

City preps for incoming grants to help low- to moderate-income areas

Annual grants have been used for young workers' salaries, removing blighted buildings and more

BY BRYN EDDY
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Federal funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is coming to the City of Sumter

in the form of Community Development Block Grants, or CDBGs, and the city has a budget for how they might spend it, but it is not yet official and city officials do not know the exact amount that

will be coming in.

WHAT ARE CDBGs FOR?

These grants are to be used to improve neighborhoods and make them more livable for residents in low- to moderate-income areas.

Youth employment opportunities for low- to moderate-income areas and demolition of

dilapidated structures are among some of the most common activities these grants are used for, according to earlier reporting from *The Sumter Item*.

The federal government defines what CDBGs can be used for, not the municipalities that receive them.

The City of Sumter has an

Entitlement Community status because it is a metropolitan statistical area, or an area with a relatively dense population. This is what qualifies the city to receive these block grants from HUD.

For context, according to the South Carolina Department of

SEE GRANTS, PAGE A8



In 2023, Pleasant Grove School was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



'We got to make sure these stories are told'



PHOTOS BY ALAYSHA MAPLE / THE SUMTER ITEM

Raymond Evans, chairman of the Pleasant Grove Restoration Project, explains plans for phase two of the historic school's restoration project on Friday, Feb. 16.

Restoration board of Clarendon's 1st Black school conducts phase 2, talks end goal of renovations

BY ALAYSHA MAPLE
alaysha@theitem.com

History doesn't only exist within the pages of a book.

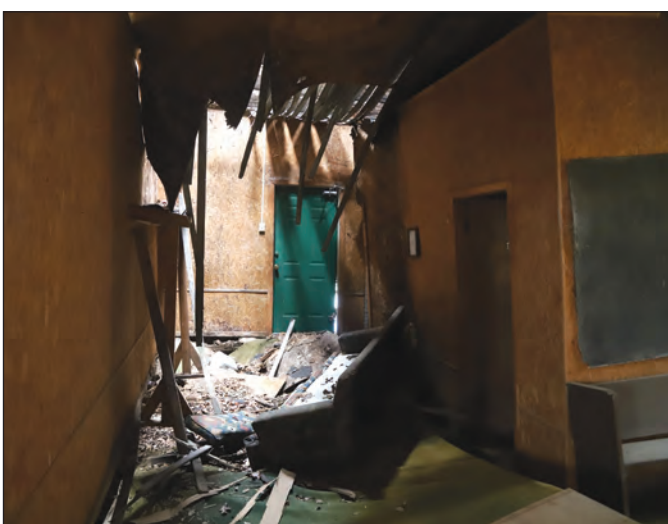
Living history, the most impressionable kind of history, is closely intertwined with the lives of residents within the community. As those standing monuments slowly lose their shape and the elders who are able to retell the glory days begin to slowly pass on, it's important to breathe new life back into the very foundation that started it all.

Which is why members of the Pleasant Grove Restoration Project board, their family, friends and dedicated volunteers ven-

tured inside the venue for learning to continue their efforts to preserve history.

Raymond Evans, chairman of the Pleasant Grove Restoration Project, launched phase one of the project in February 2023, joined by his father and former Pleasant Grove student Joe Lewis. This year, the younger Evans spoke highly of his familial ties to the historic school, highlighting how despite the odds and the not-so-suitable conditions and resources students were allotted, they still made it a priority to receive an education.

"They would travel down the road, and the buses would come by from the white schools, and they



would throw things at them and curse at them, and it was just — it was a bad trip for them," Raymond said. "There were people who had to travel from the other side of Alcolu at six years old through the woods and go across the street from the school [and] jump over the ditch."

On Oct. 28, 1933, trustees of the then-Clarendon County School District No. 27 purchased three acres of land west of U.S. 301 for \$50 to build the first public school for Black students in the community, later naming it Pleasant Grove School. There were many

SEE RENOVATIONS, PAGE A8

House budget writers propose starting teacher pay to increase to \$47,000

Salary steps available would also rise from 23 to 28 in spending plan

BY BRUCE MILLS
bruce@theitem.com

In the face of record teacher shortages in the state, the House Ways and Means Committee has proposed increasing statewide minimum teacher pay to \$47,000 next school year.

The proposal came from the Education Budget Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee on Wednesday and passed at the full committee level, according to state Rep. David Weeks, D-Sumter, the lone member of the Sumter delegation who serves on the committee.

The minimum salary schedule proposal represents a \$4,500 increase over the current statewide minimum, which is \$42,500 this year, and is a nearly \$20,000 increase compared to starting teacher salaries a decade ago.

The salary schedule would also increase the number of salary steps available to educators from 23 to 28 years of experience, making pay raises possible for a greater number of veteran teachers.

Gov. Henry McMaster has previously said his desire is to increase the starting teacher salary to at least \$50,000 by 2026.

In the fall, the South Carolina Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement released its annual Educator Supply and Demand Report, where school districts reported 1,613 vacancies across the state at the start of this school year. That was a 9% increase from the 2022-23 school year.

Weeks said he was not necessarily surprised by the proposed pay increase and provisions, which the full House will take up for debate in a couple of weeks, given a concerted effort to make the profession more attractive.

"There is a general consensus across party lines that we need to do more for our teachers with the goal to recruit and retain," Weeks said. "We have a serious shortage in the state."

He added he does not expect much in the proposal to change on the House side of the General Assembly before it is taken up by the Senate.



WEEKS

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Paul James Jackson
Naomie Toney
Nonnie Bell Colclough Perry
Roy Lee Burgess
Reita Lou Rosa Nelson McGill
Mary Downie Hamer Knowlton

Patricia Ann Rhodes
Dorothy L. Witherspoon
Mable Gass
Gladys Wilson Addison
Alonza Tindal

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SOME RAIN LATE

Breezy in the afternoon; cloudy with showers around late tonight
HIGH 68, LOW 51

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SECOND FRONT

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S. Sumter native reaches rank of colonel in U.S. Marines

Fred Glencamp has served 35 years in the military

BY BRUCE MILLS
bruce@theitem.com

Hard work, dedication, a commitment to learning and focus are qualities it takes to be successful in the U.S. Marine Corps, according to Sumter native Col. Fred Glencamp.

Glencamp has spent his entire career — 35 years — in the Marines after graduating from Sumter High School in 1988 and in January earned the rare promotion to colonel. He recently took some time to discuss his “journey” with *The Sumter Item*.

Coming out of high school, Glencamp described himself as ambitious and looking for a challenge, and the Marine Corps offered exactly what he was looking for in a challenge, he said.

After his second year of duty, Glencamp decided the military branch was a good fit for him and that he wanted to make a career of it.

In his 12th duty assignment now, Glencamp is stationed at Fort Belvoir in Fairfax, Virginia, and works at the Defense Logistics Agency, which is a Department of Defense entity and is the nation’s combat logistics support agency. End-to-end global supply chain management is the focus of the agency, and Glencamp serves as the national account manager for the Marine Corps.

He said he never expected to reach

the rank of colonel, which is achieved by less than 1% of Marines.

Glencamp admits it is a significant accomplishment and attributes his success to hard work, dedication, staying focused and being “an advocate for education.”

He holds a master’s degree in global leadership with a focus in project management from the University of San Diego and also a master’s in strategic studies from Marine Corps University, the top-level school in the branch.

“I continue to learn and grow,” Glencamp said, “and I just believe when you stop learning, you stop growing. I think people should be reading a book all the time, regardless of how long it takes you; I just think you should be reading something all the time.”

He and his wife, LaTonya, were “high school sweethearts,” he said, have been married for 33 years and also own a home in the Columbia area.

They visit South Carolina monthly, and he still visits Sumter every two months to see his mom, Alice Glencamp, and mother-in-law. Glencamp’s mom still lives in the same house that he grew up in on South Harvin Street in South Sumter.

He still remembers Sumter fondly “as a close-knit community,” he said.

“The people in Sumter were always approachable and always willing to



U.S. ARMY PHOTO PROVIDED BY HENRY VILLARAMA

Col. Fred Glencamp, a Sumter native, is seen during his promotion ceremony at the Pentagon on Jan. 4.

help one another,” Glencamp said.

Highlights of his military career include being stationed at Parris Island, one of two Marine Corps recruit depots, as a drill instructor for two years from 1994-96.

Another highlight was last year when Glencamp was the guest speaker at The Citadel for the cadets’ Marine Corps birthday celebration.

While growing up in Sumter, he and his family attended Union Baptist Church in Wedgefield, and Glencamp

said his Christian faith has been critical in what he has been able to accomplish in the service.

“I have always trusted God to lead the way, even when I could not see the way, such as when I left home at 17 years old, and that is who is still leading me today,” he said. “I am here today because He led me here, and He gave me a supportive wife and family throughout the years. I am still doing what I am today because I have that support, and I still have that faith.”

Casting a line to win \$100,000 on Clarendon’s Santee Cooper



The reigning Fishing Clash Angler of the Year, Matt Becker of Ten Mile, Tennessee, boated 12 scorable bass Tuesday, Feb. 20, totaling 45 pounds, 8 ounces, to jump out to the early lead in the Group A Qualifying Round at the Suzuki Stage Two presented by Fenwick at Santee Cooper Lakes in Clarendon County. The 40 anglers in group A compete in their two-day Qualifying Round again on Thursday, with the 40 anglers in group B on Wednesday and Friday. After each two-day Qualifying Round is complete, the anglers who finish first through 10th from both groups advance to Saturday’s Knockout Round. In the Knockout Round, weights are zeroed, and the remaining 20 anglers compete to finish in the top 10 to advance to Sunday’s Championship Round. In the final-day Championship Round, weights are zeroed, and the highest one-day total wins the top prize of \$100,000.

PHOTO BY PHOENIX MOORE

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The Sumter Item is published five days a week except for July 4, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years Day (unless those fall on a Saturday or Wednesday) by Osteen Publishing Co., 36 W. Liberty St., Sumter, SC 29150.

Periodical postage paid at Sumter, SC 29150.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Osteen Publishing Co., 36 W. Liberty St., Sumter, SC 29150

Publication No. USPS 525-900



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A crowd gathered at Sumter Veterans Park on Feb. 9 to watch another chapter in Tuskegee Airmen history unfold. In their honor, a replica of the P-51 Mustang Red Tail that was flown by the first Black Americans allowed to fly for the U.S. armed forces during the war was assembled at Sumter Veterans Park last year, and on Feb. 9, it was officially dedicated to the Tuskegee Airmen.

<https://youtu.be/OxfBdJsHSBY>



Rape, sexual assault took place during Hamas attack, Israeli association says

BY MELANIE LIDMAN
Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel — The Association of Rape Crisis Centers in Israel on Wednesday said it has found evidence of "systematic and intentional" rape and sexual abuse during the Hamas attack on Oct. 7 that ignited the war in Gaza.

The report said the attacks were more widespread than earlier thought, taking place at a series of locations across southern Israel.

"In some cases, rape was conducted in front of an audience, such as partners, family or friends, to increase the pain and humiliation for all present," it said.

Orit Sulitzeanu, the executive director of the association, said that in many cases, the bodies of male and female victims, including their genitals, were severely mutilated.

The report, published on Wednesday, did not specify

the number of cases it had documented or identify any victims, even anonymously. Sulitzeanu said victim identification was difficult because many were killed after being assaulted, and first responders were so overwhelmed by the scale of death and destruction that they did not document signs of sexual abuse.

The report's authors said they based their research on confidential and public interviews with officials and first responders, as well as media reports. Sulitzeanu said they also relied on "confidential sources" but declined to say whether they had spoken to victims.

An Associated Press investigation also found that sexual assault was part of an atrocity-filled rampage by Palestinian militant group Hamas and others who killed about 1,200 people, most of them civilians, and took around 250 hostages on Oct. 7. Hamas has rejected allega-

tions that its gunmen committed sexual assault.

According to the Israeli report, which was submitted to the United Nations and U.N. investigators carrying out a similar investigation, the sexual and gender-based violence occurred in four main places — a music festival where more than 360 people were killed, communities near the Gaza border, Israeli military bases that were overrun by Hamas and places where hostages were held in Gaza.

More than 100 hostages were released during a week-long cease-fire. Some of the hostages have described being groped or mistreated by their captors.

Sulitzeanu says the purpose of the report was to document how the sexual violence was similar across multiple sites, indicating it was organized and directed by Hamas.

The association represents multiple rape crisis centers across Israel.

S.C. DHEC helps raise awareness about teen dating violence

Shares indicators of a violent partner and statewide, national resources

BY SC DHEC

COLUMBIA — February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month, and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) is joining the cause in raising awareness about the difference between healthy relationships and teen dating abuse.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline reports that teen dating violence is much more common than many people think, with one in three U.S. teens experiencing physical, sexual or emotional abuse from someone they're in a relationship with before becoming adults. Nearly half (43%) of college women report experiencing violent or abusive dating behaviors.

"We want all teens to know that emotional, verbal, physical or sexual violence is not what love is," said Amanda Tucker, DHEC's Sexual Violence Services Program coordinator. "When dealing with complex emotions that accompany dating, it's easy to overlook some important steps to ensure personal and emotional safety. Healthy relationships depend on ongoing mutual respect, and we want to empower young people with the tools to recognize if a relationship is becoming unhealthy."

There are several statewide and national resources that young people are encouraged to use if they've experienced dating violence:

- S.C. DHEC's Sexual Violence Services Program: (803) 898-0670
- S.C. Coalition on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (SCCADVASA): (803) 256-2900 or 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or the Get Help online map at www.sccadvasa.org/get-help
- Sistercare (Midlands region): (803) 765-9428 or 1-800-637-7606
- Pathways to Healing (Midlands region): 1-800-491-7273
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-



7233

— National Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention points out that teen dating violence can happen in person or electronically, including the repeated texting or posting of sexual pictures of a partner without their permission.

Indicators of a violent partner can include, but are not limited to, someone who:

- has an explosive temper;
- is very jealous;
- must be in control of your life;
- blames others for their problems;
- will not accept "no" as an answer;
- forbids you to talk to your friends or family;
- threatens to hurt you or yourself if you break up;
- makes all the decisions in the relationships;
- calls you insulting and embarrassing names;
- hits you and promises that it will never happen again and then it does;
- criticizes what you wear and say, and how you act; and
- destroys your personal belongings.

DHEC encourages parents, caregivers and family members to talk with their teens about healthy relationships versus abusive relationships and to make sure their teens are empowered to reach out for help.

Tips and guides for speaking with teens and young people about teen dating violence are available at loveisrespect.org and through the S.C. Coalition on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault at sccadvasa.org.

Solar farm discussion continues, raising concerns for commissioners and Clarendon residents

BY ASHLEY MILLER
ashley@theitem.com

After months of discussion, a 90-day hold and input from the public, Clarendon County Planning Commission continues to work on possible changes to its solar farms ordinance.

Last week, residents were invited to a community input session to give their thoughts on solar farms, share what they want to see in the updated solar farm ordinance and ask any questions they might have. While the discussion was slightly heated, Planning and Zoning Director Tabitha Hanna took everyone's suggestions into consideration and updated the public during a recent meeting.



HANNA

On Tuesday, Feb. 20, during the regular Clarendon County Planning Commission meeting, Hanna said there were about 20 residents who attended the input session and that it went well.

"Some of the citizens were concerned about the zoning being too close to their house, some have a weakened immune system and worry about health issues, some have questions on long-term effects," she said.

Hanna said during the input meeting she would reach out to agencies in California,

Arizona and Nevada to discuss how solar farms have affected those states during 10 to 30 years and said she has been in contact with the American Planning Association. Hanna is waiting to hear back to see if she can get in contact with those agencies out West to discuss long-term effects and other items that might be included in the ordinance.

"When compared to neighboring counties such as Sumter, Orangeburg, Kershaw and Charleston, Clarendon County also needs a well-crafted solar ordinance tailored to our unique geographical location," Hanna said during the previous meeting. "The Planning Commission is currently reviewing the Decommission Plans and Indemnity Resolutions implemented in these counties for reference."

According to Hanna, the current solar ordinance the county has in place does not provide adequate notice to potentially affected property owners near the project sites and does not have a safeguard to ensure the proper removal of solar facilities at the end of a site's production.

This was the only update Hanna gave during the meeting on the ordinance, and commissioners went into executive session 10 minutes after the meeting began. They spent about 30 minutes in the closed-door meeting and returned with no action taken and no other updates.



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What to expect in the S.C. Republican presidential primary

BY ROBERT YOON
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Donald Trump and Nikki Haley will face off Saturday in South Carolina's first-in-the-South Republican presidential primary, the first head-to-head matchup for the last two remaining major candidates since the New Hampshire primary a month ago.

The contest takes place on Haley's home turf. She was South Carolina's governor for six years before stepping down in 2017 to serve as U.N. ambassador when Trump was elected president. Despite her history, Haley faces strong headwinds in a state where Trump has the support of most of the party establishment, has held a substantial lead in recent polls and enjoys high popularity among the conservative base.

Both candidates have made sharp attacks against the other, with Trump using derisive nicknames for Haley and playing down her work in his Cabinet. Haley has increasingly questioned Trump's fitness for office, most recently criticizing his comments on Russia and NATO. It is a marked contrast from earlier in the campaign when she and other GOP hopefuls avoided criticizing Trump directly.

The South Carolina primary is usually an indicator of which candidate will win the Republican presidential nomination. Since the modern version of the state's primary began in 1980, all but one GOP primary winner has gone on to win the party's nomination. The lone exception was Newt Gingrich in 2012.

A look at what to expect on election night:

PRIMARY DAY

The primary will be held Saturday, and polls will close statewide at 7 p.m.

WHAT'S ON THE BALLOT

The ballot will list Ryan Binkley, Chris Christie, Ron DeSantis, Haley, Vivek Ramaswamy, David Stuckenberg and Trump.

WHO GETS TO VOTE

South Carolina has an open primary system, which means any registered voter may participate in any party's primary. But voters may only participate in one party's presidential primary, so people who voted in the Democratic primary on Feb. 3 may not vote in the Republican contest.

Only about 4% of registered voters cast ballots in the Democratic contest, leaving the bulk of the electorate, including any Democrats and independents who favor Haley over Trump and didn't vote in the earlier contest, eligible to weigh in on the Republican race.

DELEGATE ALLOCATION RULES

There are 50 delegates at stake, and 29 will be awarded to the winner of the statewide vote. Twenty-one delegates will be allocated according to the vote in each of the state's seven congressional districts. The top vote-getter in each district will get three delegates from that district.

DECISION NOTES

The last time Haley won a competitive GOP primary in South Carolina was in 2010, when she was the top vote-getter in a four-way primary and was forced to a runoff, which she won handily. Six years later, Trump won a crowded six-way race in the state's presidential primary on his way to capturing the White House and becoming the dominant figure in Republican politics.

Republican electoral politics have changed dramatically since the last time Haley and Trump each faced other Republican candidates in the

Palmetto State. Still, their past election results do provide some clues for Saturday's primary.

In their last competitive South Carolina primaries, Haley's strongest showings and some of Trump's worst were in counties where Democrats perform best in general elections.

Trump carried 44 of the state's 46 counties in the 2016 primary, all except Richland and Charleston, the second- and third-most populous. Haley won these counties by wide margins in her 2010 runoff, as did Democrat Joe Biden in the 2020 general election.

Haley's other strongest areas in 2010 were the relatively small counties of Bamberg, Lee, Marlboro and Orangeburg, all of which Biden carried, as well as Dorchester and Chesterfield, which Biden lost to Trump.

The results are broadly consistent with Haley's performances so far in the 2024 presidential primaries. Her strongest showings in Iowa and New Hampshire were in the states' Democratic-friendly areas, and her worst were in Republican-friendly areas.

These results suggest that Haley's best chance to win in South Carolina, or for a competitive result, would be to win big in the state's Democratic areas, especially in vote-rich Charleston and Richland, while staying competitive in the largest county of Greenville and minimizing the margins in heavily Republican areas. Likewise, she would likely need to perform well in votes cast before Election Day, which will be the first votes reported on election night in most counties.

The Associated Press does not make projections and will declare a winner only when it's determined there is no scenario that would allow the trailing candidates to close the gap. If a race has not been called, AP will continue to cover any newswor-

thy developments, such as candidate concessions or declarations of victory. In doing so, AP will make clear that it has not yet declared a winner and explain why.

WHAT DO TURNOUT AND ADVANCE VOTE LOOK LIKE?

There are about 3.3 million registered voters in South Carolina. Voters do not register by party. Turnout in the 2016 Republican primary was about 25% of registered voters. It was about 22% in the 2012 primary.

Saturday's contest will be the first Republican presidential primary held in the state since a new early voting law was enacted in May 2022. The law allows voters to cast ballots in-person before Election Day without an excuse.

The early voting period for the GOP primary is Feb. 12-22. In the 2016 Republican primary, when voters had to provide an excuse to cast an absentee ballot, about 8% of votes were cast before Election Day. In the 2022 midterm primaries, after the new law went into effect, pre-Election Day voting was at about 21%. About 36% of votes cast in the Feb. 3 Democratic primary were before Election Day.

As of Tuesday night, more than 139,000 voters had cast their ballots.

HOW LONG DOES VOTE-COUNTING USUALLY TAKE?

In the 2024 South Carolina Democratic primary, AP first reported results at 7:08 p.m.

Primary night tabulation ended at 10:47 p.m. with nearly 100% of votes counted.

ARE WE THERE YET?

As of Saturday, there will be 142 days until the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee and 255 until the November general election.

A sand hole collapse in Florida killed a child. Such deaths occur several times a year

BY TERRY SPENCER
Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — The collapse of a sand hole that killed a 5-year-old Indiana girl who was digging with her brother on a Florida beach is an underrecognized danger that kills and injures several children a year across the country.

Sloan Mattingly died Tuesday afternoon at Lauderdale-by-the-Sea's beach when a 4- to 5-foot-deep hole collapsed on her and her 7-year-old brother, Maddox. The boy was buried up to his chest, but the girl was fully covered. Video taken by a bystander shows about 20 adults trying to dig her out using their hands and plastic pails, but the hole kept collapsing on itself.

Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, a small enclave north of Fort Lauderdale, does not have lifeguards at its beach, so there were no professionals immediately available to help.

Sandra King, spokesperson for the Pompano Beach

Fire-Rescue Department, said rescue crews arrived quickly and used shovels to dig out the sand and boards to stabilize the hole, but the girl had no pulse. King said paramedics immediately began resuscitation efforts, but Sloan was pronounced dead at the hospital. The boy's condition has not been released.

King said the children's parents were extremely distraught and the paramedics who treated the children had to be relieved from their shift.

"It was a horrible, horrible scene. Just imagine one minute your children are playing in the sand, and then in seconds you have a life-threatening situation with your little girl buried," said King, whose department serves Lauderdale-by-the-Sea.

News reports and a 2007 medical study show that about three to five children die in the United States each year when a sand hole they are digging at the beach, a park or at home collapses on top of them. Others are seri-

ously injured and require CPR to survive.

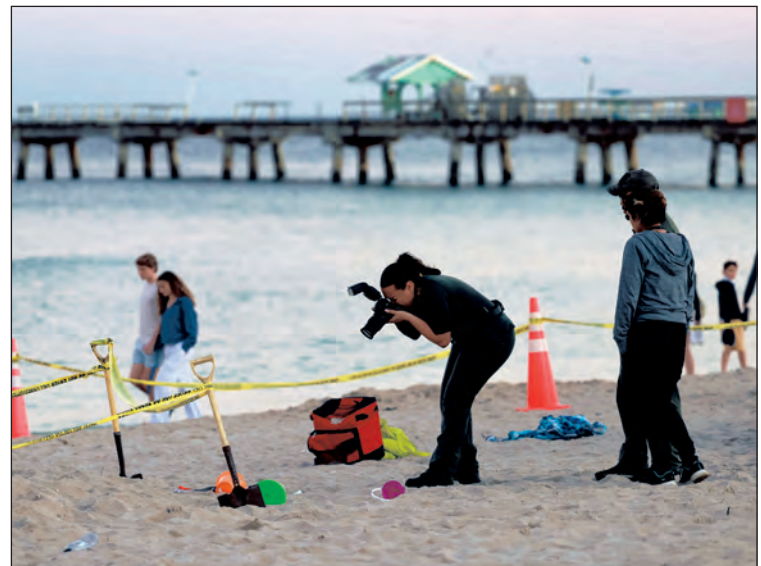
Those who died include a 17-year-old boy who was buried at a North Carolina beach last year, a 13-year-old who was digging into a sand dune at a state park in Utah and an 18-year-old who was digging with his sister at a New Jersey beach. Those two accidents happened in 2022.

"The risk of this event is enormously deceptive because of its association with relaxed recreational settings not generally regarded as hazardous," the New England Journal of Medicine study concluded.

Lifeguards say parents need to be careful about letting their children dig at the beach and not let them get too deep.

Patrick Bafford, the lifeguard manager for Clearwater, Florida, said his staff will warn families if a hole gets too big but sometimes they aren't noticed in time.

"We have had events where people have had close calls or



MIKE STOCKER / SOUTH FLORIDA SUN-SENTINEL VIA AP

Investigators on the beach in Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, Florida, take photos of the scene of a sand collapse on Tuesday, Feb. 20. A young girl was buried in sand and died Tuesday when a deep hole she was digging with a little boy collapsed on them both at a south Florida beach, authorities said.

died because of a collapse," he said. "You want them to have fun, (but) there's a difference between fun and a hazard they might face. It's hard really for people to understand that the beach can be a hazard. Bad things can still happen no matter what. Use good judgment."

Shawn DeRosa, who runs a firm that trains lifeguards, said "many people don't think

through the risks in allowing children to dig deep or wide holes."

"They know that the sand might slide down or that a wall could collapse, but they don't seem to envision their child being buried in the sand so quickly," he said. "Nor do they appreciate the real challenge in getting the child out of the sand once the collapse has occurred."

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Reviews Achievements in 2023

Get Ready To Experience Restaurant Week

Community Input Needed For Initiatives

New look, better service: Sumter EMS to bring better service to community

Sumter EMS Director Kent Hall said the agency has undergone numerous changes during his first year in office, starting with new uniforms and an updated appearance for its ambulances.

It's out with the old and in with the new for Sumter County Emergency Medical Services.

In April 2023, The Sumter Item spoke with Sumter EMS Director Kent Hall weeks into his role as new director - the first leadership change for the agency in more than a decade. Then, he promised to do what is best for the community, sharing his plans to analyze the department and implement changes in an effort to improve service and morale.

Fast forward to the top of 2024. And a couple changes have taken place around EMS' bay, starting with the appearance of its staff and their rides.

"We've had a very similar ambulance striping design for as long as I can remember it, dating back over 20 years," Hall said. "A lot of something different; if we're going to make a change, let's be bold."

Bold as in wrapping the traditional white ambulance in a sleek gray vinyl with distinctive orange and black striping. The agency traded in the block lettering on the front of the vessel for a crisp, modern font and topped it all off with a reflective finish to ensure drivers can see them coming, day or night. Hall explained the agency gathered inspiration from other modern ambulances across the country. It was also important to Sumter EMS to look uniform with other local public safety agencies that incorporated silvers of gray into their logos and vehicles.

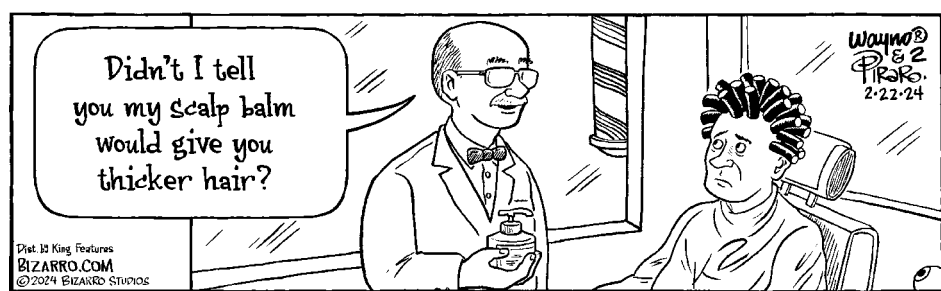
To complement the new ride, EMTs sported new, sleek uniforms for the first time on Monday, Jan. 22, complete with pristine gray button-downs - light in weight but heavy in style - and black cargo to blend seamlessly with the dark-colored boots. The new patches resting on their shoulders stand out with their black background, silver threads and bold design, falling in line with the appearance of other local public safety agencies and giving them that "TeamSumter" look Hall was going for.

"Whenever we started looking at the department, one thing that I felt like we needed to improve on was our professionalism and our image with the public; that goes along with the truck as well. We want our patient care to be top notch, we want our interaction

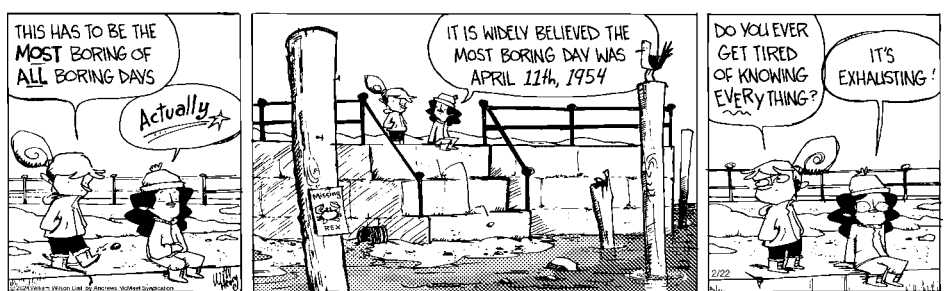
OYSTER CONT. ON PAGE 20A

Contact your Sumter Item sales representative or advertising@theitem.com to reserve your space today!
Book by March 1st and receive 20% off the March 15th first edition of The Sumter Item Impact

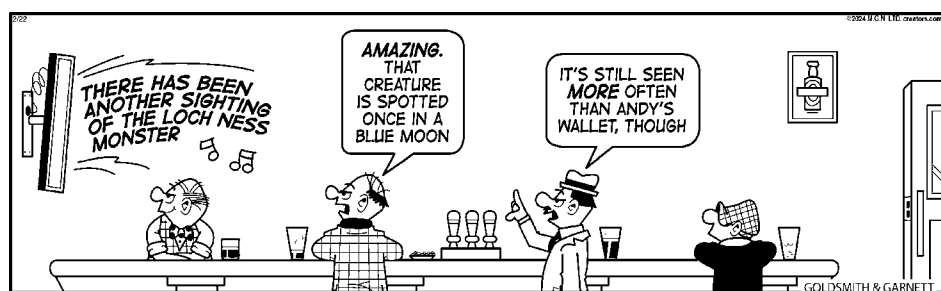
BIZARRO



WALLACE THE BRAVE



ANDY CAPP



GARFIELD



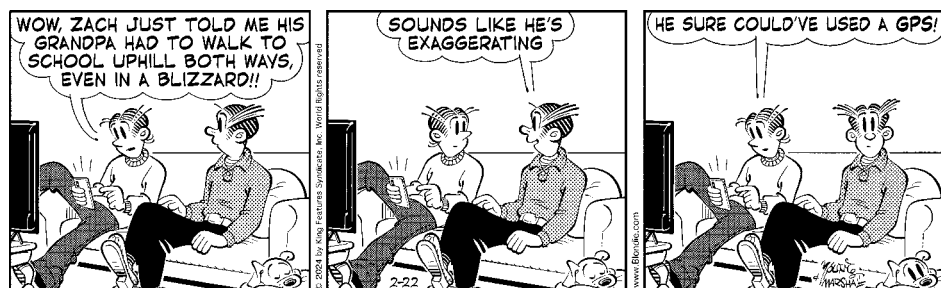
BEETLE BAILEY



BORN LOSER



BLONDIE



ZITS



MOTHER GOOSE



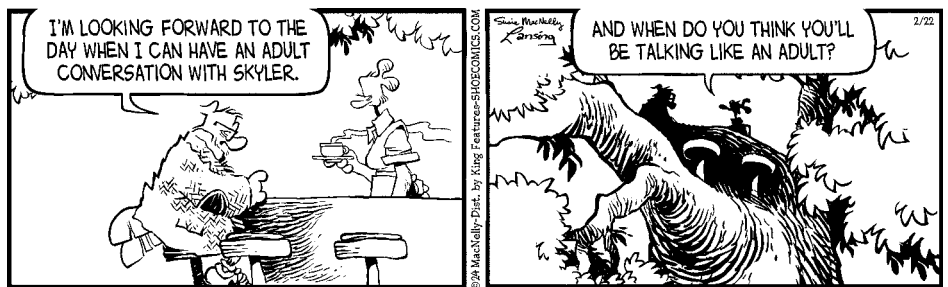
HERB AND JAMAAL



TAKE IT FROM THE TINKERSONS



JEFF MACNELLY'S SHOE



Hosting mother-in-law complains for all to hear



DEAR ABBY — My husband and I have been married three years, and we generally trade off spending holidays with each of our families. Because neither set of our parents is willing to travel to us, we go to them.

My mother-in-law takes great pride in hosting and sets a beautiful table. She'll spend an entire day in the kitchen, forgoing visiting with guests and wearing herself out to present an amazing dinner. If this brought her pleasure, there wouldn't be a problem. But, Abby, she complains bitterly about how tired she is,

how much her feet hurt, how much work it is to have people in her home and how she resents it.

The thing is, she won't let us help. I've offered each time to help her cook, bring dishes made ahead of time or take a turn so she can sit down. Each time I have been sternly rebuffed, as if I've asked something embarrassing. When I tried leading the cleanup crew, her response was a hard no. I even suggested I come a day early and help with prep work, also no. I'm pretty sure she tells her friends she has lazy kids. Suggestions?

DEAR BAFFLED — Your mother-in-law appears to love to suffer. She is a martyr, so PLEASE stop attempting to deprive her of her pleasure.

Try as you will (and have), you can't change her. Of course, you and her son could offer to take her and Dad OUT for a lovely dinner. If you haven't already experienced enough rejection from the woman, you could give it a try. But don't be surprised if she refuses the offer or takes this personally. What she may say to her friends about you should not affect you.

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

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$16 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

THE DAILY CROSSWORD PUZZLE

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14				15				16				
17				18				19				
	20			21			22					
23					24	25				26		
27						28				29		
30				31	32			33	34			
	35		36					37			38	39
				40				41			42	43
44	45	46				47			48	49		
50				51	52			53				
54			55					56				
57							58	59		60		61
62							63				64	
65							66				67	

Amanda Cook & Kelly Richardson 2/22/24

ACROSS

- Octopus octet
- Unmoored
- "Ready or not, here _!"
- Potting soil base
- Melodious cadence
- Opera star Callas
- Anti-cruelty org.
- Reporters who cover the multiple-recalls beat?
- Country star Haggard
- In a clingy way
- Championship match for competitive waitstaff?
- "Breaking Bad" law org.
- Flounder and Scuttle's friend
- "Yikes"
- Breaking Babies, Tamagotchi, etc.
- The Masters gp.
- Kept in a barrel
- "Knives Out" actress de Armas
- Party where sparks really fly?
- General on a Chinese takeout menu
- Stylish
- Understand
- Blanchett of "Thor: Ragnarok"
- culpa here _!
- Soaring apex predator
- Actress Longoria
- Zero-star review that goes fully scorched earth?
- "Dinner!"
- Meted (out)
- Professional purveyor of gossip?
- Conceited
- Finalize, as a comic strip
- Hindu festival
- Desire
- Nickels and dimes
- Bookbinder's tools
- Mushroom part
- Blight-stricken tree species
- Many, many
- Urge
- Penalize in soccer
- Tater Tots maker
- Hoodwinked
- GPA-boosting classes
- Fresh
- Purple blossoms
- Tree product
- Movie trailer?
- Dress design options
- Once-common office fixture
- Classic Pontiac
- Bordeaux buddy
- Creed: church recitation
- Avignon summer
- Catch up, maybe
- Parmigiana choice
- Second cousin, e.g.
- Big _
- Conference
- Like the Irish language
- Maker of Positively Radiant skin care products
- Japanese food prep method that translates to "pounded"
- Green tea ice cream ingredient
- Mezcal plants
- Harness straps
- Nondairy milk
- Elba of "Thor: Ragnarok"
- Rotate
- "No matter _ you slice it ..."
- Tetris shape
- Queens team, in box scores

DOWN

- Off-shared restaurant order, informally
- Surface again
- Relevant
- Treat a fever, per dubious folk wisdom
- "Grey's Anatomy" executive producer Debbie
- "Sprechen _ Deutsch?"

Previous Puzzle Solved

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

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.

FNITU
HOPOM
GIRNIO
RMLEVA

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

(Answers tomorrow)
Yesterday's Jumbles: ADMIT DRAWN DETECT ENROLL
Answer: They ran into a detour, but they weren't — DETERRED

SUDOKU

PREVIOUS SOLUTION

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

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

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



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 _____

BEST OF THE BEST

Best Boss _____
 Best Customer Service _____
 Best Local Industry _____
 Best Locally Owned Business _____
 Best New Business
 (opened in 2023) _____
 Best Place to Work _____

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GRANTS

FROM PAGE A1

Commerce website, Sumter was one of 11 S.C. cities with the Entitlement Community status in 2018.

For the April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, CDBG budget, the city was allocated \$350,085 to work with. This was used to eliminate slum and blight from some areas and promote youth services and other activities related to improving life for Sumterites.

And for April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025, city officials predict they will receive about the same amount of money to work with that can be used for infrastructure improvements, youth employment, housing repair, historic preservation, blight demolition and park improvements, to name a few.

THE PUBLIC HAD INFLUENCE OVER THE BUDGET

Late last year, the city held

a series of meetings where locals were invited to give input on where they think the money should be spent, and they were held in areas where the incoming 2024-25 funding will likely be used.

The four meetings were at the North HOPE Center at 904 N. Main St., the Birnie HOPE Center at 210 S. Purdy St., the South HOPE Center at 1125 S. Lafayette Drive and the South Sumter Resource Center at 337 Manning Ave.

Additionally, organizations submitted proposals to the city to be allotted some of the CDBG money to use for community improvement.

Public documents show that four local organizations submitted proposals.

Those four organizations include Services of Hope, Sumter United Ministries, M.H. Newton Family Life Enrichment Center and Sumter Habitat for Humanity.

Members of the public who attended the meetings late last year shared numerous concerns, most of which were about street paving, dilapidated home demolition, drainage issues and youth resources.

THE RESULTS

City council shared the preliminary budget for 2024-25 CDBG spending with the public during the Feb. 20 city council meeting, and according to that draft, about \$70,000 might be allotted to administering the program, \$10,000 might go toward eliminating slum and blight, about \$25,000 might be allotted to Sumter United Ministries to provide minor home repairs for low- to moderate-income residents, about \$193,000 might be allotted to housing repair for low- to moderate-income residents, \$2,500 might be allotted to YMCA youth services, \$46,500 might be allotted to

youth employment, and \$3,000 might be allotted to the HYPE program, which provides after-school care to some students.

During the city council meeting, Community Development Director Clarence Gaines clarified the difference between the allocation for home improvements done through SUM and home improvements done through the city.

He said SUM is able to do roughly \$200,000 worth of minor home repairs for low- to moderate-income Sumterites with a roughly \$25,000 grant because it's all done by volunteers, whereas the roughly \$193,000 grant for housing repair has to cover labor costs and materials.

This is a budget draft, and it is based on the amount the city was allotted for the 2023-24 budget because city officials do not yet know how much they will be allotted for the 2024-25 budget, but

they predict it'll be about the same as they were given for the 2023-24 budget, which was about \$350,000.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Because council unanimously passed first reading of this budget draft on Feb. 20, second reading will likely happen during the March 5 meeting, and if it passes there, then the budget will be official.

But if city officials learn they are receiving a different amount than they received for the 2023-24 budget, then there will be amendments that would also have to undergo two readings by council.

In short, this budget could be set in stone as early as March 5, but if an amount other than the expected \$350,000 comes in from the federal government through HUD, then council will make changes in front of the public eye.



RENOVATIONS

FROM PAGE A1

historic figures to come out of Pleasant Grove, including Hallow Wilson, the first African American to win an AAU championship, winning the heavyweight title in Greco-Roman, Raymond gave as an example. Once the school closed in 1953, many people worried its history and significance would be lost. Rebecca Wilson Evans-Scott, Evans' grandmother, was the visionary of renovating the space into a community center for all to use and remain a focal point of the small town's history. Her vision came to fruition in 1992 and thrived for quite some time before the lock on the doors turned for the last time in 2004.

Raymond felt it vital to reopen, renovate and reestablish the structure's significance in the community and found seven board members from across six states who share the same sentiment; each board member is a de-

scendent of someone who previously attended Pleasant Grove.

One of the board members got to see the school for the first time since his teenage years, and it happened to be Evans' younger brother, Eugene. Standing inside the school's door frame, the same one his father Joe Lewis traveled in and out, was a surreal experience for him. As he took in the space — not as neat as it may have been decades before — it became apparent to him the impact this quaint, four-walled building had not only on his father's life, but on his and siblings' lives as well.

"We were born and raised in New York, but every single summer, he would bring us back to South Carolina," Eugene said, going on to detail their summer days filled with working, visiting family and sightseeing some notable landmarks in town, in-



PHOTOS BY ALAYSHA MAPLE / THE SUMTER ITEM

Jarred Evans, grandson of former Pleasant Grove student Joe Lewis Evans, visits his grandfather's alma mater for the first time and cherishes the moment of being a part of its restoration.



Pleasant Grove School enters phase two of its Restoration Project on Friday, Feb. 16. The board began restoration in February 2023.

cluding Pleasant Grove. tools and locking the ever-green doors, the group parted ways with promises to see each other again next time.

The father-son duo Eugene and Jarred looked fondly upon the remnants of the school, envisioning what would become of their hard work and the importance it has to the next generation.

"The purpose of the building is that we're going to bring it back, [and] we want it to be a usable community center that the community can actually use. I don't know what they may use it for; it's going to be a multi-purpose center, and they can have it and do whatever they need. But we want to make sure that this stays here," Eugene expressed. "We got to give this to the younger generations, and we got to make sure these stories are told."

cluding Pleasant Grove.

"At the time, it was abandoned, especially during the early '70s, and he was just telling us, 'Hey, this is where I went to school at.' [I] didn't know the real relevance of that, how important the school was," Eugene shared. "Now today, I'm actually standing in the building that my dad was in; my dad is 90 years old, and here, he was just a kid — 5- or 6-year-old kid in this building. It's just been a great experience coming back here to South Carolina and Pleasant Grove School."

But, as the youngest of six children, Eugene was never expected to get his hands dirty on their childhood vis-

its to Alcolu. That all changed Feb. 16-17.

The Evans brothers, joined by Eugene's son, Jarred, and a couple of volunteers, launched phase two of the restoration, which consisted of gutting the remainder of the school's contents and preserving what was left. From finding lost shoes and dusting off a few piano keys to tossing out old boards and cleaning up nature's debris, people passionate about preserving history were hard at work to get the job done.

The weekend came and went, and so did the volunteers and board members. After boarding up the windows, packing up all the



Memorial bricks of former students and community members, including visionary Rebecca Wilson Evans-Scott, are seen near the historic marker outside of Pleasant Grove.

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FOUNDER, THE ITEM

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THE ITEM

Margaret W. Osteen 1908-1996
THE ITEM

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



OPINION

Jacqueline B. Osteen CO-OWNER

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Vince Johnson PUBLISHER

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HALEY CAN LEAD US BACK TO WORLD LEADERSHIP

It's time to forget party and elect the most qualified person to be president of the United States: Nikki Haley! After hearing her awesome speech on Monday, I am more convinced than ever that she is a brilliant Christian leader who is able to bridge schisms and lead us back to world leadership. All registered voters are urged to vote for Nikki Haley in the Republican Primary on Saturday.

BG JOHN B. DUFFIE
USA retired
Sumter

IF HALEY IS GOP CANDIDATE, THERE IS NO RISK OF HARRIS BECOMING PRESIDENT

If Trump is the GOP candidate and loses to Biden and Biden is found too incompetent, then Kamala Harris would be our president. What a brilliant plan our S.C. GOP leaders have. If Nikki Haley is the GOP candidate, there is no risk of that happening. Do you love your country or not?

ROBERT W. WILDER
Sumter

PRESSLEY IS AN EXAMPLE OF AN MUSC TRAILBLAZER

On Dec. 25, 1950, the first African American from Kingstree, South Carolina, who graduated from Edmunds High School and The Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) was born. More specifically, she earned her bachelor's degree there, becoming an RN (Registered Nurse) in 1973.

According to the internet's historical records of MUSC, she is not listed as the first African American to graduate as an RN there, but she recalls her initiations and introduction to dormitory life in 1969 was as the first and only female of color to live on campus that year. In fact, she doesn't remember being the second graduate but says she thought she was the first.

She added that traditionally, incoming freshmen were assigned upperclassmen — who were affectionately known as big sisters — to help them adjust to college life. However, when her bigoted, racist "big sister" realized she would be her roommate, then the unnamed upperclassman vehemently refused to do so. Obstinate, the prejudiced student who thought MUSC should not accept Black students would — immediately — drop out of MUSC.

Today this may seem unheard of by some politicians or even false, but the year she entered the sacred halls of MUSC, the Orangeburg Massacre — where nearly 25 unarmed Black American students were shot in the back by the South Carolina Highway Patrol — was still a very fresh thought in folks' minds. Needless to say, her living in the dorms of MUSC in 1969 was a bold act for lack of better words. You see, the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s was about more than marching, sit-ins, having a right to vote or even protesting unfair gerrymandered political lines for her. Having the American right and earned liberty to sleep in her dormitory was very important to achieve her ultimate goal of actually attending classes and graduating.

Mary Delores Pressley is an excellent example of a MUSC trailblazer.

DARRYL PRESSLEY
Florence

HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY? Send your letter to letters@theitem.com, drop it off at The Sumter Item office, 36 W. Liberty St., or mail it to The Sumter Item, P.O. Box 1677, Sumter, SC 29151, along with the writer's full name, address and telephone number (for verification purposes only). Letters that exceed 350 words will be cut accordingly in the print edition, but available in their entirety at www.theitem.com/opinion/letters_to_editor.

COMMENTARY

Too many corporations have lost their way

Universities are not alone among our institutions that have lost their way. How about America's corporations, which now seem to think social justice is their job, beside efficiently delivering goods and services to the American public?

In a recent panel discussion at the Bipartisan Policy Institute, Jamie



Star Parker

Dimon, chairman and CEO of JPMorgan, the nation's largest bank, rang the alarm about the nation's debt.

He noted what is already widely known — that federal debt now equals 100% of GDP, on its way to 130% of GDP by 2035.

We're headed for a cliff at "60 miles an hour," said Dimon.

But this is not new.

In 2018, for instance, an opinion piece in *The Washington Post* authored by four distinguished economists from the Hoover Institution — Michael Boskin, John Cochrane, John Cogan and John B. Taylor, along with former Secretary of State and Secretary of the Treasury George Shultz — announced, "A debt crisis is on the horizon."

They pointed to the enormous burden and risk to our budget of the then debt burden, which stood at \$15 trillion, 76% of GDP. Now we're at \$34 trillion and 100% of GDP.

At the end of 2008, debt stood at 43% of GDP.

It is good that the chairman of the largest bank in the country is waking

up. But where has he been, and is he really waking up?

Per OpenSecrets, which tracks and reports political spending, in the most recent political cycle, 2023/2024, 65% of JPMorgan's political contributions went to Democrats, and their contributions to "liberal groups" were greater than contributions to "conservative groups" by a margin of 10-to-1.

The Business Roundtable is a Washington, D.C.-based association of "more than 200 chief executive officers of America's leading companies ... that support one in four American jobs and almost a quarter of U.S. GDP."

In 2019, Jamie Dimon served as their chairman, and under his leadership, they made a significant change.

It has always been understood that the responsibility of any corporation is to serve the interests of its shareholders — the owners of the company.

Economist Milton Friedman wrote in his famous book "Capitalism and Freedom," first published in 1962, that corporations have one responsibility — to maximize profitability for its shareholders.

"Few trends could so thoroughly undermine the very foundations of our free society as the acceptance by corporate officials of a social responsibility other than to make as much money for their stockholders as possible," wrote Friedman.

But in 2019, the Business Roundtable did exactly this. They announced that they were abandoning primacy of serving shareholders as the core corporate responsibility and that shareholders would now be viewed as just one group of "stakeholders," alongside "customers, employees, suppli-

ers" and "communities."

What happened to private property? Corporate CEOs work for the owners, the shareholders.

Private property is what sets a free society apart from socialism.

Dimon noted, "The American dream is alive but fraying. ... These modernized principles reflect the business community's unwavering commitment to continue to push for an economy that serves all Americans."

If the American dream is "fraying," it is because of departure from the principles that define a free society, upon which our great country emerged. Economic freedom, private property, personal responsibility and creativity are the source of our success, not of our failures.

Blurring the lines between the private and the public, no one knows what their job is — government, corporations, universities.

Government has exploded by trying to do what individuals should be doing for themselves.

The result of all the efficiencies is slowdown of growth. The victims are the poor, not high-earning CEOs.

As our country sinks under a tsunami of spending and debt, hopefully the CEO of the nation's largest bank, and CEOs of all our corporations, will wake up that loss of freedom, not too much freedom, is what is hurting our nation.

Star Parker is president of the Center for Urban Renewal and Education and host of the weekly television show "Cure America with Star Parker."

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COMMENTARY

Can you do anything about America's problems? Not really, except for one thing

We are saturated with news in America. We know about the legal troubles of former President Donald Trump. Every day we are updated about the latest court proceedings and what is still to come. What can you do about it? Nothing. You didn't loan Trump the money and he doesn't owe you. Loan officers from lending institutions worked these deals with Trump. It's between Trump and them it seems to me. Every day you are bombarded with every detail of Trump's legal issues, from a porn star who is dissatisfied with the \$100,000-plus hush payment she reportedly received. What can you do about it? Nothing. Is all of this supposed to make you hate Trump and vote for someone else?

Almost every day we are reminded by some about the cognitive decline of President Joe Biden. Just like any president, he is derided on a daily basis for his handling of our southern border crisis, the economy, the decline of our military and much more. We care because it all impacts us, but what can you do about it? Nothing really. You can be mad and frustrated,

but that's about all.

Minneapolis police officers were killed during the weekend. People were shot and one killed at a Kansas City Chiefs citywide Superbowl party. Numerous people were shot. It makes us sick. We hurt for those whose lives



Glenn Mollette

were taken. We hurt for those families who lost loved ones. We hurt every day and week in America as more and more mass shootings occur. So what? What can you do about it? Nothing really.

We vote. Of course, that's the one thing we can do, but that's about all. We can protest, march and scream and holler, but Congress doesn't pay any attention to that. Marches in Washington, D.C., are common and seemingly ignored.

Every day we hear about the crisis of the Middle East. Israel, Gaza, Russia and Ukraine. We hear a lot about Ukraine needing more and more money. It doesn't matter if you think they need more or less money; it's out of your hands. What can you do about it? Call your Congressman? Call the president? Do you think they care about what you think? They care about one thing, and that's doing whatever it takes to be reelected.

All you can do is what you must do, and that is vote, and you already know almost for sure who your options are for this upcoming election. That's the one thing we can do. Since you and I can't really do anything about all of this mess, we had better elect someone who will do something.

Find books by Glenn Mollette at Amazon.com. Learn more about his books, columns and music at GlennMollette.com.

AROUND TOWN

A Motown Revue and Black history month art exhibit will be held at 6 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 24, at Patriot Hall, 135 Haynsworth St. Visit www.patriothallsc.org or call (803) 436-2260.

The Alzheimer's Association South Carolina Chapter will hold a pop-up community meet and greet from 4 to 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 27, at the Sumter County Public Library, 111 N. Harvin St. Residents of all ages are invited to drop by to enjoy refreshments while learning about free support services for anyone facing any type of dementia. Association staff and volunteers will be on hand to chat about care and support programs, advocacy efforts, fundraising events and volunteer opportunities. Registration is requested by calling (800) 272-3900 or visiting <https://bit.ly/AlzPopUp>.

The 2024 Rub O' the Green Golf Tournament will be held on Friday, March 15, at Beech Creek Golf Course, 1800 Sam Gillespie Blvd. Registration/check-in and lunch will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. followed by a 12:30 p.m. shotgun start. Space is limited to a maximum of 25 teams with four players per team. Visit <https://business.sumterchamber.com/events/details/2024-rub-o-the-green-golf-tournament-present>

ed-by-5128.

The Annual Barbecue Cook-Off benefiting Boy Scouts of America will be held Friday-Saturday, March 22-23, at the Sumter American Legion Fairgrounds, Sumter County Civic Center, 700 W. Liberty St. Wing ding will be held from 5:30 to 9 p.m. Friday with barbecue tasting and competition being held from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday. Visit sumterbbq.com.

Local and out-of-town bands will unite to deliver an epic concert event with Sumter Springfest. Happening on Main Street in downtown Sumter, the event will be held from 2 to 10:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 23. From mouth-watering hamburgers to fire-roasted pizza to a classy meal, there will be dining options available for whatever you may be craving. Visit <https://sumter-springfest.com>.

Swan Con: Sumter's Comic Arts Festival, presented by USC Sumter and the Sumter County Cultural Commission, will be held Friday and Saturday, March 29-30, at USC Sumter, 200 Miller Road. Celebrating all things geeky, nerdy and fantastical, this free event will feature collectibles, artwork, costumes and more. For event information or updates, follow on Facebook at Sumter SwanCon.

PUBLIC AGENDA

SUMTER COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Today, 7:45 a.m., 10 E. Liberty St.

LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Today, 6:30 p.m., District Administration Complex Quadplex, 310 Roland St., Bishopville. The public can attend in person or by calling 877-853-5247 or 888-788-0099, Meeting ID: 881 5179 9332, Password: 525123. Attend via Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8811799332?pwd=end5UGcyYkNDZjZlUjUz4bZnQvVWd209>

SANTEE WATEREE RTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Monday, Feb. 26, 6 p.m., 129 S. Harvin St. For special accommodations, call (803) 934-0396, extension 103.

SUMTER SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Monday, Feb. 26, 6 p.m., 1345 Wilson Hall Road

SUMTER COUNTY DISABILITIES &

SPECIAL NEEDS BOARD CREATIVE ENVIRONMENTS INC. INDEPENDENT LIVING INC. ABILITIES UNLIMITED INC. ADAPTIVE LIFESTYLES INC. MAGNOLIA MANOR INC. FIRST FLIGHT INC.
Tuesday, Feb. 27, 8 a.m., 750 Electric Drive. Call (803) 778-1669, extension 2537.

MCLEOD HEALTH CLARENDON BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Tuesday, Feb. 27, 6 p.m., hospital board room, 10 E. Hospital St., Manning

SUMTER COUNTY COUNCIL
Tuesday, Feb. 27, 6 p.m., Sumter County Council Chambers

GREATER SUMTER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Wednesday, Feb. 28, noon, chamber office

SUMTER CITY-COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
Wednesday, Feb. 28, 3 p.m., fourth floor, Sumter Opera House, Council Chambers

The last word in astrology

EUGENIA LAST

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Attend to business and move on to

events that propagate precious moments, love and new ways to make a difference. Personal improvements that boost confidence and encourage you to participate in events that stretch your mind and make you aware of the possibilities are favored. 5 stars
TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Establish what's important to you and release yourself from unnecessary baggage. It's time to fine-tune your plans and speed up the process of getting what you want. Integrate what you want to achieve into your routine; you'll get the results and satisfaction you deserve. 2 stars
GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Apply what you learn to your everyday routine. A positive domestic change will result if you research what's available and possible through institutional programs and courses. Refuse to be intimidated by authority figures. 4 stars
CANCER (June 21-July 22): Discovery is your ticket forward. Ask an expert, attend seminars or reunite with someone you trust to give you good advice. Don't be afraid to veer off in a new direction or try something foreign. Interesting connections will unfold. 3 stars
LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Take responsibility for your actions, but don't promise what you cannot deliver. Pay attention to who you are, what you believe in and how you can improve your life, look and reputation. Reach out to someone you love, discuss your plans and be willing to compromise. 3 stars
VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Put your effort into something concrete, and bring about changes that will transcend the shifting markets and technology. Build your future on a platform that allows you to continue to learn and expand. 3 stars
LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Get out, participate and make your presence felt. Step up to the mic and follow through with

determination. Be the one to make a difference instead of sitting on the sideline. If you love someone, let them know your intentions and feelings. 4 stars

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Let creative imagination take over, and you'll develop a unique way to adapt your living space to suit your lifestyle. Don't let what a friend, lover or colleague says taint your decisions. Change may be necessary, but it must be conducive to your needs. 2 stars
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Listen, but question what's said. Rely on your resources to confirm information before you act. A joint venture will be trickier than anticipated. Consider investing more time and money in yourself. Don't let the past consume you. 5 stars
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Take the initiative to improve. A workable space that helps you accomplish things will inspire you to achieve more. You don't have to spend to improve, but you do have to use your ingenuity to manufacture a routine. 3 stars
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Listen, evaluate and choose to do what makes you happy. Following someone else will cost you emotionally and financially. Invest time and money in updating your look, adopting a healthy lifestyle and upgrading your qualifications. 3 stars
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Pay attention to where your money goes. Don't fall behind or neglect to update documents that can result in penalties. A proactive approach to health, financial and contractual matters will lead to peace of mind and more time to pursue your interests and long-term goals. 3 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 | Go to AccuWeather.com

TODAY	TONIGHT	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
68°	51°	70° / 41°	60° / 32°	59° / 41°	71° / 49°
Chance of rain: 0%	Chance of rain: 60%	Chance of rain: 95%	Chance of rain: 15%	Chance of rain: 5%	Chance of rain: 15%
SSW 8-16 mph	SSW 8-16 mph	WSW 8-16 mph	WNW 7-14 mph	NNW 4-8 mph	WSW 7-14 mph

TODAY'S SOUTH CAROLINA WEATHER

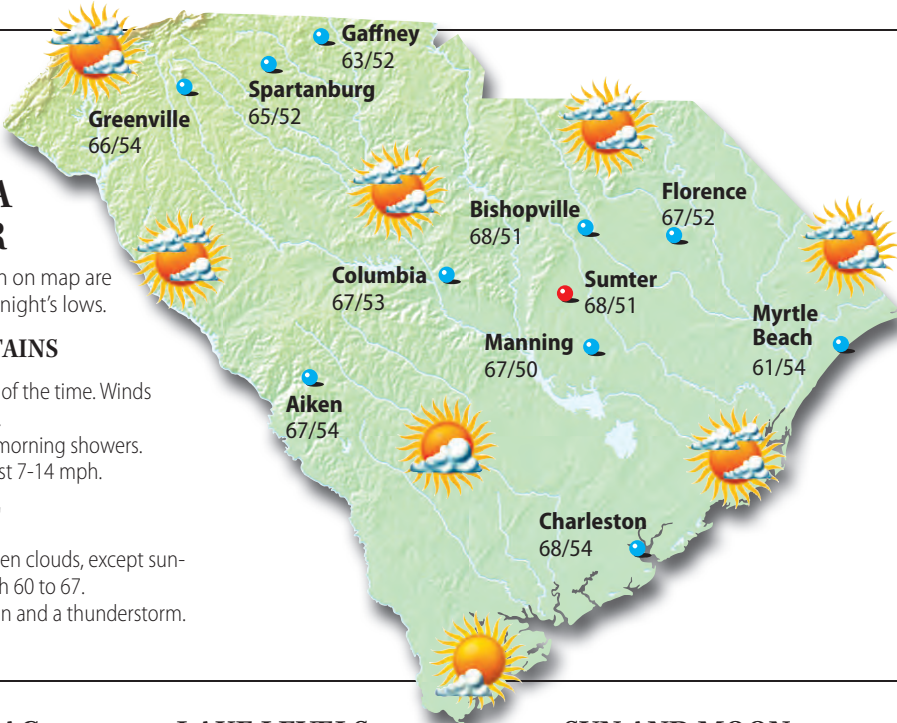
Temperatures shown on map are today's highs and tonight's lows.

IN THE MOUNTAINS

Today: Cloudy most of the time. Winds southwest 7-14 mph.
Friday: A couple of morning showers. Winds west-northwest 7-14 mph.

ON THE COAST

Today: Some sun, then clouds, except sunnier in the south. High 60 to 67.
Friday: Periods of rain and a thunderstorm. High 64 to 71.



LOCAL ALMANAC

SUMTER THROUGH 4 P.M. WEDNESDAY

Temperature	
High	60°
Low	32°
Normal high	60°
Normal low	36°
Record high	81° in 1991
Record low	18° in 1959

Precipitation	
24 hrs ending 4 p.m. Wed.	trace
Month to date	1.63"
Normal month to date	2.56"
Year to date	3.67"
Last year to date	5.75"
Normal year to date	6.34"

LAKE LEVELS

Lake	Full pool	7 a.m. yest.	24-hr chg
Murray	360	358.21	-0.04
Marion	76.8	74.85	-0.02
Moultrie	75.5	73.81	none
Waterree	100	93.53	+0.05

RIVER STAGES

River	Flood stage	7 a.m. yest.	24-hr chg
Black River	12	8.61	-0.01
Congaree River	19	4.78	+0.27
Lynches River	14	8.88	+0.34
Saluda River	14	2.77	-0.83
Up. Santee River	80	N.A.	N.A.
Waterree River	24	6.69	-1.19

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise	7:00 a.m.	Sunset	6:12 p.m.
Moonrise	4:36 p.m.	Moonset	6:16 a.m.

Full	Last	New	First
Feb. 24	Mar. 3	Mar. 10	Mar. 16

TIDES

AT MYRTLE BEACH

	High	Ht.	Low	Ht.
Today	7:45 a.m.	2.9	1:57 a.m.	0.0
	8:02 p.m.	2.6	2:41 p.m.	0.1
Fri.	8:23 a.m.	2.9	2:42 a.m.	-0.1
	8:42 p.m.	2.7	3:19 p.m.	0.1

NATIONAL CITIES

City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Fri. Hi/Lo/W
Atlanta	69/54/pc	65/42/sh
Chicago	55/35/c	41/24/pc
Dallas	77/48/s	72/46/s
Detroit	49/33/r	42/18/pc
Houston	80/56/pc	75/47/s
Los Angeles	65/49/pc	74/55/pc
New Orleans	76/61/pc	73/50/pc
New York	44/38/c	47/29/r
Orlando	75/52/s	76/56/sh
Philadelphia	49/40/pc	51/31/r
Phoenix	75/52/s	79/54/pc
San Francisco	61/47/pc	65/47/pc
Wash., DC	54/48/r	54/36/r

REGIONAL CITIES

City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Fri. Hi/Lo/W	City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Fri. Hi/Lo/W
Asheville	61/45/c	58/35/sh	Florence	67/52/pc	68/42/r
Athens	68/53/pc	67/40/sh	Gainesville	72/48/s	71/46/t
Augusta	69/53/pc	69/42/t	Gastonia	64/52/pc	66/39/sh
Beaufort	67/54/s	71/46/r	Goldsboro	66/52/pc	65/43/r
Cape Hatteras	51/48/pc	57/45/r	Goose Creek	67/53/s	68/43/r
Charleston	68/54/s	71/45/r	Greensboro	62/49/pc	63/39/sh
Charlotte	65/53/pc	68/39/sh	Greenville	66/54/pc	65/37/sh
Clemson	65/53/c	68/41/sh	Hickory	62/48/c	63/39/sh
Columbia	67/53/pc	68/41/r	Hilton Head	63/55/s	67/46/r
Darlington	66/52/pc	68/39/r	Jacksonville, FL	72/50/s	72/47/t
Elizabeth City	56/50/pc	62/39/r	La Grange	69/54/pc	66/39/sh
Elizabethtown	66/52/pc	67/41/r	Macon	70/57/pc	69/43/sh
Fayetteville	66/53/pc	66/40/r	Marietta	68/52/pc	62/39/sh
Marion	62/45/c	61/34/sh			
Mt. Pleasant	64/55/s	68/46/r			
Myrtle Beach	61/54/pc	64/46/r			
Orangeburg	69/52/pc	69/42/r			
Port Royal	64/53/s	70/45/r			
Raleigh	66/52/pc	64/38/r			
Rock Hill	66/52/pc	67/39/sh			
Rockingham	67/52/pc	67/36/r			
Savannah	69/53/s	70/47/r			
Spartanburg	65/52/pc	65/39/sh			
Summerville	67/52/s	67/43/r			
Wilmington	64/55/pc	67/44/r			
Winston-Salem	63/50/c	63/38/sh			

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

FYI

The Sumter Coin Club meets from 7 to 8 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month at Patriot Park Pavilion. All ages are welcome. Join us to learn more about coins and currency. Door prize, raffle and auction at each meeting.

Seniors on the Move Program, offered by Paxville Community Development Corp., is held from 9 a.m. to noon Monday-Wednesday. The program offers a variety of self skill sets including technology skills, elder life skills development, Bingo and other games, health and wellness workshop and Bible study. Programs operate on Clarendon School District 2 schedule. Call (803) 452-5124 or email paxvillecdc99@gmail.com.

Santee-Wateree Regional Transportation Authority (SWRTA) is offering free rides to COVID-19 vaccinations and COVID-19 testing sites. Contact SWRTA from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday at (803) 934-0396.

Sumter Newcomers' Club welcomes residents to our coffees with guest speakers on the second Friday of each month and to our lunches on the fourth Friday of each month at a local restaurant. The club also has various card and other games and a book club. If you are looking for friends or just something to do, come check out the Sumter Newcomers' Club. Call (803) 968-0024.

The General George L. Mabry Jr. Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter 817 meets at 6 p.m. on the third Thursday of each

month at the Combat Veteran Building, 529 N. Wise Drive, Sumter, SC 29153. The meetings are held to foster an environment of goodwill and camaraderie among combat wounded veterans as well as promote patriotism, assist with finding information and resources, and provide service to all veterans and their families. Visit purpleheart817sumtersc.com or call (803) 983-3770.

The GOP "Republican" meetings are held at 6:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month at The Restaurant at Second Mill (the Quality Inn restaurant), 2390 Broad St., across from Golden Corral. Meetings are open to anyone age 16 years or older. For more information and questions, call (803) 972-4555.

Marine Corps League Detachment 1202 meets at 6 p.m. on the third Monday of each month at the VFW, 1925 Gion St. All present and former Marines are welcome. Call (803) 972-4555.

American Legion Post 15 meets at 6:30 p.m. on the first Monday of each month at 34 S. Artillery Drive. All veterans, past and present, are welcome. Call (803) 968-5115.

The Civil Air Patrol Sumter Composite Squadron meets from 6:30 to 9 p.m. each Tuesday at 2945 Airport Road. There are cadet programs, aerospace education programs and emergency services programs. Call Lt. Col. George Stanley at (803) 847-7640. Visit www.gocivilairpatrol.com.

The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, Flotilla 12-1 meets at 7 p.m. on the

third Monday of each month at the Summerton Fire Station, North Cantey Street, Summerton. Membership is open to any U.S. citizen age 17 or older. Previous service in the Coast Guard is not required. The auxiliary's main objective is to promote safe recreational boating on Lake Marion and Lake Moultrie by offering safe boating classes, courtesy vessel checks for required safety equipment and patrolling the lakes offering assistance to anyone in need. The auxiliary also stands ready to assist the USCG with their mission along with search and rescue. We encourage anyone interested in participating in our mission to attend a meeting and learn more about the auxiliary.

Temple Sinai Jewish History Center is seeking docents (tour guides). Docents must be 18 years of age or older and willing to attend training prior to starting. This is a volunteer position and you will be asked to commit at least a few hours a month (Thursday or Friday afternoon or Saturday morning). The museum will work with students who want to arrange class credit through their college. The Center covers South Carolina and Sumter Jewish history, the Holocaust and Sumter's ties to the Holocaust. Docents must be friendly and comfortable engaging with both children and adults. Contact Diana Roof at (803) 468-8630 or droof@sumtercouncilmuseum.org or Annie Rivers at (803) 775-0908 or arivers@sumtercouncilmuseum.org.

Ragin Prep advances to SCISA 1A semis for 1st time with win over Our Lady of the Rosary

BY TIM LEIBLE
tim@theitem.com

Last season, Ragin Prep made history by earning their first playoff win. This year, the Rams took things a step further.

Ragin Prep used a dominant first half to take down Our Lady of the Rosary 58-46 on Wednesday, earning their second win of the postseason and advancing to the SCISA 1A state semifinals in the process.

"It's a wonderful feeling," head coach Anthony Jackson said. "We've got three or four guys that have been here from the start (of the program). To see us go from two wins to .500, going 15-15 last year to 16-5 right now, No. 2 in the region, No. 1 seed in the playoffs, it's been a journey, and I think our guys really embrace it. I think they understand their cir-

cumstances against everyone else, and they take the moment for what it is."

Ragin Prep came out swinging, taking a 20-point lead into halftime. After the break, the Rams took their foot off the gas, electing to slow down the pace of the game. But Ragin Prep's young athletes were born to run, so the slow pace only opened the door for Our Lady of the Rosary to come back into the game.

While the game never got too close — the Rams' lead never shrank to single digits — Jackson thought it was an important lesson. He wants his team to be able to play outside their comfort zone because teams might force them to play a slow, methodical game on their quest for a state title.

SEE **RAGIN**, PAGE B2



Ragin Prep's Zymir Robinson-Hill (10) scored 13 points against Our Lady of the Rosary on Tuesday in the second round of the SCISA 1A playoffs.

TIM LEIBLE / THE SUMTER ITEM

HINES FURNITURE ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Wilson Hall's Shawn Michael Matthews scored 22 points in the Barons' region championship win over Trinity Collegiate on his way to Hines Furniture Athlete of the Week honors.

ADAM FLASH / THE SUMTER ITEM



Wilson Hall's Matthews helps push Barons to region tournament title

BY TIM LEIBLE
tim@theitem.com

Last season, the Wilson Hall boys basketball team won their region title in the regular season only to fall short of claiming the crown in the region tournament. After finishing atop the region once again this season, the Barons were determined to avoid a repeat of history.

At the forefront of that effort was Shawn Michael Matthews.

The junior point guard was electric in the tournament championship against Trinity Collegiate, pouring in 22 points on the way to the crown. After his efforts throughout the week, which included a win to open the SCISA 4A playoffs, Matthews earned another honor, claiming the Hines Furniture Athlete of the Week.

"It's pretty comforting that I have people that take time out of their day to support me," Matthews said of the Wilson Hall community.

Wilson Hall head coach Rip Ripley was impressed by the way the junior was able to elevate his game when it mattered most.

"In the region tournament and the playoffs, I thought he did a great job of getting downhill and scoring. That's where we've seen his progression throughout the year,"

Ripley said. "Early in the season, he was still learning the point guard position and understanding what being a scoring point guard looks like. He's actually one of the leaders in the state in SCISA for assists, per MaxPreps, so he passes really well also, but to be able to score like he did against Trinity, to be able to attack really worked well."

"His finishing is what we've seen the biggest improvement on. I think a lot of that is just confidence and being able to do it and understanding what we're asking him to do. Seeing that growth is really fun."

Matthews and the Barons certainly had last season in mind when they faced off with Camden Military and Trinity in the region tournament last week. Those memories provided fuel for the fire, as they dominated Camden Military 70-29 before outlasting the Titans for a 56-46 win.

"We just kinda had to take some of those feelings we had from last year, where we should've won, we were in the spot to win, and we choked it," Matthews said. "We kinda used those to fuel us this year."

Matthews was slow out of the gate against Trinity but absolutely took over in the second half. He scored 20 of his 22 points after the break.

SEE **AOTW**, PAGE B2

Gamecocks can't keep pace with No. 1 Wildcats in 3rd-round playoff loss

BY JACOB PHILLIPS
jacob@lexingtonchronicle.com

The Sumter High boys basketball team concluded its season Tuesday night with a 57-37 loss to No. 1-ranked Lexington in the third round of the SCHSL 5A playoffs.

"I'm actually happy for my guys' effort," Sumter head coach Bryan Brown said. "I thought we executed the game plan well. We held a team that normally scores 70 or 80 points a game, held them to 50-something ... the ball just didn't go in the basket tonight."

Lexington's senior duo Jackson Prunty and Cam Scott combined for 24 points in their final home game. Prunty scored 14 points, and Scott had 10.

Kaleb Evans scored 14 points to tie Prunty as the game's leading scorer. His ability to slice through the Sumter defense, especially in the third quarter, allowed Lexington to expand its lead.

Jordan Bradley led Sumter with 11 points, and Caleb Jenkins scored seven.

The Wildcats took control of the game early, building a

double-digit halftime lead.

Offense was hard to find for both sides in the first quarter. Sumter held its only lead after going up 3-2 a few plays into the game.

Lexington finished the first quarter up 10-5. Prunty gave the Wildcats their first lead after scoring a fast-break layup. Lexington did not relinquish that advantage for the remainder of the contest.

The second quarter saw much more scoring. Lexington quickly built a double-digit lead after starting the quarter on a 7-2 run. By the break, the Gamecocks trailed 28-15.

Lexington came out in the third and continued the success it had in the second. The Gamecocks had stretches of scoring but failed to keep up with the Wildcats' firepower.

Sumter gave up a 10-2 run to start the period, allowing Lexington to claim its first 20-point lead of the night. Near the end of the quarter, though, the Gamecocks started to find their offense but still could not get stops on the other end.

Evans put Lexington up 20

SEE **GAMECOCKS**, PAGE B2



Sumter High's BJ Brown, center, drives to the basket against Lexington on Tuesday.

JACOB PHILLIPS / LEXINGTON CHRONICLE

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AOTW FROM PAGE B1

"It was an interesting game, like the next game, too, the other team kinda controlled some early, so I think we were looking forward to step up. I think in that Trinity game, it was Shawn," Ripley said. "Hugh (Humphries) did a good job early in that game keeping us in it, and Shawn stepped up late to really push us over the top.

"Him being able to attack from different positions, we kinda moved him around a little bit. He's a point guard, but he's played the post in the past, and he can rip and attack well. To be able to score from different levels, even step out and hit the three, is really, really big."

Matthews was quick to credit his lanky post players, Daniel Burton and Hugh Humphries, for helping him get some easy looks in transition during the second half.

"I think one thing about that game and how it started to flow easier was the pressure we were able to put on the sides where the steals weren't happening. Hugh and Daniel were both putting in a lot of work inside that opened up those break-away layups I had," Matthews said. "They're some of the best teammates I've ever had, probably, because there's so much I can do and try and mess up on, and they're just there to pick up the slack."

The victory allowed the Barons to breathe a heavy sigh of relief.

"It was great. I think the team as a whole was happy we finally did it," Matthews said. "After last year, how sad that was, we were happy to get it done."

The victory gave the Barons some great momentum heading into the first round of the playoffs against Northwood. Matthews and his teammates were confident when they walked into Sumter County Civic Center on Saturday.

"I think anyone you talk to will say that the state playoffs is the best place to be at the end of the season, the most fun, everyone has that energy," he said. "Walking into that energy that already comes with it with a win behind our sails that we didn't have last year gave us a lot of confidence."

But Matthews quickly found himself in some foul trouble, which landed the junior on the bench for stretches. He was able to show maturity by not pressing too much and committing more fouls when he got his opportunities to return to the court, especially as the Barons trailed for most of the night.

"Part of that is just learning. It's my third year on varsity, so I've had some of these moments. This wasn't my first time starting a game with two fouls and having to come in and playing a little more strategically," he said. "Having the core of coaches in my ear keeping me accountable and making sure I make the best plays makes it a lot easier than people think."

When Matthews re-entered the game late, he was able to solidify an offense that struggled to find its footing for most of the night. While he didn't have the same wild scoring output, finishing with seven, he was able to make an impact on the offense as the Barons came from behind and broke away for a 58-53 win.

"It's the comfort with our team this season moving him to the point," Ripley said. "When you've got one of your big guys that's not out there, the other guys stepped up and did a good job of keeping us in it, but I think having him in there gives us an added level of comfort. Over the course of the season, we've seen the turnovers go down, his scoring and assist go up, and he's taken better care of the basketball and we've got confidence with the ball in his hands."

The Barons were able to completely take over the game down the home stretch, which led to a great celebration afterward.

"It was pretty awesome because we have a lot of seniors on the team that, in the past, haven't won as much," Matthews said. "Coach Rip and all of the other coaches, to get a win like that under their belt, it's pretty great. A good time to be with the team."

Unfortunately, the Barons' excellent season came to an end on Monday with a loss to Augusta Christian. Matthews is excited to get back to work in the offseason to continue to elevate his game in his senior season.

"Kinda the same mentality we had this year. We've got to be dogs, and we've got to have that grit that teams are beating us with and multiplying that by a thousand," he said. "Just working on our craft, our shots, our defense, how we think about the game, but our mentality is probably the most important because we have the facilities to be the best out there."

Ripley has no doubt that Matthews will put in the work to be an even better player next season.

"I know he's working. We actually talked today about some AAU options to improve his game," Ripley said. "He'll be a gym rat; he'll either be here or at the Y working on his game with trainers and things like that. He's not one I have to worry about with his preparation and his dedication to the sport. He loves basketball. He wants to be good at it. He shows that with not only what he says, but what he does."

Premium talent still available on MLB's free-agent market, but GMs don't seem in a hurry

BY DAVID BRANDT
Associated Press

GLENDALE, Ariz. — Cleveland's new manager, Stephen Vogt, isn't sure why this year's free agent market has entered a deep freeze even as temperatures heat up during spring training in Arizona and Florida.

He just wants to see it thaw as quickly as possible.

"Those guys should be in camp," Vogt said. "I don't know who is at fault, I don't know why, I don't need to know. But our game's at its best when the best players are on the field."

"I hope those guys sign soon."

The guys Vogt is referring to are a half-dozen high-quality free agents who remain unsigned as the calendar nears March.

The resumes are impressive: two-time Cy Young Award-winning lefty Blake Snell, former MVP Cody Bellinger, six-time All-Star J.D. Martinez, four-time Gold Glove third baseman Matt Chapman, two-time All-Star shortstop Tim Anderson and left-hander Jordan Montgomery, the former Sumter High star who helped the Rangers to a World Series title last fall.

Vogt — of course — doesn't make front-office decisions. However, 15 of the 30 general managers who do were at Cactus League media day on Tuesday.

Nobody seemed particularly desperate to make moves.

"It ebbs and flows, but there have been years, like I remember I was in Cleveland, and we signed Nick Swisher and Michael Bourn late in camp," Cubs general manager Carter Hawkins said. "So it's not out of the ordinary."

This year's free-agent market peaked in December, when the Los Angeles Dodgers spent more than \$1 billion to sign two-way superstar Shohei Ohtani and right-handed pitcher Yoshinobu Yamamoto. The defending National League champion Arizona Diamondbacks were also among the teams active early, signing lefty Eduardo Rodriguez to an \$80 million, four-year deal.

D-backs general manager Mike



ADAM FLASH / THE SUMTER ITEM

Former Sumter High star and reigning World Series champion Jordan Montgomery remains a free agent as MLB training camps kick off this week.

Hazen said he didn't want to speculate on other teams' strategies.

"I can't answer for everybody else," Hazen said. "I feel like we've made a decent amount of transactions. We're looking to help build our team any way we can and we've ended up getting a couple of deals done."

The Los Angeles Angels and San Diego Padres are two teams that have spent big in the past, but seem to be taking a more cautious approach in 2024. The Boston Red Sox have been fairly quiet, too, and third baseman Rafael Devers said Tuesday his team could use some help.

"Everybody has a different perspective," Angels GM Perry Minasian said. "Every offseason is different. I don't think there's any offseason that's the same, because it's a different pool of players. For me, we're worried about what we have, not what we don't have."

The Padres had the third-highest payroll in baseball last season at \$258 million, but finished 82-80 and missed the playoffs. The franchise has been in cost-cutting mode since

San Diego still has a talented roster with a lineup that includes Fernando Tatis Jr., Manny Machado and Xander Bogaerts. General manager A.J. Preller seems content to see where that group leads the Padres this summer, even though the team hasn't ruled out adding players.

"That's a pretty good place to start," Preller said. "From our standpoint, it's a good foundation."

The 39-year-old Vogt is just two seasons removed from his 10-year playing career and has some personal experience with late signings. He signed with the Giants just as spring training began in 2019 and signed with the A's a week before the season started in 2022.

"It's weird," Vogt said. "You feel like you've got to hurry up and get there. You feel like you've missed the 8-ball. You believe you're going to get a job, but there's also that 'What if I never get the call?' It can weigh on you."

"There's a lot of good players out there who are probably thinking the same thing."

GAMECOCKS

FROM PAGE B1

again before the start of the final quarter after he scored on back-to-back sequences. He first came down the court, blew by his defender and nailed a contested layup. The next play, he did the same thing but fought through contact and converted an and-one.

Despite the large deficit, the Gamecocks continued to fight in the fourth quarter. Bradley got things going with a powerful and-one dunk that left the entire basket shaking.

The comeback attempt did not last long, as Lexington pushed the lead back over 20 a few minutes later. Sumter eventually called off its dogs with just more than three minutes left in the game.

A couple of minutes later, Lexington took time to honor its seniors, subbing them out at home for the final time.

The loss marks the end of a successful season for the Gamecocks, Coach Brown said. The team overcame preseason expectations, finished second in its region and made a run in the playoffs.

"We definitely got better from the beginning of the season. You know, nobody expected us to be where we are now," Brown said. "The amount of players that we lost coming into the season, we had a lot of guys step up, and we're pleased to be playing in an elite eight game."

The Gamecocks end 2024 with a



JACOB PHILLIPS / LEXINGTON CHRONICLE

Sumter High's Jordan Bradley shoots a free throw against Lexington on Tuesday.

.500 record, sitting at 14-14. Brown is optimistic about the future, noting the success of the school's feeder programs.

"We had a lot of guys get a lot of experience this year, and we have a

lot of returning experience for the first time in two years," Brown said. "I think we've got four losses in both feeder programs, so I think our future's bright, and I'm excited. I'm ready to hit the ground running."

RAGIN FROM PAGE B1

"It was one of those things I wanted to try to work on," Jackson said. "We get leads, and we want to be able to take some time off the clock, not take quick shots and give the other team a chance to get free baskets in transition. We wanted to try to eat up some of the clock and feed our big men and let those guys eat."

Jackson credits Jamie Richardson's leadership down the stretch as the Rams shut the door on any comeback attempt.

"He's the guy in the huddle that's always trying to bring the guys together," Jackson said. "I give him that floor; he has that voice, and

it's been major."

As they have all season, Ragin Prep spread the ball around in the win. Zymir Robinson-Hill and Kavontay Rose each finished with 13, while Richardson added 11 more to help seal the victory. Rose had more on his plate after Omari Myers tweaked his ankle early, stepping up in the paint on both sides of the ball.

"The first game, it was the bench effort. (Against Our Lady of the Rosary) It was our game," Jackson said of Robinson-Hill and Rose. "Kavontay from a rebounding perspective (was critical). Omari went down with a little ankle injury, and Kavontay had to finish up the game, and he pretty much brought it home for us. And Jamie Richard-

son is always in that mix."

The state semifinals matches up two fairly new programs as the Rams face off with Riverpointe Christian. Jackson wants to prove that Ragin Prep is the superior RPCA on Thursday at 4:30 p.m. in Wilson Hall's B Gym.

"We're RPCA, they're RPCA. They're pretty much a first-year team. This is our third year, so we're both starting the program. We have a lot of similarities. We like to run, they like to run," Jackson said. "I think we're a pretty good matchup, but size-wise, that's where we have the advantage. If we can use our size and execute our game plan, I think we'll put ourselves in a position to be successful."

The stretch run of the NBA season has arrived

BY TIM REYNOLDS

Associated Press

There's no NBA player who is a bigger fan of harness racing than Denver's Nikola Jokic. He owns horses, goes to tracks whenever he can and even accepted one of his MVP awards while riding around at his farm in Serbia.

He knows the stretch run often decides races.

And the same holds true in the NBA, which is entering its stretch run.

The All-Star break is over, games resume on Thursday and the defending champion Nuggets — along with a slew of other contenders — are hoping that this is the time when they can start hitting their best stride. Denver is coming out of the break in fourth place in the Western Conference, three games back of No. 1 Minnesota.

"We don't try to listen to what people say," Jokic said. "We know what we are capable of. And it's working for us. So, I don't know what people are saying, that we are not good. I don't say that we are the best, but we are not bad."

They were the best last season. This season, the best won't be crowned until June, of course. The next couple of months are all about jostling for playoff position — or in some cases, fighting for playoff spots.

It's not the second half — what people commonly call the period after the All-Star break — but rather the final third of the season. The league is exactly two-thirds of the way through the season, 820 games down, 410 games to go. It's the time of year when playbooks tend to get tweaked a little and things get a little more serious.

Paul George of the Los Angeles Clippers knows the playoff push is underway. But as a veteran, he also knows that the most important game is always the next one.

"Can't look too far ahead," George said. "Take it one game at a time. Be-



Phoenix Suns forward Kevin Durant (35) shoots over Indiana Pacers guard Tyrese Haliburton (0) during the NBA All-Star Game in Indianapolis on Sunday.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

cause that's what you tend to do, second half of the season, start to look ahead and look forward to playoffs and just trying to get to the playoffs. But we just got to take it one game at a time."

Boston has the NBA's best record and sits high atop the Eastern Conference, Minnesota and Oklahoma City — a pair of surprises — are first and second, respectively, in the West and some teams with championship pedigrees like Golden State and the Los Angeles Lakers are hoping their pre-All-Star momentum carries over now.

The Warriors were 8-2 in their last 10 games before the break, the Lakers 7-3.

"The most important thing for me is definitely my health, where I'm at right now, where our team is leaning," Lakers forward LeBron James said. "We're trending in the right direction. Obviously, with our Laker team, it's been about health all year. Trying to

do what's best for me for the betterment of the team."

He's been dealing with an ankle issue that limited him in the All-Star Game but didn't prevent him from playing. Other teams have far bigger concerns — primarily the Philadelphia 76ers, who spent a bit of time in November atop the East but have dropped nine of their last 12 games with reigning MVP Joel Embiid out with a knee injury.

They're sliding and so are the Milwaukee Bucks, who have gone 3-7 since Doc Rivers took over as coach. Rivers said at All-Star weekend that he knew that taking over a team just before a long road trip would be a mistake; it seems like he was right. But he also believes there's time to figure things out.

"If you look statistically over the last 20 years, the same teams win it: the teams that are in the top five or 10

in offense and the teams that are in the top five or 10 in defense," Rivers said. "That's not going away. So you can score all you want. But you better be able to defend, too, if you want to win."

Boston has a six-game lead over second-place Cleveland in the East; that would suggest it's safe to go ahead and put the Celtics down for a 10th consecutive playoff berth, extending the longest current streak of postseason appearances in the league.

Detroit, Washington, Charlotte, San Antonio, Portland and Memphis all are alive mathematically but not realistically. Take them out of the mix, and it's 24 teams left in the race for 20 spots when including the play-in tournament.

The Thunder had 100-1 odds to win the NBA title when the season started. They're at 25-1 now, according to FanDuel Sportsbook.

"I think we're starting to kind of see others take notice of us," Thunder guard and MVP candidate Shai Gilgeous-Alexander said. "We knew that was going to happen once we started winning games. It comes with the territory."

Every team has between 26 and 29 games left to play. In terms of combined remaining opponent winning percentage, Orlando, Miami and Boston are among the teams with the easiest — on paper, anyway — schedules the rest of the way. Phoenix would have the toughest, including two games left to play against Boston and a 10-game stretch to end the season all against likely playoff teams.

"We respect every team regardless and try to focus on us as much as possible each night," Suns forward Kevin Durant said. "It just about building our habits, getting better at what we've already established and pushing forward. I think playing against some of the teams that's going to be there at the end of the season, it's going to be a great test before we head to the playoffs."



ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Brooklyn Nets promoted Kevin Ollie to be their new interim head coach on Tuesday.

Nets turn to Ollie with hopes of salvaging season, making playoffs

BY DENIS P. GORMAN

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Brooklyn Nets general manager Sean Marks hasn't given up on his team making the playoffs this season, and now Kevin Ollie will be tasked with leading it there.

Ollie was named Tuesday as Brooklyn's interim coach, replacing Jacque Vaughn, who was fired a day earlier.

The Nets are 11th in the Eastern Conference standings, 2 1/2 games behind Atlanta for the final play-in spot with 28 games remaining. Marks said the decision to replace Vaughn with Ollie during the All-Star break was based on "the direction of the team and where it's potentially trending."

Marks spoke with reporters for almost 20 minutes prior to the team's practice Tuesday night, its first under Ollie, who joined the Nets' staff as an assistant ahead of this season.

"He's always carried a great voice in there. He's very direct with the players. He does hold them accountable," Marks said. "I think what makes a good coach is to be able to put yourself in those players' shoes, be able to tell great stories and be brutally honest with guys and I think those are attributes that Kevin absolutely has."

The 51-year-old Ollie played 13 NBA seasons and led UConn to an NCAA title a decade ago. Ollie coached UConn from 2012-18. The Los Angeles native then spent two years (2021-23) as head of coaching and basketball development for Overtime Elite, a developmental league for young players, before joining the Nets.

"I played 15 years professionally, 13 years in this league," Ollie said. "Never once did (a) coach call a play for me. I had to get it with grit, I had to get it with determination, I had to

get it with a mindset that we're gonna get better each and every day. That's how I coach, that's what I'm going to demand. I want them to demand that from me, and that's from day one. We can't be 30th in loose balls, we can't have five charges on the season. We can't have those things. That's losing basketball with me."

Vaughn went 71-68 in two stints with the Nets, including a brief stretch as interim coach at the end of the 2009-10 season, and led Brooklyn to the playoffs twice. He was seen as a stabilizing force after replacing Steve Nash seven games into last season.

This season, the Nets are 21-33 and have dropped five of six, including a 50-point loss to Boston in their last game before the All-Star break.

Marks was asked whether that ugly defeat factored into his decision.

"I think that's one thing," Marks said. "When you get to a juncture here and you've had the last two months, as I've said before, we have not had the results that we wanted to have. ... This was an opportunity to make a change at this particular juncture. There was no one (thing) you could look back on and say it was then or then or this. You look at it globally."

When asked whether owner Joe Tsai gave him a mandate to make the playoffs, Marks said no but added, "that is a goal, without a doubt."

Leading scorer Mikal Bridges said the Nets need to be unified to make up ground in the standings.

"You got to be ready," Bridges said. "Obviously, it's tough but you know, (the) main goal is to win. So we (have) to keep going, keep the main goal the main goal. ... It's gonna be tough and all that but the main thing is winning. Do whatever it takes, you know, to win."

No. 15 Creighton knocks off UConn 85-66 for program's 1st win over a No. 1-ranked team

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Creighton went into its game against UConn having lost all six of its previous meetings with No. 1-ranked teams and never coming closer than 10 points.

The No. 15 Bluejays finally broke through on their seventh try, building a double-digit lead in the first half and knocking off the Huskies 85-66 Tuesday night.

"We played a really good game and we beat an incredible team, a team that has a legitimate chance to win a national championship," Creighton coach Greg McDermott said. "But we're pretty good as well."

Creighton (20-7, 10-6 Big East) led by 23 points with 10 minutes left but saw its lead cut to 10 before holding the defending national champions scoreless on five straight possessions, rebuilding their cushion and prompting students to leave their seats to prepare to storm the court — which they did as soon as the buzzer sounded.

UConn (24-3, 14-2) had its 14-game win streak end three days after it beat then-No. 4 Marquette by 28 points for one of the most impressive victories of the season — and one day after it was voted as the first unanimous No. 1 this season in the AP poll.

"It kind of felt like we just ran into a buzz saw there," UConn coach Danny Hurley said.

Steven Ashworth scored 16 of his 20 points in the first half, Trey Alexander finished with 16 points and Ryan Kalkbrenner added 15. The Bluejays made 14 of 28 3-pointers in their second-best shooting night from beyond the arc this season. Creighton was just 6 of 26 on 3s in its 62-48 loss at UConn last month.

"When I watched that Marquette-UConn game, I've got to admit I wasn't feeling warm and fuzzy about our chances," McDermott said.

Conditions seemed right for the Bluejays. They came into the game off a pair of 22-point wins and on a three-game win streak, McDermott said his team's offensive flow has been as good as it's been all season, and a rowdy sellout crowd was on hand.

The Huskies were playing their third game in seven days, and Hurley said his players' body language wasn't good in team huddles once the Bluejays took the lead and built on it.

"We've had a great run, but it just kind of felt like today we ran into

them playing great and us not playing as well as we need to here in Omaha," Hurley said. "We were definitely stunned. We knew this was a dangerous game. One of the better teams in the country. But we didn't expect this to happen."

UConn's Tristen Newton scored 17 of his 27 points in the second half, including 10 during the 18-5 spurt that helped pull the Huskies within 74-64.

The Huskies made a season-low three 3s on 16 attempts in their most lopsided loss since Houston beat them 84-45 in the American Athletic Conference Tournament on March 15, 2019. They had come into the game off a Big East-record three straight wins by at least 25 points.

The Bluejays made just two of their first nine shots, trailed by eight points early and had leading scorer Baylor Scheierman on the bench for eight minutes in the first half after he picked up two fouls. Scheierman finished with 12 points.

The Huskies had problems of their own. Donovan Clingan, their 7-foot-2, 280-pound center, was called for two quick fouls and played just 11 minutes in the half, and UConn went through a 2-for-10 spell while Creighton was finding its rhythm.

A few big shots from reserves Francisco Farabello and Jasen Green sparked an 18-2 run. Farabello made two straight 3s and Green hit one from the corner to wipe out the Huskies' lead.

Then Ashworth struck from over 30 feet to begin a personal run of 13 straight points for the Bluejays, who made 14 of their last 19 shots of the half and went to the locker room with a 43-29 lead.

"When you're in your home gym, there's a feeling of confidence, and the fans were a huge part of that," Ashworth said. "Definitely a home-court advantage, and in that first half we got on a little bit of a heater."

BIG PICTURE

UConn: The Huskies have lost 21 in a row on the road against Top 25 opponents. They haven't beaten a ranked team as a visitor since Jan. 16, 2014 at Memphis.

Creighton: The Bluejays gave McDermott his 600th career win and have beaten a top-10 team in nine straight years. They also clinched a 20-win season for the ninth year in a row.

LIV's Niemann 1 of 3 players to receive special invitation to Masters

BY DOUG FERGUSON

Associated Press

Joaquin Niemann competed outside LIV Golf in his offseason and got something money can't buy. He was among three players given a special invitation Wednesday to play in the Masters.

Augusta National also invited 21-year-old Ryo Hisatsune, the first Japanese player to be European tour rookie of the year, and Thorbjorn Olesen of Denmark.

Nieman had said when he won the LIV Golf opener in Mexico, "I want to win majors, but I've got to get in first." The 25-year-old from Chile had fallen well outside the top 50 in the world ranking because LIV does not get world ranking points.

The Masters is April 11-14.

Nieman was the only player from the Saudi-funded LIV Golf to receive the invitation, which was more about his victory in the Australian Open and his willingness to play tournaments outside the LIV Golf League in a bid to get ranking points.

Augusta National did not offer an invitation to Talor Gooch, who has won three times in the LIV Golf League since the Masters was last played. The club typically reserves special invitations for international players who are not PGA Tour members and don't have access to all the criteria, such as winning or reaching the Tour Championship.

In its announcement, Augusta National only mentioned Niemann's win in the Australian Open and his two other top 10s in European tour-sanctioned events. The club did not cite his win at LIV Golf Mayakoba.

"The Masters Tournament has a long-standing tradition of inviting leading international players who are not otherwise qualified," Masters Chairman Fred Ridley said. "Today's announcement represents the tournament's continued commitment towards developing interest in the game of golf across the world."

Nieman won the Australian Open in December, along with finishing fifth in the Australian PGA. He joined the European tour after winning the Aus-

tralian Open, a co-sanctioned event, and tied for fourth in the Dubai Desert Classic, four shots behind Rory McIlroy.

He started his third season on LIV with a 59 at Mayakoba and eventually won in a playoff over Sergio Garcia, his first title in the Saudi-backed league with only 54 players.

"It kind of hurt me a little bit not being in the majors and I think also helped me to get motivation to kind of earn my spot back into the majors, into the elite players," he said in Mayakoba.

The special invitation extended to Nieman means the Masters will have 13 players with LIV Golf, including defending champion Jon Rahm. Ten of them are either former Masters champions or have won a major in the last five years.

Nieman, who was No. 18 in the world when he joined LIV in September 2022, is now No. 81. He is playing in the Asian Tour's International Series in Oman this week, though he would not have had a chance to get into the top 50 in the world because of

the weak field.

Nieman tied for 16th in the Masters last year in his fourth appearance. He played in 2018 as an amateur, earning his spot in the field by winning the Latin America Amateur Championship.

This is the 15th time the Masters has awarded special invitations since 1999, when it first began using the world ranking as part of the criteria. The only other time it awarded three in one year was 2008 to Jeev Milkha Singh of India, Prayad Marksang of Thailand and Liang Wen-Chong of China.

Hisatsune spent one year on the Japan Golf Tour before qualifying for the European tour. He won the French Open and finished high enough on the Race to Dubai to earn one of 10 spots on the PGA Tour. His best finish in four starts on the PGA Tour this year was a tie for 11th in the American Express Championship. He is No. 78 in the world ranking.

Olesen is an eight-time winner on the European tour who played in the 2018 Ryder Cup.

OBITUARIES

PAUL JAMES JACKSON

Elder Paul James Jackson, the husband of Dorothy P. Jackson, departed this life on Friday, Feb. 16, 2024, at his residence. Paul was born Feb. 7, 1939, in Sumter. He was the son of the late Ishmell Jackson Sr. and Delphine Carroll

Jackson. Paul was also known by his children as "My Daddy."

Paul was educated in the public schools of Sumter County and graduated from Ebenezer High School, Class of 1958. Paul was employed at Korn Industries for 42 years. He was a machine operator, later promoted to supervisor.

Paul accepted Christ at an early age and was a dedicated, lifelong member of Ebenezer Presbyterian Church. Paul's services started as a deacon, a member of the Gospel Choir, the Men's Council and ended as an active elder. Paul was also an active Mason of Catchall Lodge #425.

Paul leaves to cherish precious memories his wife, Dorothy P. Jackson, of 61 years; two sons, Harvey Jackson of Charlotte, North Carolina, and Harold (Irabell) Jackson of Lawrenceville, Georgia, and one daughter, Patricia (Benjamin) Wiley of Columbia; two grandchildren, Shaquella Wiley of Columbia and Shayla Wiley of Colorado Springs, Colorado; one brother, Richard (Yvonne) Jackson of Dalzell; two brothers-in-law, Ben (Venita) Peay and Willie (Pamela) Peay; four sisters-in-law, Anita (Lloyd) Hunter, Rosa Mae (Larry) Hayes, Sharon (Michael) Peterson and Loretta Peay; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, other relatives and close friends.

Paul was preceded in death by his father, Ishmell Jackson Sr., and his mother, Delphine Carroll Jackson; two brothers, McKenzie Carroll and Ishmell Jackson Jr.; and two sisters, Susan Brailsford and Geneva Scriven.

In accordance with COVID-19 guidelines, the family is requesting that face masks be worn and social distancing be observed by relatives and friends during visitation at the home, 2545 Byrd St., Dalzell.

Funeral services will be held at noon Friday, Feb. 23, at Ebenezer Presbyterian Church USA, 4620 Quinn Chapel Road, Dalzell, with the Rev. Carnell Hampton, moderator and eulogist.

The remains will be placed in the church at 11 a.m. for viewing until time of services.

The procession will leave the home at 11:20 a.m.

Burial will be in the Ebenezer Presbyterian Church Yard Cemetery.

Services directed by the management and staff of Williams Funeral Home Inc., 821 N. Main St., Sumter.

Online messages may be sent to the family at williamsfuneralhome@sc.rr.com. Visit us on the web at www.WilliamsFuneralHomeInc.com.

NAOMIE TONEY

LYNCHBURG — Funeral services for Naomi Toney will be held on Friday, Feb. 23, 2024, at 1 p.m. at Jehovah Missionary Baptist Church, 805 S. Harvin St., Sumter, with the Rev. Marion H. Newton, pastor, and the Rev. Jeanette Collins Murray, officiating. Interment will follow in the St. Peter AME

Church Cemetery in Mayesville. A public viewing will be held Thursday, Feb. 22, from 1 to 6 p.m. at the mortuary.

Naomie, the wife of the late Vip Toney, was born on Dec. 15, 1928, in Lynchburg to the late Lawrence Smith Sr. and Adell Solomon Smith.

Naomie was preceded in death by her parents; 10 siblings, Robert, Daisy, Satara, Lafate, Noah, Margie, Lillie Mae, Jesse, Lawrence Jr. and John; grandson, Vernon; a great-granddaughter, Ovi-ounce; a great-grandson, Bodrick; and a special friend, Patience Champagne.

Naomie departed this life on Friday, Feb. 16, 2024, in Sumter.

Mrs. Naomi Toney leaves behind to cherish her memories her nine children, Hattie Wilson of Mayesville, Bobbie Toney, Jannie Mae Oliver, Harry (Lillie) Toney, Ernest Toney, James (Grace) Toney of Sumter, Joseph (Christina) Toney of Elliott, Ronnie Toney of Sumter and Virginia Toney of the home; 22 grandchildren; 41 great-grandchildren; 21 great-great-grandchildren; a special friend, Shirley Anderson; and a host of nieces and nephews, other relatives and friends.

The family is receiving friends at 4109 Elliott Highway, Lynchburg, from noon to 5 p.m. daily.

Funeral services are entrusted to the care of Whites Mortuary, LLC — Dedicated to Excellence — Committed to Service.

NONNIE BELL COLCLOUGH PERRY

Nonnie Bell Colclough Perry, 85, died Thursday, Feb. 14, 2024.

Public viewing will be held from 2 to 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 22, at Hayes F. Samuels Sr. Memorial Chapel, 114 N. Church St., Manning.

Funeral services will be at 11 a.m. Friday, Feb. 23, at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Alcolu. Burial will follow in the Westminster Cemetery.

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

ROY LEE BURGESS

CHESAPEAKE, Virginia — Roy Lee Burgess, 77, died Monday, Feb. 12, 2024.

Funeral service will be held at 11 a.m. Friday, Feb. 23, at Hayes F. Samuels Sr. Memorial Chapel. Burial will follow in the Cypress Fork AME

Church Cemetery.

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

REITA LOU ROSA NELSON MCGILL

Deaconess Reita Lou Rosa Nelson McGill was born on Oct. 30, 1948, to the late Josh Nelson Sr. and Ophelia Boizer Nelson in Oswego. Our beloved passed away peacefully at McLeod Regional Medical Center on Thursday, Feb. 15, 2024.

Reita accepted Christ as her Lord and Savior at an early age. She was a member of Enon Baptist Church in Pine-wood until her marriage, then she joined and became a faithful member of Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church of Lynchburg. She served in many capacities to include lead of the culinary staff and served as member of the usher board, choir, pulpit aid and missionary ministries. She served faithfully as deaconess for over 40 years. She provided her gifts for the church throughout her many years of service with things like sewing items to dress the pulpit, providing floral arrangements for the church, decorating the church's vestibule and making the praise dancers' uniforms and choir dresses for special occasions.

Reita was educated in the public schools of Sumter County, where she graduated from Eastern High School. Upon her graduation, she worked various jobs to include Skyline Manufacturing and Shuler's. She also owned and operated her own business, McGill's Floral. She worked at R.E. Davis Elementary School until her health started to fail.

Reita was a humorous person, a jokester. She loved her family and would give her last to them or anyone if they were in need regardless of if they asked for it. She enjoyed making people laugh. Her heart was pure as gold, as she always was willing to help others and feed everybody. It truly brought joy to her heart to prepare a meal (full plate of food) and have you eat. Reita was a great mother, sister and friend. Her hobbies included cooking, making floral decorations, sewing, fishing, gardening and baking. She was a jack of all trades.

Reita leaves to cherish her memories: her loving husband of 53 years, Willy Barkley McGill; two daughters, Novella (Ajayi) Ali of Lynchburg and Maria (Farmarris) Briggs of Mayesville; three sons, Barkley (Helen) McGill of Lynchburg, Quentin (Shanika) McGill of Blythewood and Quincy Levern McGill of Lynchburg; 10 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; two sisters, Elizabeth Betsy Rufus of Oswego and Alberta Capers of Sumter; two brothers, Deacon Josh (Ethel) Nelson and Willie Nelson, both of Oswego; one sister-in-law, Mary (Larry) Durant of Lynchburg; two aunts; one uncle; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and other relatives and friends, who will truly miss her.

Reita is preceded in death, in addition to her parents, by six sisters, Janie Lou Rosa

McFadden, Minnie Ruth Lesane, Beulah Nelson, Bertha Nelson, Martha Nelson and Mary Nelson; two brothers, James Elijah Nelson and Leroy Nelson; and a host of aunts, uncles, nephews and nieces; one sister-in-law, three brothers-in-law; and one granddaughter.

In accordance with the COVID-19 guidelines, the family is requesting that face masks be worn and social distancing be observed by relatives and friends during visitation at the home, 2175 Rose Hill Road, Lynchburg.

The procession will leave the home at 2:20 p.m. Funeral services will be held at 3 p.m. Friday, Feb. 23, at Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church, 418 Main St., Lynchburg, with the Rev. Dr. Sammie D. Simmons, pastor, eulogist.

Burial will be in the Bethesda Memorial Gardens.

Services directed by the management and staff of Williams Funeral Home Inc., 821 N. Main St., Sumter. Online memorial messages may be sent to the family at williamsfuneralhome@sc.rr.com. Visit us on the web at www.WilliamsFuneralHomeInc.com.

MARY DOWNIE HAMER KNOWLTON

Mary Downie "MaryDee" Hamer Knowlton, 77, widow of Timothy Jackson "Jack" Knowlton Jr., died Wednesday, Feb. 14, 2024, at Prisma Health Tuomey Hospital in Sumter.

Born in Lumberton, North Carolina, she was a daughter of the late Robert Harry Hamer and Mary Downie Tyner Hamer.

Mrs. Knowlton retired from the S.C. Department of Corrections and later from Sumter Ear, Nose and Throat. MaryDee's lineage society memberships were her hobby and her passion. She was a charter member of Wateree Chapter, Colonial Dames XVII Century and currently served as chapter registrar. She had served as S.C. State recording secretary until her health began to fail. As a former member of Teige Canteen Chapter in Sumter, she served a term as chapter president. She was a member of Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) for over 30 years. She most recently held membership in Joseph Kershaw Chapter in Camden and served in several offices, including regent and chapter registrar. She was a member of Daughters of American Colonists (DAC), The Huguenot Society of Virginia, The Order of the First Families of Maryland and a long-time member of John D. Kennedy Chapter, United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), having served as chapter president, most other offices and two terms as central district director.

Surviving are two sons, William A. "Billy" Garris Jr. (Greta) and Robert B. "Bobby" Garris (Kelley); and six grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

She was preceded in death by a sister, Daisy Lee.

Online condolences may be sent to www.sumterfunerals.com.

Elmore Hill McCreight Fu-

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



PATRICIA ANN RHODES

Patricia Ann Rhodes, 63, died Sunday, Feb. 18, 2024, at Prisma Health Tuomey Hospital, Sumter. She was born Oct. 18, 1960, in Gable, a daughter of the late Freddie and Mary Caesar Rhodes.

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

DOROTHY L. WITHERSPOON

Dorothy L. Witherspoon departed this life on Monday, Feb. 19, 2024, in Sumter.

Dorothy, the wife of the late John Wilson Jr., was born March 27, 1936, in Manning to the late Minnie Gamble Witherspoon and Dan Witherspoon.

The family is receiving friends at 242 Averlour Drive, Sumter, from 5 to 8 p.m. daily.

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

MABLE GASS

Mable Gass, 88, wife of the late Arthur Gass, passed away Wednesday, Feb. 14, 2024, at Atrium Health in Charlotte, North Carolina. Born in Sumter County, she was a daughter of the late Elijah McDuffie and Mattie Pearson McDuffie.

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

GLADYS WILSON ADDISON

Gladys Wilson Addison, 91, daughter of the late Ollie Addison and Sarah Perry Wilson, was born on Jan. 1, 1933, in Sumter. She departed this life on Wednesday, Feb. 21, 2024, at Prisma Health Tuomey Hospital in Sumter.

Family will receive friends at the home, 141 Hoyt St., Sumter, SC 29150.

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

ALONZA TINDAL

FLORENCE — On Tuesday, Feb. 20, 2024, Alonza "Bay" Tindal, husband of Lavern Holliday Tindal, departed our midst at McLeod Hospice House in Florence.

Born on Saturday, May 8, 1948, in Manning, he was a son of the late Cleveland Tindal Sr. and Ethel Richard Tindal "Sing."

The family will begin receiving relatives and friends on Friday, Feb. 23, from 4 to 7 p.m. at the residence, 2671 Boyd Road, Manning.

Funeral services are incomplete and will be announced by Fleming & DeLaine Funeral Home and Chapel of Manning.



JACKSON



TONEY



PERRY



BURGESS



THURSDAY EVENING FEBRUARY 22

SP	FT	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30	12 AM		
LOCAL CHANNELS														
WIS	10	3	10	WIS News 10 at 7 (N)	WIS News Primetime (N)	Law & Order "Last Dance" McCoy takes drastic action to make a case. (N)	Law & Order: Special Victims Unit "Zone Rouge" A cryptic message sends SVU on a new track to find Maddie. (N)	Law & Order: Organized Crime "Missing Persons" A rescued victim from Stabler's past goes missing. (N)	WIS News 10 at 11 (N)	(:35) The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon (N)				
WLTX	19	9	9	News 19 at 7pm (N)	Inside Edition (N)	Sheldon "A Roulette Wheel and a Piano Playing Dog" (N)	Ghosts "Man of Your Dreams" (N)	So Help Me Todd "Your Day in Court" Todd suspects a crime is happening in the courthouse. (N)	Tracker "Missoula" Colter tracks down a young man involved in a cult.	News 19 at 11pm (N)	(:35) The Late Show With Stephen Colbert (N)			
WOLO	25	5	12	Wheel of Fortune (N)	Jeopardy! (N)	American Idol "701 (Auditions)" Auditions in Los Angeles, Nashville and the judges' hometowns to find the next singing sensation.		Will Trent "Me Llamo Will Trent" A car bomb ignites an investigation for Will.	ABC Columbia News at 11 (N)	(:35) Jimmy Kimmel Live! (N)				
WRJA	27	11	14	In The Bubble with Jaime (N)		The World of Cecil			Shuttlesworth	Amanpour and Company (N)		Secrets of Royal Travel "Secrets of the Royal Train"		
WACH	57	6	6	The Big Bang Theory "The 43 Peculiarity"	Big Bang "The Cooper-Hofstadter Polarization"	Next Level Chef "Curry in a Hurry" The remaining chefs are tasked with preparing a curry dish. (N)	Farmer Wants a Wife "You Need to Step up Your Flirting Game" The farmers go on their romantic second solo dates. (N)	WACH FOX News at 10P (N) (Live)	Sports Zone (N) (Live)	The National Desk (N) (Live)	iCRIME With Elizabeth Vargas			
WKTC	63	4	22	The Neighborhood "Welcome to the Working Week"	Neighbor "Welcome to the Pit Stop, How May I Help You?"	Dateline "Secrets in the Mist" An investigator uses Facebook to help find a missing woman.	Chicago P.D. "This City" Voight and Ray Price work together to stop a gang war.	Chicago Fire "A Heavy Weight" Dawson is surprised when he receives a suicide note.	48 Hours "The Case Against Brooke Skylar Richardson" The parents of Brooke Skylar Richardson discuss her case. (N)	Funny You Should Ask (N)				
CABLE CHANNELS														
A&E	46	130	The First 48 "Killer of a Kind Heart & Friend in Need"		The First 48 "Inside The Tape Special #14" (N)	Taking the Stand "Delinord Dumercy" (N)		(:05) Undercover: Caught on Tape "The Cost of Happiness" (N)	(:05) The First 48 "Stolen Innocence"	(:05) The First 48				
AMC	48	180	*** Armageddon (98) Billy Bob Thornton, Liv Tyler, Bruce Willis. A NASA rep recruits an oil driller and his team of mavericks to save Earth from an asteroid.											
ANPL	41	100	I Was Prey "Alone in the Wild"		I Was Prey "Close to Home"	I Was Prey "Mauled in the Mountains"		I Was Prey "Attacked in Alaska"	I Was Prey "Backyard Bite"		I Was Prey			
BET	61	162	(5:30) *** He Got Game (98) Ray Allen, Milla Jovovich, Denzel Washington. A high-school basketball star faces his estranged father. (P)		48 Hours "Live to Tell: One Last Hug"		Diggstown "Willy MacIsaac"		Carl Weber's The Family Business "We Are at War"		Tyler Perry's Sistas "Pens and Needles"			
BRAVO	47	181	Summer House "Reunion Part 2"		Southern Hospitality "Reunion" (N)		Summer House "Declaration of Codependence" (N) (SP)		(:05) Watch What Happens Live With Andy Cohen (N)	(:05) Summer House "Declaration of Codependence"	(:05) Vanderpump Rules			
BSSE	21	47	Facing Waves	Epic Trails	SportsMoney	Sports Stars	Fairways of Life with Matt Adams		Lights Out Xtreme Fighting LXF12		Boxing			
CNBC	35	84	Last Call (N) (Live)		Shark Tank		Shark Tank		Shark Tank		Shark Tank			
GNN	3	80	Erin Burnett OutFront (N) (Live)		Anderson Cooper 360 (N) (Live)		The Source With (N) (Live)		CNN NewsNight (N) (Live)		Laura Coates Live (N) (Live)			
COM	57	136	(:10) The Office	(:45) The Office "New Guys"	(:20) The Office "Roy's Wedding"	(:55) The Office "Andy's Ancestry"	The Office "Work Bus"	The Office "Here Comes Treble"	The Office "The Boat"	The Daily Show (N)	(:35) South Park	South Park "Fort Collins"		
DISN	18	200	Big City "Date Night: The Room"	Big City Greens "Bleeped; Sellouts"	Hailey's on It! "U.F. Whoa!"	Hailey's on It!	Marvel's Moon Girl "Run the Rink"	Ladybug "Hack-San"	Ladybug "Rocketear"	Ladybug "Wishmaker"	Jessie "Break-Up and Shape-Up"	Jessie "Diary of a Mad Newswoman"	Ladybug "Simpleman"	
DSC	42	103	Caught!		Caught!	Caught!	Caught!	Caught!	Caught!	Caught!	Hustlers Gamblers "The Lost Weekend"			
ESPN	26	35	NHL Hockey Washington Capitals at Tampa Bay Lightning (N) (Live)											
ESPN2	27	39	College Basketball SMU at Florida Atlantic (N) (Live)				College Basketball Washington at Arizona State (N) (Live)				College Basketball Oregon at Stanford (N) (Live)			
FOOD	40	109	Beat Bobby Flay	Beat Bobby Flay	Beat Bobby Flay	Beat Bobby Flay	Beat Bobby Flay	Beat Bobby Flay	Beat Bobby Flay	Beat Bobby Flay	Beat Bobby Flay	Beat Bobby Flay		
FOXN	37	90	The Ingraham Angle (N) (Live)		Jesse Watters Primetime (N) (Live)		Hannity (N) (Live)		Gutfeld! (N)		Fox News at Night (N) (Live)			
FREE	20	131	(5:45) *** How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days (2005) Matthew McConaughey, Adam Goldberg, Kate Hudson.	(:25) *** Ferris Bueller's Day Off (86) Alan Ruck, Mia Sara, Matthew Broderick. A teen (Matthew Broderick) plays hooky in Chicago with friends (Alan Ruck, Mia Sara).	The 700 Club		The Golden Girls "All Bets Are Off"		The Golden Girls "Blanche Delivers"	The Golden Girls	The Golden Girls			
HALL	52	183	(6:00) * A Tail of Love (22) Chris McNally, Jayne Eastwood, Brittanv Bristow.	* An American in Austen (24) Nicholas Bishop, Nell Barlow, Eliza Bennett. A woman gets transported into "Pride and Prejudice."	The Golden Girls		The Golden Girls		The Golden Girls		The Golden Girls			
HGTV	39	112	Farmhouse Fixer	Married-Estate "Fixing the Forever Home"	Married-Estate "Rockin' in Roswell" (N)	Hunters Int'l (N)	Hunters Int'l	Hunters Int'l	House Hunters	House Hunters	Married-Estate			
HIST	45	110	Swamp People "Chasing a Legend"		Swamp People "Curse of Graveyard Island" (N)		(:35) Swamp "Monster Highway" (N)	(:35) Swamp People "Down to the Wire"	(:05) Swamp People		Chicago P.D.			
ION	13	18	Chicago P.D. "Never Forget I Love You"	Chicago P.D. "Now I'm God"	Chicago P.D. "Knocked the Family Right Out"	Chicago P.D. "Looking Out for Stateville"	Chicago P.D. "Hit Me"	Chicago P.D.						
LIFE	50	145	Theresa Caputo: Raising Spirits "A Very Caputo Wedding"		Theresa Caputo: Raising Spirits "Hello, London!"	Theresa Caputo: Raising Spirits "High Hair, High Tea" (N)	(:05) Baby "Baby in a Blizzard" (N)	(:35) Baby "That's Not Indigestion" (N)	(:05) Theresa Caputo: Raising Spirits "High Hair, High Tea"	Theresa Caputo "Hello, London!"				
MSNBC	36	92	The ReidOut (N) (Live)		All In With Chris Hayes (N) (Live)		Alex Wagner Tonight (N) (Live)		Last Word With Lawrence (N) (Live)		11th Hour (N) (Live)			
NICK	16	210	SpongeBob		SpongeBob	SpongeBob	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends			
NWSN	8	172	On Balance With Leland Vittert (N) (Live)		Cuomo (N) (Live)		Dan Abrams Live (N) (Live)		Banfield (N) (Live)		Cuomo			
PARMT	64	153	Two and a Half Men		Two and a Half Men		To Be Announced							
SYFY	58	152	(5:00) *** Enemy of the State (98) Gene Hackman, Jon Voight, Will Smith.	*** The Equalizer (14) Marton Csokas, Chloë Grace Moretz, Denzel Washington. A former commando comes out of retirement to rescue a girl from violent Russian mobsters.		*** The Equalizer (14) Marton Csokas, Chloë Grace Moretz, Denzel Washington.		*** The Equalizer (14) Marton Csokas, Chloë Grace Moretz, Denzel Washington.						
TBS	24	156	Big Bang "The Itchy Brain Simulation"	The Big Bang Theory	The Big Bang Theory	Big Bang "The Cooper Extraction"	The Big Bang Theory	The Big Bang Theory	Impractical Jokers "Paula Abdul" (N)	Impractical Jokers "Paula Abdul" (N)	*** Girls Trip (17) Queen Latifah, Jada Pinkett Smith, Regina Hall.			
TCM	49	186	(6:00) *** King Solomon's Mines (50) Stewart Granger, Deborah Kerr.	*** She Wore a Yellow Ribbon (49) Joanne Dru, John Agar, John Wayne. A cavalry captain (John Wayne) takes on one last mission.		*** The Black Swan (42) Maureen O'Hara, Laird Cregar, Tyrone Power. An ex-pirate is asked to capture two former comrades.		90 Day Fiancé: Happily Ever After? "Isn't She Lovely"		90 Day Fiancé				
TLC	43	157	90 Day "Pillow Talk: Chantel Gets a Taste"		90 Day Fiancé: Happily Ever After? "Meet Me Halfway"		90 Day Fiancé: Happily Ever After? "Isn't She Lovely"		90 Day Fiancé					
TNT	23	158	NBA Tip-Off (N) (Live)	NBA Basketball Phoenix Suns at Dallas Mavericks From American Airlines Center in Dallas. (N) (Live)				NBA Basketball Los Angeles Lakers at Golden State Warriors From Chase Center in San Francisco. (N) (Live)						
TRUTV	38	129	Impractical Jokers		Impractical Jokers	Impractical Jokers	Impractical Jokers	Impractical Jokers	Impractical Jokers	Inside Jokes	Inside Jokes	Impractical Jokers		
TV LAND	55	161	Raymond		(:35) Raymond	(:45) Raymond	(:20) Everybody Loves Raymond "Liars"	(:55) Raymond	Raymond	King	King	The King of Queens		
USA	25	132	Law & Order: Special Victims Unit "Diss"											
WE	68	166	9-1-1 "Panic"		Bold-Bou. "Let Me Reintroduce Myself"		Bold & Bougie "Clatchet Tea Party" (N)		Bold & Bougie "Clatchet Tea Party"		Mama June "Family Crisis: Reality Sets In" Bold & Bougie			



From left, Ian Ousley stars as Sokka, Kiawentiio as Katara and Gordon Cormier as Aang in the new live-action series adaptations of "Avatar: The Last Airbender," streaming today on Netflix.

Andrew Scott stars in 'All of Us Strangers' on Hulu

BY KEVIN McDONOUGH

Hulu streams the British fantasy "All of Us Strangers," released in theaters in 2023. Andrew Scott stars as Adam, an isolated writer who visits his old family home after a strange encounter with a man, Henry (Paul Mescal), from his apartment block. While he assumes that his old house had been abandoned, he discovers it occupied by his parents, looking just as they had before they were killed in a car accident some 30 years earlier.

Over the course of the film, he resumes conversations with his long-dead parents and embarks on a relationship with Henry, coming out to his spectral parents whose reactions are shaped by experiences and attitudes of a previous generation.

"Strangers" received near-universal acclaim from critics who praised its ability to bring an intimacy and emotional resonance to what might have been a standard ghost story. Scott was nominated for a Golden Globe for his portrayal of Adam. The film's absence from Oscar consideration was considered a

glaring omission by some.

This only adds to Scott's stature, having won over audiences as Holmes' nemesis in the "Sherlock" series starring Benedict Cumberbatch and as the "hot priest" in "Fleabag," opposite series creator Phoebe Waller-Bridge. He's due to star in the title role in "Ripley," the latest adaptation of Patricia Highsmith's "The Talented Mr. Ripley." Developed for Showtime, it will stream on Netflix on April 4.

Netflix begins streaming "Avatar: The Last Airbender," a live-action adaptation of the popular Nickelodeon cartoon series. This mystical tale reimagines the four ancient primordial elements: water, earth, fire and air, as "nations" that lived in complete harmony until the Fire nation went medieval on the Air Nomads, upsetting the cosmic apple cart in a quest for world domination.

Gordon Cormier stars as Aang, the last surviving Air Nomad, who must master all four elements to set the world right before the evil Firelord Ozai (Daniel Dae Kim) puts it to the flame.

"Airbender" will unspool over eight episodes. Clearly aimed at a younger audience receptive to all manner of mystical malarkey, "Airbender" has been a hit since the cartoon debuted nearly 20 years ago. I fully admit to having found it impossibly pretentious at the time.

- MAX streams the standup special "Rory Scovel: Religion, Sex and a Few Things in Between." Produced by Conan O'Brien and Conaco.
- BET+ streams the film profile "Kemba," inspired by the story of criminal justice reform advocate Kemba Smith.
- True-crime documentary series waste no time in finding paranoia in areas normally associated with life's greatest joys. There are untold series like "Who the (Bleep) Did I Marry?" that relate sordid tales of true love turned to terror and murder. Hulu now streams the second season of "Death in the Dorms," tales of higher learning that ended in homicide.

CULT CHOICE

A boy (Sabu) raised by

wolves adjusts to civilization in the 1942 adaptation of "Rudyard Kipling's Jungle Book" (4 p.m., TCM, TV-G), directed by Zoltan Korda ("The Four Feathers").

TONIGHT'S OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

- A murder in Central Park leads to suspects from very different social strata on "Law & Order" (8 p.m., NBC, TV-14).
- A cryptic clue sparks sudden action on "Law & Order: SVU" (9 p.m., NBC, TV-14).
- Part four of the seven-episode joint biography "Genius: MLK/X" (9 p.m., National Geographic, TV-14) recalls a meeting between Dr. King and Malcolm X in Washington, when both were lobbying for the civil rights bill eventually passed in 1964.
- A rescued victim vanishes on "Law & Order: Organized Crime" (10 p.m., NBC, TV-14).

SERIES NOTES

Away from home and behind the curve on "Young Sheldon" (8 p.m., CBS, TV-PG) * "Next Level Chef" (8 p.m., Fox, TV-14) * Auditions unfold in L.A. and Nashville on

"American Idol" (8 p.m., ABC, r, TV-14) * Haunting the dreams of the living on "Ghosts" (8:30 p.m., CBS, TV-PG) * Todd suspects foul deeds close to home on "So Help Me Todd" (9 p.m., CBS, TV-14) * "Farmer Wants a Wife" (9 p.m., Fox, TV-PG) * A missing boy seems well adjusted to the cult life on "Tracker" (10 p.m., CBS, r, TV-14) * A car-bombing reverberates on "Will Trent" (10 p.m., ABC, TV-14).

LATE NIGHT

Christopher Nolan visits on "The Late Show With Stephen Colbert" (11:35 p.m., CBS, r) * Jimmy Fallon welcomes Dakota Johnson, Chloe Sevigny, Gaby Moreno and Oscar Isaac on "The Tonight Show" (11:35 p.m., NBC, r) * Sterling K. Brown, Melissa Rauch and Colleen Clark visit "Late Night With Seth Meyers" (12:35 a.m., NBC, r) * Taylor Tomlinson hosts Bianca Del Rio, Reggie Watts and Wendi McLendon-Covey on "After Midnight" (12:35 a.m., CBS, r).

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LEGAL NOTICES

Summons & Notice

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
IN THE FAMILY COURT
FOR THE
NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
COUNTY OF CHARLESTON
Case 2023-DR-10-3537
AMENDED SUMMONS and
NOTICE OF ADOPTION

JOHN ROE AND MARY ROE,
Plaintiffs,

versus

JANE DOE #A and JANE DOE #B,
(DOB: 3-21-22), minors under the age
of eighteen (18) years, and ALEXIA
KIARA MOSES
Defendants.

TO THE DEFENDANT, ALEXIA
KIARA MOSES, AND TO CLIFTON
TONEY:
AS TO THE DEFENDANT, ALEXIA
KIARA MOSES, YOU ARE HEREBY
Summoned and required to Answer
the Complaint in the above-entitled
action, of which a copy is herewith
served upon you, and to file your
Answer with the Charleston County
Family Court, 100 Broad Street,
Charleston, South Carolina 29401,
within thirty (30) days from the
service hereof; exclusive of the day
of such service; and to serve a copy
of your Answer on the subscribed at
their office at 44-B Markfield Drive,
Charleston, South Carolina 29407
and if you fail to answer the
Complaint within the time aforesaid,
judgment by default will be rendered
against you for the relief demanded
in this Complaint.

AS TO CLIFTON TONEY,
PUTATIVE FATHER OF JANE DOE
A and JANE DOE #B, YOU ARE
HEREBY NOTIFIED pursuant to
South Carolina Code Ann. Sec.
63-9-730(B), that the Plaintiffs filed
this adoption action on December 7,
2023 with the Charleston County
Family Court and seek to adopt the
minor Defendants, female
African-American children born in
Florence, South Carolina on March
21, 2022.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED
that within thirty (30) days of
receiving this Notice, you shall
respond in writing by filing with the
Charleston County Family Court
notice and reasons to contest,
intervene or otherwise respond in
the pending adoption action. Your
failure to respond within the time
aforesaid, constitutes your consent
to the adoption and forfeiture of any
rights and obligations you may have
to the minor Defendant.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED
The Court must be informed of your
current address and of any changes in
address during the adoption
proceeding; and

Summons & Notice

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED
that the Plaintiffs are not named for
the purpose of confidentiality;
however, the Court knows the true
identity of the Plaintiffs and in
responding to this Notice, you are
required to use the number
2023-DR-10-3537
BE SO NOTIFIED.

KATHERINE F. BRAUN
Attorney for Plaintiffs
44-B Markfield Drive
Charleston, SC 29407
(843) 723 1688

Charleston, South Carolina
Dated: February 14, 2024



ANNOUNCEMENTS

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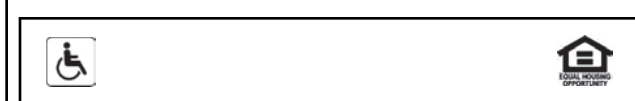
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Newspaper Network,
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