUMBIA— For months, the underdog in the presidential primary refused to concede defeat. He fought hard in state after state, even as the front-runner amassed a delegate advantage that would be virtually impos-



HALEY

ble to overcome. The extended feud between Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton in 2016, which turned more bitter as time passed, left behind Democratic divisions that would ultimately contribute to their party's crushing general election loss.

Eight years later, some Republicans fear that history may soon repeat itself.

Nikki Haley's path to the GOP nomination is rapidly shrinking following recent losses in Iowa and New Hampshire. But she's vowing to stay in the race indefinitely, backed by thousands of committed donors, a key slice of the party's moderate wing and a new willingness to attack the mental fitness and legal baggage of 2024 Republican front-runner Donald Trump. And the harder Haley fights, the more Republican officials fear she may hurt his long-term prospects in the all-but-certain general election ahead against Democratic President Joe Biden.

Former Trump adviser David Urban described Haley's continued presence as a distraction, a drain on resources and a source of frustration.

"Nobody on Trump's team thinks (a Biden matchup) is going to be easy. It's going to be a bumpy road. It's going to be a tough race. They want to hit the starter's pistol and get going," Urban said. "People need to start coming together and working together. But right now, none of that is happening because she's still out there stoking the anti-Trump fire."

## 'I AM NOT GOING ANYWHERE'

Of course, Haley is in a

much different position than Sanders was during the epic 2016 campaign. The Vermont senator actually won contests, including his 22-point victory in the New Hampshire primary. Unless she manages a dramatic turnaround, Haley's 11-point deficit in the same state last month may prove to be the high point of her presidential bid.

Haley decided to skip Nevada's presidential caucuses next Thursday in favor of a state primary election two days earlier that does not award delegates. Trump could embarrass Haley in her home state of South Carolina later in the month, where the former president has a loyal following. A *Washington Post*-Monmouth University poll on Thursday found Trump with a 26-point lead in the state.

Yet in practical terms — and in Haley's calculus — the GOP primary has barely begun. Just two states have voted so far in a process that will ultimately span all 50 before concluding at the GOP's national nominating convention in July.

"I am not going anywhere," she told reporters on Thursday. "We have a country to save. And I am determined to keep on going the entire way. As long as we can keep closing that gap, I'm gonna keep staying in."

Such comments increasingly draw Trump's ire, as he's eager to move past the primary completely and focus on Biden. At roughly the same time Haley was speaking, Trump was attacking her on social media. One post he shared said, "Nikki Haley is bought and paid for by our political enemies," and another described Haley as "deeply disliked" by a growing number of Americans.

Some Republicans worry that Trump's preoccupation with Haley, whom he frequently calls "birdbrain," might further alienate moderate voters and suburban women.

## HALEY ASSETS GROWING

Haley is getting stronger by some measures.

Her campaign has raised \$5 million from small-dollar

donors in the days since she finished in second place in New Hampshire, according to spokesperson Nachama Soloveichik. She's also in the midst of a four-state fundraising tour that will feature at least 10 closed-door events with wealthy donors. This week's initial swing through New York netted more than \$1.5 million, Soloveichik said.

Republican fundraiser Eric Levine, who co-hosted one of the New York events, said the few hundred Haley donors who gathered earlier in the week "remain as committed to Haley as ever."

Haley campaign manager Betsy Ankney highlighted the candidate's commitment to the race during a meeting with some of the GOP's leading donors earlier in the week in Florida, according to two Republican officials in the room granted anonymity to share private discussions. Trump senior adviser Susie Wiles also delivered a presentation to the group, which was designed to highlight the former president's tightening grip on the nomination.

Many major donors remain critical of Trump, but some of the biggest would-be Haley supporters are essentially in a holding pattern ahead of South Carolina's Feb. 24 primary. They think she is essentially fully funded for the rest of the month and there's little more they can do in the short term, according to the officials.

Two of the group's founders, billionaire hedge fund managers Ken Griffin and Paul Singer, each donated \$5 million to Haley's 2024 bid in recent weeks, according to federal filings made public this week.

Trump also continues to report strong fundraising totals. But his legal troubles are consuming a huge portion of his donors' dollars.

Two of Trump's political action committees spent roughly \$50 million in donor money on the former president's legal fees last year, according to federal filings made public this week. And his legal costs are continuing to grow.

## HALEY'S AGGRESSIVE STRATEGY

Haley has begun to ratchet

up attacks against Trump, a deliberate strategy designed to highlight the former president's glaring liabilities, including his legal baggage and his age.

The campaign lumped Trump and Biden together in a new attack ad this week calling them "Grumpy Old Men." She's also working to link the 77-year-old Trump's refusal to debate to questions about his mental acuity. And in a Wednesday interview on the "Breakfast Club" radio program, she blamed Trump for the state of the nation's politics.

"He's made it chaotic," she said. "He's made it self-absorbed."

Her message appears to be resonating with a key group of swing voters who play a pivotal role in general elections.

In New Hampshire's recent primary, for example, Trump won a decisive victory against Haley backed by his popularity among traditional Republican voters. But he lost a majority of moderates and about two-thirds of those who identify as independents, according to AP VoteCast. He also lost about 6 in 10 who have college degrees, and he's shown a persistent vulnerability among voters living in suburbs.

But the Republican base is still decidedly behind Trump. And a growing group of Republican elected officials on Capitol Hill are calling for Haley to quit the race. Republican National Committee Chair Ronna McDaniel said recently that it was time to unite behind Trump.

B.J. Hopper, an 81-year-old self-described "Never Trumper," is doubtful that Haley will catch Trump, but she attended Thursday's stop in South Carolina's capital city because she's trying to be hopeful.

"It'd be a miracle," Hopper said of a Haley victory in the state's upcoming primary.

As much of the attention shifts to South Carolina, Haley's campaign insists her goal there isn't to win, but simply to show growth compared to New Hampshire. She's building campaign infrastructure in next-up Michigan and several states

that host primary contests on March 5, also known as "Super Tuesday."

The Haley campaign has already rolled out leadership teams and "Women for Nikki" chapters in all 15 Super Tuesday states. A pro-Haley super PAC is also coordinating get-out-the-vote efforts in South Carolina, Michigan and multiple super Tuesday states. That's in addition to the Koch-backed conservative group, Americans for Prosperity, which has devoted its army of grassroots activists on the ground in several key states to helping Haley.

Specifically, the group is knocking on doors, sending pro-Haley mail and running online ads in Tennessee, North Carolina, Arkansas and Virginia.

But the Koch network will not continue to support her if it determines there is no path to victory, according to conversations between Koch officials and donors at a private retreat last week in California, where Haley discussed the state of her presidential campaign during a short video call.

During a separate session with top donors, AFP Action senior advisers Emily Seidel and Michael Palmer reaffirmed the group's decision to endorse Haley given that she is the last Trump alternative standing, according to an official with direct knowledge of the conversations who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss strategy.

Seidel and Palmer also made clear to donors that the group would not make future investments to any campaign if there is no opportunity to win, the official said, pointing to the Kochs' longstanding business-like approach to politics.

Meanwhile, other Republican operatives think Haley's continued candidacy creates unnecessary risks for the notoriously undisciplined Trump.

"The longer she hangs around and the more Trump focuses on her, the greater likelihood you get unforced errors," said Republican pollster Neil Newhouse. "She's giving ammunition to Biden's campaign."

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# DISTRICT

FROM PAGE A1

time of his annual evaluation, but it was not even mentioned in his contract, according to Smith, and was never discussed in an open session.

In a return letter to the NAACP, Smith set forth the district's position and said "much of your correspondence is directed to the district's employment of Dr. Wright, contains inaccurate information and has a concerning tone and content. Contrary to your allegations, the board has not undermined Dr. Wright or set him up for failure."

The NAACP letter also makes reference to a three-page document that outlines a merger of the district, Liberty STEAM Charter (LSC) and Wilson Hall and that "the partnership or 'handcuffs' involves the closing of rural schools" and other "measures ultimately intended to position LSC to establish and head a technical high school in Sumter County."

Smith sent to the NAACP a three-page document called a "Blueprint for Educational Collaboration" prepared by Liberty STEAM that only speaks broadly of a "collaborative partnership among public, private and charter schools in Sumter, SC, to create a best-in-class education system."

In a second letter dated Jan. 22, the NAACP requested any additional correspondence related to the partnership of educational entities, but Smith said Friday that he replied on Thursday that there are no other documents besides the initial blueprint.

Canty, the district's board chairman, said he took offense to the NAACP allegations on the educational partnership and said that he has only met three times with the board chairmen from Liberty and Wilson Hall to discuss "the proposition philosophically and pragmatically" to advance education for all children in Sumter County.

He said he also took offense to the racial themes in the NAACP letter and said he does not consider the board's relationship with Wright to have anything to do with race.

"To claim that we 'browbeat, handcuff or hang from a tree' the superintendent is egregious," he said. "The racial overtones in the letter in my opinion are illogical. The composition of the board is almost even, and to suggest that the four African Americans and the five Caucasians who are on the board have a racial problem with the superintendent is false and grossly unfair to a board that has worked so hard to embrace the superintendent's leadership."

Disney, the vice chairwoman, said the trustees' relationship with the superintendent has nothing to do with race.

"I have never seen a racial problem," she said. "We are five to four, and I have never seen the four African Americans ever even suggest anything like that. Our work is all about real issues that deal with all the students, and our agenda is solely about the issues of the schools. We deal with bus issues and needing teachers and items that are listed on our agendas."

At the trustees' last meeting on Jan. 22, Area 2 Trustee Brittany English said in the Board Communications section that she had received the letter from the NAACP regarding the board and essentially threw it away.

"I just wanted to let you guys know how far your letter got with me," English said. "I think I sneezed, and I used it



BRUCE MILLS / THE SUMTER ITEM

Sumter School District Board of Trustees Vice Chairwoman Bonnie Disney, left, and Chairman Ralph Canty listen during a recent school board meeting at the district office.



ENGLISH

ment or racial issues between the superintendent or trustees.

The *Sumter Item* tried to reach out on Friday to Sumter NAACP President Elizabeth Kilgore and fellow executive committee member Carlton Washington concerning the letters, but neither returned multiple phone calls and text messages from the newspaper.

Also this week, Wright declined to comment to *The Item* on the NAACP's allegations.

Kilgore signed these two letters. Some Sumter NAACP letters through the years that *The Item* has obtained have been from the branch's executive committee.

The first letter from Jan. 15 was addressed to Canty, and members of Sumter County Council and Sumter City Council and Wright were sent carbon copies. *The Item* was never included to receive the letters and obtained them from Canty.

### THE BACKSTORY

The NAACP letters written in January come after the full school board in the fall decided against implementing district realignment to balance schools' enrollments and maintain all the district's schools.

Instead, the nine-member board favored a long-term "master plan" to serve the

as tissue."

In full board meetings since Wright's tenure began in July 2022, no one has spoken in public participation on board harassment or racial issues between the superintendent or trustees.

district for 15 to 20 years that will need capital development for new schools' construction and consolidation of others because of declining district enrollment.

A theme in the previous board's realignment project approved in 2022 was to balance "facility utilization" across the district by shuffling students from higher-enrollment schools in the City of Sumter to help fill lower-enrollment schools in rural areas of Sumter County.

The previous board — essentially in place from 2018 to 2022 — had several trustees with connections to the former Sumter School District 2, which was the outlying rural school district in Sumter County before consolidation in 2011. Before the current board, infighting was common during the last

decade between trustees with connections to the former county district and the district in the City of Sumter, Sumter School District 17.

With its leadership concentrated in rural portions of the county, the Sumter NAACP supported realignment. For the past several years, a primary mission of the local NAACP has been to save rural schools. Kilgore is also a former District 2 board member.

The realignment project in 2021 and 2022 resulted in public outcry, as families did not favor mass movements of students, especially among Sumter's three public high schools. While realignment was possibly a viable alternative a decade ago, the study did not consider declining enrollment in the district in the

### LETTER AND RESPONSE

See the Sumter NAACP's letter addressed to school board Chairman Ralph Canty and Canty's response on A13.



SMITH

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last 10 years, aging facilities and "school choice" legislation currently in the state's General Assembly.

It also did not factor in Liberty STEAM, which opened in fall 2021 and has provided a "school choice" alternative for Sumter County parents. In its third year, the tuition-free, public charter school already has 586 students as a K-3 school and is adding one grade level and 144 students per year. At build out as a K-12 school, Liberty projects to have about 2,000 students.

In an increasingly competitive environment for traditional public schools, Sumter School District's enrollment is down at least 2,500 students since 2016, according to official enrollment data from the state Department of Education. The fall 2023 45-day enrollment total was 13,682 compared to 16,511 students in the spring of 2016.

Canty said no one on the board has as an objective to close rural schools.

"I would hope to God that there is no one in Sumter County with an agenda to close rural schools," he said. "I surely do not have that as an objective, and I know that our board does not have that as an objective."

"As it relates to rural schools, lower birth rates and migration into the city may be the culprit, not me."

### MORE FROM THE NAACP LETTER

The letter also references "the consolidated district has been denied critical resources for success through the withholding of critical millage increases" from Sumter County Council. While council has not approved a full millage increase since 2016, as the letter states, the district has grown its general fund balance to \$51.4 million through fiscal year 2023, largely because of attrition from teaching vacancies.

In the December audit report, Mauldin & Jenkins auditor Brian Nicholson said the \$51.4 million represents about 38% of annual expenditures. Best practices by the Government Finance Officers Association recommend for a general fund to be at 20% to 25% of annual expenditures.

Regarding some topics in the letter, such as a contract extension for Wright and a group preventing "the district's freedom to request any millage increase," it is not known how the NAACP obtained that information. Those topics have never been addressed in open session.

Smith, the district's attorney,

said he is unsure if there is a leak on the board or in administration, but any leak of an executive session item is contrary to state law and board policy, which provides for the confidentiality of executive sessions. He said that he has known of individuals being censored for violating code of conduct and confidentiality clauses.

### SIMILAR ROAD AS LAST YEAR

An apparent executive session leak on a topic concerning Liberty STEAM also occurred in spring 2023 with the Sumter school board and administration. At the time, a closed-door discussion among the school district's Board of Trustees was Liberty STEAM's interest in acquiring the former F.J. DeLaine Elementary School in the Wedgefield community.

A former school board closed the school in 2018 because of lagging enrollment levels since the early 2000s and in an effort to save money after the district overspent its budget by \$6.2 million in fiscal 2016.

Through what had to be a board or administration leak, Sumter County Councilman and Sumter NAACP officer Carlton Washington discovered Liberty's interest in F.J. DeLaine and during a six-week process rallied the community's support for turning a portion of the school into a proposed new community center and not supporting any sale to Liberty.

Washington made appeals to the local community and at Sumter County Council meetings for the community to have first rights to the property if the school board decided to sell the DeLaine school.

A majority of the current, nine-member school board had just taken office in January and was caught off guard by the turn of events initiated by Washington. About a month into the process after Washington roused debate on the matter, the full board voted 9-0 to develop F.J. DeLaine for internal use.

On May 9, 2023, Washington led a community walk-through tour hosted by the district of the school and how certain areas could be redeveloped into a community center or hub for resources.

The tour ended with Washington telling residents that he would schedule a meeting with Wright on potential next steps in the process. Since then, the full board has not addressed the concept of providing a new community center at the school site.

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# OPINION

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Vince Johnson PUBLISHER

36 W. LIBERTY ST., SUMTER, SOUTH CAROLINA 29150 • *Founded October 15, 1894*

COMMENTARY

## Changes at *The Item* will make larger community impact, benefit advertisers

How does *The Sumter Item* make the largest impact for a better Sumter?

How do we sustain local news in Sumter, Clarendon and Lee counties at a time when similar communities are losing their local news sources across the country?

How do we best serve our advertisers and our engaged readers?

These are questions I think about a lot. These are the questions that led to the changes at *The Item* announced today.

These changes are going to make Sumter better. These changes are going to make *The Item* more sustainable and allow our staff to continue producing exceptional local news. These changes are going to benefit local advertisers immensely, and our subscribers are going to continue to receive the quality and quantity of local journalism they have

come to expect.

I think, and I'm told this from newspaper industry peers across the country, that *The Item* is one of the best small-town local news sources in the country. We wouldn't be where we are without the support of our communities, and I ask our communities to support these changes as well.



Vince Johnson

One of the issues that bothers me most in local news is the cost required to receive it. I believe the world is better, and our communities are better, if everyone is informed, even if they can't pay for that information.

However, *The Item* is a private small business, and that's a good thing. We're independent and able to shine a spotlight on our communities, but local news costs a lot

to produce.

That's why our subscribers and our advertisers are so important. Without our subscribers, advertisers and the ingenuity of our staff and local ownership, *The Item* simply wouldn't exist, a local news-less reality faced by thousands of communities similar to Sumter in recent years. Without going too far into it, the absence of local news causes great problems for those communities.

In creating *The Sumter Item Impact* — a free monthly newspaper that will be delivered by mail to more than 28,000 households in Sumter County — we're opening up access to local news for the vast majority of Sumter. Yes, our subscribers will receive a lot more local news and access to new local content every day, but for those unwilling or unable to pay, they'll receive some local news, too.

*The Item Impact* is going to be some of our best local journalism, and it's going to inform all of Sumter about the

people, events and issues they need to know. It's also going to be an advertising platform for our local businesses and organizations, an advertising platform unmatched in Sumter County in decades.

Advertisers can reach everyone around Sumter and Shaw Air Force Base each month, dry in mailboxes and without the digital clutter.

For our great newspaper subscribers upset about the change in delivery days from five days a week to two, know that we understand, and we didn't make this decision lightly. We need you as subscribers now more than ever, and we're fully committed to continue producing the great local journalism you've come to know.

Printing and delivery is incredibly expensive, and it has increased in cost immensely in recent years. Rather than cutting the number of local journalists creating local news, we're cutting those print and delivery costs.

We know our digital audi-

ence is much larger than our print audience today, but we also know how loyal and passionate our newspaper subscribers are. We are committed to large, exceptional newspapers filled with local news twice a week. We hope that you understand the decision, and we ask that you continue receiving *The Sumter Item*.

Of course, anyone who has followed *The Item* closely over the past few years knows how we've evolved. Today, we have more than 35,000 residents who receive our email newsletters daily, a large social media presence, some of the area's largest events like Best of Sumter, the area's premier magazines, a host of engaging video series and more.

We're committed to providing the Sumter region with the best local news in the country for years to come. I believe these changes are steps toward that goal.

Vince Johnson is publisher of *The Sumter Item*.

COMMENTARY

## Amid time of uncertainty for newspapers, *Item* changes will increase access to news

For the last 130 years, there has not been a Sumter County without *The Sumter Item*. I do not anticipate that to change.

A lot has changed in those 130 years at the national level, local stage and within the walls of what is currently Sumter County's only newspaper. The main storyline of the newspaper industry seems startling. While there were around 24,000 newspapers in the country at the height of the industry in the early 1900s, an accelerated erosion of staff, resources and publications over the past two decades has left the nation with 6,000 surviving newspapers, according to the 2023 State of Local News report from Northwestern University and Penelope Muse Abernathy.

Without *The Sumter Item*, our coverage area would become a news desert. The term identifies a place that does not have access to a reliable local news source. Residents in more than half of U.S. counties are either barren or at risk of becoming a news desert. Abernathy's research tracks a trajectory that puts the country as having lost a third of its newspapers since 2005 by the end of next year.

That's more than two newspapers a week closing. And when a paper shutters, they're usually not replaced by a significant digital-only product. Because life around us continues to spin, regardless of how profitable or flailing a community's newspaper is, the absence of one does not mean there is a lack of news. It means, in the worst way possible, that people lose their lifeline to reliable local information they critically need to live informed, engaged and generally better lives.

In addition to the rate of newspapers closing, we have as a country lost 43,000 — almost two-thirds — of our journalists since 2005. Nearly 80% of staff photographers have been lost.

The changes *The Sumter Item* announced today that you will see transpire this spring are being made to prevent the paper from becoming one of those statistics. To prevent the slashing of resources and people who produce the news you have read and trusted since 1894.

A lot has changed in those 130 years. And *The Sumter Item* of today leans into change. To adapting, evolution.

Some of you may remember when *The Item* published an afternoon paper. There used to be no website.

Now, we publish news daily online, getting breaking news to readers before it prints. We send articles, e-papers, digital magazines, videos and promotions from local advertisers to up to 35,000 email inboxes over a dozen times a week.

You may remember when most traditional newspapers hired homogeneously. Told stories most accurately and fairly when they were about people and communities similar to their own. We now think at every turn about how we can include diverse voices and hold the microphone to the mosaic of communities that make up our coverage area.

You may remember when you had to buy a newspaper or watch TV through a paid-for cable network to get your news. Now, we provide several points of access to local news and storytelling that do not require a subscription. Thanks to community partners that support series like Sumter Today, a video news show; The

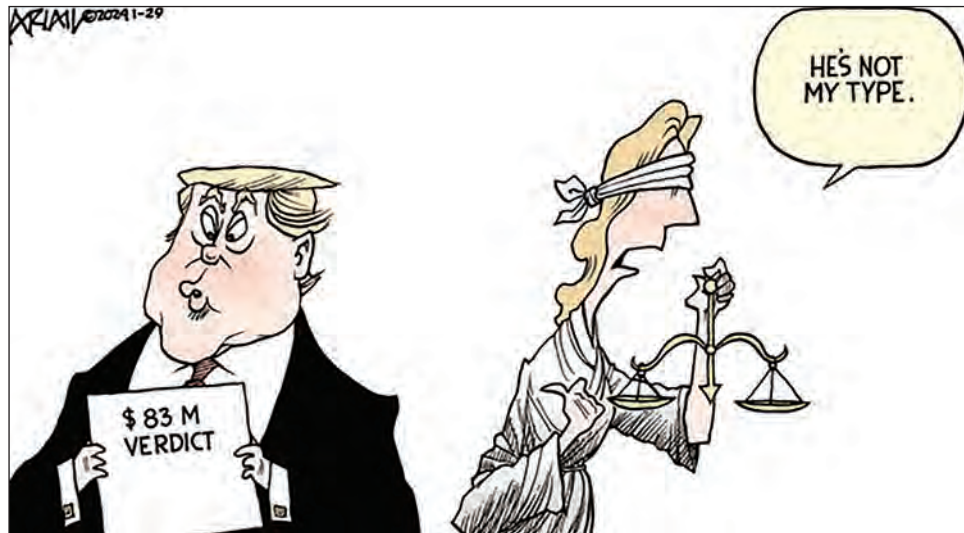
Grind, a high school athlete spotlight in print, digital and video; and Sumter's Next Generation, which spotlights academic excellence and community involvement of Sumter's youth that publishes in print and on social media, we are able to remove the cost barrier that prevents many from accessing news.

Equitable access to vital information and storytelling that makes us feel proud of Sumter is a continuing priority in our coverage and business decisions. *The Item Impact* that we will publish for the first time on Friday, March 15, and every ensuing third Friday of the month will increase that equity.

Our newspapers will be more pages than they are today, will have a longer shelf-life. Our staff will have more time to focus on the things that can expand our reach, like newsletters and video, like new series and large community events.

Change can be scary, and it's usually hard. We do not take any decision that impacts our readers, our subscribers, our advertisers, our community lightly. But for the last 130 years, there has not been a Sumter County without *The Sumter Item*. I do not anticipate that to change. And I am grateful to all of you who take this journey with us.

Kayla Green is executive editor of *The Sumter Item*.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**BIDEN ADMINISTRATION ISN'T DOING ITS JOB OF PROTECTING AMERICA**

I just opened my newspaper and what did I see, another person who watches the lying channels.

How do I know? They believe everything that the lying channels tell them.

I have some questions for the man who wrote a letter to the editor on Jan. 24 with the headline "There could be a civil war if Trump is re-elected." Why do you believe there will be a civil war if Trump is re-elected? We are about to have a civil war because the Biden administration can't do his main job, that of protecting America. I would support Texas and any other state who wants to secede over not wanting these illegal aliens here.

He wants to know "how any individual that has any self-respect and biblical training could vote for Donald Trump?" I have self-respect and biblical training and I will vote for Trump even if he is taken off the ballot. I don't believe women should use abortion for birth control. I don't believe that people ought to lie about their political opponents. I don't believe that someone should destroy and hate the country they live in. I believe that Americans should have free speech, the right to worship as they want to, should be able to own guns and have the right to vote for whomever they wish.

Then he claims "there are several really good Republican candidates that are not habitual liars, fear mongers or racist like Trump." What are some "lies" that the lying channels have told you about him?

Tell me how he is a "fear monger" and what does it mean to you? Give me an example. Tell me how Trump is a racist? Give me an example of how "he is the most corrupt president that this country has ever had." Tell me about his "gang of crooks."

You and somewhere near half of our country have bought into the lies that you are told every day. The man in charge of our country

and his helpers, to include the news media, tell you exactly what they are up to when they falsely accuse their opponent of doing what they themselves are doing.

JACQUELINE K. HUGHES  
Sumter

*Editor's note: This letter is longer than 350 words and can be read in its entirety at [www.theitem.com/letters](http://www.theitem.com/letters).*

**LEVENTIS FAMILY IS PROUD TO CALL SUMTER HOME**

Feb. 1, 2024  
This is a special day for our entire family.

It was 50 years ago on Feb. 1 that our young family, my wife of four years, our son Gregory, then 2, with our second child on the way, returned to South Carolina. I had been out of my home state for 10 years, spending five years at the University of Virginia, where my wife and I met, and five years as an Air Force pilot in Texas while EV was an Army nurse in Oklahoma. I left the active duty in the Air Force to move to Sumter so that I could work in our family business and become a fighter pilot with the South Carolina Air National Guard.

Today, EV and I now have four children, four wonderful in-laws and seven beautiful grandchildren. All four of our children who are proud graduates of Sumter High School are working hard along with their spouses to support their families.

Sumter welcomed us in 1974 and has been a great place to live, work and grow as a family. We are very grateful we were blessed to live in a community that is growing together with the Shaw, industrial, commercial and agricultural families.

We just want to say thank you to our friends and neighbors in Sumter. No matter where we go, Sumter is a place we are proud to call home.

E.V. and PHIL LEVENTIS  
Sumter

# Sumter NAACP questions potential 'partnership' of Sumter district, charter school and Wilson Hall

January 15, 2024

Dr. Ralph Canty, chairman  
Sumter School Board of  
Trustees  
1345 Wilson Hall Road  
Sumter, South Carolina 29150

As we commemorate yet another Martin Luther King Jr. holiday and look back on this country's long history of racial, social and economic oppression, we are taking this opportunity to make it clear that we will not allow our leaders, in this case, Superintendent William T. Wright Jr., to be brow beaten, handcuffed and hung from a tree. Rest assured, the era of Jim Crow and black codes will not rear their ugly head under our watch. While the conjuring of those imageries and oppressive tactics may seem extremely hard, even unimaginable, now that we have your attention, we will lay out the basis for an all out call to action to eradicate their resurrection.

While there have been many whispers and rumors of exactly what is to come, it is our understanding that there is a three-page document that outlines the merger of the Sumter School District, Liberty STEAM Charter (LSC) and Wilson Hall. The partnership or "handcuffs" involves the closing of rural schools and a K-4 literacy initiative partnership with LSC and Wilson Hall.

These measures are ultimately intended to position LSC to apply for, establish and head a technical high school in Sumter County. The unauthorized and unpoliced document was developed in collaboration between the respective chairpersons of each entity, notably without any input, knowledge, agreement or consent from Superintendent Wright. Moreover, there has been no public discussion, input or agreement.



Elizabeth Kilgore

Superintendent Wright is part of a long line of former superintendents who have been undermined and set up for failure from day one. The process of systematically dismantling and then merging former School Districts 2 and 17 was the first step towards creating a quasi-public charter district in Sumter County. Any potential merits of the envisioned educational structure are forever eroded due to the clandestine maneuvers to place the desire of a specific sector or individuals over the needs of the entire community, particularly the vast rural areas of Sumter County and even more specifically economi-

cally and socially disadvantaged families and children of color.

Since the merger of Sumter's school districts, the consolidated district has been denied critical resources for success through the withholding of critical millage increases. The district has not received a full millage increase since 2016. Meanwhile, the district continues to concentrate resources, personnel, advanced academic and extra-curricular programs in select city schools to the detriment of outlying schools. Since the merger in 2011 up until this very date the district has refused to implement realignment measures to balance inequities across the district. On the other hand, the Sumter legislative delegation moved swiftly and strategically to redraw school board lines, condensing and increasing the numbers of seats from seven to nine.

We are quite aware of the millage debacle that essentially ended the tenure of former Superintendent Dr. Penelope Martin-Knox. Apparently, this same group has issued an all-out moratorium on the district's freedom to request any millage increase, attempting to intimidate, "brow beat" Dr. Wright to adopt their stance or risk being "hung from a tree," in this case meaning,

not extending his contract until he fully demonstrates support and compliance for the established agenda.

We have attached a Freedom of Information request for a copy of the document described above, as well as all documents related to any potential partnerships, associations, mergers, agreements of any nature or sort, by or between the Sumter School District, Liberty STEAM Charter and/or Wilson Hall. We expect full compliance by all members of the Board of Trustees to produce the requested documentation as well as their public commitment to ensure Superintendent Wright is not in any way encumbered, harassed, intimidated or retaliated against in fulfilling the duties and responsibilities he has been entrusted.

Superintendent Wright's contract should be immediately extended per the 18-month and 12-month extension provisions. His performance and commitment to putting the needs of students, teachers and staff first is clear and reflected in the raise and annuity payment awarded by the Board of Trustees following his evaluation. However, withholding the extension as contractually designated and accepted is counterproductive and identical to the tactics employed by others described herein to force com-

pliance with agendas that are not clearly aligned and publicly sanctioned to serve the best interests of students, teachers, staff and indeed the entire Sumter community.

Moving forward the Sumter Branch NAACP will be laser focused on this and other matters that impede the growth and development of Sumter County. Any Board of Trustee member that fails to demonstrate a clear commitment to ensuring public education in Sumter County is their number one objective will be challenged and targeted by the community for replacement at election time. Unlike the tactics employed to solicit compliance described here that are counter intuitive to the success of the Sumter School District, operationalizing and exercising our right to vote and secure fair representation is not a threat but a call to duty to ensure equal protection for all.

This correspondence is respectfully submitted by the Sumter Branch NAACP Executive Committee.

ELIZABETH KILGORE  
President, Sumter Branch  
NAACP

CC: Sumter School Board of  
Trustees, Sumter Branch  
NAACP Executive Committee,  
Superintendent William T.  
Wright Jr., Sumter County  
Council, Sumter City Council

## Canty calls NAACP accusations 'egregious,' responds without apology

After 78-plus years of life, most of which have been dedicated to public service as a Civil Rights activist, legislator, school board member, pastor and businessman, I take all allegations, innuendos and attacks seriously, regardless of the source.

I understand the wisdom of those who would suggest keeping silent and disregarding the distractors. Trust me, I would love to do just that. But, I cannot sit idly by and allow others to frame the narrative, especially when I know the distortion, though eloquently stated, is profoundly inaccurate and untrue.

To the point of consolidation of the two former school districts, I contend, the idea was noble. To put it bluntly, Sumter County was too small and limited in resources to have two school districts, and it definitely was not cost-efficient. Unfortunately, the legislation was enacted too hurriedly, without due consideration of all the nuances, variances and dynamics that are natural in such a dramatic shift. So, instead of focusing on the children, ensuring equality in every school and creating a world-class education system, some folks with a narrow perspective and personal agendas hijacked the transition, and Sumter School District became a battleground for control and dominance. The end thereof was almost default and dissolution. Do I need to remind us that the fund balance dipped below \$110,000 in 2016? A hiccup that could have marked bankruptcy and demise. We are just rebounding from that repressive and regressive domination. This is what makes this assault so tragic.

In November 2022, the citizens of Sumter County elected seven new board members and two veterans to comprise a new school board. Personally, I couldn't have a better board with whom to work. They represent different ideologies and varying opinions but have demonstrated a sincere commitment to the construct of an educational system that empowers our children and provides unwavering support of the superintendent.

Without signing an accord or engaging in lengthy discussion or debate, seemingly, every member of this board came to the table with a conviction that the revolving door to the superintendent's office had to be closed. Hence, we have faithfully and consistently supported Dr. William Wright. Understanding his role as executive/educator/visionary-in-chief, we took the time at the onset of our term to discuss strategies with him, teachers, former board members, recent candidates for seats and the public. The results were the creation of a document titled "Shared Visions," which was presented to him in the hope it

would help him in developing an overarching vision for the district. While his vision for the district has not been disclosed, some of these ideals have already been implemented.

I cannot overemphasize the extent to which we have wholeheartedly embraced him. Additionally, he recommended a new code of conduct, and we endorsed it; he recommended a new salary schedule, and we approved it; he reassigned principals, and we supported it; test scores improved, and we applauded it; and when the teacher shortage was reduced, we saluted it. On the other hand, when the superintendent failed to attend the Commander's Breakfast, Sumter's State of Education Forum, last year's teachers' retirement reception or this year's new teachers' orientation and was late for the opening session of his own district ceremonies last fall, we continued to support him by not issuing either verbal or written reprimands. Be mindful, while the board exists to support the superintendent, it is also our responsibility to oversee his work, evaluate his performance, establish, review and enforce policies.



Ralph Canty

Recently, we gave the superintendent another document, asking him to define certain matters we did not fully have a grasp of and to update us on the current state of matters, which have been on the table for the past year. The caveat is that knowledge is powerful, and the more informed the board is, the more potent and proactive we can be in the community supporting his initiatives. To claim that we "browbeat, handcuff or hang from a tree the superintendent" is egregious.

The superintendent sits in a powerful seat of authority and leadership; he is compensated above most people in this county, and expectations are as high as the seat where he sits and the compensation he receives. His age, sex, race or any other such distinction will not excuse him from a performance commensurate with his position and pay.

When I was re-elected, I came to the first meeting with the idea of creating some system of collaboration between educational entities, which exist in the county. It just made sense to me. My life has been dedicated to eliminating barriers, dismantling walls and cracking glass ceilings. We have made tremendous progress and should continue to build upon it, making diversity work to the benefit of all ... especially our children.

Let it be known I will not apologize

for thinking out of the box. I think that it is in the best interest of Sumter, every educational institution and especially our children that we be totally committed to making our city/county a citadel of educational excellence and superiority. It should be our desire that every child gets the highest-quality education attainable. I am a student of history, but I do not believe that what has happened in the past should prevent new and better opportunities from emerging. Learn from the past, yes, but yearn for much more than the past provided.

What a vision! The creation of a platform which allows every public, private, parochial, charter and home school to compete and cooperate — modeling best practices, sharing ideas, accessing data and critically assessing effectiveness and viability. And, what an opportunity to create a model for other communities to replicate!

Admittedly, it will take time, prayer, patience and processes to fully implement such an innovative ideal. But we must start, and we have started. The chairmen of the boards of Wilson Hall, Liberty STEAM and I have met three times, mainly to discuss the proposition philosophically and pragmatically. We are convinced that the project has the potential for radically enhancing our educational agenda. Our meeting is historic, but our vision is futuristic.

In our last meeting, we agreed to ask Trevor Ivey (Liberty STEAM) and Dr. William Wright Jr. (Sumter School District) to develop a vision for the group. That document, upon adoption by the respective boards, would have given the concept legitimacy and approval for further discussions and development.

Sumter School District sends representatives, including the superintendent, to meet with other educators and board members from around the state and across the nation. It makes sense to confer with those who have similar vision, mission and values. If this principle is valid, shouldn't it also make sense to speak with neighboring entities up the street or around the corner?

Why should a local federation be confronted with suspicion or hostility?

What we seek is collaboration, not consolidation. This should be considered as another phase in our ongoing process to reimagine and reconstruct education and educational opportunities for our children.

A K-4 initiative is nothing new. It's a great idea, and I will not apologize for supporting it. Can we get it? It is too late to pour thousands of dollars into programs when eighth-graders are reading on a third-grade level or seniors who are not college and ca-

reer ready. Of course, we must continue to serve them and use every technique available to prepare them in the limited time remaining in their secondary careers. Strategically, though, we must make the shift to preschool. And, yes, that service should be available to every preschooler in the county, especially for those who need it the most.

Can you believe the amount of money we spend on inmates at the state Department of Juvenile Justice, South Carolina Department of Corrections or in the federal corrections system? Whatever the idea may have been for their creation, it is not working. And the cost continues to soar through the roof. The cost of taking care of juveniles and adults, including three meals a day, is staggering, and it is a major encumbrance on the economy. The federal government is struggling from week to week to avoid shutdown and default, partly because of a fatalistic commitment to the industrial prison complex, which exists to house and feed folks who should have been empowered to work and feed themselves and their families who are wards of the state.

We cannot fix the economy until we fix the educational system. And we cannot fix the educational system until we intentionally shift our investment in our children to the front end. A total of \$3,000 a year for a child in preschool is far cheaper than \$45,000 for an incarcerated child. Empowerment of all is the critical key to a healthy, robust economy and a safe, progressive community.

In South Carolina, we boast of being a "right-to-work" state. Well, great, let's give every child the opportunity to develop the skill and intellect needed to work, rear families, purchase homes and to co-exist in the American mainstream. I believe it is immoral to be a proponent of life and not be committed to the principle that every life should have the right to experience dignity, quality and nobility.

Finally, I will not apologize for being a leader. And as a leader, I will continue to strive for unity and solidarity instead of isolation and polarization. I will remain perched on the ridge of the future envisioning those things that are "not yet," lifting us from the usual and customary to the exceptional and extraordinary.

From the spiritual "Walk together Children," I plead, let us journey on reaching "the not yet" and beyond, leaving what has been behind. The promise is before us ...

Ralph W. Canty Sr. is a Sumter resident and serves as Sumter School District Board of Trustees chairman, representing Area 3.

PUBLIC AGENDA

SANTEE-LYNCHES REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Monday, noon, Central Carolina Technical College, 506 N. Guignard Drive, Building M400, Room 401
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS BOARD
Monday, 5:30 p.m., Sumter Sheriff's Office conference room
CLARENDON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Monday, 5:30 p.m., Manning High School, lecture hall, 2155 Paxville Highway, Manning
SUMTER CITY COUNCIL
Tuesday, 1 p.m., Sumter Opera House, 21 N. Main St.

BISHOPVILLE CITY COUNCIL
Tuesday, 5:30 p.m., Colclough Building, 109 E. Council St., Bishopville
TOWN OF LYNCHBURG PLANNING COMMISSION
Wednesday, 4 p.m., Lynchburg Municipal Building, 81 Magnolia St., Lynchburg
SUMTER COUNTY VOTER REGISTRATION / ELECTION COMMISSION
Thursday, 5:30 p.m., registration / election office, 141 N. Main St.

The last word in astrology

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Consider your financial situation before initiating change. Sticking to a budget and planning carefully are in your best interest. Don't trust someone else to know what's best for you. Time is on your side, and strategic planning is necessary to obtain a favorable outcome. 3 stars
TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Don't let someone distract you from positioning yourself for advancement. Use your connections, flaunt your strengths and enforce changes that make people in high positions take notice. Change is a choice; stop procrastinating and focus on something that excites and empowers you. 3 stars
GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Don't let what others do lead you astray. Stick to your plans and finish what you start. Gather information that can help you improve your qualifications. Send out resumes that boost your profile and position you for a job that interests you. 3 stars
CANCER (June 21-July 22): You'll discover an outlet to flaunt your skills and experience. Don't limit what you can do when the world is starving for something you have to offer. Trust in your ability, and join forces with people who share your vision. Love is favored. 5 stars
LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Take a moment and size up your situation. Without the facts, you will miscalculate and make poor decisions. Your best course of action is to bide your time, focus on positive gains and let things settle down while you gather facts and rethink your strategy. 2 stars
VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Get into the mainstream. If you show everyone what you can offer, you will bring about positive change. Learn as you go, expand your wisdom and insight, and your people will find and follow you. Romance is apparent and will highlight your day. 4 stars
LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Put your head down and move

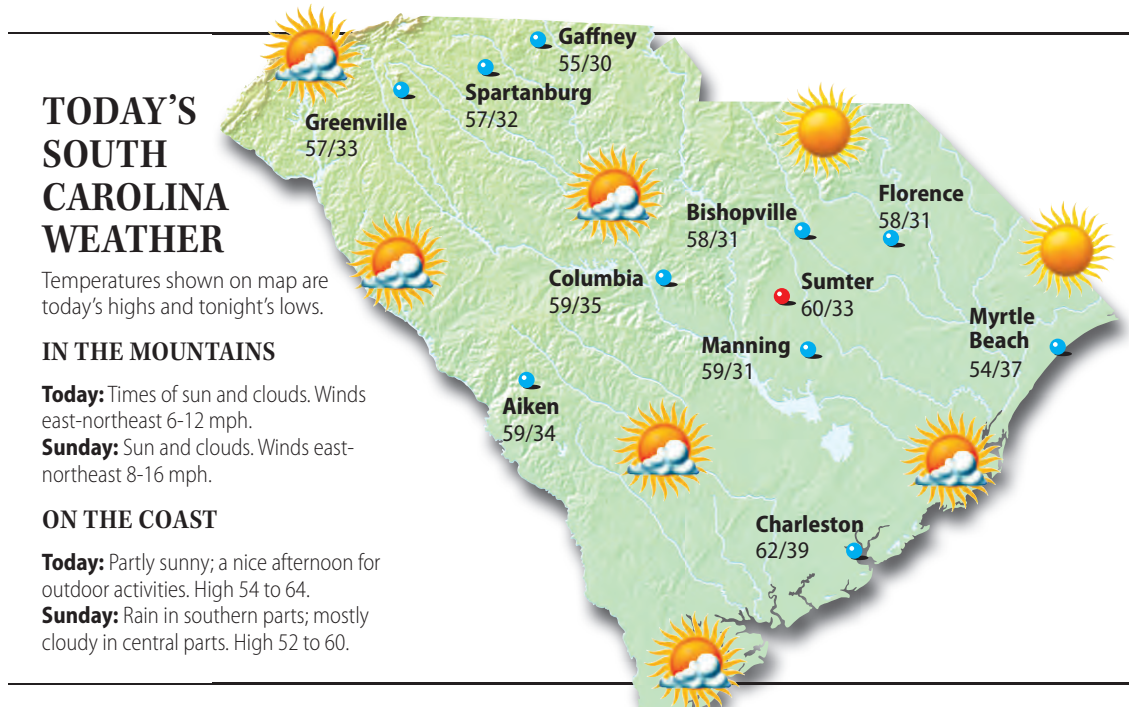
forward with discipline, and you'll accomplish your agenda. Don't let anyone stand in your way or become an expense you cannot afford. Learn to say no and to fend for yourself. Arguing will weaken your position. 3 stars
SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Disregard anyone who tries to take over or push you aside. Carve your way forward with discipline and unique ideas; you will make a difference and attract the people you want on your team. A passionate gesture will lead to opportunity and meaningful relationships. 3 stars
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Charity begins at home. Refuse to let anyone talk you out of your cash. Hold on to power and decide how you want your life to unfold. Dismiss temptation and embrace what makes you feel alive. Say no to manipulation. 3 stars
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Pace yourself and make a point to clear up unfinished business at home and within meaningful relationships. Put the past behind you, and you'll find it easier to get to a place you want to encompass. Be the person who promotes joy and gratitude. 4 stars
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Distance yourself from anyone putting pressure on you. You'll regret placing someone else's dreams in front of your own. Dig in, and don't stop until you are happy with the results. Stick to those heading in a similar direction, and together, you'll reach your target. 2 stars
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Your popularity will grow if you are true to yourself and take the path that offers the freedom to do what you do best and enjoy most. Let your mind wander, and you'll create the scenario that empowers you to be happy. Romance is favored. 5 stars
1 star: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. 2 stars: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. 3 stars: Focus and you'll reach your goals. 4 stars: Aim high; start new projects. 5 stars: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

WEATHER

Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2024

AccuWeather® five-day forecast for Sumter

Table with 6 columns: TODAY, TONIGHT, SUNDAY, MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY. Includes weather icons, temperatures, and wind speeds.



LOCAL ALMANAC

Table with 2 columns: Item and Value. Includes Temperature (High 63°, Low 37°), Precipitation (24 hrs ending 4 p.m. Fri. 0.00"), and Record high/low.

LAKE LEVELS

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

SUN AND MOON

Table with 4 columns: Sunrise, Moonrise, Sunset, Moonset. Includes icons for New, First, Full, and Last moon phases.

TIDES

Table with 4 columns: High, Low, and corresponding times for Today and Sun. at Myrtle Beach.

NATIONAL CITIES

Table with 3 columns: City, Today, Sun. Lists major cities like Atlanta, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, etc.

REGIONAL CITIES

Table with 3 columns: City, Today, Sun. Lists regional cities like Asheville, Athens, Augusta, etc.

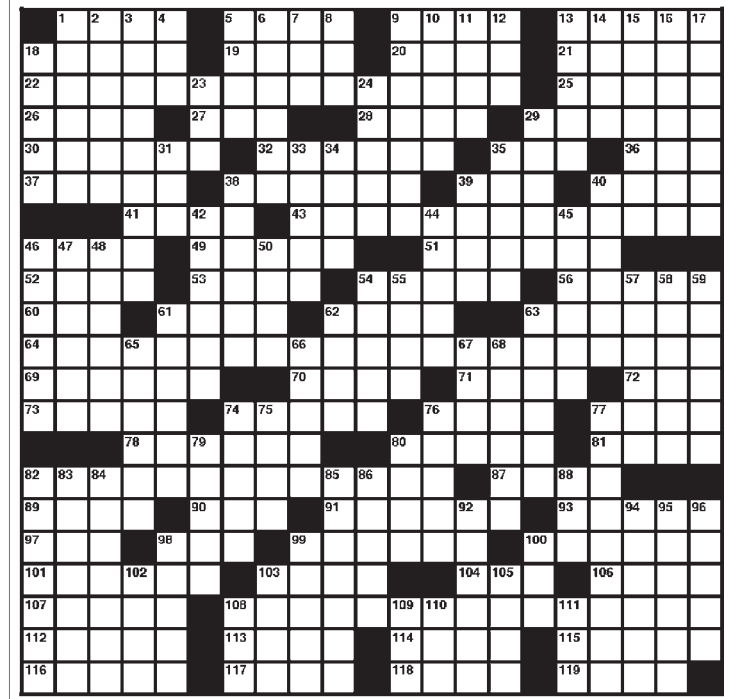
Advertisement for 'We have a NOSE for NEWS' featuring a cartoon dog detective and contact information for The Sumter ITEM.

THE NEWSDAY CROSSWORD

ONE-SYLLABLE SAWS: Poly-syllables prohibited by S.N. ACROSS 1 What vegans avoid 5 Comfy-cozy 9 Marvel superheroes 13 Plant firmly 18 Stop it 19 Hawaiian figurine 20 Vatican's surroundings 21 Great courage 22 Single-syllable saw 25 Dreamland visit 26 Poker pot starter 27 Genesis construction 28 Bar bottles 29 Camper's stove fuel 30 Intensely competitive 32 Inbox filler 35 Road fork shape 36 Reunion gath-

ter 70 Israeli diplomat Abba 71 Name meaning "lion" 72 Despotic Amin 73 Handle efficiently 74 Converges on 76 USN rank 77 Yuletide beverages 78 Neighbors of A's 80 Return of the Jedi robot 81 Singles 82 See 43 Across 87 Employs 89 Expressed aloud 90 Top performer 91 Green Eggs and Ham starter 93 Farm enclosures 97 Poetic sphere 98 Venomous snake 99 Be a volunteer 100 Be in charge of 101 Kid-lit sport 103 Get ready, for short 104 Electrical measure 106 Former Milan money 107 Aircraft tracking device 108 Single-syllable saw 112 Be penitent 113 Animal pouches 114 Groundhog Day nickname 115 Walks unsteadily 116 Tablelands 117 Miniaturizing ending 118 Fabric footwear 119 Juror's assignment DOWN 1 101 Across, notably 2 Lent follower 3 More than a single 5 Down 4 PGA peg 5 Cellphone symbol 6 Japan's Stock Average 7 Banjo cousin 8 Martial arts uniforms 9 Radiography room 10 Biblical law man 11 FD squad 12 Formerly named 13 Happen next 14 Defrost 15 Enter unlawfully 16 Dinner time 17 Hinges (on) 18 Rub roughly 23 Fannie (mortgage agency) 24 Jot down 29 British novelist A.S. 31 Big biz bigwig 33 London length 34 Very pale 35 Group's modest acknowledgment 38 County next

CREATORS SYNDICATE © 2024 STANLEY NEWMAN WWW.STANXWORDS.COM 2/4/24



to Napa 39 Pitch-fork-shaped letters 40 Capital of Rwanda 42 Inheritance 44 Annoy a lot 45 Be dressed in 46 Pigtailed 47 Cost to get cash 48 Input again 50 Suffix with cyclo- 54 Court hearings? 55 Astronaut Shepard 57 Rack-and-steering 58 Feeling tense 59 Not paying attention 61 Truncate 62 Etc., for instance 63 Norwegian topography 65 Top at an auction 66 Toy with 67 Red Muppet 68 Communication channel 74 Civil rights org. 75 Raison d' 76 Tangy salad green 77 Longed for long ago 79 Rover's restraint 80 Actress Moore 82 Word with no repeated letters 83 Tell, as tales 84 Instinctual energies 85 Graceful skill 86 Novelist Ellison 88 Compass reading 92 Extremely small 94 Nonliteral phraseology 95 Latvia's locale 96 Time periods 98 Lots of land 99 Standing straight 100 Royal Navy designation 102 Granny 103 Neato, in the '90s 105 Clumsy boat 108 Cats guy's monogram 109 Spy missions 110 UN immunization agency 111 Gentle handling, initially Among other applications, BUTANE (29 Across) is used as a refrigerant in freezers and air condition-

SATURDAY'S ANSWERS

CROSSWORD

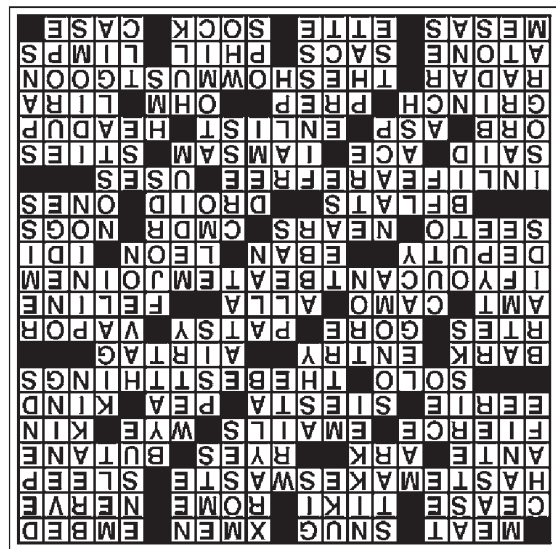
Grid of crossword puzzle answers.

SUDOKU

9x9 grid for a Sudoku puzzle.

JUMBLE

DITTY FRESH GUITAR AZALEA The sea route named after Magellan was - "STRAIT" AHEAD





Brent Dillard races in the Grand Prix of France in Macon, France.

SIMON PALFRADER / SPECIAL TO THE SUMTER ITEM

## Dalzell native Dillard making a splash in international F1 racing after RotY honors

BY TIM LEIBLE  
tim@theitem.com

Last year was quite literally a wild ride for Dalzell native Brent Dillard.

Dillard has been racing boats since before he could legally drive a car, but he took his competition to the next level in 2023. He competed on the world's largest stage in the sport, Formula 1 H2O.

The sport took him on a tour across the world, a fact that sounds more glamorous than it is in actuality, according to Dillard. But he didn't just show up in places like Italy and Indonesia, he thrived.

Dillard finished in 10th place in the standings at the end of his inaugural season, earning rookie of the year honors in the process. Now, he's gearing up for his second season, which kicks off in Indonesia on Feb. 23. Throughout every step of the journey, Dillard never forgets the city that raised him.

"I'm proud to be from Dalzell, South Carolina. I have it on my helmet," Dillard said. "I actually have a picture of Ja Morant on my helmet because I'm so proud to be from Dalzell and racing on a national level. This year, we're really looking forward to getting some wins to get on the stage and get that American flag up there with me."

### F1H2O

When many people think of F1, especially in America, they think of cars. The popu-

lar Netflix series built around the sport helped the automotive version of F1 explode in popularity.

The aquatic version is extremely different, even if the basics are the same.

"It's like if you took a car and you're going 140 mph and you said, 'I'm going to go straight into that cornfield' or you went over 1,000 speed bumps, one speed bump after another," Dillard said. "That's what it's like in a boat; you're going 140, but it's not smooth. Your head is banging side to side, you can barely see, and sometimes we race in salt water. The salt will come up, and the sunlight, there's so many different factors."

The land-based version of the sport is built on precision. While there are many fine details that need to go right to succeed on the water, there's no simple game plan you can create beforehand to gear up for the perfect race.

"I have an F1 simulator; every lap is the same. If I can perfect a lap, I've got it," Dillard said of driving in a car. "In boat racing, every lap is different because the water changes. You come into the turn one time, and the water is one way, you come in another time, and there's rollers in there, you have to take that turn a different way. To compare Formula 1 car racing to boat racing, I think it's a lot harder to do the boat racing because you can't train for what you're about to do. We

SEE DILLARD, PAGE B4



ADAM FLASH / THE SUMTER ITEM

Dalzell native Brent Dillard sits in front of his growing collection of awards from racing tunnel boats. The latest addition is rookie of the year honors from F1H2O, the highest level of Formula 1 racing.

*"It's like if you took a car and you're going 140 mph and you said, 'I'm going to go straight into that cornfield' or you went over 1,000 speed bumps, one speed bump after another. That's what it's like in a boat; you're going 140 but it's not smooth. Your head is banging side to side, you can barely see, and sometimes we race in salt water. The salt will come up and the sunlight, there's so many different factors."*

### BRENT DILLARD

On the difference between Formula 1 racing on land and in the water

## Paris' Gamecocks joining Staley's women in making South Carolina a basketball school

South Carolina head coach Lamont Paris is congratulated by a fan while he waits to be interviewed after upsetting Kentucky on Tuesday, Jan. 23, in Columbia.

ASSOCIATED PRESS



BY PETE IACOBELLI  
Associated Press

COLUMBIA — Leave it to Dawn Staley to know before most everyone else about the biggest surprise in college basketball.

South Carolina's women's coach got the inside scoop after talking with her counterpart, second-year coach Lamont Paris, when the men's team returned from their August trip in the Bahamas.

"We're going to be good," Paris told her flatly.

"When you have a coach saying that," Staley said, "they know."

Now, everyone in the sport knows, too.

Picked last in the Southeastern

Conference after going 11-21 in Paris' debut season, South Carolina is 18-3 and rolling along almost as strongly as Staley's undefeated group.

Even some older Gamecocks are surprised. Josh Gray, who's been with the team three seasons, joked with fellow veteran Jacobi Wright: "Can you believe we're 18-3?" Gray asked. "But we're still keeping our heads down."

Paris' team pulled off its second stunner in a week when it defeated No. 5 Tennessee 63-59 on Tuesday night. The Tuesday before, the Gamecocks dominated then-sixth-ranked Kentucky 79-62.

SEE USC, PAGE B3

# Former Astros closer Giles, top prospect Waldrep among non-roster invites by Braves

ATLANTA (AP) — Former Houston Astros closer Ken Giles and top prospect Hurston Waldrep were among 23 non-roster players invited to spring training Friday by the Atlanta Braves.

The six-time reigning NL East champion will have a total of 60 players in their big league camp at North Port, Florida, including 37 members of the 40-man roster.

The 33-year-old Giles was signed to a minor-league deal. He had 34 saves for Houston's World Series-winning team in 2017, notched 26 while splitting the following season between the Astros and Blue Jays, and added 23 saves for Toronto in 2019.

But Giles has been plagued by injuries since then, including Tommy John surgery. He had made only nine major league appearance over the last four seasons, missing all of 2021 and spending last season mostly with the Dodgers' Triple-A team.

Now, Giles is hoping to earn a spot with a team that already features a deep bullpen led by closer Raisel Iglesias.

Waldrep, the Braves' first-round pick in the 2023 draft from the University of Florida, made a rapid rise through the minor league

system in his first pro season. He posted a 1.53 ERA in eight starts across Class A, High A, Double-A and Triple-A, with 41 strikeouts in 29 1/3 innings.

The 21-year-old Waldrep could work his way into the Atlanta rotation at some point this season, though 2025 is considered more likely as he looks to improve his command.

The Braves remaining non-roster invitees were: LHP Ben Bowden, RHP Tommy Doyle, RHP Grant Holmes, LHP Hayden Harris, RHP Jake Walsh, RHP Taylor Widener, C Drake Baldwin, C Tyler Tolve, C Chadwick Tromp, C Sebastián Rivero, IF Ignacio Alvarez, IF Phillip Evans, IF David Fletcher, IF Leury García, IF Alejo López, IF Andrew Velazquez, IF Luke Waddell, IF Luke Williams, OF Luis Liberato, OF Jordan Luplow and OF Eli White.

## AREA ROUNDUP

# Ebenezer, Alice Drive boys to meet for middle school championship

### STAFF REPORT

The boys basketball teams from Ebenezer and Alice Drive punched their tickets to the Sumter County Middle School Conference championship game with victories on Thursday.

Ebenezer continued their undefeated season with a resounding 61-36 win over Chestnut Oaks.

Sheldon Davis was unstoppable, scoring 28 points in the victory. He added four rebounds and three assists. Brayden Boults added nine points, five rebounds and two steals. Jayden Martin led the team with 10 rebounds to go with six points. Jordan Miller had seven points, three assists and three steals.

They will face off against Alice Drive, who outlasted rival Bates for a 28-27 win.

Joshua Pendergrass led the Hawks with 10 points, while Jacori Wright added nine and Joshua Peoples scored four. Bates was led

by Jordan Butler, who finished with 14, while Bryson Pollard added six.

Ebenezer and Alice Drive will face off at Crestwood on Saturday. The boys game will follow the girls championship between Alice Drive and Bates, which tips off at noon.

### VARSITY BASKETBALL

#### MANNING SPLITS WITH AYNOR

The Manning basketball teams faced off against Aynor on Thursday.

The Monarch boys dominated in a 56-32 win, helping secure their playoff chances in the process. They took control quickly, outscoring Aynor 19-3 in the first quarter on the back of seven points from Jeffrey Ceasar and five from Lovell Stevenson. Manning then put the game away in the third, outscoring Aynor 15-4.

Ceasar finished with 18 in the victory, while Stevenson added 11 and both Tavion

Carter and Tyler Green scored eight.

The Lady Monarchs, meanwhile, struggled in a 51-35 loss. Manning scored just 17 points in the first three quarters before exploding for 18 in the fourth, but it was too little, too late.

### CAVS SPLIT WITH MARLBORO ACADEMY

The Lee Academy basketball teams traveled to Marlboro Academy on Thursday, splitting the contests.

The Lady Cavaliers pulled out a 39-33 win. They were led by Mazie Tomlinson, who finished with 15 points, 17 rebounds and three steals. Julee Saverance added 12 points, six rebounds and five steals. Alleigh Brown pulled down 16 boards, adding two points and five steals. Karagan Melton had six points, three rebounds and three steals, while Jameson Collins had four points and six boards.

The boys followed with a 54-39 loss.

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BASKETBALL	
MON. JAN. 29	DARLINGTON @ CRESTWOOD 52-44 BOYS GIRLS 53-48
TUE. JAN. 30	LMA 'CATS @ HAMMOND 48-77 BOYS GIRLS 32-57
TUE. JAN. 30	SUMTER CHR @ CAROLINA CHR. 85-66 BOYS
TUE. JAN. 30	SB EAGLES @ HEMINGWAY 55-47 BOYS GIRLS 56-23
TUE. JAN. 30	MANNING @ GEORGETOWN 44-58 BOYS GIRLS 57-39
TUE. JAN. 30	TSA GENERALS @ PALMETTO CHR. 12-57 BOYS GIRLS 36-73
WED. JAN. 31	E. CLARENDON @ CARVERS BAY 36-58 BOYS GIRLS 36-55
WED. JAN. 31	WILSON HALL @ CAR. NEWMAN 54-61 BOYS GIRLS 49-53
THU. FEB. 1	LEE ACADEMY @ MARLBORO AC. 39-54 BOYS GIRLS 39-33
FRI. FEB. 2	CRESTWOOD @ LAKEWOOD LATE BOYS GIRLS LATE

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South Carolina forward Ashlyn Watkins (2) shoots as Auburn forward Taylen Collins defends on Thursday in Auburn, Alabama. ASSOCIATED PRESS

# Watkins, Fulwiley help No. 1 South Carolina break through in 2nd half, beat Auburn 76-54

AUBURN, Ala. (AP) — Ashlyn Watkins had 14 points and 15 rebounds, reserve MiLaysia Fulwiley scored 15 points and No. 1 South Carolina overcame a slow start to beat Auburn 76-54 on Thursday night.

In a matchup between the top offense and the top defense in the Southeastern Conference, the Gamecocks broke through in the second half, going on a 13-2 run late in the third quarter to put away the Tigers.

Kamilla Cardoso added 13 points and six rebounds for South Carolina (20-0, 8-0), which out-rebounded Auburn 48-35.

The Gamecocks scored 49 points in the second half, shooting 56.3% from the field and 50% from 3-point range.

"(Auburn) had a great game plan," South Carolina head coach Dawn Staley said. "They made us play badly. It was their pressure defense and their ability to play their style."

"At halftime, you make a little bit of an adjustment, but as players, you know what you're capable of doing."

Watkins' double-double came in her first start of the season for the Gamecocks. She replaced Chloe Kitts, who Staley said missed the game due to an illness.

"I wasn't surprised," Staley said of Watkins. "She's shown us that she's pretty talented. She's an extraordinary rebounder, she put up some points for us, and she was an absolute monster on defense."

Auburn's Honesty Scott-Grayson matched her career high with 31 points, but no one else scored more than six points for the Tigers (14-7, 3-5).

"(South Carolina) is the No. 1 team in the country for a reason," Scott-Grayson said. "They stuck to their game plan. ... But we went out there and fought hard. I'm proud of that."

South Carolina has won its first 20 games in back-to-back seasons. The Gamecocks' lone loss last season came in the Final Four to Iowa.

Auburn bottled up the nation's lone undefeated team in the first half and trailed 27-22 at the break. It was the lowest first-half point total for South Carolina since a 65-58 win over North Carolina on Nov. 30.

But the Tigers didn't have enough offensive firepower to stay with the Gamecocks after halftime and finished shooting 32.2% from the field for the game. Savannah Scott and Sydney Shaw were the only Tigers besides Scott-Grayson to hit multiple shots.

The teams combined to

shoot 7 of 26 from 3-point range in a defensive battle that featured 32 turnovers.

"I was really proud of how we came out and set the tone, which we wanted to do," Auburn head coach Johnnie Harris said. "We had some miscues and missed shots in the first half that we have been working on. But we got what we wanted... and we defended our tails off."

### BIG PICTURE

South Carolina: After a stretch of improved shooting, particularly from 3-point range, the Gamecocks' offense struggled to replicate that success early against Auburn. But South Carolina remained unbeaten by controlling the paint and taking advantage of turnovers.

Auburn: Less than three weeks removed from their win over defending national champion LSU, the Tigers fared better than most teams that have gone up against South Carolina. Auburn has a good enough defense to hang with any opponent, but offensive improvement will likely be key any postseason run.

### UP NEXT

South Carolina: Hosts Mississippi on Sunday.

Auburn: Visits Arkansas on Sunday.

## USC FROM PAGE B1

It was the first time they beat two Top-10 opponents in a three-game stretch since 1968 when the program played in the ACC.

"They got a lot of heart. It's a passionate group," Paris said. "They want the spoils of whatever happens when you do what we've done already. They're fighters, they're tough, they want to win badly as a group."

That's apparent in their play, especially on defense. The Gamecocks held Kentucky, the country's best offense, 29 points below its average coming in.

The Vols were averaging nearly 80 points a game and were held below 45% from the field (21 of 58) for the first time in seven SEC games.

South Carolina is poised for its first trip to the Top 25 since 2017 and, at 6-2 in the SEC, only a game out of first place.

Paris has done it by melding together a group of transfers playing big roles. Ta'Lon Cooper, a guard who played at Minnesota last season, has

started all 21 games and scored 38 points combined against Kentucky and Tennessee.

Starters like forward B.J. Mack played at Wofford and guard Myles Stute, who hit four late free throws and then put his finger to his mouth to hush the loud Tennessee crowd, came from Vanderbilt.

Staley, whose women are 20-0 and No. 1 in the country, is a big fan of the men's team. She's led the call on social media to get the team in the Top 25 (the Gamecocks were 26th with 108 points in Monday's latest poll).

Staley believes getting left out last week was key to the win over Tennessee.

"When things happen, you go within," Staley said.

"When you don't think forces outside of you are giving you your just due, it only reinforces the tight knit group you do have."

South Carolina men look to continue their success at Georgia on Saturday while the women host Ole Miss on Sunday.

The men's and women's teams have combined for a 38-3 mark, the best in Division I. It's arguably the most attention on the two programs since 2017 when the men reached their only Final Four and Staley's women captured the first of two national championships.

Is the South Carolina campus the capital of college basketball this season?

"It feels like it," men's leading scorer Meechie Johnson said. "It's everything we've always talked about."

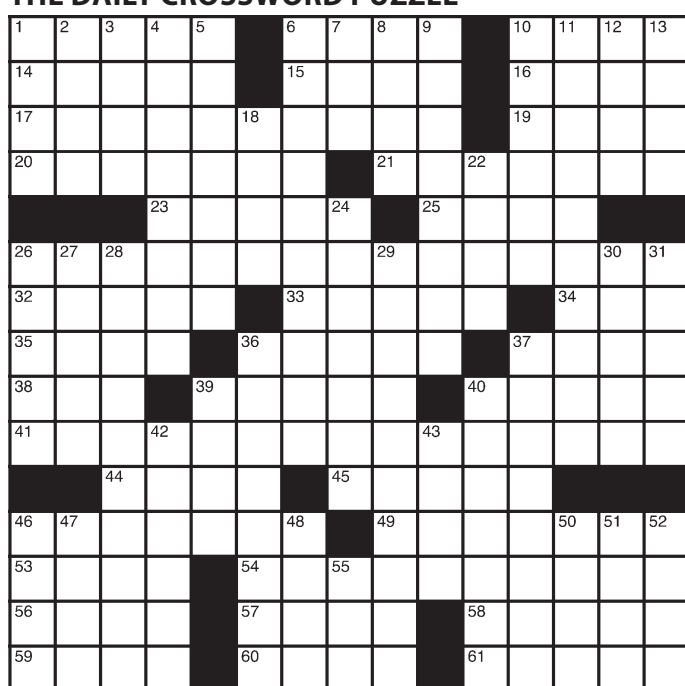
While Staley's team has been to the past three Final Fours and won another title in 2022, the Gamecock men have not been back to the NCAAs since their run to the national semifinals seven years ago.

It was a memorable time, Staley recalled, that put a lot of eyes on a school that had not had that sort of success. Staley believes bigger things are ahead for both teams — sooner rather than later.

"We're trying to figure out what we're going to do on Selection Sunday," when both the men's and women's NCAA fields are announced on March 17, Staley said. "It'll be different around here."

## SATURDAY PUZZLES

### THE DAILY CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Grace Warrington & Greg Warrington 2/3/24

- ACROSS**
- 1 Tells
  - 6 Randall Munroe webcomic
  - 10 In a tizzy
  - 14 Instant success?
  - 15 Move, informally
  - 16 Athletic brand that makes Scoot Zeros
  - 17 "So ... you're not saying no ... ?"
  - 19 Conditionally give
  - 20 "My mistake"
  - 21 Contamination process
  - 23 Drab shade
  - 25 Pet brand since 1946
  - 26 "Rock'n Me" group
  - 32 Worked on the road
  - 33 "Good thinking!"
  - 34 Congressional auditing org.
  - 35 Squeezes (out)
  - 36 Devout
  - 37 Some recyclables
  - 38 \_\_\_ Lingus
  - 39 For company
  - 40 Actress Tazel of "Justified"
  - 41 Correct
  - 44 The addition
  - 45 Singer who never toured outside North America
  - 46 Spots for fireside chats
  - 49 "You must let me"
  - 53 Actor who hosted "Scientific American Frontiers" from 1993 to 2005
  - 54 Editorial piece, perhaps
  - 56 Side hustle option
  - 57 Peignoir frill
  - 58 \_\_\_ wafers
  - 59 Hit with an intense beam
  - 60 First asteroid landed on by a NASA craft
  - 61 Wimbledon set?
  - 8 Jazz singer Laine
  - 9 Files
  - 10 Grace under pressure
  - 11 "Still wrong"
  - 12 Hotel chain headquartered in Dallas
  - 13 \_\_\_ about
  - 18 Short cut
  - 22 Outlet
  - 24 San Gabriel Valley city north of Whittier
  - 26 Pike, e.g.
  - 27 "Oh Myyy! There Goes the Internet" memoirist
  - 28 Largest subtropical wilderness reserve in North America
  - 29 Wrinkles in time?
  - 30 Actor Jack who often collaborated with David Lynch
  - 31 "If I \_\_\_ so myself"
  - 36 Glitch in "The Matrix," maybe?
  - 37 Rail yard piece
  - 39 Busy, busy, busy
  - 40 Celebrated
  - 42 Capital of Zimbabwe
  - 43 Pernicious
  - 46 Spoils
  - 47 Heimdall player in Marvel's "Thor" films
  - 48 Box
  - 50 "\_\_\_ come to me ..."
  - 51 Pitch well?
  - 52 Buffet surface
  - 55 Prefix with footprint
- DOWN**
- 1 Con \_\_\_ with vigor, in music
  - 2 Word in some mascara names
  - 3 Receipt figs.
  - 4 Is incumbent upon
  - 5 Congested, in a way
  - 6 Penetrating gaze?
  - 7 Escape room find
- Previous Puzzle Solved**
- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | A | T | S | H | A | I | R | S | P | S | S | T |
| B | R | E | W | A | B | O | U | T | O | M | A | R |
| O | G | R | E | V | E | N | M | O | P | U | L | I |
| N | U | M | E | R | O | W | I | S | D | O | M |   |
| D | E | L | T | A | C | O | R | E | S | I | G | N |
| I | T | D | F | E | E | I | C | E |   |   |   |   |
| R | O | M | E | O | F | C | C | A | L | P | H | A |
| A | V | I | A | N | T | H | O | H | E | R | O | N |
| G | E | T | S | H | O | R | N | O | U | T |   |   |
| N | E | W | B | I | E | D | O | C | T | O | R |   |
| D | I | E | D | T | U | R | F |   |   |   |   |   |
| S | L | I | P | P | E | R | Y | W | H | E | N | W |
| P | O | N | Y | O | U | R | E | D | N | A | T | A |
| A | S | K |   | E | M | M | Y | S |   | G | A | P |

### 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.

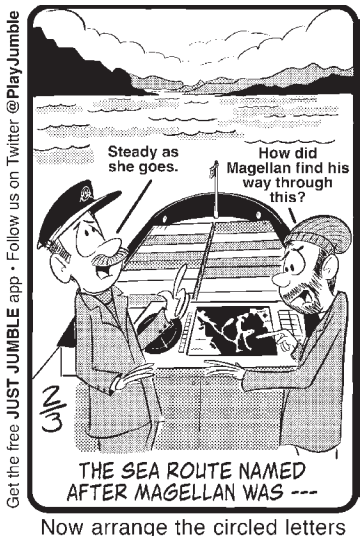
TIYDT

SEFHR

IRGUAT

EZLAAA

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

" [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] " [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] (Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumbles: GUILT GOOSE MARROW HOOPLA  
Answer: After discussing whether to drill for oil on their land, they decided they — MIGHT AS WELL

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

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

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

## DILLARD FROM PAGE B1

literally are reading the water every second.”

The sport is broken down into various levels, all depending on the top speed of the vehicles. Dillard has raced Formula 3 in the past and began international competitions at Formula 2. When he made the leap to F1, the speed of the boats jumped about 30 mph.

“Where you really feel the difference is not the straightaway at top-end speed,” Dillard said. “You feel it and the engine is just singing, it’s high pitched, but when you turn you’re pulling, instead of 3Gs, you’re pulling 6G’s and it just rips your neck. That’s all I do is neck exercises.”

### ROOKIE YEAR MADNESS

Dillard dreamed of racing at the Formula 1 level, but he didn’t expect to make the jump in 2023.

He was racing for a Formula 2 squad from England at the time, competing throughout Europe. That’s when he got a call from China CTIC. Their top driver had just retired, and they wanted to have Dillard fill the void.

Dillard didn’t need much convincing.

He was just 30 days from his first race in a boat he’d never driven before, but he wasn’t concerned. From the moment he stepped foot in Indonesia and hopped in the tunnel boat, he felt right at home.

“It felt like this is how a race boat should feel, that much power,” Dillard said. “It’s actually easier to drive Formula 1 than it is to drive Formula 2 because you have more power behind you to get through the water. If the water is really rough, you can get on top of it. When you turn, you have more power pushing you through the turn. Formula 1, for me, it came natural, it felt natural. My first race, we got sixth place, and we were very excited for that.”

The Dalzell native was confident from the start.

“As soon as I was on the team, I was like, ‘I’m gonna get this rookie of the year,’” Dillard said. “My real goal was that I wanted to win one race to get on the podium. If I get on the podium, I can bring my American flag and tie it around my neck like Superman, so that was my No. 1 goal. I wanted to get on that podium and have that American flag up there.”

That confidence was tested almost immediately. Dillard’s season was very complicated, though not in the way you might expect.

When Dillard got to Indonesia, it was smooth sailing, at least once he landed. The travel was a grind.

“When I ran Formula 2, we were racing in Europe. Now, we’re racing around the world. The first race last year was in Indonesia, and I couldn’t even tell you where it was on the map. I had to look it up, right above Australia,” he said. “It was like two 15-hour flights; it was crazy. That was a toll on me, the flight and then the time difference to 12 hours ahead and the types of food there, all that you have to get adjusted to. And then, I had never been in the boat before. When they signed me to the team, it was 30 days before going to Indonesia, so it was no practice, nothing, just get in the boat, you’re going to race Formula 1.”

But once Dillard’s feet touched the ground, things were simple. His visa was sorted out before he left the airport, and he raced well, finishing in sixth. His second race, however, would be in China. One might assume that wouldn’t be a problem, as he does race for a Chinese team, after all.

Not so much.

He went through weeks of trying to deal with getting a visa. He even hired someone to do the heavy lifting. When the day arrived for his planned fight to China, Dillard still had no visa.

“We (typically) get there a week early because you have to get used to the time difference, prepare the boats. Then FedEx showed up with my visa on Wednesday, and the race was Saturday,” Dillard said. “I literally got the FedEx, drove straight to Charlotte and said, ‘I need a ticket right now to China.’ It was eight grand. I call the team and say it was the only way I can go, and they say get it. I was there, I got to China that night, and in the morning, I had to race.”

Dillard got off the plane and almost immediately had to jump in his boat for practice. When he did, the antenna for his boat was missing, wiping out radio connection to his team. After some trial and error, the issue was sorted, but by that point, Dillard was at the end of his rope.

“I get them to put the antenna on, and I go out there, and I drive like a maniac because I’m upset about the visa, I’m upset about having to sit on that plane for so long, not getting any sleep, and then the team owner after was like, ‘Calm down or I’m putting you on a plane back to the USA’ because I was like flying the boat,” he said. “It was practice, and I was driving like I was driving for my life, like I had everything on the line. I had one of the quickest times and everybody



Brent Dillard races in the Grand Prix of France in Macon, France.

SIMON PALFRADER / SPECIAL TO THE SUMTER ITEM

was amazed, and it was great for the fans, but there was no need to do that.”

Despite the visa-induced mania, Brent still managed to finish in 10th place in the race. In another month, it was off to France, the second home country for his team. France is where he also got closest to getting on the podium.

“I was in third place in a brand-new boat, and I got stuck right behind somebody on a restart, and a guy from Abu Dhabi went right by me, then my teammate pulls up beside me, and he was going to pinch me,” Dillard said. “I didn’t know what he was going to do. It was my first year racing with my teammates, so I backed out of it. With it being my first year, I didn’t want to push it because there was another rookie that did something stupid and he got a red card, got punished, and now he’s suspended for this first race coming up.”

Everything came to a head in Dillard’s final race, the Grand Prix of Sharjah, which is in the United Arab Emirates, Dec. 8-10. Before the weekend even started, Dillard knew he was in for a wild time.

“My engines were stuck in Germany in a snow storm, so I didn’t get to qualify,” he said. “They had qualifying, and I just sat there and watched.”

On Saturday night, they had a pre-race competition. Instead of racing for points, they were racing for money. Then the next piece of insanity hit.

“We’re racing, and my radio man was yelling at me, ‘Turn harder, turn harder.’ So after three turns of him telling me to turn harder, I grab the bottom of the steering wheel and turn it as hard as I could, and I did two barrel rolls,” Dillard said. “I was upside down; I went to undo the belt, and I was back over right-side up. I tried to keep going, but it broke the fuel line.”

With one crisis averted, Dillard geared up for Sunday’s race.

“Then Sunday comes, I’d just crashed, my engines aren’t coming, a big mess. I start dead last,” Dillard said, referencing the fact that he couldn’t run in the qualifying race. “I worked my way all the way up to ninth, pass the ninth-place boat. I’m passing the eighth-place boat, and as I pass him, he doesn’t know. We’re going into a right-hander. I pass him, he turns, and he hits me and puts a crack in my boat. I see three boats in front of me; I know I can go get them, but once you get a crack in a boat that’s going 130 mph, water comes in there and just blows the boat completely apart.”

While it was the only race all season that Dillard was unable to finish, he stayed positive.

“That was, I think, my best race because it was the most troublesome, the most hurdles I’d had to overcome,” he said.

### GETTING STARTED

To make sense of Dillard’s confidence at the start of his F1 career, it helps to know his origin as a racer.

He started the sport at the young age of 13, following in the footsteps of his father, Steve Dillard. The young buck was an instant success. He won his first race, and by the age of 14, he won the APBA Hydro Class, racing against a field of adults.

“It had never been done, still to this day,” Dillard said of claiming the title at 14. “I remember winning it, and it felt like I did something wrong. When I finished, everyone looked at me, giving me this really mean look because I had just beat all these adults, and they’re just looking down at this kid. I was kinda confused.”

All through school, Dillard raced, but mostly as a hobby. His greatest passion was another sport, basketball. He played at Camden Military and Lee Academy before making the jump to college hoops at Hampden Sydney College in Virginia. His coach wasn’t necessarily the biggest fan of his other extracurricular activity.

“My college coach did not want me to go. Actually, my roommates that were on the team with me wanted to



ADAM FLASH / THE SUMTER ITEM

Dillard’s rookie of the year trophy is displayed next to a miniature of one of his previous tunnel boats.



The back of Dillard’s helmet features fellow Dalzell athlete Ja Morant, the currently injured point guard of the Memphis Grizzlies.

PHOTO PROVIDED

go to the race with me, and he wouldn’t let them go,” Dillard said. “When I was playing college basketball, I was racing, but I wasn’t very passionate about it. It was something I was doing to be a hobby with my father. It was more of a hobby.”

But Dillard got hurt during his sophomore year, injuring two discs in his lower back. He eventually had surgery, but his days of college basketball were finished. Without basketball to drive his competitive spirit, Dillard turned his attention fully to racing.

He was looking into purchasing a new boat in 2018, contacting a team in Sweden about a vehicle they were planning to retire.

“We were thinking about buying this thing and bringing it home, and during that conversation, they said, ‘Why don’t you come over here and race it with us in our world championship against the best in the world?’ I said, ‘Sure, no problem.’ So I flew to Sweden, stayed there for about a month, went to the first race, it was in Lithuania,” Dillard said. “We do qualifying on Saturday, and I miss the pole by like .2 seconds, so I had to start second. I had never been in this boat, I’d never raced with these guys, this is Formula 2, and we’re going about 120 mph, and I qualified second, which blew everyone’s mind. They’re like, ‘Who is this American?’”

Much like his time in F1, things didn’t necessarily go smoothly, but they went well in the end.

“When the race started, we all line up together, and we start like a drag race onto the course, and then we do the course. I hit the start, and the motor didn’t crank,” he said. “Everybody left, 21 boats left, and I stayed. The fourth time, the engine cranked, and they’re already 200-300 yards ahead of me. It was a 45-lap race, and I finished fourth. I ran down almost every single one of those guys. I was good from then on.”

Dillard stood out because of his aggression to pass other racers, which is atypical outside of the U.S.

“The mentality overseas is to maintain your position,” he said. “I always

want to keep going to the front because you can make one mistake and go from first place to breaking your boat and instead of making money to spending money.”

After a strong start to his international career, COVID-19 wiped out two years of racing. He competed once in America, winning a race on Lake Havasu in Arizona. After that, he dove back into European competition, first with a team from Italy before the squad from England in 2022.

Now after a great rookie year, Dillard is looking to make a strong push in F1H2O in 2024.

“We got third last year in the team championship. We should’ve gotten second. If I wouldn’t have crashed, we would’ve gotten second,” Dillard said. “My teammate (Peter Morin) is really good, too; he can win any race that we have. Our team goal is to win the team championship. You’ve got to finish every race, that’s the most important. The main goal is to finish every race and to try to get on the podium. And I want to get the pole on one of the races. I know I can get the pole.”

Dillard also loves his team, China CTIC. Owner Eric Chan has developed a great environment with the squad that is partially Chinese and partially French.

“Every race he tells us, ‘No pressure, just win,’” Dillard said of Chan. “He kinda stands in the background, he doesn’t get too much involved, but he’s really excited about it. For somebody to invest in the sport and have their own team, they have to really love it. You can see he has a passion for it. As drivers, he really takes care of us.”

The Dalzell native will start 2024 behind the eight ball as he waits for his boat to get back into racing shape after his crash to end 2023. After that, he’s gunning for wins.

“I don’t know what’s going to happen in the first race. I’m going to be in a boat I’ve never been in before, so we’ll see how that goes,” Dillard said. “After the first race and I get my boat back, I believe I can fight for the win in every race we go to.”

# Senior Bowl features well-traveled QBs, other top prospects

BY JOHN ZENOR

Associated Press

MOBILE, Ala. — The Senior Bowl quarterbacks are a well-traveled group, most of whom have moved from one Power Five program to another.

Led by Washington's Michael Penix Jr. and Oregon's Bo Nix, all seven have spent this week leading up to Saturday's Senior Bowl working on their next landing spot.

The game will culminate a week of scrutiny from NFL coaches, scouts and executives on the field and in the meeting rooms. And a week of trying to stand out from the crowd.

"It's all about preparation," said Penix, who led the Huskies to the national championship game. "Once you get to this level, everybody knows football. It's about what extra are you going to do to separate yourself from somebody else. That's what it's going to be about. That's what it's always been about."

Penix, Nix and Notre Dame's Sam Hartman will lead the National team. The American team has South Carolina's Spencer Rattler, Tennessee's Joe Milton III, Tulane's Michael Pratt and South Alabama's Carter Bradley. Bradley, whose father Gus is the Indianapolis Colts' defensive coordinator, will play on his home field at Hancock Whitney Stadium.

Penix, who led the nation in passing



Former South Carolina American quarterback Spencer Rattler, who is suiting up for the American team this week, runs through drills during practice for the Senior Bowl on Wednesday in Mobile, Alabama.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

each of the past two seasons, and Nix have faced off twice this season in leading the Pac-12's top teams. Now they're teammates for a week.

LSU Heisman Trophy winner Jayden Daniels, USC's Caleb Williams and North Carolina's Drake Maye are widely regarded as the top three quarterbacks available for April's draft.

But there are big names and potential high picks in Mobile too. Penix, who started his career at Indiana, was second in the Heisman voting. Nix, an Auburn transfer, finished third.

Rattler arrived at South Carolina via Oklahoma, Milton started his career at Michigan and Hartman at Wake Forest.

They've spent the week trying to separate themselves from the pack but the goal for the game is to give them all fairly equal chances.

"We're just going to try to give these guys equal opportunities across the board," said National coach Jeff Ulbrich, the New York Jets' defensive coordinator. "Do we want to win? Absolutely. But at the same time the most

important part of this game is giving these guys the opportunity to shine."

They all bring confidence developed during successful college careers. Rattler was a bright spot in South Carolina's disappointing season.

"I stack up versus everybody," Rattler said. "I'm confident in my abilities. I'm happy with where I'm at right now. Still working."

Given that five of them have played for multiple schools, the quarterbacks have some added common ground along with their mutual goals.

Hartman said being able to connect with other college passers has been a fun part of the experience. He can particularly relate to Nix. Both left their home states to finish their careers.

"His legacy and his career is very similar to mine, the highs and the lows," Hartman said. "I'm a huge fan of him."

The game features a number of potential early-round picks, including edge rushers Laiatu Latu of UCLA and Darius Robinson of Missouri, Toledo cornerback Quinyon Mitchell and Texas defensive lineman T'Vondre Sweat.

There are some highly rated offensive linemen too, including Oregon State's Taliese Fuaga, Oklahoma's Tyler Guyton, BYU's Kingsley Suamatai, Oregon center Jackson Powers-Johnson and Houston's Patrick Paul.

## OBITUARIES

### TOMMY EDWARD SAMUEL

MANNING — Tommy Edward Samuel, 72, died on Sunday, Jan. 28, 2024.



Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. on Sunday at Fresh Fire Christian Life Center, 625 W. Huggins St., Manning.

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

### MILDRED LEE STREATER ENGLISH

Mildred Lee Streater English, of Sumter, died on Monday, Jan. 29, 2024, at Prisma Health Richland Hospital.



Born on May 24, 1935, in the city of Wadesboro, North Carolina, she was the youngest child of the late Thomas and Carrie Adams Streater. The family moved not long after her birth to the city of Cheraw, where Mildred spent the remainder of her childhood, until she graduated from Coulter Memorial Academy. After graduation, she moved to Long Beach, New York, to find work as most young people from the south did. While in New York, she met a young soldier by the name of William Thomas English. The two would soon marry and eventually move to Boston, Massachusetts, where he was stationed.

While in Boston, Mildred was a dedicated member of Holy Tabernacle COGIC, where she devotedly served on the missionary board and held the position as president of the usher board for many years, until the family moved to South Carolina. Upon their arrival in Sumter, Bishop English began the ministry of Greater St. Paul N/D Church. First Lady Mildred was very active in the ministry from its inception. She established the usher board of Greater St. Paul, served as the young adult Sunday school teacher for an extensive period, served as president of the missionary board for many years, served as coordinator for the Bill English Evangelistic Association Outreach Committee, and held the position of church secretary until her passing.

Mildred leaves to cherish: one son, Geoffrey Streater Sr.; three daughters, Sheryl (Ronald) Eady, Sheila (James) Coplin and Shonda English; three granddaughters, Sequita Toya (Paul) Abrams of Gray Court, Tenesha Ciera (Mario) Drake of Cheraw and JaShema (Toa) Panapa of Florence; two grandsons, Geoffrey (Jasmine) Streater Jr. of Charlotte, North Carolina, and James (Breigh) Coplin

III of Denver, Colorado; six great-granddaughters; three great-grandsons; a close cousin, Thelma Woods of Black Mountain, North Carolina; a host of nieces and nephews whom she held dear to her heart; adopted daughters in Christ, Connie Pearson and Denise Franklin; a special sister in Christ, Mary Sumpter; and many sons and daughters in the Lord.

From Massachusetts to South Carolina, her life touched many.

In addition to her parents and her loving husband of 52 years, Mildred was preceded in death by her brothers, Preston (Fannie) Streater and Thomas "June" Little; and sisters, Sarah (John) Hawkins, Louise (Sammie) Isaiah and Ethel (James) McCaskill.

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

Funeral services will be held at 3 p.m. on Sunday at Greater St. Paul N/D Church, 200 Watkins St., Sumter, with Bishop Henry Simmons officiating and Minister Ernest LeGette, eulogist. Interment will follow in Bishop W.T. English Memorial Park, 3735 Congruity Road, Sumter.

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

### JOSEPHINE FRAISER

Josephine Fraiser, 83, was born on March 30, 1940, in Sumter, a daughter of the late

Joshua Sr. and Ophelia Olden Fraiser. She departed this life on Monday, Jan. 29, 2024, at Prisma Health Tuomey Hospital in Sumter.

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

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. on Monday at Wayman Chapel AME Church, 160 N. Kings Highway, Sumter, SC 29154 with the Rev. Robert L. China Jr. officiating. Interment will follow in Wayman Chapel AME Church Cemetery, SC 29154.

The family will receive friends from 1 to 6 p.m. daily at 4780 Chanson Lane, Sumter, SC 29154.

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

Online memorials may be sent to the family at [jobsmortuaryinc@gmail.com](mailto:jobsmortuaryinc@gmail.com) or visit us on the web at [www.jobsmortuary.net](http://www.jobsmortuary.net).

### IVORY ROSE BURGESS WILSON

Ivory Rose Burgess Wilson, 88, was born on Jan. 14, 1936, in New Zion, a daughter of the late John Benjamin Howard and Creola Ophelia Burgess Howard.

She departed this life on Tuesday, Jan. 30, 2024,

at her residence.

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

Funeral services will be held at 1 p.m. on Monday at First Baptist Missionary Church, 219 S. Washington St., Sumter, SC 29150 with the Rev. George P. Windley Jr. officiating. Interment will be held at Hickory Grove Baptist Church Cemetery, Turbeville, SC 29162.

The family will receive friends at the home, 3643 Moseley Drive, Sumter, SC 29154.

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

Online memorials may be sent to the family at [jobsmortuaryinc@gmail.com](mailto:jobsmortuaryinc@gmail.com) or visit us on the web at [www.jobsmortuary.net](http://www.jobsmortuary.net).

### RICHARD MCBRIDE

Funeral services for Richard McBride will be held at 3 p.m. on Sunday at Crossroad Christian Fellowship, 845 Webb St., Sumter, with Apostle Sylvester Francis III, pastor. Interment will follow in Bradford Cemetery.



MCBRIDE

Richard was born on April 24, 1959, in Manning, to the late Arthur and Ruthie Lee Witherspoon McBride.

He departed this life on Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2024, in Sumter.

The family is receiving friends at 71 Birnie Circle, Sumter.

Funeral services are entrusted to Whites Mortuary LLC — Dedicated to Excellence — Committed to Service.

### REGINALD MCFADDEN

Funeral services for Reginald McFadden will be held at 2 p.m. on Sunday at Jehovah Missionary Baptist Church, 805 S. Harvin St., Sumter, with Marion H. Newton, pastor, and Bishop Shederick White officiating. Interment will follow in Ruby M.B. Simon Family Cemetery, 3750 Congruity Road, Gable



MCFADDEN

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

Reginald, husband of Yoland James McFadden, was born on March 31, 1975, in Sumter, to Deborah Smith McFadden and the late Felix McFadden III.

He departed this life on Tuesday, Jan. 30, 2024, in Sumter.

The family is receiving friends from 3 to 7 p.m. at 1 Burgess Court, Sumter.

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

### JAMES ERVIN FRANCIS

James Ervin Francis, 66,

was born on Dec. 14, 1957, in Sumter, a son of the late John Burch and Mabel Alviteen Francis. He departed this life on Friday, Jan. 26, 2024, at his residence.

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

Funeral services will be held at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday at Salem Chapel & Heritage Center, 101 S. Salem Ave., Sumter, SC 29150.

The family will receive friends at the home of his daughter, 232 S. Salem Ave., Sumter, SC 29150.

Online memorials may be sent to the family at [jobsmortuaryinc@gmail.com](mailto:jobsmortuaryinc@gmail.com) or visit us on the web at [www.jobsmortuary.net](http://www.jobsmortuary.net).

### DEMETRE TERRELL GAYLE

Demetre Terrell Gayle, 38, crossed over to life on Sunday, Jan. 28, 2024, in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Born in Sumter County at Shaw Air Force Base, he was a son of Juanita Gayle Epps and stepson of Roy Lee Epps.

Funeral arrangements are in progress and will be announced by Palmer Memorial Chapel.



### MARION GREEN JR.

Marion Green Jr. departed this life on Friday, Feb. 2, 2024, in Sumter.

He was born on June 2, 1937, in Wedgefield, to the late Marion D. Green Sr. and Prectdia Scott Green Washington.

The family will be receiving friends from 3 to 7 p.m. at 2410 Emil Road, Wedgefield.

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

### RICHARD THOMAS WALLEY

Richard Thomas Walley, 76, husband of Ida Sansbury Walley, died on Thursday, Feb. 1, 2024, at Prisma Health Tuomey Hospital.

Born on March 25, 1947, in Bridgeport, Connecticut, he was a son of the late Thomas Walley and Helen Griwach Walley. He formerly attended New Hope Baptist Church and was currently attending Hickory Road Baptist Church. He enjoyed playing music and loved fishing. He was an automobile salesman for many years. He was a U.S. Air Force veteran.

Survivors include his wife; a son, Michael Lee Walley (Terrie) of Lexington; a granddaughter, Bella Grace Walley of Lexington; a sister, Mary Walley Williams (C.J.) of St. Mary, Florida; a nephew, Alex Muraviov of Tennessee; and a special aunt, Lottie McManus of Sumter.

He was preceded in death by a sister, Linda Walley Boccarossa.

A funeral service will be held at 3:30 p.m. Sunday in the Elmore-Cannon-Stephens Funeral Home chapel with the Rev. Dr. Ron Taylor officiating. Burial will be in New Hope Baptist Church Cemetery.

Pallbearers will be Michael Walley, Allen Nesbitt, Jay Nesbitt, Jared Nesbitt, Tyler Washington and Steve McManus.

Honorary pallbearers will be James Barwick, Cary Cook and Bubba Hatfield.

The family will receive friends from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. on Sunday at Elmore-Cannon-Stephens Funeral Home.

Memorials may be made to Hickory Road Baptist Church, 1245 Cherryvale Drive, Sumter, SC 29154.

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

### WENDELL MILLER

MANNING — On Monday, Jan. 29, 2024, Wendell "Bo" Miller, husband of Sharon Moorer Miller, passed away peacefully at McLeod Health Clarendon.

Born on Thursday, Jan. 4, 1962, in Manning, he was a son of the late Albert Jr. and Pearlene Hilton Miller.

Services celebrating his life will take place at 2 p.m. on Sunday at Premuel Gibson Gymnasium, located on the campus of Manning Junior School, 1101 W.L. Hamilton Road, Manning, where the Rev. Terry R. Johnson Sr., pastor of Elizabeth Missionary Baptist Church, will preside. The Rev. David Pugh, pastor of St. John Baptist Church, will bring words of comfort. The service of committal with military honors will follow in the family plot, located in St. John Baptist Church Cemetery, 3944 Brewer Road, Bloomville community, Manning.

Public viewing will take place from 4 to 6 p.m. today at Fleming & DeLaine Chapel, 222 W. Boyce St., Manning. The family is receiving relatives and friends from 3 to 8 p.m. at the residence, 2067 Hector Walker Road, Manning. Fleming & DeLaine Funeral Home and Chapel of Manning is assisting the Miller family. Online condolences may be sent to [www.flemingdelaine.com](http://www.flemingdelaine.com) or [flemingdelaine@aol.com](mailto:flemingdelaine@aol.com).

### JIMMY LEE THAMES

BRIDGEPORT, Connecticut — On Monday, Jan. 29, 2024, Jimmy Lee "JT" Thames departed this life at his residence in Bridgeport.

Born on Wednesday, May 1, 1946, in Manning, he was a son of Sarah Lee Wells Thames and the late late Alphonso Thames.

Online condolences may be sent to [www.flemingdelaine.com](http://www.flemingdelaine.com) or [flemingdelaine@aol.com](mailto:flemingdelaine@aol.com).



### AUTO & TRANSPORTATION

- Aftermarket Auto Repair \_\_\_\_\_
- Auto & Boat Upholstery \_\_\_\_\_
- Auto Body Shop \_\_\_\_\_
- Auto Parts \_\_\_\_\_
- Boat Dealership \_\_\_\_\_
- Tire Store \_\_\_\_\_
- Car & Truck Accessories \_\_\_\_\_
- Car Audio & Electronics \_\_\_\_\_
- Car Salesperson \_\_\_\_\_
- Dealership Service Dept \_\_\_\_\_
- Limousine Service \_\_\_\_\_
- Luxury Car Dealership \_\_\_\_\_
- Mobile Car Detailing \_\_\_\_\_
- Motorcycle / Moped Dealership \_\_\_\_\_
- New Car Dealership \_\_\_\_\_
- ATV Dealership \_\_\_\_\_
- Oil Change \_\_\_\_\_
- Rims / Wheels Store \_\_\_\_\_
- Small Engine Repair \_\_\_\_\_
- Towing Service \_\_\_\_\_
- Used Car Dealership \_\_\_\_\_

### BUSINESS

- Adult Day Center \_\_\_\_\_
- Air Purification Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Auction Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Bail Bond Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Banquet Facilities \_\_\_\_\_
- Barber Shop \_\_\_\_\_
- Building Design Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Car Wash \_\_\_\_\_
- Child Care Center \_\_\_\_\_
- Children's Fitness \_\_\_\_\_
- Commercial Contractor \_\_\_\_\_
- Commercial Real \_\_\_\_\_
- Estate Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Dance Studio \_\_\_\_\_
- Day Spa \_\_\_\_\_
- Dry Cleaners \_\_\_\_\_
- Employment Agency \_\_\_\_\_
- Fire Extinguisher Service \_\_\_\_\_
- Fitness Center / Gym \_\_\_\_\_
- Floral Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Funeral Home \_\_\_\_\_
- Golf Course \_\_\_\_\_
- Hair Salon \_\_\_\_\_
- Health Care Insurance \_\_\_\_\_
- Heavy Equipment Rental \_\_\_\_\_
- Home & Auto Insurance \_\_\_\_\_
- Hotel \_\_\_\_\_
- Internet Service Provider \_\_\_\_\_
- Irrigation Company \_\_\_\_\_
- IT Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Junk Removal Service \_\_\_\_\_
- Life Insurance Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Lumber Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Manufacturing Plant \_\_\_\_\_
- Martial Arts \_\_\_\_\_
- Massage / \_\_\_\_\_
- Massage Therapist \_\_\_\_\_
- Mobile Device Repair \_\_\_\_\_
- Monument Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Nail Salon \_\_\_\_\_
- Online-Based Business \_\_\_\_\_
- Paralegal Firm \_\_\_\_\_
- Paving Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Pest Control \_\_\_\_\_
- Pet Boarding \_\_\_\_\_
- Pet Grooming \_\_\_\_\_

- Pet Hospital \_\_\_\_\_
- Pilates / Yoga Studio \_\_\_\_\_
- Printing & Graphics Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Self Storage Facility \_\_\_\_\_
- Septic Tanks \_\_\_\_\_
- Sign Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Storage Buildings \_\_\_\_\_
- Tanning Salon \_\_\_\_\_
- Tattoo Studio \_\_\_\_\_
- Transportation Services \_\_\_\_\_
- Travel Agency \_\_\_\_\_
- Tree Service \_\_\_\_\_
- Trucking Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Web Design Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Window Tinting \_\_\_\_\_

### Community

- Art Gallery \_\_\_\_\_
- Charity Event \_\_\_\_\_
- Church \_\_\_\_\_
- Civic Club \_\_\_\_\_
- Community Event \_\_\_\_\_
- Elected Official \_\_\_\_\_
- EMT \_\_\_\_\_
- Event Entertainment \_\_\_\_\_
- Event Venue \_\_\_\_\_
- Family Entertainment \_\_\_\_\_
- Firefighter \_\_\_\_\_
- Law Enforcement Officer \_\_\_\_\_
- Live Theatre \_\_\_\_\_
- Networking Group \_\_\_\_\_
- Non-Profit Organization \_\_\_\_\_
- Park \_\_\_\_\_
- Place for a Girls Night Out \_\_\_\_\_
- Place for Kids to Have Fun \_\_\_\_\_
- Place to Take a Visitor \_\_\_\_\_
- Place to Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_
- Sports Leagues \_\_\_\_\_
- Summer Camp \_\_\_\_\_
- Wedding Venue \_\_\_\_\_

### EAT & DRINK

- American \_\_\_\_\_
- Asian \_\_\_\_\_
- Bar \_\_\_\_\_
- Barbeque \_\_\_\_\_
- Breakfast \_\_\_\_\_
- Breakfast Buffet \_\_\_\_\_
- Brunch \_\_\_\_\_
- BBQ Sauce/ \_\_\_\_\_
- Seasoning Rub \_\_\_\_\_
- Buffet \_\_\_\_\_
- Burger \_\_\_\_\_
- Business Lunch \_\_\_\_\_
- Butcher \_\_\_\_\_
- Cake & Desserts \_\_\_\_\_
- Catering \_\_\_\_\_
- Chicken \_\_\_\_\_
- Coffee Shop \_\_\_\_\_
- Country Cooking \_\_\_\_\_
- Deli \_\_\_\_\_
- Donuts \_\_\_\_\_
- Family Restaurant \_\_\_\_\_
- Fast Food \_\_\_\_\_
- Food Truck \_\_\_\_\_
- French Fries \_\_\_\_\_
- Frozen Yogurt \_\_\_\_\_
- Grocery Store \_\_\_\_\_
- Happy Hour \_\_\_\_\_
- Health Food \_\_\_\_\_
- Hot Dog \_\_\_\_\_

- Ice Cream Store \_\_\_\_\_
- Italian \_\_\_\_\_
- Liquor Store \_\_\_\_\_
- Local Produce Farm \_\_\_\_\_
- Mexican \_\_\_\_\_
- Nightclub \_\_\_\_\_
- Pizza \_\_\_\_\_
- Pizza Delivery \_\_\_\_\_
- Produce \_\_\_\_\_
- Restaurant Drive-Thru \_\_\_\_\_
- Romantic Restaurant \_\_\_\_\_
- Salads \_\_\_\_\_
- Sandwiches \_\_\_\_\_
- Seafood \_\_\_\_\_
- Smoothie \_\_\_\_\_
- Snow Cones / \_\_\_\_\_
- Shaved Ice \_\_\_\_\_
- Sports Bar \_\_\_\_\_
- Steak \_\_\_\_\_
- Sushi \_\_\_\_\_
- Sweet Tea \_\_\_\_\_
- Takeout \_\_\_\_\_
- Tex-Mex \_\_\_\_\_
- Wings \_\_\_\_\_

### EDUCATION

- Adult Education \_\_\_\_\_
- After-School Program \_\_\_\_\_
- College / University \_\_\_\_\_
- College Professor \_\_\_\_\_
- Driving School \_\_\_\_\_
- Elementary School \_\_\_\_\_
- High School \_\_\_\_\_
- Middle School \_\_\_\_\_
- Preschool \_\_\_\_\_
- Private School \_\_\_\_\_
- School Administrator \_\_\_\_\_
- School Teacher \_\_\_\_\_
- Tutoring Center \_\_\_\_\_

### HOME & FINANCE

- Accounting \_\_\_\_\_
- Air & Heating Service \_\_\_\_\_
- Apartment Complex \_\_\_\_\_
- Assisted Living Community \_\_\_\_\_
- Audio Video Solutions \_\_\_\_\_
- Bank \_\_\_\_\_
- Bookkeeping Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Cable/Satellite Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Carpet Cleaning \_\_\_\_\_
- Cleaning Company (Residential) \_\_\_\_\_
- Contractor / Remodeler \_\_\_\_\_
- Countertops Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Credit Union \_\_\_\_\_
- Decks & Porches \_\_\_\_\_
- Drive-Thru Banking \_\_\_\_\_
- Electric Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Fence Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Financial Advisement \_\_\_\_\_
- Flooring Installation Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Garage Doors \_\_\_\_\_
- Glass & Mirror \_\_\_\_\_
- Grading & Hauling \_\_\_\_\_
- Gutter Maintenance \_\_\_\_\_
- Home Accents Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Home Security Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Interior Decorating Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Investment Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Landscaping \_\_\_\_\_
- Loan Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Locksmith \_\_\_\_\_

Manufactured House Dealer \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mortgage Lender \_\_\_\_\_  
 Moving Company \_\_\_\_\_  
 New Home Construction  
 Company \_\_\_\_\_  
 Nursing Home \_\_\_\_\_  
 Painters \_\_\_\_\_  
 Plumbing Supplies \_\_\_\_\_  
 Pool Company \_\_\_\_\_  
 Pressure Washing Company \_\_\_\_\_  
 Propane / Gas Company \_\_\_\_\_  
 Property Management Company \_\_\_\_\_  
 Real Estate Agent \_\_\_\_\_  
 Real Estate Appraisal \_\_\_\_\_  
 Real Estate Closing Attorney \_\_\_\_\_  
 Real Estate Company \_\_\_\_\_  
 Real Estate Inspector \_\_\_\_\_  
 Roofing Company \_\_\_\_\_  
 Senior Care \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tax Preparation \_\_\_\_\_  
 Window Cleaning \_\_\_\_\_

**MEDICAL**

Audiologist \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cardiologist \_\_\_\_\_  
 Children's Dentist \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chiropractor \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cosmetic Dentist \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dentist Office \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dermatologist \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dialysis Company \_\_\_\_\_  
 Durable Medical Equipment  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ear, Nose, and Throat \_\_\_\_\_  
 Endodontics \_\_\_\_\_  
 Esthetician \_\_\_\_\_  
 Family Practice \_\_\_\_\_  
 General Surgeon \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hearing Aid Center \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Health \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hospice Care \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hospital \_\_\_\_\_  
 Imaging Services \_\_\_\_\_  
 In-Home Care \_\_\_\_\_  
 Internal Medicine \_\_\_\_\_  
 Laser / Skin Care \_\_\_\_\_  
 Lasik Surgery \_\_\_\_\_  
 Medical Center \_\_\_\_\_  
 Nurse \_\_\_\_\_  
 Obstetrics & Gynecology \_\_\_\_\_  
 Occupational Therapist \_\_\_\_\_  
 Optometrist \_\_\_\_\_  
 Orthodontist \_\_\_\_\_  
 Orthopedic Surgeon \_\_\_\_\_  
 Outpatient Surgery \_\_\_\_\_

Outpatient Therapy Clinic \_\_\_\_\_  
 Pediatric Practice \_\_\_\_\_  
 Physical Therapist \_\_\_\_\_  
 Plastic Surgeon \_\_\_\_\_  
 Podiatrist \_\_\_\_\_  
 Prosthetics Company \_\_\_\_\_  
 Psychiatrist \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mental Health Counselor \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sleep Center \_\_\_\_\_  
 Urgent Care \_\_\_\_\_

**PROFESSIONALS**

Bankruptcy Attorney \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bartender \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chef \_\_\_\_\_  
 Civil Attorney \_\_\_\_\_  
 Consultant \_\_\_\_\_  
 Counselor \_\_\_\_\_  
 Criminal Defense Attorney \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hair Stylist \_\_\_\_\_  
 Electrical Contractor \_\_\_\_\_  
 Estate Planning Attorney \_\_\_\_\_  
 Event Planner \_\_\_\_\_  
 Life Coach \_\_\_\_\_  
 Family Law Attorney \_\_\_\_\_  
 Individual Dentist \_\_\_\_\_  
 Insurance Agent \_\_\_\_\_  
 Loan Officer \_\_\_\_\_  
 Pediatrician \_\_\_\_\_  
 Personal Injury Attorney \_\_\_\_\_  
 Personal Trainer \_\_\_\_\_  
 Pet Sitter \_\_\_\_\_  
 Pet Trainer \_\_\_\_\_  
 Photographer \_\_\_\_\_  
 Plumber \_\_\_\_\_  
 Private Investigator \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tattoo Artist \_\_\_\_\_  
 Veterinarian \_\_\_\_\_  
 Wedding Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_

**SHOPPING & COMMERCE**

Antique Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Appliance Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Arts and Crafts Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bookstore \_\_\_\_\_  
 Boutique \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bridal Shop \_\_\_\_\_  
 Carpet / Flooring Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 CBD Retailer \_\_\_\_\_  
 Children's Clothing Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Computer Store \_\_\_\_\_

Consignment Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cosmetics Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Department Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fabric Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Feed Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fishing Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fitness Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Frame Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Furniture Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Gas Station \_\_\_\_\_  
 Gift Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Golf Cart Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Guns & Firearms Dealer \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hardware Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Jewelry Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Lighting & Fan Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Local Cellular Company \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mattress Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Men's Clothing Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Music Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Nursery \_\_\_\_\_  
 Office Equipment \_\_\_\_\_  
 Paint Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Party Rentals \_\_\_\_\_  
 Party Supply Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Pawn Shop \_\_\_\_\_  
 Pharmacy \_\_\_\_\_  
 School Supplies \_\_\_\_\_  
 Shoe Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sporting Goods \_\_\_\_\_  
 Thrift Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tobacco Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tool / Equipment Rental Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tuxedo Rental \_\_\_\_\_  
 Vape Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Wig Store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Window Company \_\_\_\_\_  
 Women's Clothing Store \_\_\_\_\_

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 (opened in 2023) \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. Winners will receive a BEST OF SUMTER window cling and framed photo recognition.
4. Winners will be invited to attend the BEST OF SUMTER red carpet event in April!

To promote your business throughout the contest, contact your Item sales representative or marketing@theitem.com.

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Drop off or mail to:  
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 36 W. Liberty Street  
 Sumter, SC 29151

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

# the Sumter ITEM CLASSIFIEDS

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

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

**LEGAL NOTICES**

**Legal Notice**

**NOTICE OF CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARINGS**

The Sumter City Council will hold public hearings on proposed amendments to the City of Sumter Zoning Ordinance on Tuesday, February 20, 2024, at 6:00 p.m., in the City Council Chambers located on the Fourth Floor of the Sumter Opera House (21 N. Main St.). The following requests are scheduled for consideration:

**RZ-24-01, 160 Hoyt St. (City)**  
A request to rezone one +/- 0.17-acre parcel from Residential-6 (R-6) to General Residential (GR). The property is located at 160 Hoyt St. and is represented by Tax Map # 227-13-01-019.

Documents pertaining to the proposed request(s) are on file in the Office of the Sumter City-County Planning Department and are available to be inspected and studied by interested citizens.

David P. Merchant  
Mayor

**Summons & Notice**

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF SUMTER  
IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS  
CASE NUMBER:  
2023-CP-43-01637

**GAYLE MAHIEU, PLAINTIFF,**  
**VS.**  
**SAMIR PRAVIN PATEL, DEFENDANTS.**

**SUMMONS TO THE DEFENDANT, SAMIR PRAVIN PATEL, NAMED ABOVE: YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED,** and required to answer the Complaint in this action, a copy of which is available from the Clerk of Court for Sumter County, South Carolina, herewith served upon you, which was filed on October 12, 2023 at 4:38 P.M., and to serve a copy of your answer to the said Complaint on the Plaintiff, or his attorneys, Poulin | Willey | Anastopoulos, LLC at their office located at 32 Ann Street, Charleston, South Carolina 29403, within thirty (30) days after the service hereof, exclusive of the day of such service, and if you fail to answer the Complaint within the amount of time aforesaid, the Plaintiff in this action will apply to the Court for judgment by default for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

**POULIN | WILLEY | ANASTOPOULOU, LLC**  
s/ India D. Shaw, Esq.  
S.C. Bar No.: 104339  
Lane D. Jefferies, Esq.  
S.C. Bar No.: 101764  
32 Ann Street  
Charleston, SC 29403  
(803) 222-2222  
E: teamshaw@poulinwilley.com  
**ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF**  
Charleston, South Carolina  
Dated this 18th day of January, 2024

**TO THE DEFENDANT, SAMIR PRAVIN PATEL, NAMED ABOVE: TAKE NOTICE,** that the Summons in the above-mentioned action of which the foregoing is a copy, together with the Complaint therein was filed in the office of the Clerk of Court, Sumter County Court of Common Pleas, 215 H. Harvin Street, Sumter, SC 29150 on the 12th day of October, 2023 at 4:38 PM.

**POULIN | WILLEY | ANASTOPOULOU, LLC**  
s/ India D. Shaw, Esq.

**Summons & Notice**

S.C. Bar No.: 104339  
Lane D. Jefferies, Esq.  
S.C. Bar No.: 101764  
32 Ann Street  
Charleston, SC 29403  
(803) 222-2222  
E: teamshaw@poulinwilley.com  
**ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF**  
Charleston, South Carolina  
Dated this 18th day of January, 2024

**Public Hearing**

**NOTIFICATION OF BOARD OF APPEALS PUBLIC HEARING**

The City of Manning Board of Zoning Appeals will meet on Monday, February 26, 2024 at 6:00 PM, City Hall, 29 West Boyce Street, to hear the following appeals:  
Request No. 2024-E-02 by Mary Major to be allowed a special exception to be allowed a daycare center for property located on 212 Dinkins Street, Tax Map # 187-02-05-018-00 zoned, Light Industrial (LI).

Documents relating to this appeal are available for public inspection during regular business hours in the office of the Zoning Administrator at City Hall, 29 West Boyce Street, Manning, South Carolina.

**NOTIFICATION OF BOARD OF APPEALS PUBLIC HEARING**

The City of Manning Board of Zoning Appeals will meet on Monday, February 26, 2024 at 6:00 PM, City Hall, 29 West Boyce Street, to hear the following appeals:  
Request No. 2024-E-01 by The Manning Diner, LLC to be allowed a special exception to sell and consume alcohol on premises for property located at 302 E. Boyce Street, Tax Map # 187-03-08-005-00 zoned, General Commercial (GC).  
Documents relating to this appeal are available for public inspection during regular business hours in the office of the Zoning Administrator at City Hall, 29 West Boyce Street, Manning, South Carolina.

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**MERCHANDISE**

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**NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE**

To satisfy the owner's storage lien, PS Retail Sales, LLC will sell at public lien sale on February 21, 2024, the personal property in the below-listed units, which may include but are not limited to: household and personal items, office and other equipment. The public sale of these items will begin at 09:30 AM and continue until all units are sold.

**PUBLIC STORAGE # 25924, 1143 N Guignard Dr, Sumter, SC 29150, (803) 282-9623**  
Time: 10:30 AM  
Sale to be held at www.storage-treasures.com.  
238 - Dunham, Nikosha;  
303 - Forbes, Sierra;  
319 - Kron, Chad;  
331 - Taylor, Tonia;  
344 - Neeley, David;  
417 - Walters, Kiarra;  
472 - Cassidy, Meagan;  
510 - Bristle, Lloyd;  
512 - Ray, James;  
642 - Lipscomb, Shaquania;  
701 - Sterling, Jonathan;  
720 - Jones, David Jermaine;  
727 - Glover, Willa;  
739 - Daniels, Edward;  
748 - Atzert, Ryan

**PUBLIC STORAGE # 08604, 1277 Camden Hwy, Sumter, SC 29153, (803) 218-9507**  
Time: 11:00 AM  
Sale to be held at www.storage-treasures.com.  
A006 - McFadden, Latasha;  
A018 - Dozier, Malcolm;  
A044 - Stone, Henry;  
A049 - Gipson, Dy'Mond;  
C025 - Nelson, Yolanda;  
C038 - brown, Derrick;  
D004 - Archie, Tamara;  
D017 - Chatman, Cristie;  
D036 - Rose, Yolanda;  
E006 - Johnson, Geneva;  
E033 - Hilton, Ny'Keria;  
F020 - Bowen, Summer;  
F031 - Prosser, Amanda;  
F052 - Mack, Rosa;  
F055 - Davis, Colin;  
G003 - Hinnant, Joycelyn;  
G036 - Rogers, David

**PUBLIC STORAGE # 25925, 3785 Broad St, Sumter, SC 29154, (803) 282-9826**  
Time: 11:30 AM  
Sale to be held at www.storage-treasures.com.  
0106 - Mcmillan, Steven;  
0128 - Skipper, Kimberly;  
0209 - Muldrow, Shamara;  
0213 - Williams, Dujuana;  
0241 - Butler, James;  
0253 - Dawson, Kimberly;  
0318 - Mcdaniels, Elijah;  
0424 - Morris, Keith;  
0517 - Mitchell, George;  
0618 - Taylor, Aaron;  
0801 - Patton, Clint;  
0809 - Nelson, Mary

Public sale terms, rules, and regulations will be made available prior to the sale. All sales are subject to cancellation. We reserve the right to refuse any bid. Payment must be in cash or credit card-no checks. Buyers must secure the units with their own personal locks. To claim tax-exempt status, original RESALE certificates for each space purchased is required. By PS Retail Sales, LLC, 701 Western Avenue, Glendale, CA 91201. (818) 244-8080.

**Garage, Yard & Estate Sales**

**BILLHEIMER ESTATE SALE**

100 Bridgepointe Dr.  
Sumter, SC 29154  
Fri., Feb 2, 2024 10am-5pm  
Sat., Feb 3, 2024 9am -1pm  
Sumter Cabinet Queen Size Bdrm Set, China Hutch, Wicker Chairs, Cedar Chest, Trunks, Artwork, Jewelry, Ladies Accessories/Clothing, China, Crystal, Lots of kit & hsehd items, Mechanics, welding/woodworking tools, Yard & gardening tools, GE Upright Freezer, Sewing machines, etc.  
All items must be sold!  
estatesales.org  
**NO EARLY SALES CASH ONLY**  
(SC sales tax will be applied)

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**Driver/mover helper**, part-time to full-time hours. No experience needed. Background check. Driver class A or B or non-CDL. Good driving record. 803-236-4008.

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MANNING, S.C. 29102  
(803) 435 4492

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  - LAUNDRY FACILITY ON SITE
  - INDIVIDUAL STORAGE
  - PLAYGROUND
  - SMOKE FREE COMMUNITY

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- Magazines
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MULTIMEDIA CONSULTANT



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karen@theitem.com

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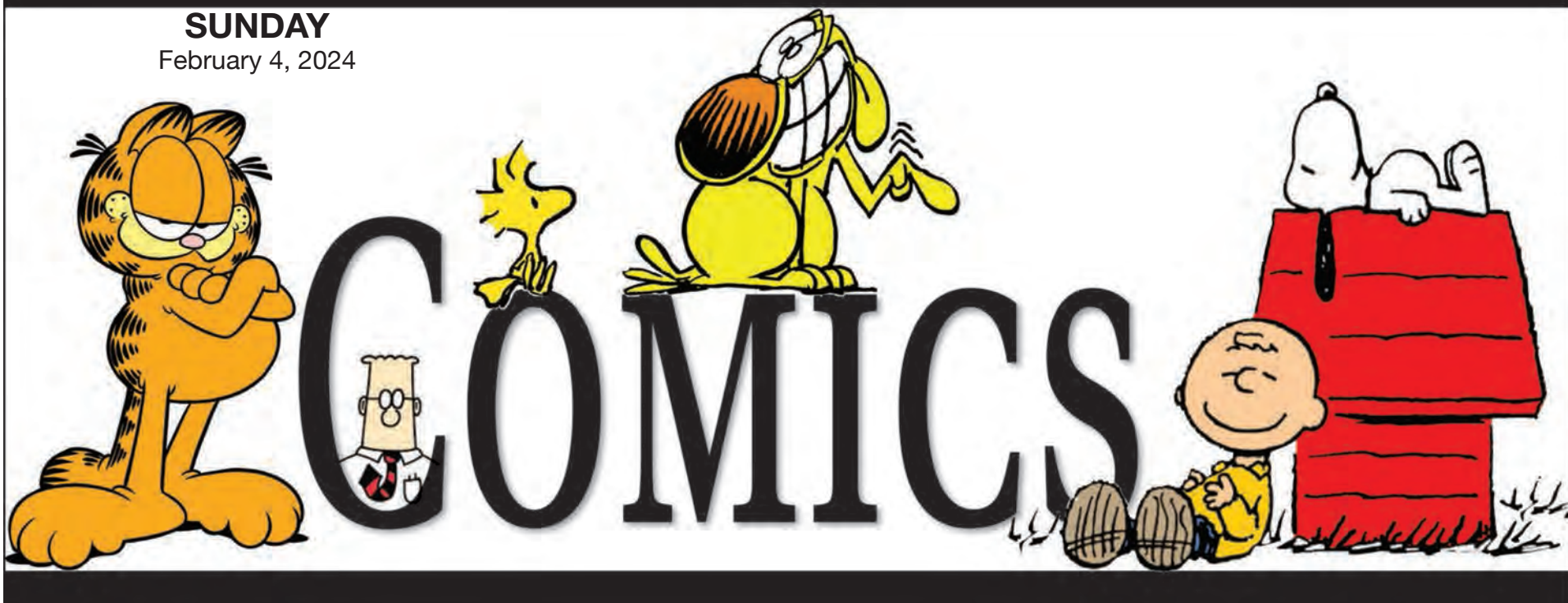


- Cat Litter
- Canned Cat Food
- Soft treats and Hard Treats
- Dry Dog Food
- Cleaning Supplies
- Lysol
- Bleach
- Dawn Dishwashing Soap
- Laundry Detergent
- Towels and Blankets (new and used)

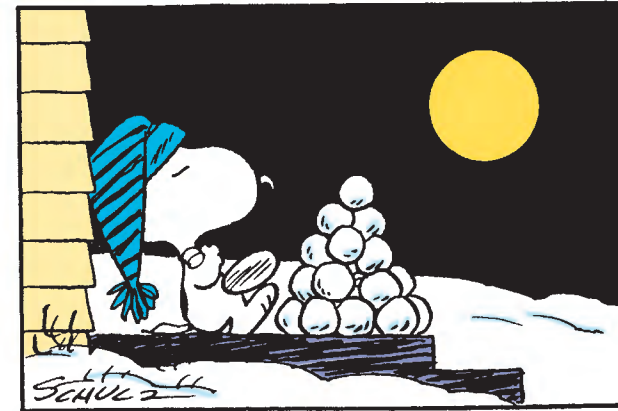
Donations can be dropped off at  
Sumter SPCA  
1140 S. Guignard Drive • Sumter, SC 29150  
Office Hours: 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM  
Closed Wednesdays & Sundays



SUNDAY  
February 4, 2024

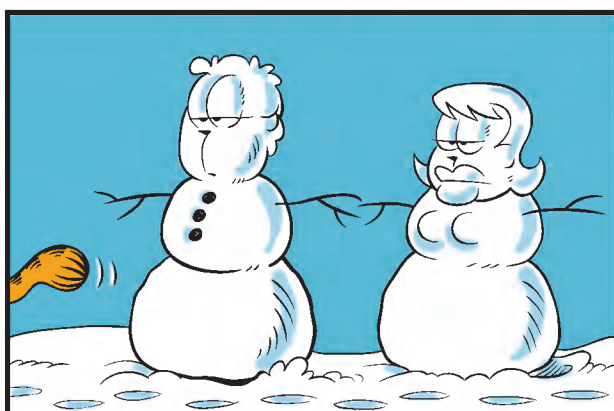
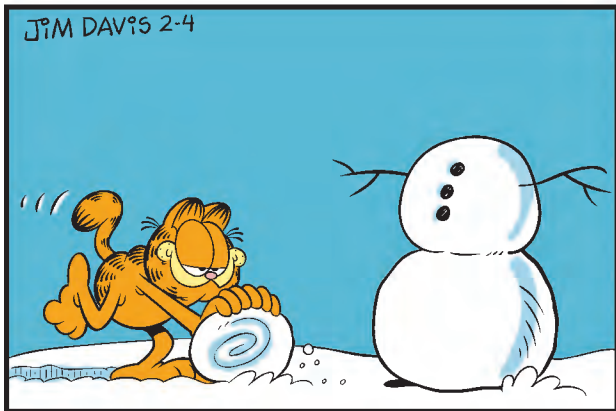


**PEANUTS**  
featuring  
**"Good ol' Charlie Brown"**  
by SCHULZ



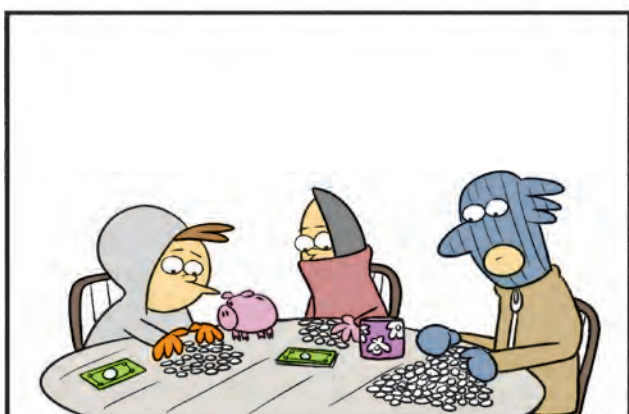
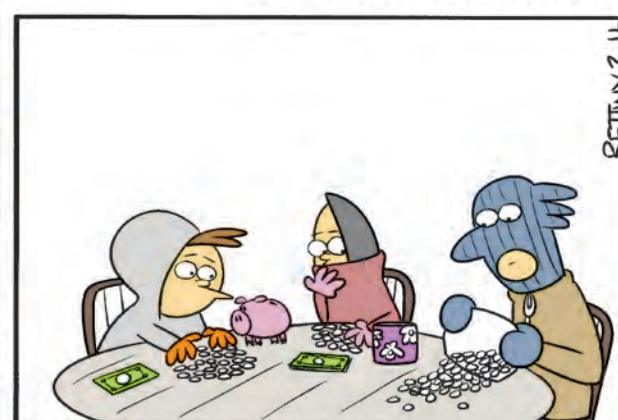
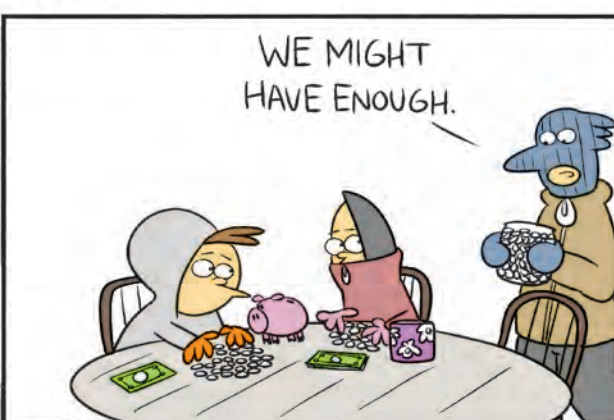
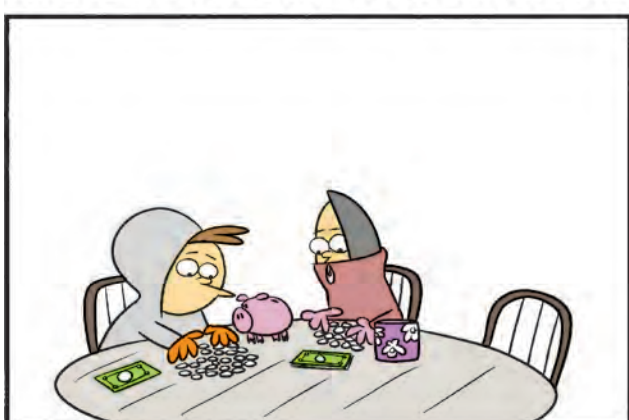
**GARFIELD**

BY JIM DAVIS



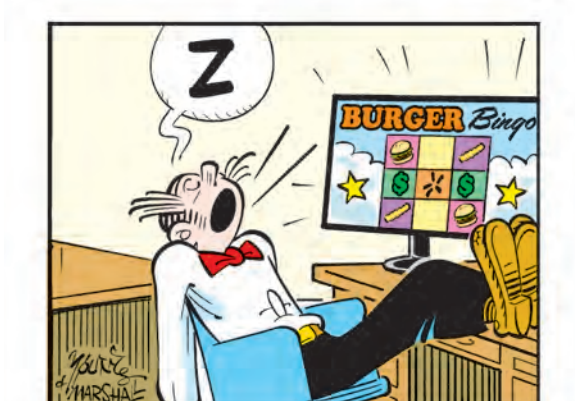
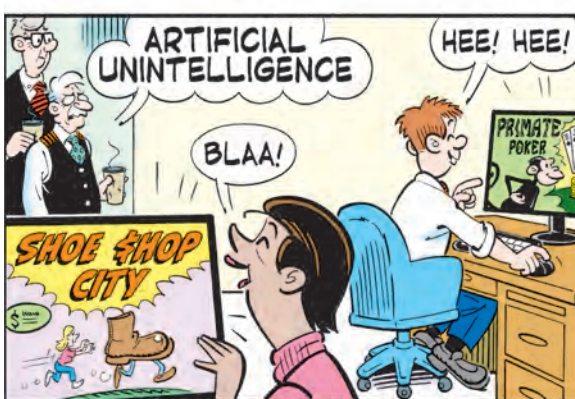
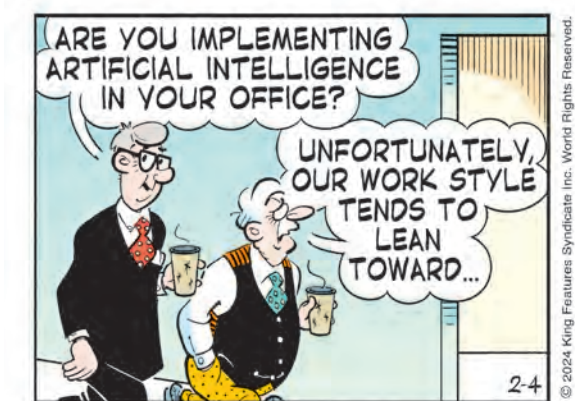
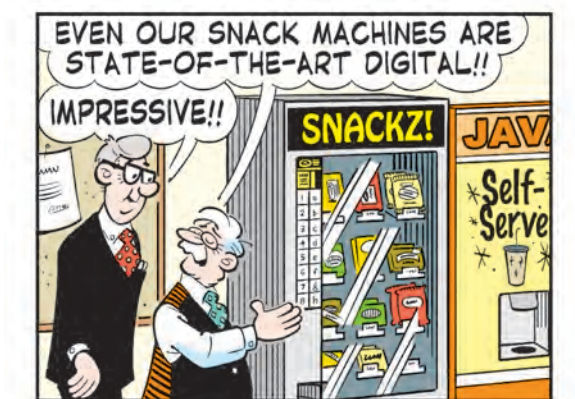
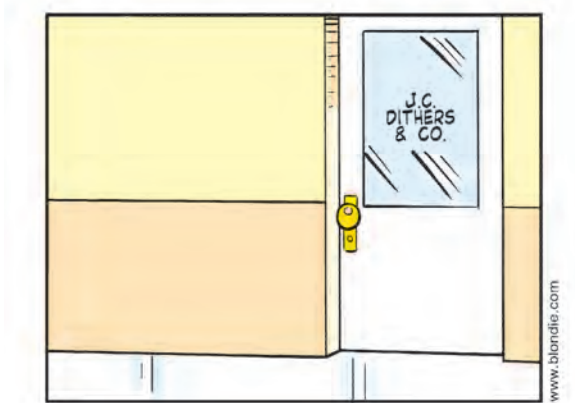
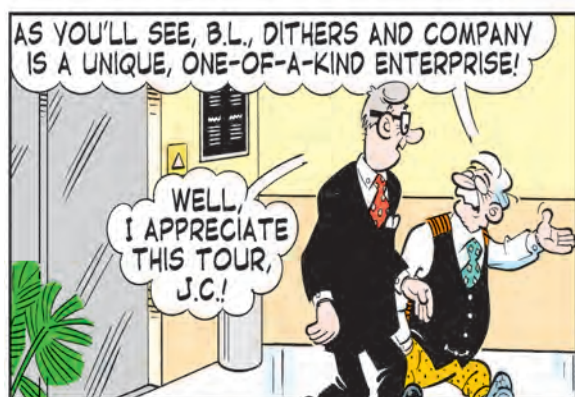
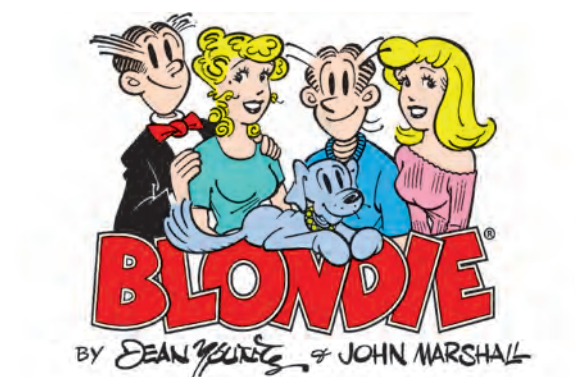
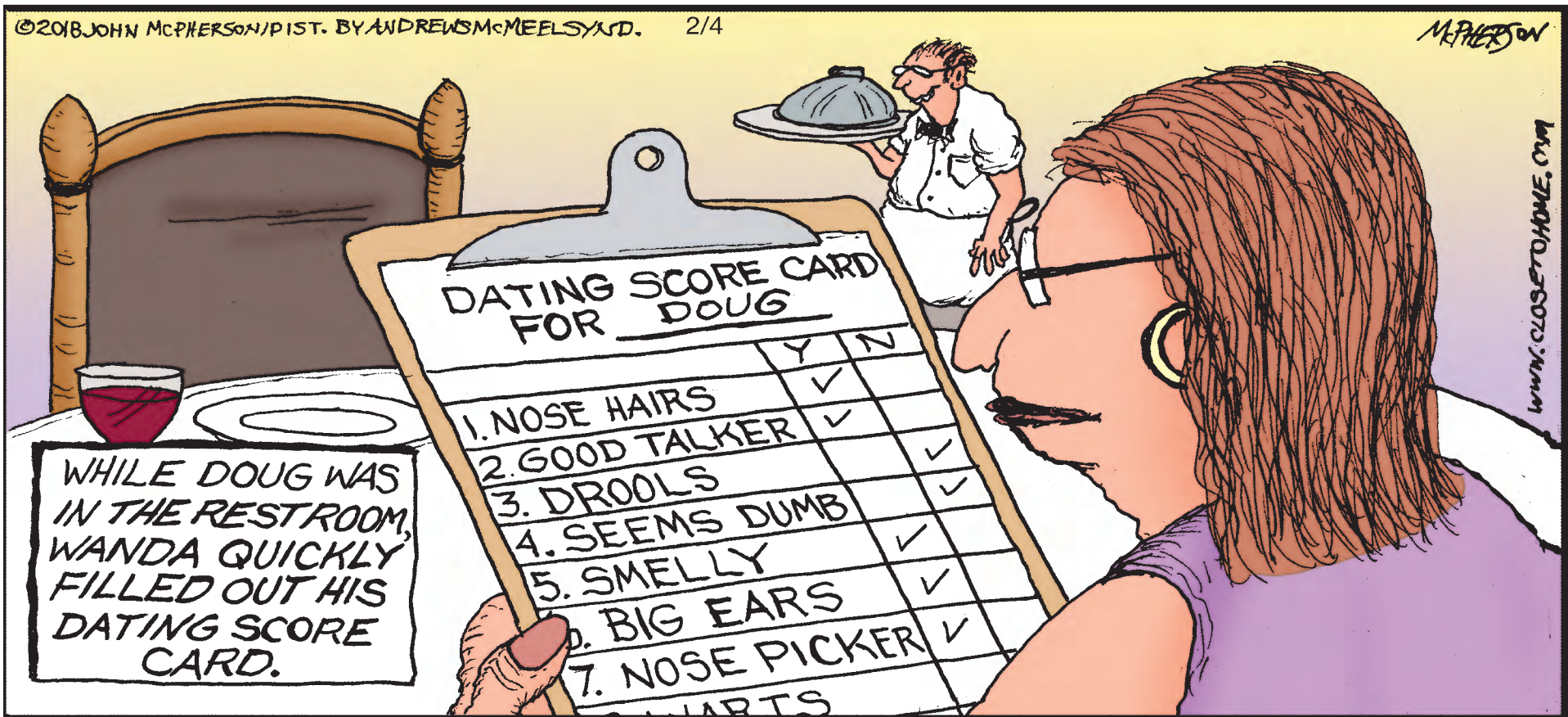
**TAKE IT FROM THE TINKERSONS**

BY BILL BETTWY



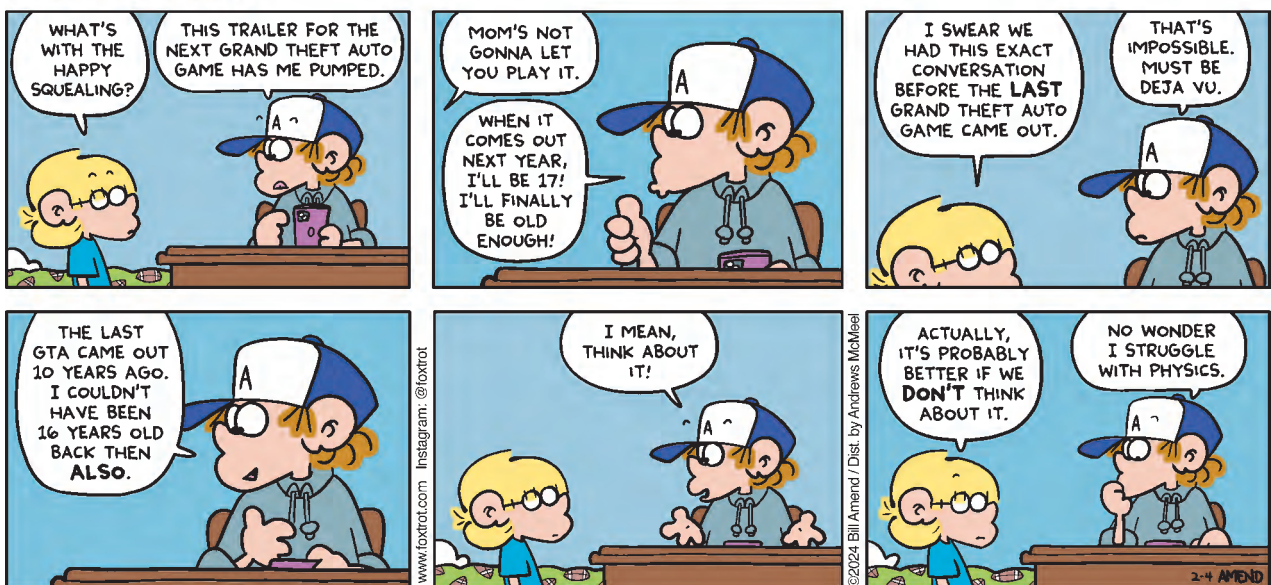
CLOSE TO HOME

BY JOHN MCPHERSON



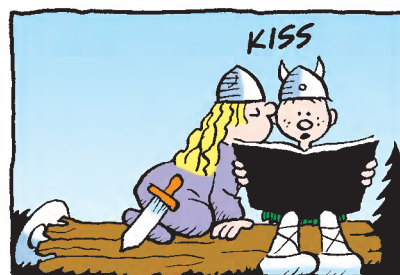
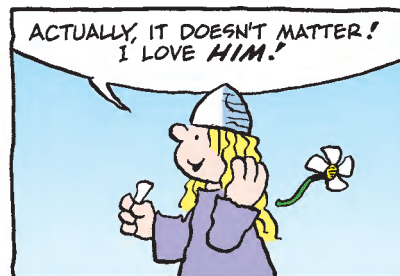
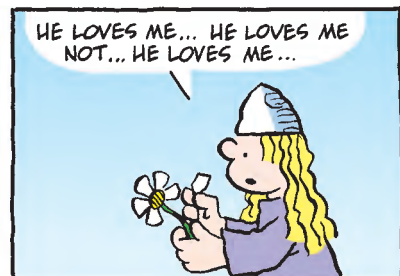
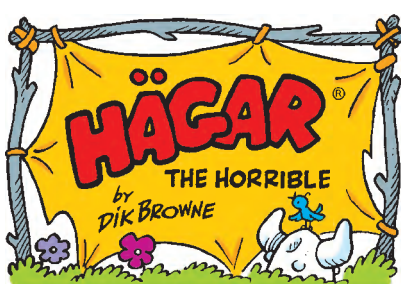
FoxTrot

by Bill Amend



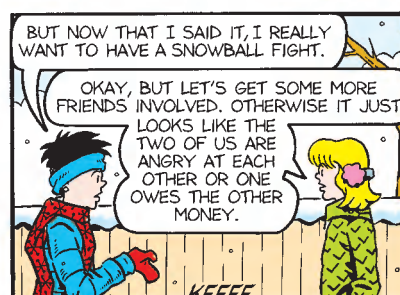
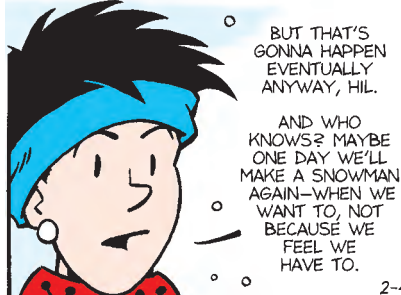
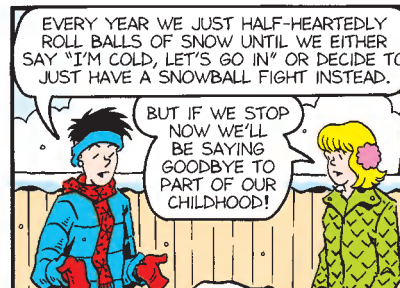
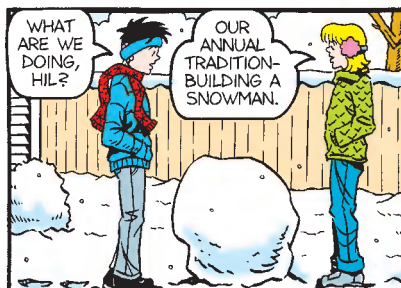
THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bill Keane



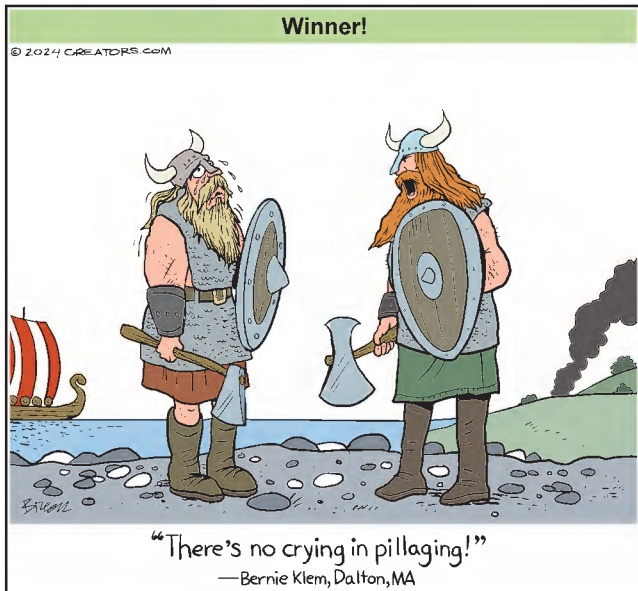
SALLY FORTH

BY FRANCESCO MARCIULIANO & JIM KEEFE





by Steve Green



# FRANK AND ERNEST

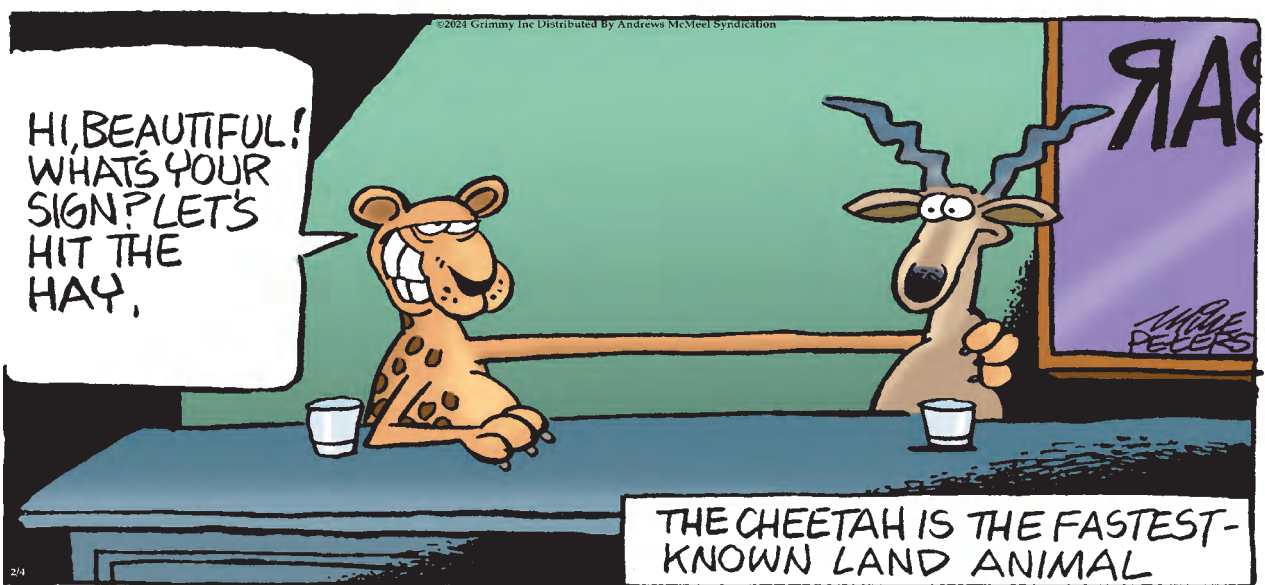


# THE BORN LOSER



# MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS



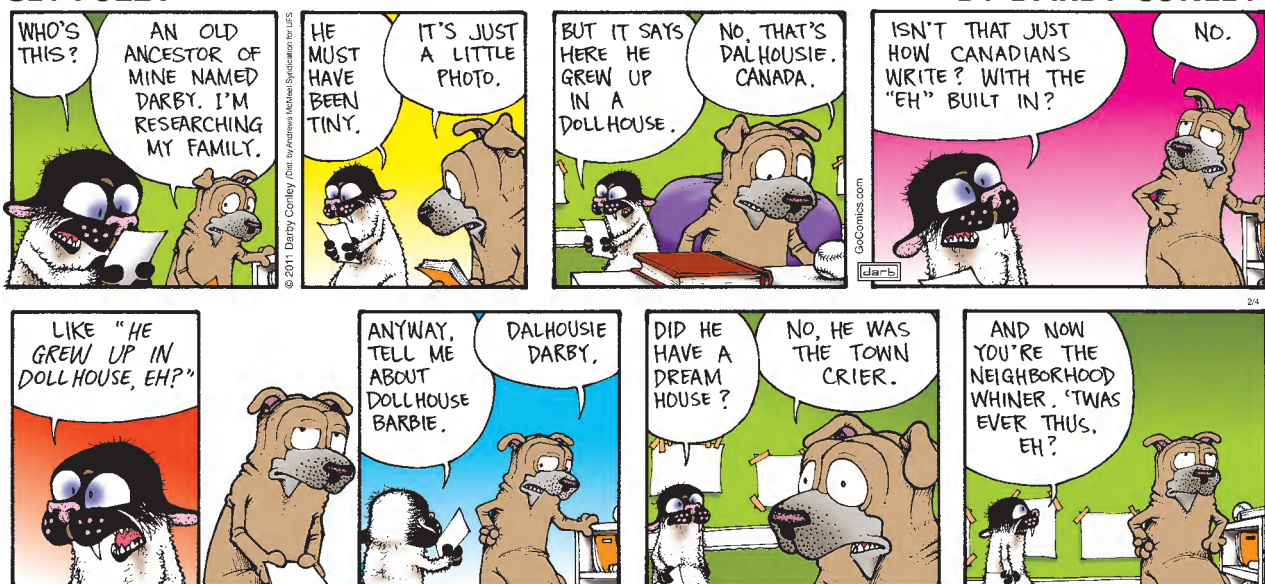
# WIZARD OF ID

by Hart, Mastroianni and Parker



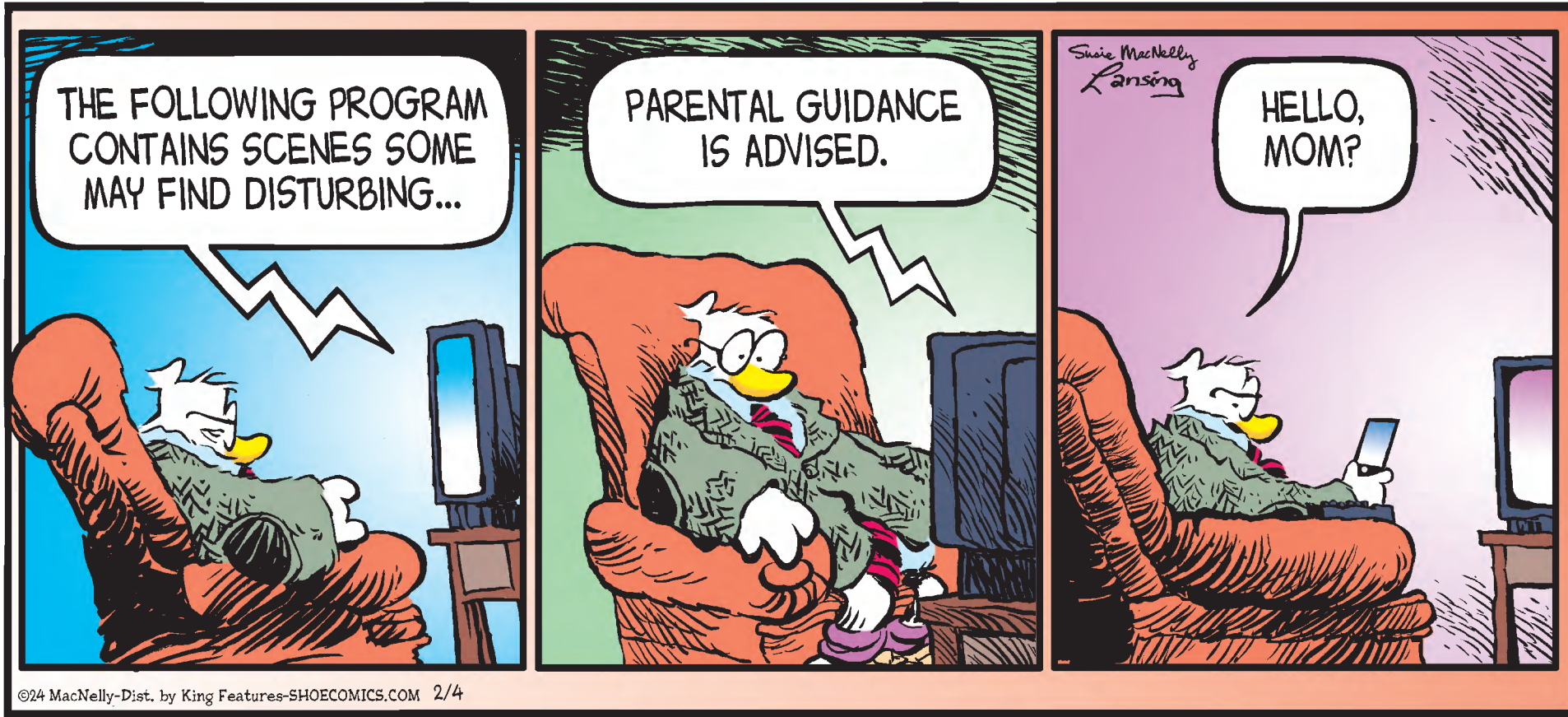
# GET FUZZY

BY DARBY CONLEY



SHOE

BY GARY BROOKINS & SUSIE MACNELLY

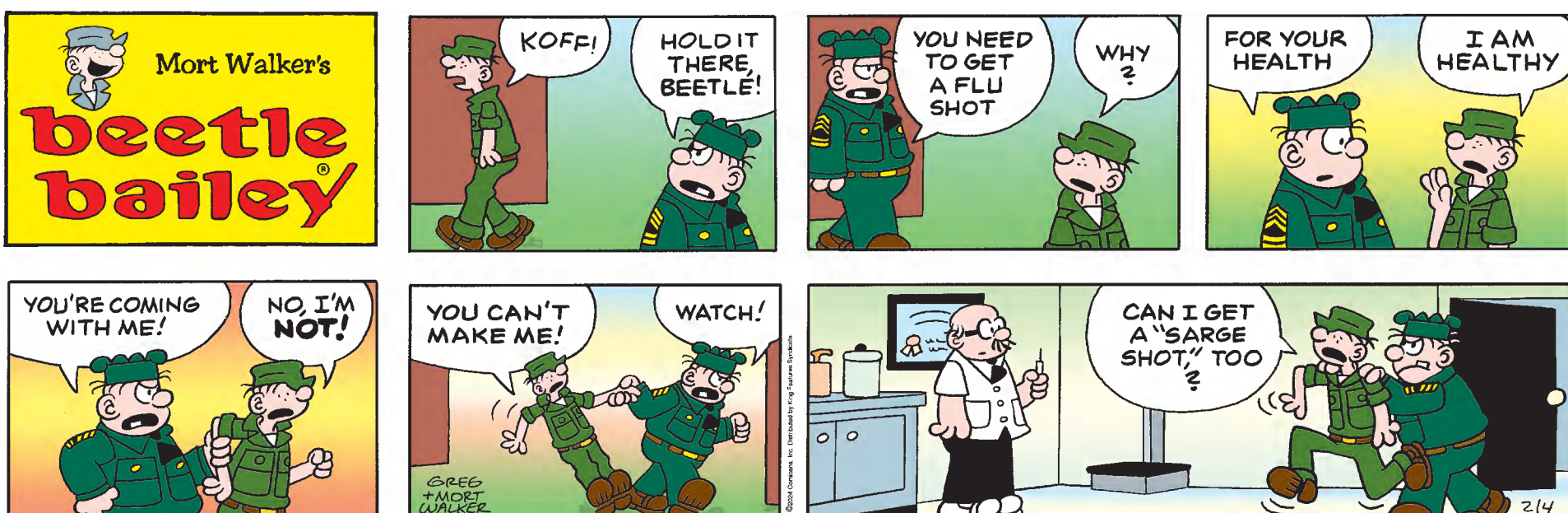
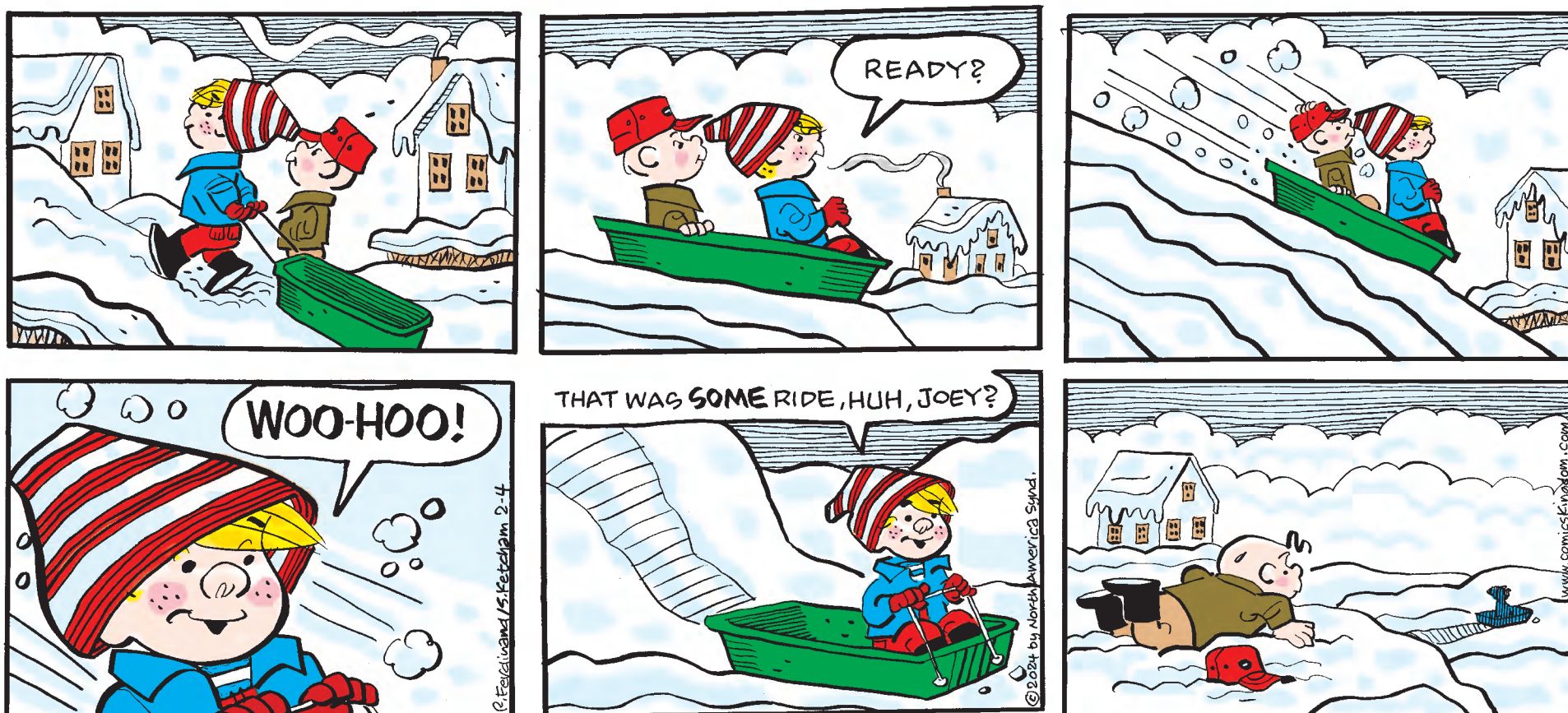


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DENNIS THE MENACE

BY HANK KETCHAM





**6** "The Thomas Crown Affair" is criminally enjoyable in remake



**7** Going out with 'Enthusiasm': HBO say goodbye to 'Curb'



**7** Savvy in session: Steve Harvey hands out common-sense rulings in new episodes

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

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# The Summer Scene

February 3 - February 09, 2024



## Comedy comebacks: 'Abbott Elementary,' 'Not Dead Yet' and more return for 2024

BY DANA SIMPSON

We may still be several months from the start of a new school year, but classes are back in session on ABC. Featuring Philadelphia's finest (fictional) teachers across a broad smattering of subjects, the network's foremost public school continues to specialize in comedy. Premiering its third season Wednesday, Feb. 7, on ABC, "Abbott Elementary" joins other fan favorites "The Conners" and "Not Dead Yet" in the network's Wednesday night comedy block.

Kicking off the midweek laughs on Feb. 7 is "The Conners," the well-established spinoff of the popular 1988-96 sitcom "Roseanne" (and its short-lived 2018 revival), led by controversial comedienne Roseanne Barr ("She-Devil," 1989). Despite no longer centering on Roseanne herself (Barr was dismissed from the series revival in 2018), "The Conners" has thrived for 90 episodes to date, under the leadership of Emmy-winning actor John Goodman ("Barton Fink," 1991).

"The Conners," which tackles complicated family themes at all stages of life, enters its sixth and final season this year. Series fans can look forward to several of the show's ongoing plot lines wrapping up, as well as the growth and development of returning players. No matter how things end for the Conner family, however, executive producer Bruce Helford told ABC that the ending is well planned and deliberate.

"Sara Gilbert expressed to the network that we don't want to go out without knowing that we are going out with a series

finale so we can build to the right ending," Helford said. New episodes of "The Conners" begin Wednesday, Feb. 7, and air weekly on ABC until the series finale.

Premiering after "The Conners" is Season 2 of "Not Dead Yet," the quirky comedy about down-on-her-luck obituary writer Nell Serrano (Gina Rodriguez, "Jane the Virgin"), who is plagued by visitations from her newly deceased subjects prior to the publication of their death announcements in the newspaper. Despite their unsettling drop-ins, Nell always manages to harness the decedent's energy in order to give them each a sendoff worthy of their life on Earth. Of course, it doesn't hurt that Nell often learns a valuable lesson or two along the way.

The piece de resistance on Feb. 7, however, is the special one-hour premiere of "Abbott Elementary."

Headed into Season 3 with as much chaos as an elementary school classroom, the four-time Emmy-winning sitcom was created by its star, Quinta Brunson ("A Black Lady Sketch Show"), who recently became the first Black actress in over 40 years to win the Emmy for outstanding lead actress in a comedy series. Brunson based the series on her mother's own experiences as a teacher in the Philadelphia public school system. Each episode follows Abbott's teachers as they navigate workplace politics, the changing economics of their school board and the nuances of their personal lives, all while trying to foster healthy and supportive student/teacher relationships.

Brunson stars as Janine Teagues, a hopelessly optimistic second-grade teacher who began working at Abbott in Season 1. Upon her arrival, Janine met Ava Coleman (Janelle James, "Central Park"), Abbott's social media-loving, less-than-professional principal; Melissa Schemmenti (Lisa Ann Walter, "The Parent Trap," 1998), a hardened second-grade teacher with suspicious connections and a hidden soft side; sixth-grade teacher Jacob Hill (Chris Perfetti, "The Night Of"), who often awkwardly tries to bond with his students; and Janine's new-found idol, Barbara Howard (Sheryl Lee Ralph, "Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit," 1993), a veteran kindergarten teacher who always seems to have the answers.

Shortly after Janine is settled, new substitute teacher Gregory Eddie (Tyler James Williams, "Everybody Hates Chris") arrives and is later made permanent staff. A large part of the series thus far has focused on the will they/won't they dynamic between Gregory and Janine, and it is expected that Season 3 will finally give fans what they are hoping for ... eventually.

"I wanted her [Janine] to be able to make a decision that she felt was best for herself," Brunson told TV Line after the Season 2 finale, explaining, "It's more about maturity. [Janine]'s maturing, [Gregory]'s maturing. ... I kind of want the characters to be able to grow a little bit more as individuals, so we can see where they land."



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# Horoscopes

The luckiest signs this week:  
AQUARIUS, PISCES AND ARIES

**ARIES**  
Unexpected circumstances could cause delays. Give yourself plenty of time between appointments to relieve some of the pressure. This is a good time to start your own business.

**TAURUS**  
You could be invited on a getaway with a few friends. Nothing will bring you more joy than a change of scenery, even if it's just to spend some time in nature. This is especially true if you live in the city.

**GEMINI**  
You may experience a wide range of emotions this week. You'll need to sort out your group of friends. Some may not be worthy of your friendship, as they act more like opportunists. Assert your values to earn respect in the process.

**CANCER**  
You may be under considerable pressure to make a crucial decision. However, you must gather all the relevant information to make an informed decision. Weigh the pros and cons. Give yourself the time you need.

**LEO**  
You'll be overwhelmed with urgent tasks at work this week. Although stressful, this situation will have a positive impact on your career. Opportunities for advancement may emerge.

**VIRGO**  
Even if you tend to be a private person, you'll find yourself in the limelight. This situation will require you to overcome your shyness. Many people will express their admiration for you, and you'll show them your gratitude.

**LIBRA**  
If your children left the nest a while ago, you may consider selling the family home to enjoy more freedom. If you're in a new relationship, you may consider moving in together soon.

**SCORPIO**  
You'll be involved in various discussions this week. You'll expand your customer base and unite your staff. Your guidance and advice will be well received. This will have a positive impact on your finances.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Money is a source of stress for many people. Talk to an expert to identify solutions and give yourself a well-deserved break from pinching pennies.

**CAPRICORN**  
You're full of energy and ready to take the world by storm! You'll be inspired to take on new things, both at work and at home. This will bring you a deep sense of satisfaction.

**AQUARIUS**  
You'll feel the need to be supported both professionally and personally. You'll give everything you have to someone close to you. Your generosity may sometimes be taken for granted.

**PISCES**  
This week will be full of tension. This could push you to pay more attention to your well-being and boost your physical activity. As a foodie, it's good for your morale to indulge in a few sweet treats from time to time.

# New Streaming Movies & Shows



**"Upgraded" (Feb. 9)**  
Ana (Camila Mendes) is an ambitious intern dreaming of a career in the art world while trying to impress her demanding boss Claire (Marisa Tomei). When she's upgraded to first class on a work trip, she meets handsome Will (Archie Renaux), who mistakes Ana for her boss — a white lie that sets off a glamorous chain of events, romance and opportunity, until her fib threatens to surface.



**"Suncoast" (Feb. 9)**  
Inspired by writer and director Laura Chinn's real-life experience from the early 2000s, this semi-autobiographical film follows the story of a teenager (Nico Parker) as she and her strong-willed mother (Laura Linney) must take her brother (Cree Kawa) to live at a specialized facility. While there, the teen finds an unlikely friendship in an eccentric activist (Woody Harrelson) amid the protests surrounding a landmark medical case.

## Word Search

I J T R A H K R U B M M R P T  
 B A S E M E N T U I R E A I E  
 L C L I N G Y H C A C O N N U  
 T K E P P H E H D O E T D C G  
 O I C R L H A I R R H V Y I F  
 E E A I T E O D A E I R N O M  
 E L L C L O O T S N T V R T N  
 H C P E A N S T O S A M E T I  
 C R T M N I R L F H A C A I S  
 R I N A V E L R E N U T H A N  
 U C I R E A V B Z K I T T Y O  
 I T O T U R O E Y E Y M W O C  
 S U P R N B S O T X T E E N S  
 E M I D G E N N O S R A E P I  
 R E D Y H W A F T E R M A N W

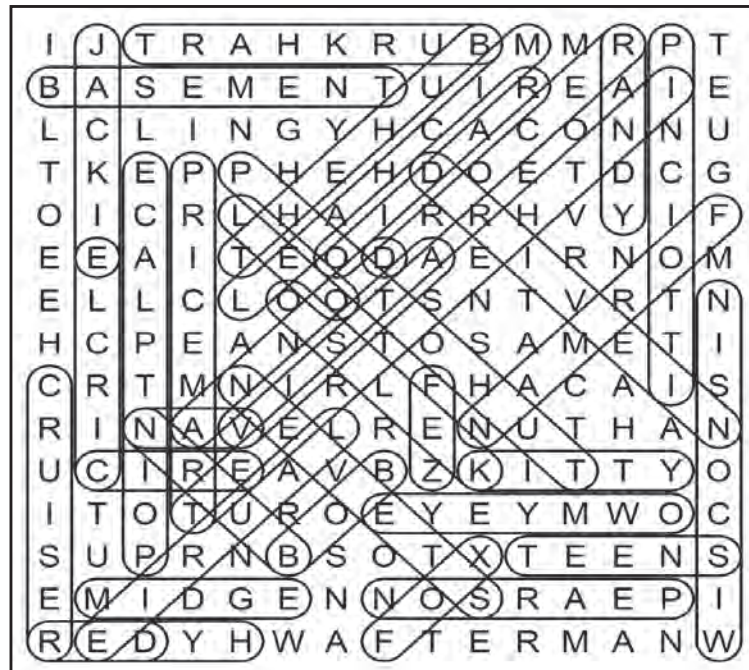
### That '70s Show

- |          |        |             |           |
|----------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| BASEMENT | FEZ    | LEO         | RANDY     |
| BOB      | FORMAN | MICHAEL     | RECORD    |
| BURKHART | FOX    | MIDGE       | RED       |
| BURN     | HYDE   | OW MY EYE   | STEVEN    |
| CIRCLE   | IN THE | PEARSON     | TEENS     |
| CRUISER  | STREET | PHOTO HUT   | THE HUB   |
| DONNA    | JACKIE | PINCIOTTI   | VAN       |
| DRIVE-IN | KELSO  | POINT PLACE | VISTA     |
| ERIC     | KITTY  | PRICE MART  | WISCONSIN |
|          | LAURIE | RADIO       |           |

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**"Rael: The Alien Prophet" (Feb. 7)**

Featuring interviews with his followers, critics and Rael himself, this docuseries traces how a UFO-inspired religion spiraled into a controversial cult.



**"Arctic Ascent with Alex Honnold" (Feb. 5)**

Climber extraordinaire Alex Honnold embarks on an epic quest of unclimbed walls in one of the most remote corners of Greenland. He and world-class climbers Hazel Findlay and Mikey Schaefer attempt to summit Ingmikortilaq, an unclimbed Arctic seacliff that rises out of the frozen wilderness and is nearly 1,000 feet higher than "Free Solo's" El Capitan.

**Q&A: Joe Keery**

BY JAY BOBBIN

**Q: I know they're making another season of the show now, but is Joe Keery from "Stranger Things" doing anything else?**

A: He's landed a few big things since "Stranger Things" debuted on Netflix in 2016. Most notable (and recent) among these is a role in the new season of another prestige TV hit: FX's " Fargo." He plays the villainous Gator Tillman, son of the show's chief bad guy, Roy (played by "Mad Men" star Jon Hamm).

He also had a central role in the 2021 big-screen hit "Free Guy," playing a nerdy video game developer named Keys. Much like Keery's "Stranger Things" character, Keys is a reluctant hero type. This makes a bit of extra sense since "Free Guy" was directed by Shawn Levy, who also directed and produced "Stranger Things."



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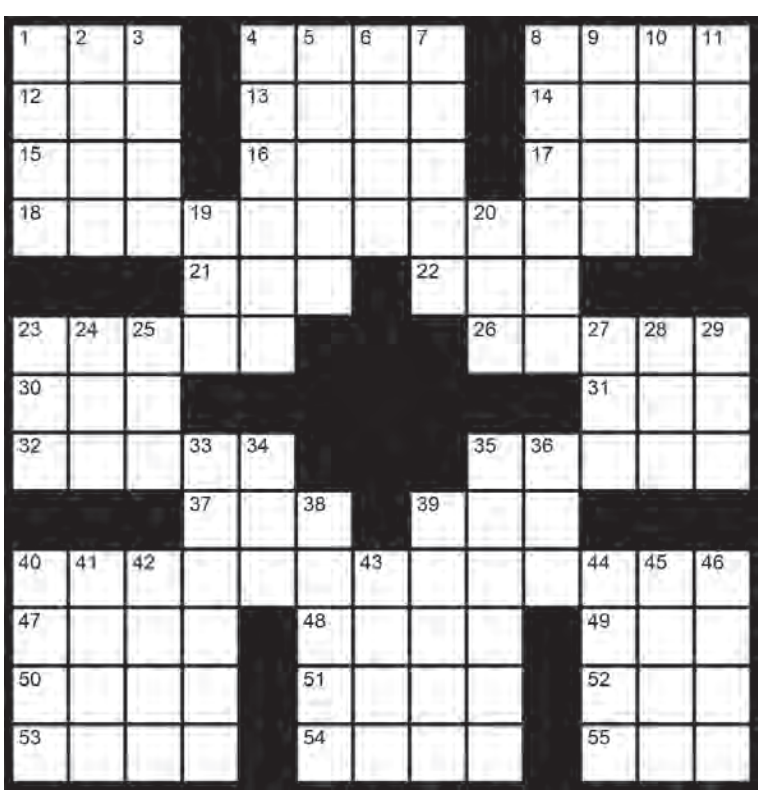
**18 Karat \$61**  
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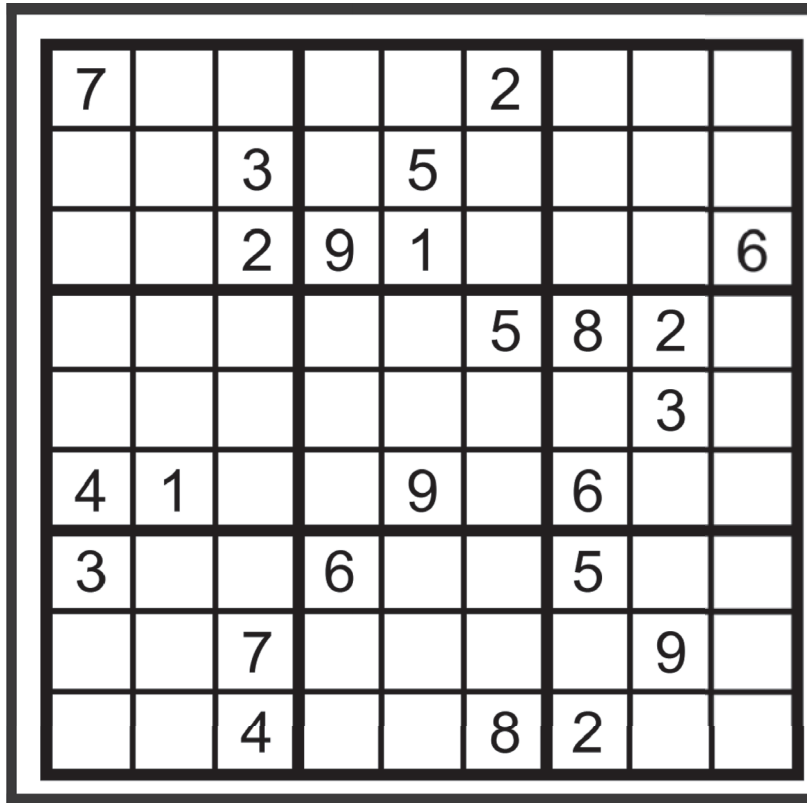
# Crosswords



- Across**
- Cartoon cat paired with 23-Across
  - Superlative on some year-end lists
  - "Edward Scissorhands" star
  - "\_\_\_ Yankee Doodle Dandy"
  - Solemn declaration
  - Mideast leader
  - USNA grad
  - Steadfast
  - "Sex and the \_\_\_"
  - Cartoon about a mad scientist and his grandson
  - "Walk-\_\_\_ welcome"
  - Milk source
  - Cartoon mouse paired with 1-Across
  - Not in the \_\_\_
  - Small bill
  - Hon, in dialect
  - "Tell me something I don't know!"
  - "Rizzoli & \_\_\_"
  - Faultfinder
  - A as in Acapulco?
  - ABC sitcom featuring Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery
  - Christmastime
  - Ballet garment
  - Hole-punching gadget
  - "Luther" star Idris
  - Carmen of "South Park"
  - Caviar, e.g.
  - Twofold
  - Road deicer
  - Barely manage, with "out"
- Down**
- Part of a wedding cake
  - Big name in luxury hotels
  - Opposite of fem.
  - Science dealing with flora
  - Merits
  - Macho man
  - Motif
  - Fiat
  - Let forth



# Sudoku



To complete this puzzle, place the numbers 1-9 in the empty cells, so that every row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold outline) contains all nine digits.

Each number 1-9 may appear only once in each row, column and 3-by-3 box.

## SOLUTION

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

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# Coming Soon



**"Players" (Netflix — Feb. 14, Movie Premiere)**

New York sportswriter Mack (Gina Rodriguez) has spent years devising successful hook-up "plays" with best friend Adam (Damon Wayans Jr.) and their crew. While it has led to countless one night stands over the years, following their playbook comes with a strict set of ground rules — chief among them: you can't build a relationship from a play. When Mack unexpectedly falls for her latest target, charming war correspondent Nick (Tom Ellis), she begins to rethink the game entirely. As the lines begin to blur, Mack must learn what it takes to play for keeps.

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Main TV schedule table for February 4, 2024. Columns include channel, SP, FTC, DTV, and time slots (6 PM, 6:30, 7 PM, 7:30, 8 PM, 8:30, 9 PM, 9:30, 10 PM, 10:30, 11 PM, 11:30). Rows list various programs like 'America's Got Talent', 'Chicago P.D.', 'The Bachelor', 'The Golden Girls', etc.

Main TV schedule table for February 5, 2024. Columns include channel, SP, FTC, DTV, and time slots (6 PM, 6:30, 7 PM, 7:30, 8 PM, 8:30, 9 PM, 9:30, 10 PM, 10:30, 11 PM, 11:30). Rows list various programs like 'America's Got Talent', 'Chicago P.D.', 'The Bachelor', 'The Golden Girls', etc.

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## “The Thomas Crown Affair” is criminally enjoyable in remake

BY JAY BOBBIN

Many movie remakes prompt the question of why they were even attempted. In the case of “The Thomas Crown Affair,” though, the result is surprisingly good.

Originally filmed in a 1968 version with Steve McQueen and Faye Dunaway as romantically entangled adversaries in a heist investigation, the story was updated in 1999 with Pierce Brosnan and Rene Russo as the amorous opponents. Produced by Brosnan’s company and directed by John McTiernan (“Die Hard”), the revision – which Cinemax shows Wednesday, Feb. 7, and Saturday, Feb. 10 – is engaging and stylish in its own way, standing successfully without taking anything away from the first edition. And that is no simple feat.

Brosnan is fashionable in more ways than one as title character Crown, a New York-based business tycoon and billionaire who gets kicks from stealing priceless artworks (a change from the Boston-set McQueen variation, in which bank robberies were the crimes of choice). His latest theft draws the attention of a police detective wryly portrayed by Denis Leary, as well as the glamorous insurance investigator represented by Russo. (In a nice nod to the original film, Dunaway has several scenes in a cameo appearance as Crown’s psychiatrist.)

In their bountiful screen time together, Brosnan and Russo have great chemistry and a playful spirit

as Crown’s pursuer tries to get the goods on him ... though she ultimately him irresistible, especially as he plies her with aspects of his posh lifestyle as glider flights and getaways to exotic locations. As she continues to live the high life apparently under Crown’s spell, the Leary-played cop casts a very skeptical eye toward how she is conducting the probe ... and herself.

Ben Gazzara and Frankie Faison also are in the well-chosen cast, as are a number of actors with physiques that could pass for Brosnan’s, which the clever adaptation (by Leslie Dixon and Kurt Wimmer) of Alan R. Trustman’s initial script requires as it proceeds. Not surprisingly, Brosnan never loses his cool as the tale unfolds; conversely, Russo has some nicely emotional moments as her ploy to ensnare Crown backfires on her, putting her heart at more risk than she had gambled on.

Bill Conti supplies a music score that features an appropriate bounciness, mirroring the nature of Crown’s approach to larceny, and encompasses an update of the theme song “The Windmills of Your Mind” performed by Sting (Noel Harrison sang the Oscar-winning original). While it’s nice that the later “The Thomas Crown Affair” has ties to its forerunner, the second picture also has its own merits, and they remain highly enjoyable 25 years later.

## Best Henry Fonda MOVIES

BY JAY BOBBIN

**“Jezebel” (1938):** Sort of a “Gone With the Wind” without the same exact characters, this well-regarded drama casts Bette Davis as a willful Southern belle who wants to retrieve the man she let get away (Henry Fonda).

**“Young Mr. Lincoln” (1939):** This John Ford-directed view of the young Abraham Lincoln did much to advance Fonda’s profile.

**“The Grapes of Wrath” (1940):** A milestone in American movies, director John Ford’s version of the John Steinbeck novel hinges largely on Fonda’s moving portrayal of Tom Joad, the next generation of a Depression-era migrant family.

**“The Return of Frank James” (1940):** In one of the great Westerns, Fonda stars as slain outlaw Jesse James’s brother, who’s determined to avenge his sibling’s death.

**“The Lady Eve” (1941):** Director Preston Sturges’ celebrated comedy makes Fonda the target of a former flame’s (Barbara Stanwyck) deception.

**“The Ox-Bow Incident” (1942):** A potential lynch mob is at the heart of director William A. Wellman’s famous Western, with Fonda as one of the men who wants to see true justice done in the case of a farmer’s possible killers.

**“My Darling Clementine”**

**(1946):** Stories of the Old West continued to hold appeal for Fonda as he teamed yet again with director John Ford by playing Wyatt Earp, who becomes a lawman in his quest to find those responsible for the death of one of his brothers.

**“Fort Apache” (1948):** John Ford called the shots for Fonda again – as well as for John Wayne, Shirley Temple and others – in this signature Western about opposition between the commanding officers at a military outpost.

**“Mister Roberts” (1955):**

Fonda re-created his Broadway performance in the title role as a Navy officer having his own war with his ship’s captain (James Cagney) while stationed in the South Pacific during World War II.

**“12 Angry Men” (1957):** Also serving as producer, Fonda mounted a classic by turning a television play into a movie vehicle for an outstanding ensemble cast as the members of a deliberating jury in a murder trial.

**“The Wrong Man” (1958):** Being presented by Turner Classic Movies on Monday, Feb. 5, this fact-inspired, Alfred Hitchcock-directed melodrama casts Fonda as a musician wrongly suspected of being a criminal.

**“Spencer’s Mountain” (1963):**

The inspiration for television’s “The Waltons,” this affecting drama casts Fonda as the patriarch of a close-knit mountain family.



## Table for three: Celebrities chow down in all-new series

BY CAROLINE COLLACUTT

What would you do if you saw Chrissy Teigen (“Chrissy’s Court”), David Chang (“Ugly Delicious”) and Joel Kim Booster (“Fire Island,” 2022) out for dinner? Hopefully, you’d sit and watch. The brand-new series “Chrissy & Dave Dine Out” airs a new episode Wednesday, Feb. 7, on Freeform. Episodes stream on Hulu the next day.

Following Teigen, Chang and Booster as they book tables at the most popular, must-try restaurants across Los Angeles – sometimes unexpected and unusual eateries – this series allows viewers to watch as the trio joins their famous friends for dinner parties unlike any other, jam-packed with celebrity gossip, Hollywood glamor and delicious, mouth-watering food.

“While David gets his hands dirty in the back of house with the restaurant’s chef, Chrissy and Joel will hold court in the front of house, hosting an always loose, unexpected and entertaining dinner party with undeniably delicious food and great conversation. ... Celebrity guests handpicked by Chrissy, Dave and Joel will bring laughs and unfiltered conversations where no topic is off limits,” said Freeform in a press release.

Teigen’s husband, John Legend (“La La Land,” 2016), will also appear as a celebrity guest, alongside the likes of Regina Hall (“Girls Trip,” 2017) and Simu Liu (“Barbie,” 2023), with each celebrity treated to a taste of a different cuisine.

The series premiere, for example, finds the group dining out at the wildly popular Pizzeria Bianco, where chef Chris Bianco serves up what some call the best pizza in the country. During their meal, they are joined by late-night host and comedian Jimmy Kimmel (“Jimmy Kimmel Live!”) and his wife, writer/producer Molly McNearney (“Murder Mystery,” 2019), who talk marriage, meals and more.

The group’s next outing calls for a couple’s night, as Chrissy and Dave bring their spouses (Dave being married to Grace Chang, “A Missing Piece,” 2019) out for a double date alongside Hollywood power couple Kumail Nanjiani and Emily Gordon (both of “The Big Sick,” 2017). In honor of their “spicy” night out, the six head to La Casita Mexicana, where they enjoy cuisine from the Jalisco region of Mexico.

Billboard magazine reported that “Teigen previously starred in Chrissy’s Court for a total of 30 episodes. ... She also doubles as an executive producer [for] ‘Chrissy and Dave Dine Out.’ Chang is a restaurateur and author who founded the Momofuku restaurant group. Booster is an actor and writer who wrote, produced and starred in Hulu’s 2022 rom-com ‘Fire Island.’”

See what this talented trio tries next, as a new episode of “Chrissy & Dave Dine Out” airs Wednesday, Feb. 7, on Freeform, and Thursday, Feb. 8, on Hulu.





## Going out with 'Enthusiasm': Larry David, HBO say goodbye to 'Curb' after 12 seasons

BY DANA SIMPSON

After a total of 24 years on television, the two-time Emmy-winning comedy series, "Curb Your Enthusiasm," is headed for the door. The semi-improvisational series, which began in 2000 and took a six-year hiatus between Season 8 (released July 2011) and Season 9 (released October 2017), ends its run with a final 10-episode season. With new episodes dropping on HBO and the Max streaming service each Sunday night until the April 7 finale, the show's creator and star, David, is looking forward to ending the show on his own terms. The series' 12th season premieres on HBO and Max Sunday, Feb. 4.

"As 'Curb' comes to an end, I will now have the opportunity to finally shed this Larry David persona and become the person God intended me to be — the thoughtful, kind, caring, considerate human being I was until I got derailed by portraying this malignant character," David quipped in an HBO news release this past December.

He continued: "And so 'Larry David,' I bid you farewell. Your misanthropy will not be missed. And for those of you who would like to get in touch with me, you can reach me at Doctors Without Borders."

David, who gained popularity for his particular brand of sardonic humor, is perhaps best known for

his work on the cult classic '90s sitcom "Seinfeld." A co-creator of the show alongside Jerry Seinfeld himself, David has embraced the quick-witted, ironic wordplay and anti-authoritarian themes that have become synonymous with Jewish humor in Hollywood. While he and Seinfeld are certainly not the only Jewish comedians to make it big in television, "Curb" and "Seinfeld's" combined 293 episodes certainly carry a lot of weight in the business.

In fact, the "Seinfeld" finale some 26 years ago was so masterful that fans of both shows are wondering if perhaps David will opt to end "Curb" on a similar note.

Now, for those who may not be familiar with "Seinfeld's" ending (26-year-old spoiler coming), the series' nine seasons culminate with all four main characters — Jerry (Seinfeld), Elaine (Julia Louis-Dreyfus, "Veep"), George (Jason Alexander, "Pretty Woman," 1990) and Kramer (Michael Richards, "Airheads," 1994) — sitting in a jail cell together for neglecting to stop a robbery. While on trial, they are confronted by the enemies they made over the years, who have come to testify against their characters.

In "Curb Your Enthusiasm," David certainly made a fair number of his own enemies, so this could be a fun callback. That said, no details have actually surfaced regarding the way the writers plan to end the series.

According to HBO, however, the final season of "Curb" "continues to prove how seemingly trivial details of one's day-to-day life can precipitate a catastrophic chain of events."

Additionally, viewers can expect to see the return of many ongoing jokes, bits and recurring characters, including Jeff Garlin ("The Goldbergs") and Susie Essman ("Cop Out," 2010) as Jeff and Susie Greene; Cheryl Hines ("Suburgatory") as Larry's wife, Cheryl David; J.B. Smoove ("Spider-Man: No Way Home," 2021) as Leon Black; Vince Vaughn ("Wedding Crashers," 2005) as Freddie Funkhouser; Tracey Ullman ("The Tracy Ullman Show") as Irma Kostoski; and Richard Lewis ("Robin Hood: Men in Tights," 1993) and Ted Danson ("The Good Place") as fictionalized versions of themselves.



## Savvy in session: Steve Harvey hands out common-sense rulings in new episodes



BY CAROLINE COLLAUTT

Steve Harvey is bringing his signature style — and common sense — back to the bench when "Judge Steve Harvey" returns for its third season, with an all-new episode premiering Wednesday, Feb. 7, on ABC.

After launching in 2022, this series followed the "Family Feud" host as he traded in buzzers for gavels in order to preside as judge in his own reality TV courtroom, acting as mediator in real-life disputes brought forward by real-life people.

"In the grand tradition of 'Judge Judy' and 'The People's Court,' 'Judge Steve Harvey' is an arbitration-based reality show where a judge — in this case Steve Harvey — settles legal disputes between two parties," claims Parade in a recently published article. "Unlike Judy Sheindlin and the late Joseph Wapner, however, Harvey has no real legal background at all, which means 'Judge Steve Harvey' is far more comedic in tone than a typical courtroom show."

That is, namely, because Harvey himself possesses exactly zero legal training. As he mitigates disputes and calms tempers, handling issues ranging from unpaid loans and mismanaged funds to childcare conundrums and more, Judge Harvey sets himself apart by relying solely on

his own common sense to determine right from wrong.

Parade went on to say: "If you're wondering whether Harvey secretly went to law school at some point in his career, the answer is no: He has zero qualifications for adjudicating legal disputes. He says this isn't an issue, however, because his years of life have taught him how to read people."

When asked about his particular style of judgment, Harvey first told TV Insider: "I knew I had to just be myself. Most judges are interested in the law: These are the facts, and that's it. I'm going to dig up the story behind why people came to court vs. what they're in court for. I lean on decades of experience dealing with all types of situations and people, and I rely on my street savvy, common sense and humor to get it done."

"There are little tells people have," Harvey described. "You can see their eye movement and hear their voice inflection. I know this, so I get to the truth a lot better than most."

Heavy is the head that wears the crown, and savvy is the hand that bears the gavel. Court is in session, and common sense presides, as Season 3 of "Judge Steve Harvey" premieres, Wednesday, Feb. 7, on ABC.

## View from the Couch

AS Adult situations  
P Profanity

Family Viewing Ratings  
V Violence  
N Nudity

GV Graphic Violence



"MCCABE & MRS. MILLER"

Now in a 4K Ultra HD edition for the first time, the Criterion Collection version of director Robert Altman's 1971 Western teams Warren Beatty and Julie Christie — who also would work together later that decade on "Shampoo" and "Heaven Can Wait" — as a gambler and a prostitute who decide to go into business together in running a combined brothel and tavern in a mining town. The business thrives, to the extent where others want to purchase it ... a proposition rejected by the owners, setting the

BY JAY BOBBIN

stage for trouble. The supporting cast is loaded with excellent talents including Rene Auberjonois, Keith Carradine, Shelley Duvall, Michael Murphy and William Devane. The relatively sparse music score encompasses songs by Leonard Cohen. \*\*\* (R: AS, N, P, V) (Also on DVD and Blu-ray)

### "THE BIG COUNTRY"

Originally released in 2018 to mark the Western's 60th anniversary, a "Special Edition" of the William Wyler-directed drama is re-released. Gregory Peck, who also produced the film with Wyler (his "Roman Holiday" director earlier), gets top billing in the impressive cast as a former sea captain who heads west to reunite with his fiancée (Carroll Baker) at her father's (Charles Bickford) ranch. He soon finds himself in the midst of the longstanding conflict between his host and another landowner (Burl Ives, who won an Oscar for his performance), with a range war a definite possibility unless the situation can be defused. Charlton Heston, Jean Simmons and Chuck Connors also are featured prominently in the sprawling saga, based on a Donald Hamilton novel and boasting an excellent music score by Jerome

Moross. Special features include a documentary on Wyler and interviews with Peck's and Heston's children. \*\*\*\* (Not rated: AS, V) (Also on Blu-ray)

### "WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION"

Another "Special Edition" of a classic film showcases the 1957 drama based on the Agatha Christie-written courtroom thriller, and directed and co-adapted by Billy Wilder. Tyrone Power stars as a man who stands trial for the slaying of a wealthy woman, and only his wife (Marlene Dietrich) can clear him ... but what she has to offer as the title witness isn't likely to help his case. Charles Laughton and John Williams play the Power character's defense lawyers, with Elsa Lanchester, Henry Daniell, Torin Thatcher and Ruta Lee also in the cast. A new special feature is an interview with Joseph McBride, who wrote a biography of Wilder; the film earned six Oscar nominations including best picture, director, actor (Laughton) and supporting actress (Lanchester). \*\*\* (Not rated: AS, P, V) (Also on Blu-ray)

### "THE THOMAS CROWN AFFAIR"

A "Special Edition" of the original 1968 version of this combination of crime story and romance gets a reissue. Director Norman Jewison's stylish drama casts Steve McQueen in the title role of a Boston tycoon who secretly engineers bank robberies for kicks, eventually drawing the interest of an insurance investigator (Faye Dunaway) who plans to seduce him into confessing. Instead, he turns the tables on her and she falls for him, forcing her to decide which side she's on as he plans the next heist. The picture is famous for a literal chess game between the two stars, marked by extreme close-ups, that becomes something more. Jack Weston lends great support as the getaway driver, and Paul Burke is solid as a police detective who's skeptical about the entire probe; Yaphet Kotto and Gordon Pinsent also are in the cast. The theme song, "The Windmills of Your Mind" (performed by Noel Harrison), earned an Oscar. \*\*\* (Not rated: AS, V)

### "MOON LANDING: WORLD'S GREATEST HOAX?"

The 1978 movie "Capricorn One" suggested that a space mis-

sion could be faked using television techniques, leading the public to believe the staged footage was the real thing. This documentary indicates that more than half of England's population believes that was exactly the case with the 1969 lunar landing, a theory debated here through the use of archival material, reconstructions and comments from experts and conspiracy theorists. Of course, Neil Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin — who gained global fame as the first two men to set foot on the moon, per history — are seen in some of the clips. \*\*\* (Not rated)

## Coming Home Soon

"THE MARVELS" (FEB. 13)

"COLUMBIA CLASSICS 4K ULTRA HD COLLECTION VOLUME 4" (FEB. 13)

"FOOTLOOSE" (4K ULTRA HD) (FEB. 13)

"THE HUNGER GAMES: THE BALLAD OF SONGBIRDS & SNAKES" (FEB. 13)

"DARKMAN: COLLECTOR'S EDITION" (4K ULTRA HD) (FEB. 20)

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